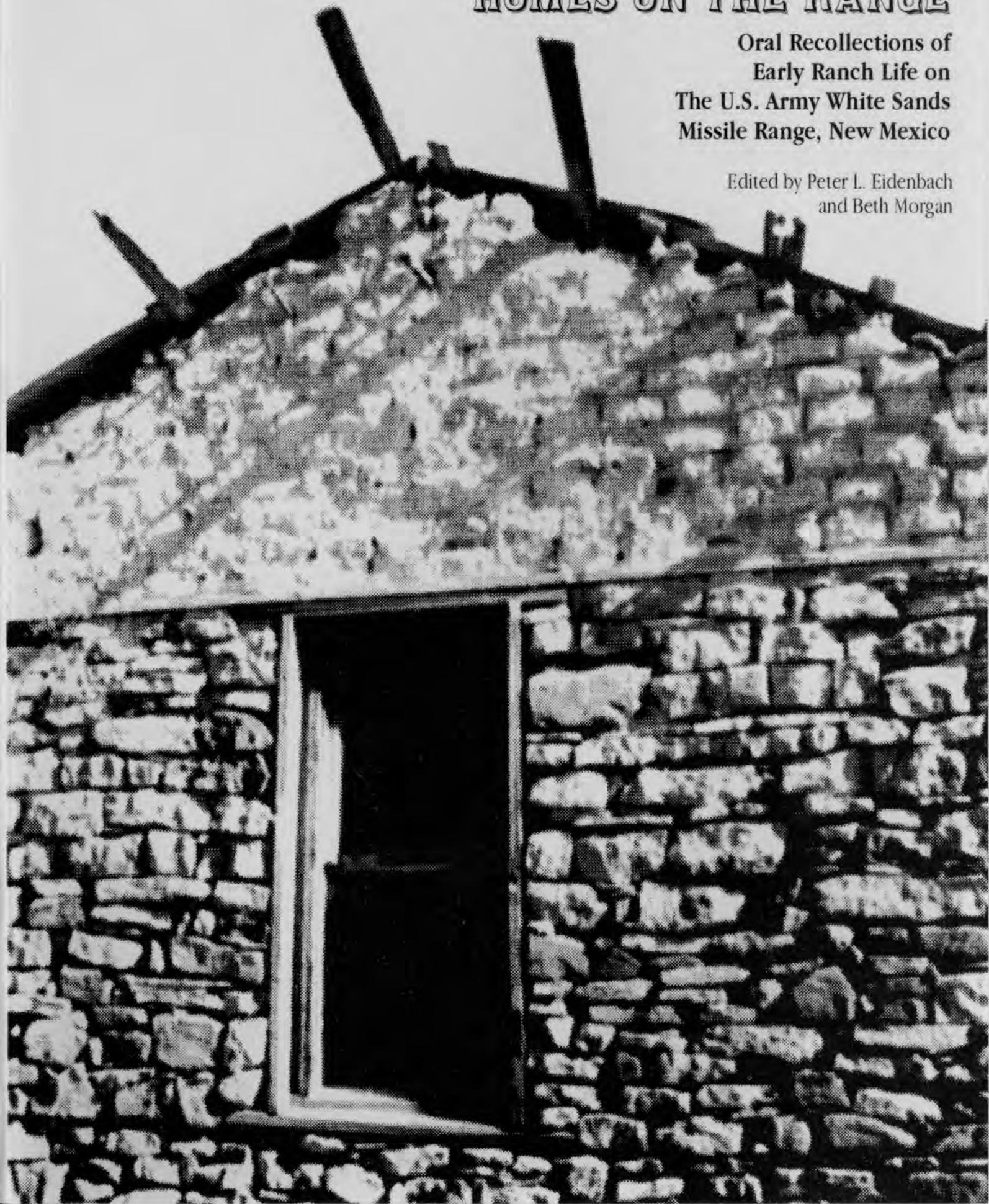


HOMES ON THE RANGE

Oral Recollections of
Early Ranch Life on
The U.S. Army White Sands
Missile Range, New Mexico

Edited by Peter L. Eidenbach
and Beth Morgan



HOMES ON THE RANGE

ORAL RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY RANCH LIFE ON
THE U.S. ARMY WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, NEW MEXICO

Department of Defense
Legacy Resource Management Program
Ranching Heritage Oral History Project

Edited by Peter L. Eidenbach and Beth Morgan

Based on interviews by Mark Carter, Beth Morgan, Janie O'Cain, and Michelle Nawrocki

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Cover photo: Rock and adobe barn, Bruton Ranch,
White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico.
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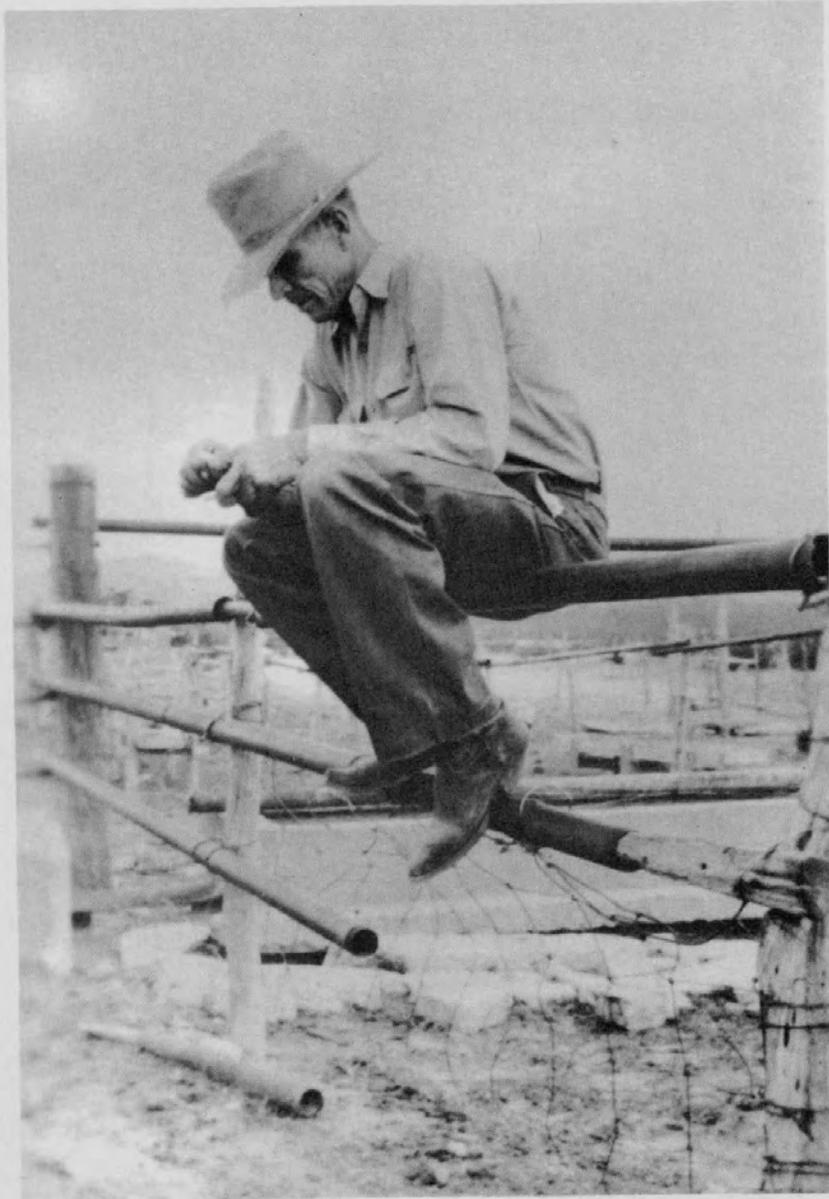


Figure 1. Pat Withers at the Robinson Place, 1943.

DEDICATION

To the families
who sacrificed their hard-won homesteads
for the American people
and to
their children, grandchildren,
and all of us,
lest we forget
“the ancient days and the springtime of the world.”

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Special thanks are due the consultants and their families who graciously shared their memories and memorabilia with us, ensuring that future generations will remember what life was like at the brink of the modern era in New Mexico.

Dr. Neal Ackerly, Center for Anthropological Research, NMSU, acted as co-principal investigator, and supervised the student interviewers and transcriptionists whose efforts were essential to the success of the project. The three graduate student interviewers, Janie O'Cain, Mark Carter, and Michelle Nawrocki interacted directly with most of the ranching family consultants and deserve special recognition for their unflagging enthusiasm and hard work throughout the interviewing and editing process.

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As always, this is as much their project as ours.

Introduction

This volume presents a small fraction of the recollections, stories, and photographs collected from local ranching families during the Legacy Resource Management Program Ranching Heritage Oral History Project on the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), New Mexico. These families homesteaded New Mexico's last frontier—the barren deserts and rugged mountains of the Tularosa Basin and Jornada del Muerto.

White Sands Missile Range is rich in rural ranches dating from the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries. WSMR's testing and evaluation mission ensures an unparalleled degree of preservation and protection for these sites. More than 200 of these locations exist in backwater canyons and hidden valleys throughout the range. Today, these sites are protected by the unique combination of WSMR's vast land area, its high security, and low-impact land use.

