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Harrison Lester Hamer

## 20th Century Shining Star:

### Harrison Hamer

*Today*, only the most die-hard Ranger enthusiast is familiar with Harrison Hamer. Even then, they mainly think of him as the brother of the man who led the posse that killed Bonnie and Clyde. Harrison may have been in the shadow of his brother as far as fame is concerned, but he more than held his own during his lifetime of law enforcement.

F. A. and Lou Emma Hamer had five sons. Four of them became Texas Rangers: Estill [D. E.], Frank,

Harrison, and Flavius L. Of those four, D. E. and Frank went on to be Senior Ranger Captains. The other son, Clint, was never a law enforcement officer.

Harrison Hamer, the fourth son, was born on August 15, 1888, in Fairview, Texas. He grew to adulthood in San Saba County, where the family had moved when Harrison was very young.

Harrison and Frank, who were very close, grew up in a rural countryside and honed their skills in tracking, shooting, and defending themselves in shootouts. Harrison was twelve and Frank sixteen when they shot it out with a neighboring farmer [\[click here\]](#).

D. E. and Frank were already Rangers when twenty-year-old Harrison joined them for the first time in 1918. Flavius was still a few years away from joining.

As was common during those years, Harrison was in and out of the Rangers numerous times during his career. When not a Texas Ranger, he wore the badge of several law enforcement agencies: Mounted Customs Agent during the prohibition years, Special Ranger, Range Detective for the Cattleman's Association, and agent for the Sheep and Goat Raisers Association. His final position was working security at the Magnolia Refinery in Beaumont.

One of Harrison's most noteworthy cases occurred when he was a Mounted Customs agent. The outlaws involved were Jess Newton and his brothers Joe, Dock, and Willis. These four men had robbed and burglarized banks in the

United States and Canada for years before their career ended—at least officially—robbing a train near Chicago, Illinois. After this last heist, the brothers were hunted down and taken one by one.

It was believed that several of the Newton brothers were living in Mexico across the Rio Grande River from Del Rio, Texas. Harrison knew that the boys loved rodeos and suspected that one or more of the them might not be able to resist as big an event as the July 4th rodeo in Del Rio. Keeping a close eye on the crowd, Harrison saw Jess and his wife enter the stands, and he patiently waited his chance. His persistence paid off when Jess left the stands and unsuspectingly walked past the former Ranger. Harrison grabbed Jess by the arm and, undoubtedly with the aid of his ever-present six-shooter, informed Newton that he was under arrest. Escorting Jess below the grandstand, Harrison asked one of the local cowboys to watch the ever-elusive bandit. He returned to the stands and sent word to Newton's wife that her husband needed to see her. As she walked past Harrison, he also arrested her.



**Harrison Hamer in a Model T**

The movie *The Newton Boys* shows Jess Newton being captured by Texas Ranger Frank Hamer. In actuality, it was Harrison who captured Jess.

During his years in law enforcement, Harrison participated in investigations involving homicide, narcotics, bank robbers, and prohibition violations, among many others. In the largest raid on illegal stills in Texas history up to that time, Harrison found and destroyed 2,500 gallons of whiskey in Big Lake County.

Sadly, in the eyes of the public, Harrison is almost completely overshadowed by his legendary brother Frank. This did not interfere with the feelings the two had toward one another, however. They were close until their deaths—something that cannot be said about Frank and D. E. [See <http://www.texasranger.org/dispatch/13/pages/Hamer.htm>]

Harrison Hamer, a truly outstanding Texas Ranger, died on August 24, 1977, in Houston. He is buried in Del Rio, Texas.

Texas Ranger

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