

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS
JANUARY 11, 2023
PR-2022-143328; GF-2022-169703
7304-06 KNOX LANE

PROPOSAL

Demolish a ca. 1940 house.

ARCHITECTURE

The building at 7304 Knox Lane is an eclectic house with early Ranch and vernacular stylistic influences. It is one and one-half stories in height, with an L-shaped plan and intersecting partial-width porches. Its compound roofline features deep eaves with cedar shakes at gable ends. Fenestration includes 8:8 wood windows of varying dimensions.

RESEARCH

The house at Knox Lane and Running Rope Lane, known as either 7304 or 7306 Knox, was constructed between 1930 and 1940. The land had been purchased in the 1930s by Mary Lou and Warren Penn Knox. Knox, the district commissioner for the Boy Scouts of America, turned the property into a day camp for boys during the late 1940s, called Running Rope Ranch.

Knox was a vibrant native of Vermont who moved to Austin after a stint as a cavalryman in World War I. After serving as an Army captain in World War II, Knox became increasingly involved in outdoor youth activities in Central Texas, including organizing a youth circus in Austin and serving as the official operator of the Arrowhead Ranch Camp in Kerrville, before opening Running Rope Ranch. The ranch offered riding lessons, hiking and survival training, swimming in the spring-fed pool—the land boasted seven natural springs, which were later identified by Margaret Thomas Knox as a habitat of the threatened Jollyville Plateau salamander.¹—and other outdoorsmanship training for elementary-, middle-, and early-high-school-aged boys. From 1959 to 1966, legendary Austin horsewoman Ginger Pool taught riding lessons at Running Rope Ranch.² The Knox family operated the day camp for ten years.

Captain Knox, noted as “larger than life” in several posthumous publications, was a man of eclectic interests. He often entertained his pupils by showcasing rope tricks he learned as a rodeo performer after WWI. Knox was a life member of the Marshall Ford Game Protective Association, volunteered on the Council of the Texas Confederate Home for Men, and taught Sunday school at University United Methodist Church.

In later years, the property became the residence of James and Margaret Thomas Knox and their children. Margaret Knox, Captain W. P. Knox’s daughter-in-law, was the daughter of famed Austin architect Roy L. Thomas, and married WWII navigator and P.O.W. James Knox in 1944. After James’ retirement from the military, the couple moved back to his family home—the former Running Rope Ranch—in 1966. There, Margaret Knox worked as a seamstress, a beekeeper, a children’s book author, and a wildlife rehabilitator until her death in 2022.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

Designation Criteria—Historic Landmark

- 1) The building is more than 50 years old.
- 2) The building appears to retain high integrity.
- 3) Properties must meet two criteria for landmark designation (LDC §25-2-352). Staff has evaluated the property and determined that it may meet two criteria:
 - a. Architecture. The building is an eclectic house with early Ranch and vernacular stylistic influences.
 - b. Historical association. The property has significant historical associations with the Knox family and Running Rope Ranch.
 - c. Archaeology. The property was not formally evaluated for its potential to yield significant data concerning the human history or prehistory of the region; however, interviews with former owners indicate a high probability of significant archaeological data, including evidence of Native American mound-building activity and springs purported to be used by Native American residents of the land.

¹ <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/jollyville-salamander>

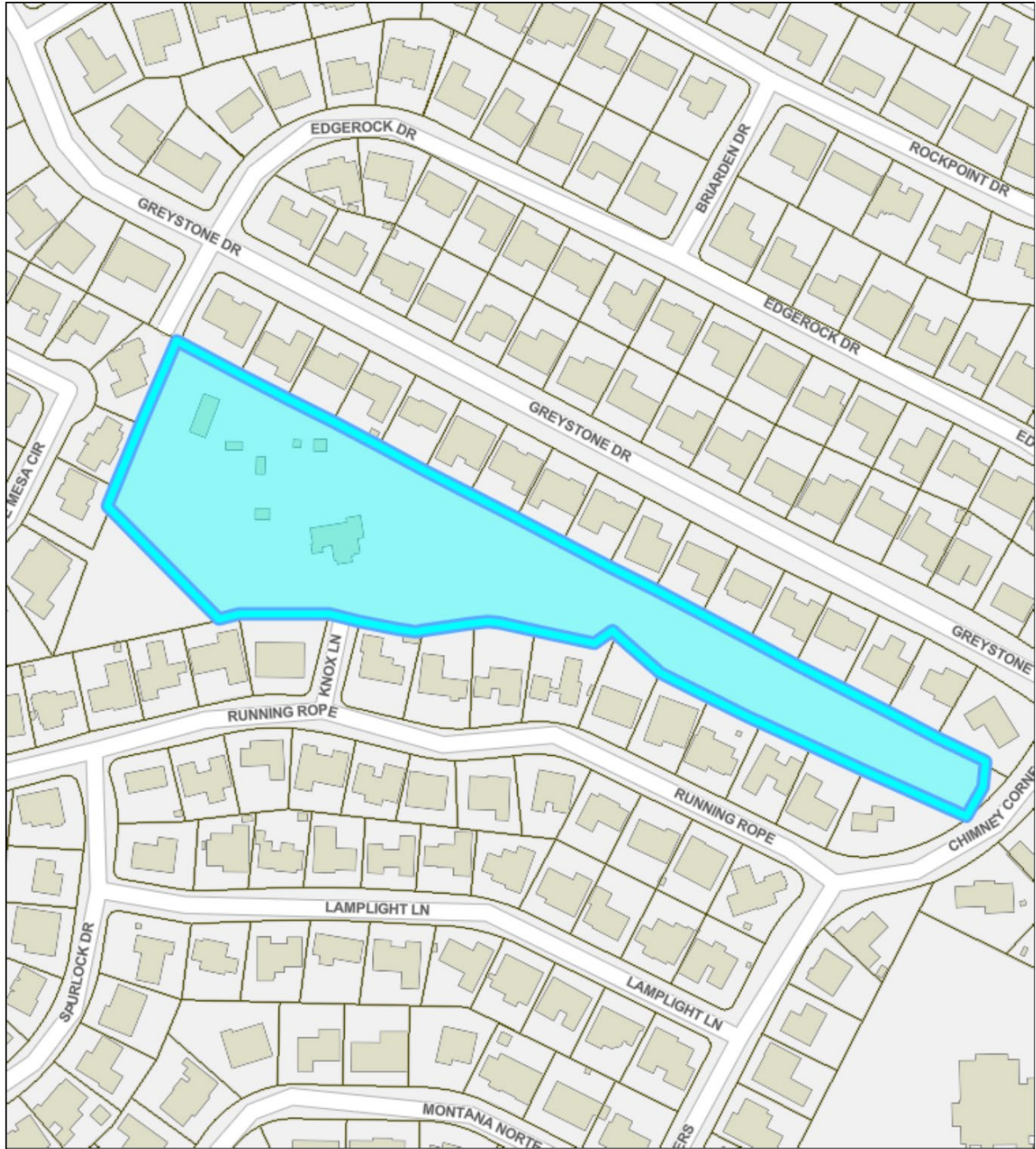
² <https://www.chronofhorse.com/article/obituaries-021006?page=2>