During the past five years, White Sands Missile Range has begun the process of recording these anonymous rural homesteads, isolated windmills, Angora goat sheds, and other physical remains which dot the landscape. The George McDonald Ranch House—assembly site for the first atomic weapon tested at nearby Trinity Site on July 16, 1945, is the crown jewel of WSMR's unique collection. These ranches are closely linked to the history of space and missile development and their acquisition represented a major patriotic contribution by local ranching families, most of whom still reside in the region. The end of that historic ranching era coincided with the beginning of WSMR military history, just 50 years ago.

Recording the architecture and archaeology helped preserve history but did little to illuminate it. More was needed to establish the context of these remains, to interpret and remember what transpired in the past.

Major parts of that history are in danger of being lost within the next several years. The ranches themselves can be preserved under the stewardship of the Department of the Army, but their context—the everyday details of the life they represent—will pass away forever with the ranching families who lived and worked here. Detailed oral, photographic, and document history is an immediate need. To meet that need, the Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program provided funding to implement a rigorous program of oral recording to preserve WSMR's ranching history for the benefit of future generations.

Human Systems Research, Inc., the New Mexico State University Center for Anthropological Research and Rio Grande Historical Collections, and the Farm and Ranch Heritage Foundation joined in a Legacy partnership with White Sands Missile Range to develop the procedures and protocols for recording ranching oral histories; duplicating and archiving historic photographs, historic documents, and personal papers; and developing training materials to allow independent continuation of the project in the future. The results of Phase I of this effort—80 hours of taped interviews, 1,600 pages of transcript, and several hundred archivally copied photographs—will be preserved for posterity by the Legacy partners. But more importantly, a unique heritage has been remembered, a process which has promoted a new level of good will and mutual respect in the region.

Words often fail in this bleak, white land—mystery and enchantment echo in the gritty wind. Photography, not narrative, is the favorite modern medium for capturing this land's fascination. Few know the land with an intimacy which allows vivid, accurate description. Few remember the bold, persistent efforts required to wrest a living from such a threatening region. Few can say, "it was almost like living in paradise." Names, places, and events are nearly forgotten. What little remains in memory reminds us of our own past and opens a unique window onto a cheerful land, despite its grim appearance.

Today, the Tularosa Basin remains doubly mysterious—hidden and empty, vast and silently forbidding, the heart of the U.S. Army's White Sands Missile Range—4,000 square miles: larger than Delaware and Rhode Island combined. The Spaniards never ventured beyond the rugged mountains—not one word was written about this place. The region remained hidden until the 1880s, when U.S. Army Topographical Engineers finally penetrated the burning white sands, which had been labelled *Unexplored* for more than two centuries.

Adversity and abandonment are characteristic here. Early Jornada Mogollon farmers deserted their fragile corn fields 500 years ago. The Apache arrived 200 years later and remained unchallenged in their mountain strongholds until nearly the turn of the last century.

The frantic cattle boom of the 1880s collapsed in the face of drought. Only a few of the dauntless remained to subdue the land with persistence, perseverance, and imagination. These early families came from Texas, the Old South, Europe, and the Southwest. A few witnessed the last bloody engagements which pitted Geronimo, Victorio, and Nana's Apache against the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the Brave Rifles of the 3rd Cavalry. Descendants of these fierce Apache still live in their sacred mountains. The 3rd Cavalry was posted at Fort Bliss, guarding Paso del Norte, and the sons and daughters of this land's first ranch families are WSMR's neighbors and employees. Memories run deep and strong, buttressed by sacrifice and adversity.

This land demands sacrifice, a sacrifice doubly paid by many families. New Mexico's 200th and 515th Coast Artillery, our nation's oldest militia, were the first to fire and last to lay down their arms in the defense of Bataan. Their ordeal on the Death March is well remembered, a memory physically present in a stark white cross which crowns the arid Godfrey Hills overlooking the east boundary of the missile range.

But few remember the second sacrifice. The same fierce patriotism forced many of those families to abandon the efforts of two generations and make way for U.S. Army Air Corps bomber training, the Trinity atomic test, and Operation Paper Clip, the beginning of the Army's modern missile program.

After 50 years, the debt cannot be repaid—no compensation can recognize the magnitude of such sacrifice. But in some small way, we can preserve the memory, moderate the loss, and pay tribute to these last pioneers.

Eugene Manlove Rhodes fondly called these families *the little people*. Their lives were devoted to land and family, not notoriety and fame. Even then, Rhodes recognized the value of the small everyday events which made up the lives of those who inhabited the "ancient days" during "the springtime of the world."

...you want to remember that in a thousand years, or some such, historians will publicly offer their right eye to know what you can see now, at first hand; just as they puzzle and stew and guess about Harold, the Saxon, nowadays. Ain't people funny?...Here you are...with a priceless chance to get the low-down on how we scramble through with a certain cheerfulness and something not far removed from decency, and make merry with small cause....stick around...and watch our ways and means...

Despite that admonition, their history is largely forgotten. Faded photographs, tattered records, dim memories captured by spinning tape—this is the legacy which remains. Preserving this history is the mission of the WSMR Ranching Heritage Oral History Project.

Pete Eidenbach
High Rolls, NM
August 1994

Editor's Note

This book has been prepared using our consultants' own words, from the transcripts of taped interviews conducted between the fall of 1993 and the spring of 1994.

Several concerns must be kept in mind when working with transcripts. The transcripts prepared for this project are a verbatim record of the consultants' recollections about their lives on the ranches that became part of the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range. Some 1,550 pages of transcript from 80 hours of audio tape were produced during Phase I of the project. Obviously, space will not allow the presentation of each interview in its entirety. Thus, selected excerpts were chosen, based on their ability to enhance our understanding of the various aspects of ranching life, whether they focus on such domestic concerns as making jerky or the carrying capacity of a section of land in this desert country.

The purpose of this book is to present our consultants' stories in their own words. Editing of the excerpts removed repetition and unrelated comments to make the text more readable. We have tried to preserve the flavor of our consultants' own styles of unique and colorful expression, so the reader can become acquainted with the person behind each story. Some passages with irregular grammatical usage have been edited to remove obstacles to the reader's comprehension and enjoyment of the ranching story.

In addition, most interview questions have been deleted or recast so that, instead of a question and answer format, a continuing narrative encompasses the questions, as well as the consultants' responses. Some dialogs between consultant and interviewer have been preserved where interview comments are essential or enhance the narrative. In other cases, where comments from interviewers added nothing to the dialog or were repetitious, they have been deleted. Unfinished sentences or questions have been completed, when the meaning was clear. When a consultant discussed the same subject on two or more separate occasions, the material was often combined to present a continuous narrative.

Verbatim copies of the transcripts and the tapes from which they were made, along with photographs, documents, and other materials, will be permanently available for family and public use at the Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University.

Beth Morgan
Las Cruces, New Mexico
June 1994



Figure 2 . Grandpa and Grandma Johnson, Dixie Gililand Tucker's maternal great-grandparents.

RANCHER BIOGRAPHIES

Some 97 families owned property in the area that eventually became the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range. The individuals interviewed during the White Sands Missile Range Ranching Heritage Oral History Project represent only a fraction of those families. Many of these families and their descendants have scattered since leaving their ranches, and many have passed away. The project began with those families who could be located, in hopes that these will lead to others. Biographies of the ranching family consultants are presented below.

Holm O. Bursum III

Holm Olaf Bursum III is a third-generation White Sands Missile Range rancher. During his childhood, he lived at Ozanne, a former stage stop on the sprawling 200,000-acre ranch his grandfather amassed by buying up area homesteads, beginning in the 1890s. The ranch was approximately 32 miles long from east to west and 10 miles wide from north to south. It was roughly bisected east-west by U.S. Highway 380.

The Bursums originally ran sheep only, then sheep and cattle, before making the switch to cattle only. The ranch's size required maintenance of a commissary at the headquarters at Hansonburg to supply the sheep herders, other employees, and Bursum's family.

"It operated just like a store: each herder was charged for his rations for himself and his men that worked for him. There was not many fresh foods—I still remember the salt pork and the eggs were packed in a huge box full of salt."

When the federal government required the southern half of the Bursum ranch for military testing in 1942, the family moved to Hansonburg and continued to operate the portion of the ranch that lay outside the missile range boundary, until its sale in 1979. Bursum is now president and chief executive officer of First State Bank in Socorro, the bank founded by his father and several other businessmen in 1947.

Lewis D. Cain

Lewis Douglas Cain, Jr., was born in Parsons, Lincoln County, New Mexico, to Louis D. Cain and Lola Greer Cain on November 12, 1915. His parents, both natives of Texas, had grown up on neighboring ranches in the Lava Gap area on present-day White Sands Missile Range. When Lewis was a boy, his family acquired the Buckhorn Ranch in the San Andres Mountains, where they ran cattle. There, he helped develop surface tanks using a horse-drawn fresno, milked cows, and helped perform other assorted ranch chores. Asked what he and his two brothers, Ben and Leonard, and sister, Bonnie, did in their spare time, he couldn't come up with anything—they didn't have spare time.

