

It's Yippee-Aye-Yelp as Texans 'Saddles Slip

By TED LEWIS

Washington, Jan. 17—Texans are having a hard time these days. The biggest one of all, LBJ, still is having trouble lifting himself up to full height from the midterm election blows.

And the nasty cracks made by author William Manchester about Texans in general, and specific politicians in particular, have hurt to the quick every sensitive soul in the Lone Star State.

Even in Congress, Texans are finally having trouble throwing their weight around. For instance, in a House Democratic caucus today, Rep. Jacob Gilbert (D-N. Y.) won a coveted committee assign-

ment over Omar Burlison of Texas. As victories go, this was an itty-bitty one, but it could be symbolic, suggesting that the fed-up point had been reached and a Texas label has begun to lose its glamor.

Let's hope so, for with a few intermissions Texans have been running Congress since 1933, beginning with Cactus Jack Garner, then Sam Rayburn, and, of course, Johnson himself.

They're Flustered When They Take It on Chin

There is a vital significance in the widening display of Texans in trouble. It hinges on the fact that there is something in their bones which makes them dish it out in an exaggerated big-shot way and at the same time get flustered and petty when they have to take it on the chin.

In the last few weeks, for example, these professional Texans in the Johnson menage have been spewing their hate of "Ivy Leaguers." Their bitter references are to "the Kennedys," but it is a more composite coverage—including Arthur Schlesinger, various Eastern Democratic governors cool to LBJ's style—or anyone who casts aspersions on Texans in a cultivated twangless "intellectual community" voice.

Anyone who has had to endure the big-talking Texas claque through the years is bound to get some sadistic pleasure out of watching them squirm. For that very reason the anti-Texans have been enjoying the angry Texas reaction to certain passages in the first installment in Look magazine of William Manchester's "The Death of a President."

Reference to LBJ 'Tong' Has Texans Boiling

Manchester's accuracy about certain happenings on John F. Kennedy's last fateful journey may be questionable, but his prejudices toward Texans make him a soulmate to all those with similar prejudices.

And how delectable have been the typical Texas retorts! Gov. John Connally, for example, chewed out Manchester in a hastily called press conference, but as has been duly noted he made no reference to the author's crack that he was "a classic example of the poor boy who has risen above his origins and despises them."

Neither have we seen any acceptable answer to Manchester's charge that on the night before the assassination, President and Jacqueline Kennedy were given a Fort Worth hotel suite "smaller and cheaper" than that set aside for Texas-bred Johnson, then Vice President.

This cheap favoritism has been overlooked, but not Manchester's reference to how Lyndon, in his more spacious suite, "jovially entertained members of his tongue."

The very idea of Johnson having a "Texas tongue!" Why this grates on Texans, in and out of the White House, is, nevertheless, almost impossible to figure out. The Kennedys had their "Irish Matig" and could laugh about it.

But a Johnson "tong" is clearly to sensitive Texans a hateful thing to change, although there are obvious similarities between the devious and mysterious Red Chinese methods of Mao Tse-tung and LBJ's own technique on American soil.

We have had our own experience with the capacity of Texans to hate with provincial insecure fervor. Once in an aberrational moment we had a tongue-in-cheek comment to the effect that Lady Bird Johnson's natural beauty campaign would be stalled in Texas. Simply because the state, generally, had a drab landscape.

From every part of Texas, drab or otherwise, came abusive letters. Didn't we know that there was no lovelier flower, gracing all fields, than the Texas bluebonnet? Plus, of course, majestic mountains, magnificent forests, even glorious deserts?

They All Put It in the Congressional Record

The White House itself even got into that act. Every Texas Congressman was ordered to put in the Congressional Record a defense of the Texas landscape, which he did.

There is absolutely no rhyme or reason in this adolescent characteristic of Texans to defend themselves against even the most pique slur by an outsider.

Dallas, for example, is an outstanding American big city, packed with churches, estimable characters and brimming with tolerant citizens.

Imagine Chicago, New York or Boston going to the bother of so defending itself!

Neither are the "Ivy Leaguers" of the East required to respond to Texas slurs. They didn't let the Texas Administration down in the November election. House and Senate seats were not lost in the East, but in the Midwest, West and South—in states much closer to Texas.



William Manchester
His pen cuts to the quick



Gov. John Connally
His skin is tender