- d.* Community value. The property may possess a unique location, physical characteristic, or significant feature that contributes to the character, image, or cultural identity of the city, the neighborhood, or a particular demographic group, as it has been noted in several Northwest Austin Civic Association publications.
- e.* Landscape feature. The property may function as a significant natural or designed landscape with artistic, aesthetic, cultural, or historical value to the city. While some of the original ranch has been developed, a significant portion of the original camp, including a spring-fed swimming pool, remains.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Consider initiation of historic zoning, and request that a plan for archaeological monitoring be submitted to the Historic Landmark Commission for review.

LOCATION MAP






1: 2400

12/20/2022

GF 22-169703

7304 KNOX LANE



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey. This product has been produced by the City of Austin for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Photos

Demolition permit application, 2022



Google Street View, 2022

Occupancy History

City Directory Research, October 2022

Address not listed in City directories.

Biographical Information

Knox-Rogan.
One of the most beautiful of home weddings was solemnized Saturday evening at the home of the bride's parents, Judge and Mrs. Charles A. Rogan, when their daughter, Miss Mary Lou Rogan became the bride of Warren Penn Knox of San Antonio. The ceremony was pronounced by the Rev. A. Frank Smith of San Antonio, in the presence of a large group of friends of the young people.

Immediately after the ceremony Mr. and Mrs. Knox left for their home in San Antonio, where a furnished bungalow awaits them. The bride's going away suit was a modish spring model coat suit with accessories to correspond. A corsage of roses was prettily worn with it. The wedding bouquet tossed by the bride as she departed, was caught by Miss Ruth Robbins. The bride is the attractive daughter of Judge and Mrs. Rogan and was reared in Austin. She graduated at the Austin High School and the University of Texas. She is an Alpha Delta Pi, and has been teacher of Spanish in the Main Avenue High School of San Antonio.

The bridegroom, Warren Penn Knox

is a graduate of New Hampshire State College, his home being in Madbury, N. H. During the war he was a first lieutenant in the Fourteenth Cavalry, Fort Sam Houston. He is now connected with the Chamber of Commerce in San Antonio.

Out of town guests for the wedding were: Misses Ruth Robbins, Reagan; Lucile Ball, San Antonio; Emily Dickson, San Antonio; Mrs. W. L. Freeman, San Antonio; Messrs. James D. McCusker, San Antonio; Dee Montgomery, San Antonio; Ross L. Montgomery, San Antonio; Mr. and Mrs. P. D. Warren, Boston, Mass.; Mr. and Miss Palmer, Boston, Mass.; ((relatives of the groom)); Rev. A. Frank Smith of San Antonio.

BOY LEADERSHIP COURSE AT ST. EDWARD'S; KEEN INTEREST IS MANIFEST

The boy leadership training course, sponsored by the boys' life bureau of the Knights of Columbus is being conducted at St. Edward's College by Professor Ray Hoyer, B. S., A. M., director of the graduate department of boy guidance at the University of Notre Dame, assisted by W. P. Knox, assistant regional scout executive of Austin. Professor Hoyer is also assisted by Rev. E. Vincent Mooney, C. S. C., A. M., LL. B., head of the department of social sciences at St. Edward's College.