As a sophomore in high school, Lewis attended Ritch School, a ranch school near his home in the San Andres. He graduated from high school in Truth or Consequences and later earned a bachelor's degree in biology at New Mexico State University.

Although a portion of the Buckhorn Ranch was taken over by White Sands Missile Range, what remained continues to be operated as a cattle ranch by Lewis' nephew, Doug Davis. Lewis also remained in the cattle ranching business. He lives and works on the Lewis D. Cain ranch near Upham, New Mexico. His brother Ben ranches at Aleman.

Natalia (Nellie) Lucero DiMatteo

Natalia (Nellie) Lucero DiMatteo was born into the politically prominent Lucero family in 1920. Her grandfather, José R. Lucero, and her great uncle, Felipe Lucero, took turns serving as Doña Ana County sheriff. Both men also operated ranches on present-day White Sands Missile Range: José near Lake Lucero and Felipe near Ash Canyon.

José R. Lucero's cattle ranching operation became the special province of Nellie's father, José B. Lucero. The ranch saw some tough times during 1934, a drought year in that part of the range. Cattle that were starving because there was not enough feed were destroyed by the government. The family was left with the unpleasant job of destroying the orphan calves left behind. In spite of the losses experienced during dry times, Nellie and her sisters and brother had a happy childhood on the ranch. Swimming in the stock tank, holding family rodeos, and making jerky were among the family's country pastimes that Nellie recalls with fondness.

Nellie continued in politics. She served as Doña Ana County treasurer, chief deputy treasurer, and Doña Ana County investment officer over a period of 16 years.

Anna Lee Bruton Gaume

Anna Lee Gaume was born to Jack and Ella Fite Bruton on October 9, 1912, in Magdalena, New Mexico. Her family lived in the Magdalena Mountains at the L Slash ranch and then moved to the O Bar ranch in the Hembrillo Basin.

Her mother, Ella May Fite, was born in Mayhill, New Mexico, in 1893, and grew up on the Fite ranch. Her father, Jack Bruton, was born in Weed, New Mexico, in 1886. Anna Lee attended schools in Cutter and Las Cruces (Loretto Academy). She became a school teacher and taught all along the Rio Grande during her career. She married Paul Gaume in 1942 and had one daughter, Jackie, in 1943. Anna Lee and Paul currently are retired and live in Deming.

Betsy Lucero

Betsy Lucero was born to a farming couple, Aloys and Aurora Biel of Mesilla, New Mexico, in 1927. At 19, she married Joe R. Lucero, whose father, José B. Lucero, died while Joe was still in school. They moved to the ranch to run it for Joe's mother and stayed until 1950.

Joe Lucero and his bride lived in the same house that Joe and his sisters had lived in as children. They came to the ranch at an interesting time in the history of the area. White Sands Missile Range had yet to settle the transfer of all properties that today make up the range. Limited testing was taking place, however, and when experiments were scheduled, families would be evacuated. The ranchers did not always receive notification in time or were allowed to return to their ranches before testing was completed. On one such occasion, Betsy was at home alone when a V-2 rocket landed in the Lucero pasture. The men were attending to business on another part of the ranch.

Betsy and Joe's time at the ranch saw the Luceros developing stronger ties with commerce and family in Las Cruces. It was a transitional period when ranching operations were beginning to come to an end. The couple left their family ranch in 1950. Joe R. Lucero died in an explosion in 1953. Betsy worked at Western Bank in Las Cruces for more than 34 years, served as a commercial teller and bookkeeper, and ran the loan department.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

Verena Andregg Mahaney was born to Alfred Clay Andregg and the former Eunice Riddle on April Fool's Day, 1931, in Alamogordo. Her family had migrated from Texas to Alamogordo, where her grandfather, a Swiss immigrant, owned a meat market.

Upon his death shortly after Verena was born, his heirs received enough money to set them up in business. Verena's father bought a Texaco gas station and auto repair shop with his share. When it did not work out, he moved his family and took work in Arizona. His brother Frank used his share to buy more goats for a ranch he already owned in the San Andres Mountains. Their mother also bought land to extend the goat ranch's grazing area.

Verena's parents eventually returned to New Mexico, where her father helped her Uncle Frank with the goat-ranching operation. Much of Verena's childhood was spent alternately at her grandmother Alice Andregg's place and her Uncle Frank's place, which was considered the headquarters, 4 miles up the canyon.

She remembers the ranch with fondness: "Uncle Frank was special. He really thought an awful lot of us...We had a lot of fun at that little ranch. There was just lots of things we done, not just work with the goats, but we'd do hikin' and huntin' and we'd all sit down and sew together. Seemed like that was the one place that our family was really the closest."

Florence Martin

Florence Martin was born to Frank and Rose Dalley Wesner on April 19, 1912, in Las Vegas, New Mexico. She grew up in a Las Vegas ranching family and then worked as a school teacher in the Alamogordo area. She loved to dance and met her husband, Frank Martin, at just such an event. Because she married, Florence was required to retire from school teaching since, at that time in New Mexico, only single women could work as teachers. Upon her marriage, she lived and worked on the Martin ranch in the Jornada del Muerto, the only woman of the household.

She later returned to teaching in the Socorro area, received bachelor's and master's degrees in education, and served as principal at an elementary school. Florence currently lives in Socorro and owns and runs a small auto parts store with her daughter. She remains an active participant in supporting the small-rancher's rights.

Eloise (Dolly) Helms Onsrud

Dolly was born Eloise Coslett in Lamar, Oklahoma, a small community about 150 miles southeast of Oklahoma City, on October 16, 1920. Her mother and stepfather migrated to New Mexico in 1935 because times were hard around Oklahoma City then. The family's planned destination was Taos, but when they visited relatives in Carrizozo, Dolly's stepfather was able to find work in the nearby gold and zinc mines.

In November 1936, Dolly met A.D. (Art) Helms (now deceased) of Nogal, New Mexico, and after what Dolly describes as a "whirlwind courtship," they married on December 24, 1936. Dolly first saw the Tularosa Basin as the 16-year-old bride of a rancher. She and Art raised three boys, Roy, David, and Larry Helms. When Dolly talks about this portion of her life, she is obviously very proud of what she and her husband Art were able to accomplish. She often helped with chores such as branding, roundup, and other ranching activities, which often are mistakenly labeled as "man's work." In her own words, "Me and my late husband did everything 50-50." Art died in 1985.

In 1987, Dolly married Lee Onsrud. They have a small ranch near Oscura, New Mexico. Dolly, now 73, leads an active life, which includes running a small herd of cattle. Dolly remains very much a rancher at heart. She has few regrets regarding her choice of becoming a rancher's wife. She says, "I wouldn't have traded it for nothing."

Mellie Crawford Potter

Mellie Crawford Potter was born on April 24, 1910, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to Sarah and Thomas Calvin Crawford. The Crawfords moved to Ajo, Arizona, when Mellie was a young

girl. Following the death of her mother when she was 13, Mellie returned to New Mexico. She lived with her maternal aunt and uncle, Myrtle and Finus Henderson, on their cattle ranch in the San Andres Mountains. While Mellie was living with the Hendersons, she met the man who would be her future husband, Uel "Potsy" Potter.

Mellie Crawford and Potsy Potter were married in 1925. Mellie moved to the Potter Ranch, where her husband, brother-in-law, and father-in-law owned and operated a goat ranch. The Potters, besides their goat ranching business, installed a gas pump at the ranch after State Highway 52 was built. The Potters sold gasoline to friends and neighbors and to some of the immigrants to California who were escaping the Depression and drought in the states further to the east.

Potsy and Mellie Potter had three children, Thomas, Marjorie, and Jimmy. Thomas now resides in Tularosa, New Mexico, and Marjorie lives with her husband, Benny Fleming, in the Sacramento Mountains. Jimmy is deceased. The Potters lived on their ranch until 1942. After moving to Tularosa, the Potters owned and operated a grocery store until they sold it and retired. Potsy Potter died in 1965.

Mellie remains in Tularosa, where she enjoys her flower gardens and many pets. She is a favorite of the neighborhood children, who can count on her for a homemade cookie.

Alice Gililand Smith

Alice Gililand Smith was born on July 5, 1912, in Alamogordo, New Mexico, to Richard Gililand and Ginevra Wood Gililand. She was raised on her parents' cattle ranch in the San Andres Mountains. In 1932, Alice Gililand married Clay Smith. The first two years of their married life, her husband worked as a cowboy for ranchers in the area. Clay and Alice obtained their own ranch in 1934, when Richard Gililand's ranch was divided between Alice, Dixie, and Sam Gililand. The Smith's portion of the ranch was the Sweetwater. They raised Angora goats on their ranch until 1942, when they moved to Alamogordo.

The Smiths have lived in Alamogordo since then, with the exception of a short period of time when they lived in Arizona. Alice and Clay Smith had four children: Richard, Lucy, Dorothy, and Viola. Mr. Smith was employed as a fireman until his retirement in 1970. During his retirement years, Clay Smith wrote a book, *Cowboy on the Jornada*, chronicling his early adventures as a ranch hand and cowboy. Mr. Smith died in 1977.

