

he had been assigned a series of complicated land fraud cases that resulted in at least a dozen convictions. If there was anyone who could stop the murders, said Robertson and the aldermen, it was Lucy.

### III

With the announcement of Lucy's appointment, Austin's citizens did feel a definite sense of relief. Now, they told one another, life can go back to normal.

Which was exactly what happened. There was a dedication ceremony at St. David's Episcopal Church for its new stained-glass window that depicted the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus. Over at Austin High School, a group of students played a "football game" against a group of students from the Texas German and English Academy. (It was perhaps the first high school football game ever played in Texas.)

As the Christmas season approached, shop owners decorated their windows with ornaments, red and green crepe paper, and heaps of pine boughs. One merchant placed a string of incandescent lightbulbs



Texas Ranger James Lucy was brought in as the new marshal to restore law and order.

around his front window, which featured a stuffed Santa Claus and tiny elves surrounded by fake snow, and another filled his window with a plethora of presents for children: dolls, hobbyhorses, baseballs and baseball bats, bows and arrows, tambourines, accordions, tea sets, and red-topped cowboy boots. At Stacy and Baker's newsstand and tobacco shop, one of Austin's portlier citizens dressed up as Santa Claus and sat on a large chair by the front door, where he asked the children who came to see him if they had been good that year.

Newspaper reporters wrote that the downtown streets were "literally thronged with all sorts of people" and the stores "jammed with purchasers." L. Schoolherr & Brothers, one of the city's better dress shops, held a Christmas sale on shawls, robes, silk gowns, and silk handkerchiefs. Hirschfield's Dry Goods advertised "Christmas prices" on its sewing machines. And Austin's most well-known photographer, Mr. Samuel B. Hill, offered discounts on his "portraits." Many men brought their entire families to his studio. Standing before a painted backdrop—a pastoral landscape, a ruined castle, the hills of Italy—they held themselves still for several moments, looking as dignified as possible, while the negatives were exposed. Women arrived at the studio to have individual portraits made, which they planned to give to their husbands as Christmas presents. The women stared directly at the camera with their backs straight, their mouths slightly pouted, and their noses turned delicately upward. Because Hill used incandescent lamps to light the studio, their eyes shone, and their skin seemed as pale as milk.

On the evening of December 22, after the 9 p.m. roll call at the police department, Lee turned over his badge to Lucy. According to the *Daily Statesman*, Lee gave a farewell address, "indulging in a few appropriate remarks, referring to his past pleasant relations with the force, and trusting his successor's administration would be fruitful of much good." Sergeant Chenneville and the other officers then stood at attention as Lucy spoke to them about his determination to keep Austin free of crime.

That night, Lucy helped patrol the streets. He was on the streets the next day, December 23, and again on December 24, Christmas Eve,

greeting residents who came downtown to do the last of their Christmas shopping. Throughout that day, people lined up at Bill Johnston's market to buy meats for their Christmas Eve dinners, the counters loaded with steaks, hams, turkeys, venison, and some of the last buffalo meat left in Texas. Others went to Prade's ice-cream parlor, where clerks were selling Christmas fruit baskets, ornamented cakes, and French candy for twenty cents a pound. Men drove their wagons to Radam's Horticultural Emporium to buy Yule trees to carry back to their homes for their children to decorate. (Some of them, no doubt, also bought bottles of the florist's Radam's Microbe Killer.) A man pulled up in his wagon at H. H. Hazzard's music shop to purchase a piano as a Christmas gift for his family. At his livery stable just off Congress Avenue, Osborn Weed, who had been the employer of Rebecca and Mary Ramey, offered the city's children Christmas rides on Tom Thumb, his gentle Shetland pony. Attempting to show goodwill to all, Charles Lundberg the baker provided a Christmas meal to all the prisoners in the county jail.

As the sun began to set, Henry Stamps performed his usual role lighting the gas lamps. The owners of the restaurants and saloons turned on their incandescent lights. Dr. J. J. Tobin, one of the city's pharmacists, invited fifty of his friends to his home to watch fireworks. Children from the state's Asylum for the Blind held a concert, performing a popular new song about Santa Claus coming to town, and over at the state's Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, another group of children stood around a Christmas tree decorated with candy and popcorn, making what one reporter said were "mute testimonials of affection."

There was even a Christmas party at the State Lunatic Asylum, north of the city. Dr. Denton had arranged for selected patients to gather in the main day room, eat popcorn, sing Christmas carols, and stay up one hour past their usual nine o'clock bedtime curfew, and he had one of his employees dress up as Santa Claus and pass out candy.

An hour passed, and then another. The shop and restaurant owners turned off their lights, locked their doors, and headed for their homes. Throughout the city, families ate their Christmas Eve dinners and decorated their Christmas trees, covering the branches with orna-

ments, strings of popcorn, candy-filled paper cornucopias, candles, and Japanese lanterns.

Eventually, parents put out the fires in the fireplaces, telling their excited children that they didn't want Santa to burn himself on his way down the chimney. A thin breeze swept through the city, carrying with it the aroma of evergreen and cinnamon and wood smoke. Soon, the moon rose. The stars appeared. According to what a reporter for the *Daily Statesman* would later write, the moon and the stars "were at their most effulgent and shot their mellow light over all the earth and in nearly every crevice of our houses and garden fences."

At midnight, the clock above city hall began to chime. Marshal Lucy, Sergeant Chenneville, and several of the officers remained on the downtown streets, keeping watch. A couple of officers checked the saloons to see if any suspicious characters were drinking at the back tables; a couple of other officers walked the alleys behind the Congress Avenue buildings, looking for tramps; and a couple more wandered through Guy Town to make sure the men at the brothels were behaving themselves.

Suddenly, there was sound of hoofbeats. A horse was seen coming straight up Congress Avenue from south of downtown, and it was coming fast, whipping through the cones of light thrown out by the gas lamps. On the back of the horse was a man named Alexander Wilkie, who worked as a night watchman for one of the saloons.

"A woman has been chopped to pieces!" Wilkie yelled. "It's Mrs. Hancock! On Water Street!"