Circus Scheduled Friday

The Capital City Circus, which shows here Friday and Saturday at its home lot, the 2200 block on Leon street, is an Austin product. All performers are Austin people recruited and trained here, while the equipment has been made or purchased in Austin. W. P. Knox, who is directing the organization and training the circus, is a former boy scout executive, and has been a camp director and boys' worker for many years. This is the fourth home talent circus that Mr. Knox has directed. His last show was at Kingsville.

The Capital City Circus has all the features of a big circus, with clowns, aerialists, animal acts and side shows. The grounds have taken on a real circus appearance. High poles from which the trapeze and swinging ladders are suspended have been erected and are in use daily. The circus rings are also busy as animals are being rehearsed in their acts. The trained animals include horses, ponies, mules, dogs, goats, pigs, rabbits and ducks. A yoke of red steers, pulling a small covered wagon, is one of the features. The menagerie will include many kinds of wild and domestic animals.

Knox said he has had excellent cooperation from the various organizations and individuals in making this Austin circus a success.

BOY LEADERSHIP COURSE AT ST. EDWARD'S; KEEN INTEREST IS MANIFEST. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 15 Aug 1924: 4.

Circus Scheduled Friday. The Austin American (1914-1973); 03 Sep 1933: A2.

3 Scout Leaders To Attend Course

Three executives of the capitol Boy Scout area will attend a regional troop camping course to be given in San Angelo April 21-23,

it was announced Wednesday.

The three are Warren P. Knox, district commissioner; Jack Stoltz, university student, and Noel P. Amstead, assistant scout executive. Other members of the local council expect to attend the course to be given in Houston May 19-21.

A course in troop camping for scouters of the council will be held here May 27-29 by the men trained in the regional courses.

3 Scout Leaders To Attend Course. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 19 Apr 1939: 3.

Knox, Thomas Rites to Be Solemnized Here Saturday

Miss Margaret Ruth Thomas, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Leonidas Thomas, will become the bride of Aviation Cadet James W. Knox, son of Lt. and Mrs. Warren P. Knox, Saturday at 8:30 p. m. at the University Methodist church with the Rev. Edmund Heinsohn officiating.

Wedding music will be played at the organ by Miss Beulah Beaver. Alice Mungula will sing d'Hardelot's "Because" and Grieg's "Ich Leibe Dich."

Miss Vivian Knox, sister of the bridegroom, will be the bride's only attendant. Aviation Cadet Knox will be attended by John A. Focht, Jr., best man. Ushers will be Will Roy Thomas, brother of the bride, and Aviation Cadet Ralph B. Lawrence.

After the wedding a reception for the bridal party will be held at the home of the bride's parents. Guests will include members of the immediate families and close friends of the bride and bridegroom.

Miss Thomas and Aviation Cadet Knox are both members of old Austin families. She is the granddaughter of Mrs. George W. Beaver, and he is the grandson of the late Judge and Mrs. Charles Rogan.

Both attended Austin high school and the University of Texas. Aviation Cadet Knox was a student in the university when he joined the Army air corps in the spring of 1942. While in school he was a member of Alpha Phi Omega and the Naval R.O.T.C. unit. He will receive his wings and commission June 24 from the San Marcos navigation school.

Knox, Thomas Rites to Be Solemnized Here Saturday. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex. [Austin, Tex]. 18 June 1943: 6.

Class Views Pack Exhibit

The pupils of the 6B class of Fulmore School have recently seen two demonstrations of transportation methods which is now under study.

The first was the exhibit and demonstration of packs, yokes, and saddles, by Captain W. P. Knox of Running Rope Ranch, held on the Fulmore grounds. The exhibit of packs carried by man included the Korean pack, the Indian pack basket, the Army packs, the Boy Scout pack, barrel stave pack, rucker sack, grain sack, Alaskan pack frame, and tump line.

Class Views Pack Exhibit. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 11 Nov 1947: 11

Running Rope Ranch

A Day Camp for Boys Age 7 to 15 Years

The camp combines ranch and outdoor activities, physical development, equitation, hiking, cooking and handicraft. Noon meal served campers.

Enrollment limited to 25 for five weeks beginning June 6.

CAPT. W. P. KNOX

R. 4 Box 392 Phone 7-9684

RAIN. W. P. Knox, who runs the Running Rope Ranch on Balcones Trail at Austin, reports that 1.80 inches of rain fell there Sunday, boosting his May total to 2.15 inches and the 1952 total to 10.95.

Display Ad 14 -- No Title. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); May 1949: 5.

Reuben's HALF ACRE. DAVE SHANKS Farm-Ranch Editor. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); Austin, Tex. [Austin, Tex]. 22 May 1952: B3.

Young Pioneers Hit the Trail West

By DAN GROVER

The Running Rope Ranch was flush with the flavor of the Old West Thursday morning.

For Captain W. P. Knox, US Army retired — fearless Indian fighter — was heading westward with his small brave band of pioneers in an oxen-drawn covered wagon.

"All right, men," he ordered sharply. "Let's get the yoke on the animals and hit the trail."

The other pioneers helping him get the vicious beasts hitched up were Charles Yett, study Indian guide; Tom Broad, lean plainsman; and his sister, Betsy Broad, the belle of the expedition into the wilds.

"Haw, there. Gee!" Capt. Knox shouted to the oxen.

AND WITH ALL this exciting activity under way, Capt. Knox was enjoying his favorite hobby: teaching outdoor life to Austin youngsters in an atmosphere charged with imaginative Old West enthusiasm.