Alice Smith is very active in the Alamogordo Senior Citizen Center. She also enjoys visiting two of her children, who have moved far away from their Alamogordo home.

Dixie Gililland Tucker

Dixie Gililland Tucker was born on June 30, 1917, in Hot Springs (Truth or Consequences), New Mexico, to Richard Gililland and Ginevra Wood Gililland. She, her sister Alice, and brother Sam were raised on her parents' cattle ranch in the San Andres Mountains.

In 1934, Dixie Gililland married Roy Tucker. Richard Gililland, Dixie's father, obtained some additional land at this time, and his ranch was divided between Dixie and her husband, and Dixie's two siblings, Alice and Sam. Roy and Dixie Tucker raised Angora goats. In 1942, the Tuckers moved from their ranch in the San Andres Mountains and resided in Tularosa, New Mexico, for a short time. They then moved to the Hatchet ranch in the Three Rivers area. The Tuckers had four children: Roy, Jr., G.L., Cloma Jane, and Ginevra. Roy Tucker died in 1975.

Mrs. Tucker lives in Tularosa, where she stays very busy and involved in the activities of the Senior Citizens Club. She feels very fortunate to have two of her siblings close by, and they spend a great deal of time together.

Irving Virgil (Pat) Withers

Irving Virgil "Pat" Withers was born on June 8, 1909, in Sweetwater, Texas, to R.C. and Estella George Withers. When he was 2 years old, the family migrated to southeastern New Mexico and settled near the little community of Jal. They remained in Jal from 1911 until 1924, during which time Pat's father worked as a rancher and did contract carpentry work. In 1924, the family moved to Artesia, in Eddy County, where Pat graduated from high school in 1930.

After graduation, Pat went to college at Hardin-Simmons College near Abilene, Texas. While he was away at school his first semester in 1931, "A guy came along peddling beans, and he said something about having a ranch up here in this mountain, and he wanted to know if anybody would be interested in it, and dad and mother come and looked at it." As a result, Pat quit college and joined his parents and two brothers in forming the R.C. Withers ranch near the Oscura Mountains. Three years later, on Christmas Eve 1934, Pat married Nadine Houston. They had one daughter, Ina Verle Withers.

Since then, Pat has spent over six decades as a rancher, bronc buster, and cattleman in the Tularosa Basin of south-central New Mexico. Pat's enthusiasm for life is apparent when he reminisces about working cattle, breaking horses, or playing baseball in the local league. His eyes sparkle in a manner that defies his 84 years. Although he admits to having slowed down "a little bit," he still works cattle and rides horses on a regular basis. He has no regrets concerning his life as a cowboy, and "wouldn't live in town for nobody."

Joe Pete Wood, Sr.

Joe Pete Wood was born in Edwards County, Texas, on September 16, 1896, to John Henry Wood and Alice Johnson Wood. In 1902, Joe Pete and his family moved from Texas to New Mexico in a covered wagon. His father initially homesteaded in the Caballero Canyon area but later obtained a ranch near Bear Den Canyon in the San Andres Mountains. Joe Pete Wood was raised on this ranch and attended school at the Bear Den School. He was drafted into the Army during World War I and was stationed at Camp Eagle Pass, Texas.

Following his discharge from the service, Joe Pete worked for ranchers in the San Andres Mountains. He married Nina Chiado and they lived in Albuquerque until 1935, when Joe Pete took over the Wood Ranch from his father. Joe Pete initially stocked the ranch with Angora goats. After raising goats for five to six years, he sold the goat herd and purchased sheep. His ultimate plan, however, was to raise cattle, and in 1947, the Woods were able to realize this dream. During their years on the ranch, they also raised and sold horses and mules.

Joe Pete and Nina Wood had five children: Joe Pete, Jr., born in 1928; Katherine Yvonne, born in 1936; Ralph, born in 1941; Henry, born in 1943; and James, born in 1948.

Joe Pete Wood currently makes his home in Tularosa, with Joe Pete, Jr., and Ruth Wood. He enjoys his great grandchildren, whom he is lucky enough to see on a daily basis.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr., was born on May 28, 1928, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Joe Pete Wood and Nina Chiado Wood. He was raised in Albuquerque until 1935, when he moved with his parents to the Wood Ranch in the San Andres Mountains.

Joe Pete, Jr., attended grade school at the Ritch School. He graduated from Socorro High School and attended college at the New Mexico School of Mines in Socorro. He also served in the Armed Services. In 1950, Joe Pete married Ruth Wood, and they moved to the Wood Ranch and raised cattle. After leaving the ranch, the Woods moved to Tularosa, New Mexico. Joe Pete was employed as a radar operator until his retirement.

Joe Pete, Jr., and Ruth Wood raised four daughters. They are presently very active babysitting two of their grandchildren and caring for his father. Joe Pete, Jr., has a keen interest in the history of the Tularosa Basin.



Figure 3. John Henry and Alice Johnson Wood, parents of Joe Pete Wood; grandparents to Dixie Gililand (Tucker), Alice Gililand (Smith), and Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

HOW WE GOT HERE

In all the sun-scorched and sand-blasted reaches of the Southwest there is no grimmer region. Only the fierce and the rugged can live here—prickly pear and mesquite; rattlesnake and tarantula. True, Texas cattlemen made the cow a native of the region seventy-five years ago, but she would have voted against the step if she had been asked.

— C.L. Sonnichsen, *Tularosa*

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

Grandfather came out of South Carolina or North Carolina, and grandmother came out of the other state. They married and then went into Tennessee. And they migrated on into Texas for whatever reason, I suppose because land was cheap and adventure was high.

Why they came out here entails a pretty good story concerning my grandfather. Seems he, prior to being married, was working for some rancher down there in Texas—this was back during the time when barbed wire was just becoming popular in certain areas. His boss put in a barbed wire fence around a water hole or spring. The neighbor didn't appreciate it. His boss sent him to guard the spring and make sure no one cut the wire. The neighbor came over, stepped off his horse, was warned by my grandfather not to touch the fence; he cut the first strand of wire and my grandfather shot him. Then he came to New Mexico immediately after. I just assumed he got on his horse and **...my grandfather shot him.** rode by the man's place and told him, "I'm going to New Mexico. I just killed so and so." Truthfully, it wasn't quite that drastic. He shot the man, and they gathered him up and took him to the doctor. My grandfather left and came out here.

Well, he traveled all over this part of the country. And somehow, a few years later, he found out that my grandmother, her and two or three of her sisters and her mother, were in Socorro. When he found this out he went up and they got married; and they got the train and went back to Texas, started a family and started ranching. By the time they came out here again to live, it was six children later, and they brought their goats and their cows and their horses.

Holm O. Bursum III

BM: Your grandfather was the original rancher in the family. Can you tell me what the ranch looked like when he started it? Was it the same piece of property?

It was basically put together by lots of ol' homesteads. This part of the country, a lot of people homesteaded after the turn of the century, in the early teens, and there was no way those people could make a living in this kind of country with just 320 or 640 acres. This is desert country and it takes a lot of country to be able to raise enough livestock. You know, the average carrying capacity in this part of the country, say for cattle, is maybe 7 or 8 head per section—for 640 acres. So, if you had a homestead well, you couldn't make a living raising 8 or 10 cows, and so these people, a lot of 'em over a period of time, sold out and moved away. That's how most of the ranches were put together in this part of the country. A series of homesteads had the water, had a well, so all of your deeded land in this part of the country controlled the water.

...it takes a lot of country...

I think the Melecio Apodaca place was his first ranch, and that's down south of present-day Stallion Site. The deeded land on the original ranch, as it finally ended up being—I believe there was about 22,000 acres of deeded land, so that made up about, about 10 percent of the ranch. The total ranch and all, including deeded and leased acreage, was a little over 200,000 acres.

Once he put it together, and I don't know when he finished but I'm gonna guess about, maybe about 1920, maybe 1918, somewhere in there is when he had it all put together, and I don't believe we ever added to or subtracted from it after that.

BM: Could you describe the approximate boundaries of the ranch?

Okay, just a general description: about 10 miles east of San Antonio, New Mexico, where Highway 380 goes into what we call the Chupadera Basin, which is at the northern end of the Jornada del Muerto. One of the landmarks in that area is the Bell Mountains, they're on the maps as the Bell Mountains. And that is pretty much the area of the western boundary. The ranch ran for about 32 miles, really, on both sides of Highway 380. There were a lot of jogs in there, but anyway, it was roughly 10 miles wide and 30 miles long. And then, Highway 380 basically ran right through the middle of it, going from west to east.

We had a lot of neighbors. The Nalda Ranch joined us on the northeast, that was the Louie Nalda Ranch. Then there was the Ratliff place, the Wilson Ranch, the Wrye Ranch, the Coker Ranch, the Williams Ranch—those were all on the north. And then, on the southeast was the Withers Ranch, the McDonald Ranch, the Green Ranch, and the Harriet Ranch. On the west end, then, was the Fite Ranch, **We had a lot of neighbors.** let's see, the Muncy Ranch, the Gallegos Ranch, the Long Ranch, the Del Curto Ranch—they were kind of a little south. Those were the west, and then the southwest—Del Curto's on the southwest.

