

over 1500 dozen cookies? Yeah, that is a lot of cookies. These gentlemen entered that first afternoon with some level of fear and doubt, but left there Sunday afternoon with most participants being new members of the Christian family. A small few had no intention of learning what we had to offer. They were there only for the food and cookies. We offered and they decided not to accept what we offered. I can tell you, of those who chose to move forward with a new understanding of what a life with Christ could be like, there was unbridled energy. A few tears were shed by those willing participants.

It was a great weekend, but boy am I tired, and yes, I did have one or three cookies during the weekend. I ate them only to assure quality of the round cookies. I feel comfortable saying it was an overall successful event.

Be Well, Gary Karschner



A Restatement

By James M. Decker

Almost seven years ago, in November of 2017, I began writing weekly essays about community revitalization and associated topics. I soon named this series "West of 98." In November of 2020, I transferred that project from a series of Facebook posts to a Substack website and newsletter. This project has grown in a slow and steady fashion ever since, but in the last two months, my readership has increased significantly. I will credit my recent essays about Wendell Berry's 90th birthday and about rural mental health. This merits a re-introduction of this project to my readers new and old and a fresh restatement of the principles behind the title "West of 98." In a legendary scene in "The Office," Michael Scott asked his nemesis Toby, "why are you the way that you are?" Today, I am here to answer that question about myself.

In 1931, legendary historian Walter Prescott Webb defined the 98th Meridian as the approximate beginning of the Great Plains. This north-south line runs just west of Fort Worth, Texas and a few counties east of my home here in Stamford. Prescott identified this as the point where rainfall becomes scarcer and more irregular. West of this line, farming and grazing practices of the eastern United States, largely imported from Europe, could not be applied with the same outcomes. For man to



Coke County Championship! Another year of the Coke County Championship was held on Friday, October 4, with the Bronte Longhorns traveling to the west side of the county to face the Robert Lee Steers. The Longhorns put in a valiant effort but the Steers came away with a homecoming win of 54 - 8.

survive west of the 98th Meridian, man could not merely "tame" the land with agriculture. People and agriculture alike would be required to adapt to the place. As a people's agriculture goes, so goes its culture. An arrogant people would be ruined on the Great Plains and do their fair share of damage to the land itself, but a properly adapted people would shape their land



management practices, their culture, their institutions, and their very lives to thrive in harmony with this harsh and

brilliant land.

Ever since I was old enough to think about my "future," I

aspired towards a future life in Stamford.

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