What does it matter if the powerful "oxen" are two half-grown whiteface calves, bored with the whole thing?

And what difference does it make if the prairie schooner will only carry three kids and a dog?

Nor if the wild country is only a short drive from Austin off the Balcones Trail?

Capt. Knox and the youngsters who come to his day camp go back a hundred years in history. It's hard to tell who gets the biggest kick out of it—the captain or the kids.

"These benches are getting too big for this yoke," Knox told a Statesman reporter and photographer who came out to watch the western get under way. "We'll have to get rough with them."

The Indian guide, Charles, in real life the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Yett; Plainsman Tom and Belle Betsy, children of Mr. and Mrs. John Broad; all of Austin, lit into the team to get the show on the road.

WHILE THEY WERE getting the wagon tongue connected, Knox regaled his listeners with a few facts about himself, the sort of things that have kept his youngsters open-mouthed at the Running Rope Ranch sessions.

"I'm really a davyankee," he chuckled. "Born near where they had the battle of Bunker Hill. In Charlestown, Mass. Right on Bunker Hill Street, as a matter of fact."

The two calves looked half asleep as he cinched the yoke hoops with a bit of bailing wire and continued:

"My father knew Buffalo Bill. Knew him well. I went in the Army in World War I. Later got out to work on the King Ranch. Learned rope tricks. Went traveling with Colonel Johnson's World Champion Rodeo."

About that time, the pioneer expedition suffered a slight setback as it developed that someone had left a gate open. A saddle horse and a Shetland pony were ambling leisurely out the open gate.

"Hey, boys," Knox shouted, restoring the guide and plainsman to their original status. "Somebody left the gate open. Get those horses before they get away."

While Charles and Tom tore out after the horses, Knox went on: "Always wanted a place like this. Went back into the Army and stayed in through World War II, then to Korea. Retired before the trouble in 1949, but knew it was coming."

The boys brought the horses back

in, accompanied by a friendly collie dog.

"That dog's name is Rex," Knox said. "He's highly trained."

The captain said that an expert named Vincent Orepazo was the man who taught him—the captain—his rope tricks. This is the same man who taught Will Rogers his stuff, he added.

"Will Rogers was good, all right," Knox said as he took time out to show some of his rope tricks. He twirled a rope in his right hand, the loop spinning around in a perfect circle.

"NOW I'LL CHANGE it to my left hand," he announced, and he did just that. "Two ropes at once now," and he had two lariats circling.

"Now," he said, perspiring freely, "I will attempt to spin a rope from my teeth." He bobbed his head, bit the end of the noose, circled it, then picked up two other ropes in his hands and had all three going at once for more than a minute.

"There it is," he said, completing the act. He then tied a batch of fancy knots, climaxing with tying a different knot with each hand at the same time.

"Will Rogers had a knot trick," he recalled. "He'd tie a knot in a rope and tell the audience that 'Congress is all knotted up.' Then he'd snap the rope and the knot would disappear. Let's try that one."

The captain tied a knot near the end of a rope. He snapped the rope. The knot was still there.

"Well, well," he remarked. "Did not work that time."

"Will Rogers," he confided, "had a piece of lead in his rope to unsnap it."

But it was getting time to hit the trail. Miss Belle Betsy was in

the wagon. The massive oxen could not budge the wagon at first, so the two pioneers gave it a shove.

The captain walked alongside, prodding the oxen. Capt. Knox sniffed the air and said: "Might get some rain."

The historic departure was under way. The outriders, rifles over their saddles, were topping the skyline leading to the Old West.

"Keep a sharp lookout, men," Capt. Knox warned. "This is Comanche country."

Young Pioneers Hit the Trail West. Grover, Dan. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); July 1953: A13.

Campers Plan Sports, Exhibits To End First Summer Session

Campers at Running Rope Ranch north of Austin Friday will complete their first summer session with a horse show, swimming meet and handicraft exhibit.

Owned and operated by Captain and Mrs. W. P. Knox, the ranch serves as a day camp for boys, featuring instruction in horseback riding, arts and crafts, swimming and nature.

Parents and friends of the boys presently enrolled at the ranch are invited to attend the Friday exhibition.

Boys who will participate are John Alvis, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Alvis; Kenny Dryden, son of Dr. and Mrs. S. H. Dryden; Bill Duncan, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Duncan; Tom Elkin, son of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Elkin; Merrin Fatter,

Hawkes, son of Mrs. E. H. Hawkes.

Also, Ralph Jones, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Jones; Bobby Kelly, son of Mr. and Mrs. Everette Kelly; John Knippa, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Knippa; Billy Page, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Page; Phacion Park, son of Mr. and Mrs. P. S. Park; Ben Powell III, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Powell Jr.; David Smith, son of Mr. and Mrs.

Campers Plan Sports, Exhibits To End First Summer Session. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 30 June 1955: A17.

Rope Tricks Next Zilker Fare

Comedy, band music and the rope artistry of Captain W. P. Knox are on the fare of Zilker Hillside Theater Thursday at 8 p.m.

Weldon Covington and his 50 musicians of the Austin Municipal Band lead off the Starlight Revue with a half-hour concert followed by a 15-minute sing-song with Rod Kennedy.