Well, the Nalda Ranch really was on the northeast; and I'm missing one in there, the Red Canyon—can't think whose ranch that was. But anyway, Rentfrow was in there, but they didn't immediately join us, but they were in the area. Earra Rentfrow, the daughter of the original Rentfrow, was registrar of New Mexico State [University] for 30 or 40 years.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

My dad and my Uncle Frank were both cowboys and worked on ranches as they were growing up. My uncle just kindly favored goats. He thought there was more money in goats than there was in cattle.

So he always wanted a goat ranch, and he'd kindly worked until he found one. He didn't have too many goats to start, you know; they did come with the place, and there wasn't too many there. And that's how he come to have his ranch. But then, when my grandfather died—he died, I believe, about May of 1931, I was only 5 weeks old—and I understand that half of his estate was to be split between the five children. So, my uncle took his share and bought more goats. My dad wanted a mechanic shop; he thought that's what he **...dad wanted a mechanic shop.** wanted to do. He took his part and bought a mechanic shop with a filling station. It was called a Texaco. Grandma, she took the other half, what was left, and bought her ranch. And then, between her and Uncle Frank, well, Uncle Frank paid his off and they bought more goats. That's how they came to get into the goat business.

Well, my dad got rid of his station and his workshop, and we went to Arizona. And then something come up—the job he was workin' on, I guess, had played out, so he decided we'd come back to New Mexico. So, that's where we went, to the ranch, and this was probably in '36, maybe May or June of 1936.

I remember 'cause I rode on the back of the old truck. Dad had a two-ton Chevy truck and we rode on the back of the truck, sometimes with the furniture and clothes and stuff that we brought. Sometimes I would ride up in the cab with Mom and Dad and my brothers, Perry and Val Dee. My brother Val Dee was a baby at this time; he was born in February. And there was a little hump that you'd come up over and you look right down on Uncle Frank's place. And Grandma was standing out there, and she always wore this ol' big black hat and a

...a long black dress.

long black dress. She had a beak nose and a chin that met it, and I remember my mother saying, "Why, Alf, is that your mother?" 'cause she did kindly look like a witch. Dad says, "Of course, that's my mother." We went on down there and she was really glad to see us.

So, we right away moved into Uncle John's place across the canyon—you could see the house from Uncle Frank's—and we lived there quite a while. I don't remember just how long, but I know there was a summer. But, the winter we had spent at Grandma's place; we had moved down there then for the winter. I don't know whether it was a better place or Dad was gonna look after goats at Grandma's place, 'cause we had the sheds and stuff down there. It seemed like we stayed until somewhere in early September, first part of September, 'cause we lived in some tents in Las Cruces and my brother Clay was born. We spent the winter in Las Cruces and then we went back to the ranch, and we stayed at the ranch winter and summer.

And we done a lot of things out there to the ranch—we helped herd goats and we had a good life. We didn't eat too much goat meat; we ate more deer meat than we did goat meat. I think the fun times is when we'd load up the ole white burro. There was an ole white burro came to us one time and he was so gentle, and we'd load him up with the smaller kids and extra clothes. It was 4 miles from Grandma's place to Uncle Frank's place. We would walk, you know, up there and stay a couple of days, 'cause Dad was always gone with the goats. Uncle Frank usually had two goat herders, but it'd take everybody around to trail goats and change camps and stuff like this.

So, we'd stay down at Grandma's place all the time they were doing this. We'd hitchhike up there and we'd play along the way. There was water holes and there was the Indian painting caves; there was black granite rocks and they had Indian carvings on 'em, and we'd kinda play along and try to read 'em and make out what they were. So, it'd take us, you know, several hours to get up to headquarters. And then, we would, oh, we'd chop wood and we'd do things around there, rake up the chips on the wood pile and catch up the other burros, and just do all kinds of things up there. It was really fun.

BM: Can you tell me anything about the size of your uncle's ranch and maybe your grandmother's place?

Well, I believe Grandma had a section; and Uncle Frank, I don't really remember, but he had three parts. He had his ranch, I think there was a section at the main headquarters, and then there was a place over the hill. I don't remember what canyon that was in, but he had a house there and goat sheds and stuff. No one stayed there all the time. When they run out of grazing land over here, they went over the hill to graze the goats there.

And there was also a place he called Box Canyon, that also had a little house, and the goat herders would go up there and stay. I'm sure that he had some leased land, too, for grazing, because he went beyond his property at times. They'd trail the goats all day, and then they'd come in and bed 'em at night. If that grazing was short, well, then they'd move to another grazing, and then they'd take 'em out and follow 'em all day and then bring 'em in and bed 'em at night. And then they'd come down to Grandma's place and graze and do the same thing. I know they went beyond the property boundaries on other land, and I'm sure it must've been public domain.

BM: What kind of goats did they raise?

Angora, mohair goats, 'cause they sheared them like they do sheep. They'd kid 'em out—they would have their little kids, babies, and they'd stake the kids out in the little huts they had, just like little roofs, little peaks, like a pup tent. And they'd stake them out with a tag on their leg and mark the mother also with the tag. They'd trail 'em all day, you know, and bring 'em in, and then they could match 'em up.

And they would shear them before kidding time, and we'd sack the mohair just like they do wool, and he'd sell it. I guess that's why Uncle Frank thought there's more money in goats than cattle, 'cause it pays off twice, you **...it pays off twice** know. He's gonna sell your mohair and then, when the kids are up, well, then you sell the male kids off, and then you keep your little nanny kids to raise more.

Mellie Potter

The deal that my father-in-law made with his boys was, they would put what they had—cows and what have you—in on the ranch and they would go in together, and it would all be together until the ranch was paid for. They hadn't paid for all of it. And then, after it was paid

for, it would be divided equally among the three boys. If one of 'em pulled out before the ranch was paid for, they pulled with nothin'. Emmett, the older boy, was the first one to pull out. My husband and my brother-in-law stayed, my father-in-law stayed, and it was that way until my father-in-law died.



Figure 4. Mellie Potter, 1923.

Back then, we had a spring up in Rhodes Canyon. The Grahams took 80 acres to cover the spring and they filed on it, or they bought it—I believe that they bought it and paid for it. When we bought the ranch, we bought that. It was a heavy flowing spring, about a mile and a half above the house, and we had a well at the house. We bought the Bennett place; there was a well there over the hill. We had another spring that we called a seep, out of Seep Canyon. The seep wasn't a real heavy flowing spring. There 'as a guy that made boot leg whiskey and he wondered if he could move his still up there. They told 'im go ahead, so he had a still up there in that canyon. And you couldn't get up there anyway, but horseback. He made his whiskey up there, then he brought it down around here and sold it.

NATURAL ENEMIES

Sooner or later in desert country there is going to be a long, long drought, and when the rainless years come, everybody suffers. The nesters and hoe men go broke first ... The rest just try to stay alive till it rains and they can start over.

—C.L. Sonnichsen, *Tularosa*

Pat Withers

Now, in the wintertime, of course, we wore leather coats and chaps. But we got caught up there in our short sleeves in a snow storm, June the 12th. It come 3 inches of the wettest snow in the forest— three of the wettest, coldest cowboys you ever saw in your life.

...three of the wettest, coldest cowboys you ever saw...

We went up there the day before and gathered and bedded 'em down on the fence line that night. Went up there the next mornin', just as pretty a day as you ever saw. And here come a northern over that hill, just a big ol' black cloud, and went to snowin' and the wind a blowin'; boy, we liked to froze to death—we's in our shirt sleeves.

It was '44, I believe. I don't remember just exactly, but, boy, that's the coldest I've ever been. I finally dug into a big ol' beargrass and got it on fire, and we stood around that as close as we could and kinda dried out and warmed up till Dad—Dad and Dolly had the bedding in the pickup—they went back to turn the rest of the horses out and got the bedrolls and things. And when they caught up with us, we tore up some bedrolls—we were after quilts, tarps, and everything else warm. God, it was cold.

Mellie Potter

The first milk cow drowned. There was a flood came down and she was out there on a big ol' gravel bar—the floods would take out one gravel bar and it would build another one somewhere. Well, the ol' cow was never seen after that flood.

Oh, we had several pretty big floods, and you could hear 'em roarin' a long time before they'd get to the house—sound like wind, way off. And if the rain hit the Red Hills, you could smell the flood long before it got to the house. My husband had to have an operation on a hip that he'd got hurt, and a shearing crew was there, shearin'. They had platforms they put on the ground, and then they sheared on these platforms. He was on crutches at the time; those big ole drops of rain went to falling, and he came to the house. Bessie and he and I were standing there in the door, and I said, "I smell a red flood." He got to teasing me and grinning his nose around: "I don't smell no red flood." "Oh, I do."

Pretty soon there was a wall of water came down, and it was bouncin' so high that you couldn't even see the windmill. That windmill tower was about 40 feet high; the well was down in the canyon. The ol' cow had come in and her calf was in the pen, and for awhile we could see the calf way up in the corner, and we could tell by the looks of the calf that the calf was bawlin'. And the ol' cow would look at us and bawl and look at her calf and bawl.

...a wall of water

Two horses, Ol' Headlight and Button, was in a pasture. Ol' Headlight was a regular smart aleck; when it come to openin' gates, he could open just about any gate. He opened the gates and he let some out, and they were just goin' down the canyon. And he heard the flood comin', so he starts up to go into the tank corral, and he was goin' just as close to the pasture fence as he could. For awhile, we could see the horses. Ol' Button got excited, and he went to rearin' up. Ol' Headlight looked toward the house, and he nickered. You couldn't hear 'em but you could tell. That was when I started bawlin', when Ol' Button jumped up on Ol' Headlight's back and Ol' Headlight almost fell. I said, "He's gonna drowned 'em both." Ol' Headlight just kept as close to the fence as he could get; they went out of sight. The water was bouncin' so high, and the next thing we knew, well, he was up above the tank corral, and Ol' Button was standin' right there by 'im—he had led both of them out of that flood.

We always told our children never ride off into a flood; it don't make any difference how small you think it is, don't ride off into a flood. Well, Margie and Ruth, my niece that was livin' with us at the time, they had been down to Tip Top and they stopped on the canyon bank. Margie said, "I think we can beat the flood." She told Ruth, she said, "If we get in trouble, turn your horse loose and he'll come out." She was ridin' Ol' Headlight. They got into swift water, and Ruth went to tryin' to guide 'im. Margie turned back and yelled at her to turn 'im loose.

Ruth put the reins around the horn and he brought 'em out of that flood. And when they got in, of course, they couldn't get to the barn, and Margie said, "Mother, we did somethin', it was my fault, that we were told not to do," and she told me what they did. I said, "You see, you almost lost a good horse, and," I said, "you almost lost your own lives." The big flood came down right after they got out of the canyon.

A flash flood could just come anytime. And we had one big flood when these guys were shearing that time. There was a big ol' tree that come down the canyon in this flood—huge thing. A limb of that big ol' tree hit the pipe that come across the canyon. Now, pipes were not buried, they were put on guide wires. My brother-in-law was down there and that water came up to where they were shearing. This guy that had the shearing outfit, he got it on the back of his truck—heavy thing—and he was tryin' to manually move that truck. It had six arms for shearers. And Ernest hollered at 'em, he said, "Get out of there before you go down." **"This is all I've got."** He looked at my brother-in-law and he says, "This is all I've got." My brother-in-law said, "I thought I was gonna have to hit 'im and drag 'im out, but he finally came out." That flood took those shearing floors and just laid 'em right up against the truck. That was the only thing that saved the truck, caused the water to run around it.

We had a Three-C camp up at the spring one time. Those guys built up rock walls, and they put wire next to the rock walls to keep water from diggin' into the canyon banks and widening the canyon. This foreman, Ol' Jimmy, came down to the house, and he wanted my husband to go up and see what they had did. He looked at it and he said, "Well it's awful pretty, but," he said, "the first big flood that comes, it's gonna take it out." Well, Jimmy got mad because he thought it was gonna turn that water. Well, a big flood did come down, and they had their camp in a little flat just up out of a canyon. One of those ol' boys grabbin' his French harp, when the water come up around their camp, sat down on his French harp. Oh, boy, they were leavin' camp.

Natalia Lucero DiMatteo

The only really bad time that I can recall is the drought—that one year when the cows climbed into the tank. With the lack of water, cattle were dropping like flies; they were dying. A lot of cattle just weren't getting enough water, they weren't getting enough food. The grass was practically all dead because of lack of water, and there would be cattle far away from the ranch.

A lot of times, cowboys from other ranches would come and tell Dad, "Joe, we found a couple of your cattle are down at such and such a place. We'll go up there and show you." Dad would get into the truck—I don't know what you call those rigs they had that he put in his pickup to lift up cows, make them stand up on their feet again.



Figure 5. José B. Lucero, with Ford Model A (license plate reads 1935).

You know what I'm talking about. It's kind of like a winch with a piece of fabric that goes around their belly. The fabric would go under their belly, and that's the way they would get them up. And then they would take water to them and some alfalfa, just get them back on their feet.

And the drought, I believe, lasted—God, it was a very hard, sad period for us. I really do remember that it got so bad that a lot of cows that had calves—24 little baby calves that had no mother—their mothers died. Dad was trying to give a calf to other cows that had one calf already, and the mother cows would refuse them. They didn't want them at all, they would just push them away with their head. Julie and Izzie more or less kept them alive by feeding them with baby bottles.

Dad would find all these little calves and bring them home. We were feeding them Carnation milk. At that time, there was three canned milks: Pet milk, Carnation milk, and Eagle Brand milk. But it was Carnation milk that we used to buy, just boxes and boxes of cans, grosses of canned milk that Mother would just mix with water. That's what we fed the little calves, just keep on feeding them that way, because they needed something. That was a sad day; that I do recall.

And when it came to the point that there was no point, like Dad said, they couldn't keep them alive, he came to town and notified people that they were going to have the government shoot them; they were going to go ahead and kill 'em. They would pay him a dollar a head. He let

the people **...it came to the point that there was no point**
here know

that they could go up to the ranch and pick up one whenever they would kill the cows. And these 24 little calves—Julie and Izzie had named each and every one of them. I still remember the names of two of them because they were twins—Patootie and Palooka. Can you imagine having to just shoot them?

Then, after they were shot, my dad gave my brother a little hatchet and told him—I would say he was 10 years old—"Check and hit them on the forehead, just to make sure that they're all dead." We could hear them, every time they were shot we could hear. We were standing in the porch and we were just crying, and Mother said, "Well, this is just like losing children of our own." That was really sad, but nothing could be done. So, that's what I remember about the drought—a lot of sick, hungry cows. My dad lost quite a few cattle at that time, maybe, say, between 40 and 50 or maybe more.

Our little calves were killed right there in the corral. They just lined them up, and we could just hear every single shot that was fired. Mother said it was like a shot in one's heart. Izzie and Julie, they were the two oldest ones, they were just crying up a storm. They were the ones who had been feeding the little calves all this time. And then, we had

...like a shot in one's heart.
all these people from town coming

in; they took the calves, practically every single little calf that was killed that day. I imagine there were a lot of them selling meat that might have been from grocery stores at that time, you know. There were exactly 24 little calves that were killed during the drought then, right there in the corrals. We actually saw the little calves after they were killed. And after the people from the government left, they left all the little calves.

People coming in from Las Cruces and other parts of the county, whoever came first, whatever they wanted to take, my dad gave them permission. There was no law that you couldn't do that, you know, give away what the government didn't want. They would tell the cattleman, "Just tell your friends about them, that you don't want to take the trouble to bury them, or we can take them." I have no idea what they would do with cows, where they would kill them. I guess Dad would just take them out to wherever they were.

BM: Was this drought the one that occurred the year that the cows came into the yard when you were sleeping out there?

Yes, it was a screened-in porch, facing east; that's where we slept that night when the cows all came. Our ranch was fenced in by barbed wire, so they even tore down the fence. And that's the way they were coming, facing east, right past us. We were right there within the fence. They broke down the fence, and all of sudden we hear all this mooing going on. We all woke up, "Mama, Daddy!" We saw all these cows going past us, and they were already jumping into the tank. They could jump into the tank so easily because the land right there was kind of sloped up to the tank. Dad had it built that way so that it would go into a slope and the little ones wouldn't have to climb to the edge of the tank. And so, there were calves you wouldn't believe inside that tank.

I remember one incident; it was kind of cool that night. We went with Mother and Dad, and it was the edge of the corrals where a cow had just dropped, she'd just had a baby calf. That night, they just poured coffee down her throat, over and over again—this had to be more or less when cold weather was coming—and she got her back on her feet. That cow lived, so did her calf. I remember Dad building a fire and had this big coffee pot, and they kept giving her coffee. They hated to lose cows because their cattle was their livelihood.

...they kept giving her coffee

Holm O. Bursum III

Erosion control was a very tough thing to deal with. I saved all of our old wagons and fresnos from the ranch. Are you familiar with a fresno? That's all they had, were team- or horse-drawn fresnos, to do any dam work or tank building or erosion control. So, you know it was really not possible to do very much; you did what you really had to for storing what rainwater you could.

Most ranchers are conservationists, by heart and by livelihood—they have to be. My grandfather invented a fresno with wheels on it, and it was just a little faster and more efficient. But anyway, he did lots of tank work, and so we had lots of fresnos. When my father was active on the ranch, not only did he do this pipeline work but he kept somebody on almost full-time with a Caterpillar doing erosion-control work. You know, these arroyos would get 20 feet deep, and it was really

Most ranchers are conservationists

pretty—this was back in the late '40s and early '50s—I can still remember how these diversion dams finally started fillin' up. A lot of these arroyos were unhandy besides, because you were horseback and you couldn't cross 'em; you had ta go up 'til you could get to a more shallow part to cross. You're not just doing it because you're a good guy or because it looks pretty, but it's also practical—you spread this water out, and it grows more grass.

BM: So, when you're talking about erosion control and the arroyos, you mean that you leveled the banks?