Rope tricks of "Chief Running Rope" as Knox was titled by an

Indian tribe following an appearance at Madison Square Garden, brings an unusual talent to Zilker's open air stage—a talent which was known to many hospitalized GIs around the world whenever Capt. Knox had the time to demonstrate his hobby. Knox moved to Central Texas several years ago and established a ranch to which he transferred his Indian name.

Highlight of the evening is You-

zovytch, Susan Miskill and Diane Berebovytch.

YouTheatre is a year-around drama project for boys and girls of junior high age. Directed by Mrs. Betty Kennon of Austin Recreation Department, YouTheatre meets weekly at Austin Athletic Club.

Starlight Revue is the regular Thursday evening program at Zilker Hillside Theatre, which offers

Starlight Revue: Rope Tricks Next Zilker Fare. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 27 June 1962: 10.



American-Statesman/UPI

WESTERN FLING DING AT RANCH

One hundred fifty guests gathered at Running Rope Ranch, off Balcones Drive, Saturday night for a Western Fling Ding hosted by 10 graduating seniors at Austin High School.

Those entertaining at the celebration, from left, were Phocion S. Park Jr., Terry Baylor, Thurston Bland, Mickey Edwards, Drew West, David Rohrer, John Raish, John Roh-

rer and David Coonrod. The 10th host, Steve Bone, is not pictured. During the evening there was dancing and western music. Parents of the seniors are Mr. and Mrs. Phocion

S. Park, 2501 Westover; Mr. and Mrs. Togle Baylor, 5908 Manor Road; Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Edwards Jr., 5333 Wellington; Mrs. W. A. Rohrer, 3716 Meredith; Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Coonrod, 2801 High-

WESTERN FLING DING AT RANCH. The Austin American (1914-1973); 06 May 1962: D17.



VOLUNTEERS

Capt. W. P. Knox, chairman of the Volunteer Council of the Texas Confederate Home for Men, presents the state volunteer insignia patch to Susan Sifuentes for her personalized services. Miss Sifuentes is a new volunteer representing the future nurses of Austin High School. She, who played table

games with patients in the recreation room twice weekly after school, will continue to do so this summer. Many more of the older high school students are needed to help this summer.

Mr. and Mrs. Knox recently entertained the Volunteer Council at a barbecue supper at their Running Rope Ranch to show their appreciation to Council members for the service they have given this past season. This was the last meeting of the season.

Capt. Knox, Longtime Scouter, Dies

Capt. Warren P. Knox, 7304 Knox Lane, died Monday in a local hospital.

He was a longtime resident of Austin, and a member of the University Methodist Church. He was a graduate of the University of New Hampshire, a longtime Boy Scout volunteer worker for the 15-county Capital Area Council and holder of the Silver Beaver Award. He was a veteran of World Wars I and II, and a captain, U.S. Army, retired. He was a life member of Marshall Ford Game Protective Association, Operator of Arrowhead Ranch Camp in Kerrville and Running Rope Day Camp in Austin.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Mary Lou Knox, Austin; one son, James W. Knox, Austin, one daughter, Mrs. Max W. Schulz, Schenectady, N.Y.; one sister, Miss Alice R. Knox, Tauton, Mass.; two brothers, W. E. Knox, Scarsdale, N.Y., and Henry Knox, Wrentham, Mass.; and four grandchildren.

Funeral services will be at 5 p.m. Wednesday at Weed-Corley Funeral Home with Dr. William A. Holmes officiating. Burial will be in Oakwood Cemetery.

VOLUNTEERS. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 28 May 1965: 8.

Capt. Knox, Longtime Scouter, Dies. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 27 July 1971: 17.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS
NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING
CLAIMS
AGAINST THE ESTATE OF WARREN
PENN KNOX, DECEASED:**
Notice is hereby given that original
Letters Testamentary upon the Estate of
Warren Penn Knox were issued to the
undersigned on the 17th day of August,
1971, in the proceeding indicated below,
which is still pending, and that we now
hold such Letters. All persons having
claims against said estate are required to
present the same within the time
prescribed by law to James Warren
Knox, whose residence and post office
address is 7304 Knox Lane, Austin, Texas
78731.
Dated this 18th day of August, 1971.
James Warren Knox
Vivian Knox Schulz
**INDEPENDENT EXECUTORS OF
THE
ESTATE OF WARREN PENN KNOX**
No. 33.504, County Court of
Travis County, Texas

Legal Notice 1 -- No Title. The Austin Statesman (1921-1973); 20 Aug 1971: 66.

She knew what she wanted to 'bee'

Margaret Knox's autograph party features cookies, first graders

At right, Bob Sullivan explains his demonstration bee hive at Doss Elementary. Below, Doss students perform a song about bees they wrote as Margaret Knox, right, and Bob Sullivan, far left, and Jim Knox, center, listen.

Staff Photos by Jim Shahin



By JIM SHAHIN
American-Statesman Staff

To bee or not to bee. For author Margaret Knox, there was no question.

"All my life I wanted to keep bees," said Knox, 58. "In '77 we were finally in a position to do so. We started out with two hives, a his and a hers. Which is kind of a joke around our house because bees are always fighting, just like husbands and wives."

She and her husband, Jim, now have 35 hives abuzz at their home at 7304 Knox in Northwest Hills. "Each one has a name," she said. "Not a number, like most folks."