Yeah, we'd go in, if an arroyo was runnin' down here. You know, the arroyos all went somewhere, I guess. If you put a diversion dock across it, then that water would hit, and it would spread it out, and it would go out into the pasture. So, you'd create huge flood zones whenever it rained and, boy, that was beautiful to see. You don't ever go horseback or drive out in there because you'd never get out, you know, you'd just sink. But all the grass that grew, it just made these areas beautiful. And so, as I say, ranchers have gotten kind of a bad rap at times on not being conservationists and about the livestock stompin' out some little flower or something that's about to become extinct. On most ranches, and on the one we're talking about, I know firsthand it's in much better shape. I can remember when I was a kid: then you had huge pasture areas, maybe several miles square, where there would be not a blade of grass on it. And it was just because, when you did get some rain, it'd go down the arroyos, and then the wind would come up and dry it out real quick. So, when we built these diversion dams and spread this water out, you would've thought you'da had to go in there and plant, but you didn't. Pretty soon you had grass. First, you had a few weeds; then, you get grass. You know, nature is pretty smart, I guess; Mother Nature's been around a long time.

...that was beautiful to see

Pat Withers

Coyotes is the worst thing in the world for sheep. A coyote, if they get too many in a bunch, they'll kill a calf. Six or seven coyotes get running together, pack up, why, they'll do it when they get thick; and coyotes in a pack of six or eight can kill a deer or a yearling. A yearling, they just finally drag her down. We never had any problem with that here or up yonder, either. We never lost anything to mountain lions or nothing. Nothing but the sheep men had problems; they lost some to coyotes and the bobcats. A bobcat won't bother a cow, but a coyote, if he catches a baby calf, will bite the tail off of it.

Jay and I went horseback one day and we seen this cow: she'd had her calf and she run a little ways from the road. We went on down to the Robinson place and when we come back by, the coyotes had got that baby calf—she come to water and the coyotes got the calf. That's the only one we ever knew that the coyotes got.

Oh, we trapped, yeah, because it was pretty good money in trapping back then. Wayne and I, in '44, we had, I guess, 150 traps set out. Made your own bait—just old urine, coyote urine, or made from some of the glands—and as long as it just stinks like the dickens, well, it was good bait. We trapped coyotes and cats. In two months in the fall, fall of '44, November, December, and January, Wayne and I, we made a little over 500

...it's 500 dollars; now, it's 5 cents. dollars apiece trapping coyotes and cats. Five hundred dollars is, why, it's 500 dollars; now, it's 5 cents. Oh, we'd catch a bunch of coyotes every day, every night. Everybody trapped their own. Bursum never did trap, but they had government trappers; these big ranchers could get the government trapper to come in and trap, but we never did fool with them.

One year, Wayne and Orville Luttrell flew in an airplane. Wayne done the shooting, Orville had the plane. They'd kill coyotes for several people that way. We used a sawed shotgun—we had sawed off about 8 inches of the barrel—twelve gauge. He's still got it. He got a broke leg from it, but he's still got it.

Him and Orville was killing coyotes and cats for a sheep man out in that Magdalena country, and they got after a cat and tried to go in the same hole he went in. Hit a dead-air pocket, and the airplane hit the ground, caught on fire. Wayne hit, drived this right ankle right into that bone and split that bone pretty near up to his knee, and the seat knocked his left ear off. He had his right foot out on the wing, and it never hurt this leg.

Orville had a hole in his forehead about as big as your finger. Knocked Wayne out, but Orville managed to get out—it flattened a vertebra in his back, but he managed to get out. Knocked the landing gear out from under the Piper Cub, and he drug Wayne out to the end of the wing about as far as he could go with him, until the shotgun shells began going off.

The plane burned up. Now, the rancher was on horseback watching them, just riding along, watching them shoot. A neighboring rancher saw the wreck happen, and he never come to the plane to see if they was alive or nothing 'cause it burst into flame. He went in and turned in that they burnt up in an airplane, and that's the first report we got.

Bear Turner was the game warden over at Magdalena, and Clayton Huffs was raised here around Carrizozo. This rancher went to Magdalena and turned it in, and Bear and Clayton went out there. Wayne come to—and he knew both of them, Bear and Clayton, too—and he said the first thing he told him was, "Bear, I used to say you was the ugliest man in the world," he said, "God, you're pretty."

They went in and turned in a report and called the ambulance—he done that on his radio. The ambulance is 26 miles out there, and he made it in 26 minutes; the last 8 miles was right out across the prairie, and he made that 26 miles in 26 minutes. And that old road out of Socorro to Magdalena had some bends in it, not curves. He was flying down the road when he could. They come out here and told Nadine all about it—they didn't have no phone back then—that Wayne had had that wreck. Nadine and

I got in the car and went to **Orville was in the maternity room.** town and asked Mother if

she wanted to go, and she said yes. She had a new Chrysler, new Fraser, and so we got in her car. Nadine, my wife, always said it took me 45 minutes to make that 67 miles, but she looked at her clock wrong—it took 55 minutes. It would run 120; I had it setting on a 100 most of the time. The funny part of it was, Orville was in the maternity room. Yeah, that's the only place they had for him. All the rest of the hospital was full, except the operating room. 'Course, Wayne was in it.

Orville was propped up on his elbows talking to the Aviation Association, the F.A.A., and when I looked in there, 'course, I kind of grinned, and Orville said, "Don't you say it, darn you." Just as soon as Orville got able to fly his plane he come up there and lit. Wayne was out of the hospital, on crutches. They went out and crawled in the plane and took a ride.

We didn't have that much problem, once we got up to the point where we had lots of calves. One of the reasons may have been that we kept back the cats and coyotes pretty heavy a lot of the time, anyhow. We had a couple of trappers that would come in if predation got too bad. We also set traps, because we could make a little money in the wintertime setting a few traps. I know almost all of my cousins set a few here and there, and I did, too. And we'd catch an occasional bobcat, two or three coyotes a year, so on and so forth.



Figure 6. Christopher Columbus Wood, predator control agent, with panther skins, circa 1925.

The major predation that we had were the cats, the panthers preying on the young colts and mules. They loved colts and mules. The horses that we had loved to camp up where the panthers were, so we did quite a bit of panther hunting in the wintertime when the snow was on the ground. We had hounds. We didn't deplete the population down to the extent that there weren't any. Matter of fact, you can check on things now and find out that there's way too many out there. But we did keep the population to the point where we didn't have a major predator problem at any given time. The coyotes were worse on sheep and goats, of course. Bobcats were mostly on sheep and goats, but panthers, they loved mules and young colts.

We'd be all right for a couple of years, then all of a sudden, a young colt would come in and he'd have a great long streak down his back or through the neck where the cat had almost got it down before mama got there. We never did know whether the colts had help fighting off the cats; we never were around when any of this was happening. But on a couple of occasions, we tried to check back and trail them to where this cat had come off this bluff or off this tree limb. It looked like the horses had helped to keep the colt from getting killed—the mother and, I don't know, two or three others, maybe.

Holm O. Bursum III

BM: Did you have any problems with predators?

Yes, that was always a continuing problem. In the old days, we used to employ a trapper full-time. Coyotes are like people: you might have a thousand coyotes but there's only two or three killers out of 'em. Most coyotes only kill for what they want to eat. That kind of a predator really doesn't bother you too much. Well, you'd soon not have it, but you can stand that. But your killers, if they got into where a herd was penned at night, 3 or 4 coyotes might kill 40 or 50 sheep. And you know, they were just killers. But I always felt they were just like people—if you could've eliminated the killers, then you wouldn't have any predator problem. But, of course, you couldn't, so you just had to trap 'em all, or try to, anyway; and you'd never trap 'em all anyway, but it made a big difference. You had ta keep some kind of control all the time in the sheep business, particularly. In the cattle business, well, you didn't have near the problem; you'd lose a calf's tail once in awhile, and once in awhile, if they happened ta get up on a newborn calf, they could get it. But once the calves got any size, well, they could pretty well fight 'em off.

The trappers had ta really be smart; they had ta be smarter than a coyote, which is pretty smart. A lot of people tried trapping, you know, and they didn't ever catch anything. But a good trapper thought just like a coyote. It was really kinda fun. I used ta go around with this one, once in awhile, just to see how he did it, and he wouldn't even let me get near his trap. He'd use the different scents and then set this trap; and he'd wear gloves and he had scent on his gloves. He'd clean it and wipe any tracks—use some kind of a bush ta brush that. You had to know where the coyote was gonna go, so that he'd come across your trap. But they knew.