Her interest in bees led her to write a book, "Betsey's Bee Tree." Last Friday, two days after it officially rolled off the Shoal Creek Publishers presses, Knox was making the rounds.

Surrounded by small bees fashioned from colored paper and minglers chewing peanut butter cookies made with honey, Knox found herself at a somewhat unusual autograph party. Notable critics were not present, but Ellen Sharp was. And Ms. Sharp lauded the work.

"I think it is a good book," said Sharp, "because you could tell the main person, uhm, bee easily by a blue bow on it. Plus, I like it 'cause it's just a real good book."

Sharp, a first-grader at Doss Elementary, was voicing the general critical judgment of her peers at the party in the school library.

The book is Knox's first. But judging from the response last week, the children's story is, as a reviewer might intone, a triumphant achievement.

"I had never tried anything like this before," said Knox, whose marriage to an army officer meant constant travel and little work outside the home. "I just thought I'd try."

Her daughter, Pat Partridge, who

attended the Kansas City Art Institute, illustrated the book. Both of them worked on it for about nine months.

"I worked from a rough idea that she had down," said the daughter, who also attended the autograph party along with Knox's husband.

"It wasn't too hard, because I think in those kinds of (illustrated) figures," said the mother.

In another part of the room, students swarmed around a demonstration bee hive constructed by Bob Sullivan. He was explaining the workings of the hive, how queens are selected and the method of collecting honey. He has donated hives to several Austin area elementary schools.

"I don't push them on anyone," said Sullivan, who started making the demonstration hives three years ago. "Usually, someone from a school will ask me for one and I'll make it."

"We have been studying bees," said first-grade teacher Virginia Mullens. "We normally do in the fall. But this time the studies were made much more exciting because of all this." She gestured to the hive and Knox's book.

She said Sullivan has spoken to Doss classes on bees and hives and Knox has explained how a book is put together. "It was really a wonderful session," she said. "The kids learned so much."

The students, carrying books signed by the author, began filing out of the library. They were excited and at least one boy said his fear of bees was reduced.

The Knoxes and Sullivan answered questions raised by the students. The children asked about bees, the book, the author's personal life. But one question stood out. The student seemed to understand various complexities of the book and honey-making processes, but, she asked illustrator Partridge, "How do you stay inside the lines?"



JIM SHAHIN American-Statesman Staff. The Austin American Statesman (1973-1980), Evening ed.; 23 Oct 1980: K1.

An Interview with Mrs. Margaret Knox

- Luci Thompson

I interviewed longtime Northwest Hills (NWH) resident and neighbor Mrs. Margaret Knox about what it was like to live in NWH before the area was developed. You maybe familiar with the street called Running Rope, but did you know it was a boy's summer day camp called Running Rope Ranch?

Running Rope Ranch was started by Warren and Mary Lou Knox and ran for 10 years. Warren came to Texas from Vermont after World War I. He was in the Cavalry during the war. Warren was a fan of film star Will Rogers, and he proposed to Mary Lou on horseback. Warren and Mary Lou decided to settle down in Austin and he bought 250 acres here in NWH in the 1930's for \$15 per acre. It was a large ranch that went from the corner of Far West and Chimney Corners to West Rim and along Greystone Drive that backs up to Running Rope.

Warren was a Silver Eagle Scout and enjoyed teaching what Scouts needed to know. He loved doing rope tricks and he often showed them to the boys. The boys learned to ride horses, tie knots, and start fires. They were fed a hot meal for lunch cooked by an African American cook named Ulah.

Margaret Thomas met James W. Knox at a church picnic at Barton Springs. James brought Margaret out to the ranch for picnics while they were courting. James joined the Army Air Corps the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked, and he married Margaret soon afterward.

James and Margaret Knox spent many years traveling with the military, but settled down in NWH in 1966. I asked Mrs. Knox what it was like when they moved back here in 1966, and she said it was beautiful open country with lots of deer. The gate to their property used to be at the corner of Far West and Chimney Corners. They had a peach orchard where the GW Boutique is now located. They also had a herd of goats, a few white-faced cattle, and horses. Their daughter Patricia was in college, and their son James Christopher (Chris) was in high school at McCallum.

I asked Mrs. Knox, "What types of animals would you see on the ranch?" She said there were deer, red and silver foxes, raccoons, herons, armadillos, rabbits, possums, and occasionally skunks. Coyotes weren't around back then, and there used to be more rabbits. Her son Chris had a love of nature. He raised a Red Tail Hawk named "Lots" for Lord of the Sky and a baby raccoon name "Loki." But his most surprising pet was an American alligator named Harvey, who used to live in their natural spring pool. Harvey was donated to the San Antonio Zoo years later.

There is even a threatened animal species, the Jollyville Plateau salamander, that lives in the largest of their seven natural springs. The salamander is brown with pink ruffles for gills. Close to the water spring was an old Native American Indian mound, too. I



asked Mrs. Knox what her favorite memories were about Running Rope Ranch and she said coming out to the ranch for picnics and family get togethers at the pool.

I want to thank Mrs. Knox for letting me interview her while I work toward my Girl Scout Bronze Award.

History Interview: Betty Wood

– Carol Jones

Betty Wood has had a life of adventure, teaching and living all over the world. She has been in this neighborhood for almost 50 years. To her, Northwest Hills has always felt like a small town inside of Austin.

Betty is from Pampa, in the Texas Panhandle. She was born during the Great Depression and the devastating Dust Bowl years. When the dust storms started, they would place wet towels over the windows and doors, and over their faces so that they could breathe. Afterward came the task of cleaning up the dust that had relentlessly sifted into the house.

She was thrilled to be able to go to college, majoring in Business Education with a minor in English. When jobs for teaching opened in the Defense Department, she and her first husband applied. They were sent to France, then Germany, Ethiopia, Japan, and the Philippine Islands. In those years, she taught American children stationed at military bases.

After her Defense Department travels, Betty knew she didn't want to live in a small rural area, so they moved to Austin. Her first house in 1972 was at 4004 North Hills Drive, just up the hill from the new Murchison Middle School. It cost \$43,000, a lot of money then. They briefly thought about buying an empty lot with a beautiful view up on the peak of Cat Mountain. But that lot cost \$15,000, too much for just land.

She is friends with some original residents of Northwest Hills, such as Margaret Knox. She has fond memories of swimming at the spring-fed pool at the Knox farmhouse, part of the original sprawling Running Rope Ranch. When one of her kids got injured, Dr. Stanley Casner was right there in the neighborhood on Spicewood Springs Road. Northwest Hills had it all: grocery stores, a post office, new schools, and churches. It truly was a small town within Austin.

Continued on Page 12

NWACA News, January 2021: <https://nwaca.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021-01-January-NWACA-Newsletter.pdf>

Captain Knox and the Running Rope Ranch – Carol Jones



Tucked away on a quiet side street in Northwest Hills is the remaining few acres of the Running Rope Ranch. In the mid-1900s, it was a rollicking boys day camp, with horseback riding, hiking, and other outdoor activities.

In the 1930s, a visionary named Warren P. Knox purchased 250 acres far out in the country. According to his family, he paid somewhere between \$1.25 - \$15 per acre. Everyone told him it was a big waste of money. The land consisted of Hill Country scrub oaks, cedar breaks, cactus, and rocks. Also, it was miles away from Austin. Nobody could imagine wanting to live that far away from town.

But Knox had imagination. He had served in the Cavalry in WW I and was very comfortable around horses and other animals. Having his own ranch was likely his dream come true. A 1949 newspaper ad proclaimed Running Rope Ranch as a "Day Camp for Boys Age 7 to 15 Years," with "ranch and outdoor activities, physical development, equitation, hiking, cooking and handicraft."

On July 23, 1953, the Austin newspaper had a feature article about him. "... Capt. Knox was enjoying his favorite hobby: teaching outdoor life to Austin youngsters in an atmosphere charged with imaginative Old West enthusiasm." He was a big fan of Will Rogers and liked to demonstrate rope twirling tricks and knot-tying techniques. His granddaughter Pat Partridge remembers him coming to elementary schools to make balloon animals, perform magic tricks, and tell Wild West stories. His grandson James Christopher (Chris) sent me a picture of Captain Knox balancing on a tightrope.

The animals at Running Rope Ranch all had names starting with "R" to match the ranch name, such as Rex, Rebecca, and Rosie. Captain

Knox created a one-ring circus on the property with bleachers and a metal roof, featuring his trained animals. "How old are you?" he would ask Rosie, the miniature cow. Rosie would answer by tapping her hoof on the ground the correct number of times. Parents brought their kids there for one-of-a-kind birthday parties.

It's hard to imagine how much of present-day Northwest Hills was part of the Running Rope Ranch. It was an adventure out in the wild country just to get there from Austin, driving on a long winding dirt road from Balcones Drive on the east (now Mopac).

There was a large Quonset hut on the west end of the ranch, near current-day Enclave Mesa. The hut had a swing inside, hung from the ceiling on 20' long ropes. If someone pushed you hard enough, you could touch the horns of a mule deer mounted over the fireplace. The kids all loved that fantastic swing. It made them feel as if they were flying through the Quonset hut. At the back of the spacious building was a large kitchen with a serving window to the outside. There were lots of barbecues and picnics at the ranch.

Several people I spoke to described Captain Knox as "larger than life." Former Austin resident Kate Lyon has many fond memories of him. Her parents would drop her off at Running Rope Ranch for the whole day. She took horseback riding lessons and rode around in the Captain's Jeep over the bumpy caliche roads. He had wooden crates of sodas for the kids to enjoy in the screened-in porch of the house.

Kate remembers that he wore a suit when teaching Sunday school at University United Methodist Church, where she learned more about rattlesnakes than religion. But when Captain Knox was with his animals, he always wore jodhpurs and tall riding boots, like the Cavalry man he was. "I adored him," she says. "He was generous, charming, funny, and he loved kids."

Chris Knox remembers searching for Indian arrowheads on the property with him. After a good rain, those treasures would surface. In later years, Chris realized that the Captain probably had filled his pockets with arrowheads and scattered them secretly so that the kids would have an exciting adventure. Just like a fun-loving grandfather would do.

Captain Knox's daughter-in-law, Margaret Knox, passed away recently in January 2022. She was featured in a 1982 book called *Austin Originals: Chats With Colorful Characters* by Robyn Turner. She was also featured in a 2017 NWACA newsletter interview by Girl Scout Luci Thompson. I was very fortunate to be able to spend time with Margaret's children, Pat and Chris, who have generously given their time to tell me stories about Captain Knox and send me pictures. An entire book could be written about everyone in the fascinating Knox family, who gave so much joy to Austinites.

Margaret Knox

 dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/austin-tx/margaret-knox-10544199

OBITUARY

October 13, 1924 – January 20, 2022

Born October 13, 1924 in the house her father designed and built on Hemphill Street in Austin, Margaret was the youngest of three children born to architect Roy L. Thomas and his wife Ruth E. (Beaver) Thomas.

Margaret attended UT and was a huge fan and long time supporter of UT's football team - "Hook'm Horns!" - declaring her blood to be burnt orange.

She married the love of her life James W. Knox on June 19th (Juneteenth) 1944 only to see him whisked away into WWII as a navigator on a B-17 (Pistol Pack'n Mama) where after 10 1/2 missions he was shot down over Bulgaria and held as a prisoner of war for nine months before being freed and finally coming home.

Margaret was the anchor of our family. Being a military wife she was faced with moving her family from place to place every few years. Making each new location a home for us whether here in the U.S. or overseas. She loved experiencing new cultures, making new friends and learning new languages. She was the constant core of our family. Helping her children weather losing old friends, to be open to making new ones, navigating new schools and sometimes new languages and customs.

Margaret loved Nature and all its inhabitants. There were always dogs and cats in our lives as well as lizards, turtles, snakes, bugs, a flying squirrel, a ferret, a pigeon named Mutts, an alligator named Harvey, a raccoon named Loki, a Red Tailed Hawk called Lots (Lord Of The Skies), just to name a few.

Another passion of Margaret's was fashion. She loved to sew and create. She had an outfit for every occasion and then some. I believe she would have been a fashion designer if that path had ever been opened to her.

She was a professional seamstress for many years helping to support her family and put her children through school.

When her husband retired from the Air Force in 1966 they moved back to Austin, which had been the hub of our family's world, to live in the old family ranch house on what was left of the Running Rope Ranch.

Finding themselves in retirement with kids grown and flown Jim and Margaret began to explore new avenues. Ever the fisherman Jim had more time to enjoy boating and bass fishing. And Margaret took up what she loved - being a seamstress again. But Margaret became restless so took up dog training and began competitively showing her standard poodle Nanook. Shortly thereafter she and Jim partnered up with some friends and opened up the "Gingham Dog & Calico Cat" grooming and boarding kennel.

Later bee keeping became a passion. Traveling all over the state selling the honey and bee's wax products from their hives at fairs, festivals and from their home. And never taking an idle moment Margaret set out to educate children by writing and getting published an illustrated book "Betsey's Bee Tree" all about the wonders of a bee's life. She traveled to local schools giving talks and readings of her book. She also had a traveling observation hive encased between two panes of glass so everyone could observe the hidden world of a living hive - queen bee and all.

Then the travel bug bit. It was time to hit the road in a big bus-like RV known as the "Brownhound". Getting out and seeing the country, visiting favorite places, parks, going to hot-air balloon festivals, seeing friends and family. Living the good life - on the road again. (Margaret loved Willie Nelson's songs).

After her husband of 67 years passed away and her children grown with families of their own Margaret began searching for someone to nurture and became interested in Wildlife Rescue of Austin. She volunteered with them caring for a variety of injured and orphaned animals. Her specialty became caring for orphaned fawns and later baby squirrels. Anything Margaret took an interest in benefited from her loving care and attention.

On top of all this Margaret loved crossword puzzles, she was a wicked Bridge player and had a clever wit. She loved jokes. She loved hearing and telling them and sharing in the laughter.

Her passing is like the end of an era. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Permits

10

149502 ~~Water~~ WATER SERVICE PERMIT
 Austin, Texas
 Lot ~~149502~~
 Block ~~149502~~
 Plat Sec. 789
 Received of ~~James W. Knox~~
 Service Address 7304 Knox Ln.
 Amount ~~One hundred and twenty five~~
 Subdivision ~~W.A. Knox Vol. 191 - Pg 191~~
 RECEIVED FEB 1 9 1978
 G No 01144
 PLOTTED
 Date 10-18-78
 Size of Meter 1 1/2"
 P.R.V. Yes No

RESIDENTIAL WATER

Date of Connection 12-1-78
 Size of Tap Made 1"
 Size Service Made 1"
 Size Main Tapped 8 C.I.
 From Front Prop. Line to Curb Cock 7'
 From 5 Prop. Line to Curb Cock 1'
 Location of Meter Curb
 Type of Box ROUND - SMALL
 Depth of Main in St. 10"
 Depth of Service Line 10"
 From Curb Cock to Tap on Main
 Zone: East Central West
 No. Fittings 15" Pipe P.E. 1"
 Corp. Cock
 Cop. to Iron ell
 Cop. to Cop. ell
 Cop. to Iron Coupling
 Cop. to Cop. Coupling
 Angle Stop 1"
 Stop
 Bushing 1" METER
 Nipples 8 x 3/4"
 Service Clamp 8 x 1"
 Valve
 Meter Box ROUND SMALL
 Lock Lid 1"
 Drain Tile
 Drain Tile Lid
 Stop & Drain
 Job No. 82/3530040454639
 Foreman John Brantley

WLP 0053

14.95 ACRES

7304

SPOT IN FIELD