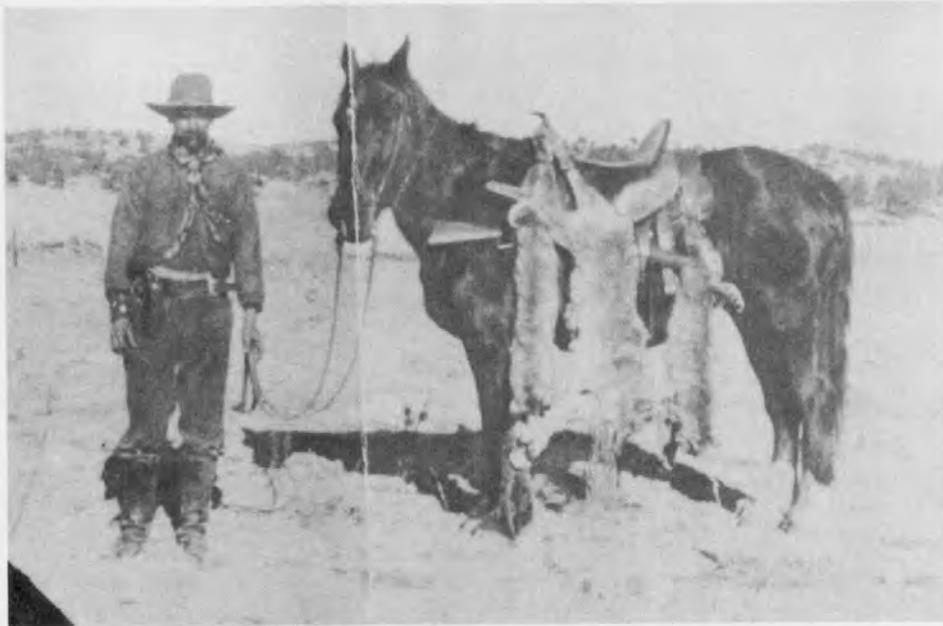


Figure 7. A.B. Helms with wolf, bobcat, and coyote, near Magdalena, N.M., 1915.

BM: Did you have any trouble at all with mountain lions?

We used to, in the Ozanne area and that part of the country, 'til the Army kicked us out. We had mountain lion problems. There was a lot of mountain lions and the government, at that time, had a trapper that worked that area, a mountain lion trapper. He was on the payroll and that was his job. He trapped quite a few. They were clever: one time, by Garden Springs, we found a deer that had been killed by a mountain lion, and we backtracked it. We found where the lion killed the deer, all the blood; he bled 'im there. And then, they're strong, you know? He apparently got the deer by the neck and slung his body up over his back, because all of a sudden, there were only mountain lion tracks. We tracked 'im, oh, I don't remember how far,

wasn't too far, maybe a couple hundred yards, where he'd gone into some bushes. He put 'im back down where he was comfortable and started eatin' 'im or fed the rest of his crew.

In the late '50s and in the early '60s, the predator problem got real bad. We had a trapper out there and he didn't even sell the pelts. He hung them along the highway fence at one of the main gates, and he sure had a lot of pelts hangin' there at one time. That was about the worst year for the predators.

Mellie Potter

Eagles, they're bad about kids. Those old eagles go around up in the sky. My husband used a slingshot a lot, and he could pret' near put a rock right where he intended for it to go. The eagles would swoop down and stick those old talons in this little ol' kid. And those little kids, if the eagle was not got away from them in time, would die such an agonizing death—they would just bleat and bleat and bleat; their bodies would swell up. Eagle talons are just as poison to them. These people that go on and on about preservin' eagles and such as that, all they would have to do would be to watch some little ol' kids die from eagle talons goin' into 'em. They don't have to go in deep.

JO: Goodness. Were eagles on your ranch the most serious form of predation, or were there other animals?

Eagles, coyotes, panther, bobcats. We had a big old workhorse, old Crook—it was back on the range. Riley Wood had his hounds out, he had been trailin' a panther that had gotten into their goats over around their place. But the panther was so far in lead of him that the dogs or Riley hadn't spotted the panther yet. He was about 8 or 10 miles from our place, and he came back in and told us that a panther had jumped a horse. And he said, "He was up in the tree. I think he waited 'til the horse come

under the tree and jumped
Eagles, coyotes, panther, bobcats.
down and grabbed him

around the neck." Well, old Crook, one of the workhorses, whenever he took a notion to pitch, he could make a good rider really do all he could to stay on him. Potsy was huntin' for him and found him, but he already had worms in his neck on both sides where this panther had got through. He found where the panther got him. Riley had found that, also. Boy, he had really tore up the country. Potsy brought him in, put him in pasture, and went to doctorin' him. He had to get all of those worms out and use creosote to kill the worms. Those worms had already eat clear through on that horse's neck.



Figure 8. Joe Pete, Sr., and Christopher Columbus Wood with skin from the last bear killed in the San Andres Mountains, 1927.

BUCK BRUSH AND YUCCA APPLES

People stick to ranching because they love the feel of a quick little horse moving intently after cattle, or the smell of greasewood after summer rain or new-cut alfalfa on a spring morning, or the stretch of damp rawhide as they work at braiding a riata, or the look of a mother cow as she trails her dusty way back to her calf after a long walk to water. People stick to it because they enjoy the feel and smell and sound of things, and because they share those mostly unspoken loves with other people they can trust as being somewhere near to decent.

—William Kittredge, *A Hole in the Sky*

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

If you've got a bunch of cows, it's a lot easier to run one operation than it is two, particularly if you have a small operation. You can't get too spread out—we'll say 15 to 35 or 40 sections, that's small in numbers—because you're not going to grow many cows per section. All right, average 6 to 12 cows per section, whatever, Animal Unit Months or Animal Unit Years, however you want to look at it; this is the BLM's criteria. They'd come out and take a look at your ranch and say, "You've got enough grass for five head of cows per section," or seven head of cows per section, or 10 head of cows, or 12 head of cows. It was reevaluated almost yearly, and it is still. BLM checks on people pretty close and pretty regular.

We never had any major problem with our allotment. The man'd come out and look at our place and he'd say, "Well, you're doing a good job feeding. Keep up the good work and I'll write you a permit for X number of cattle." And it seldom went very much higher than our average or very much lower than our average. It usually went around 250 to 256, somewhere along in there, for the whole ranch, and this was **...keep up the good work.** 20 sections. Dad always undercut that by a certain percent. He never did run a full number of cattle. If he was allowed 250, his herd was usually 235/240. He wanted that extra little bit of security. He said, "If you take care of the ranch, it'll take care of you. If you overstock it, it won't." And that basically is all it amounts to. Most of these ranchers know that, most of them do it that way.

Mellie Potter

They sent guys out here, out in the mountains, that had no more idea of what consisted of overgrazing or anything at all like that. The guys stayed with us and got horses and went up around the salt troughs. Well, nothin' grows around the salt troughs because they tromp everything out, eating salt and what have you. And this ol' boy says, "Hey, you're gonna have to cut way down," he said, "there's not a thing around here." Potsy says, "Boy, what in the world's the matter with you?" he says, "don't you know that nothin' grows around salt troughs, where everything is tromped out?" "Yeah, but there should be somethin' growing around here." Potsy said, "No, there's not anything growing around here because its tromped out, before it has a chance to grow." he said, "you've got to get out on the range before you know whether its overgrazed or not." So, they went out over the range, and he still didn't know much more than he did before. **...ignorant, college-educated nitwits...** He was lookin' for a lot of grass.

We had no whole bunch of grass, ours was mostly brush—mostly brush was what the goats ate. And they was some of the most ignorant, college-educated nitwits you ever saw in your life.

Alice Gililand Smith

I raised orphan calves. I had one calf, I remember, back in 1922. We didn't have any rain at all and the cows were poor. And we cut bear grass: we took these little daggers and we'd burn 'em, had the dagger machine there that we would cut 'em up, you know, and put 'em in the wagon and haul it out for 'em to eat. And, I had a steer calf that was a dogie that was down, and I'd have to tail him up. Now, I don't know whether you know what tailin' up is, but you get ahold of their tail and lift 'em up and get 'em on their hind legs, and then you give 'em a chance to get on their front legs and get 'em standin'. And I'd have to tail him up every morning and feed him and take care of him, or finally get 'im on his feet, you know.

Holm O. Bursum III

BM: Did your cattle prefer certain kinds of range or vegetation?

Oh, I guess they had their preference, but, you know, anything that was born out in this part of the country, they were just like their owners—they had to eat whatever was available.

In your good years, when you had lots of blue grama, well, they thought they'd died and gone to heaven. Usually, when you have a lot of blue grama, you have a lot of chamise and sage and even tumbleweeds, which nobody likes, but they are very good livestock

...they thought they'd died and gone to heaven.

feed when they're green, when they first come up. Livestock are just like people: when they had lots of moisture, they had lots of food, and when they didn't, well, then they had to walk a little further and forage for whatever they were going to eat. And at times, if it was really a drouth, then we would have to do some supplemental feeding. Like I was telling you, the water system helped the livestock to where we really didn't run out of feed anymore. We ran about the same number of livestock after we put in our 300 miles of pipeline and had waters spaced about every 2 miles. We still run the same number of cattle, but we were able to spread them out and make much better use of our vegetation, so we didn't run out of feed.

That was in the early to middle '50s and late '50s. You know, it was like I was telling you, even when you didn't have good rains or proper rains, we always had lots of old feed. Even the least amount of moisture over the growing period, you got roughly the same amount of new grass as you had old grass—inch of old grass, you got an inch of new grass. If you had ten inches of old grass, you got ten inches of new grass. It worked that way.

Chamise, of course, was excellent at the right time of year; livestock eat the seed off that. The yucca plants, if you had moisture at the right time, had a fruit shaped like apples that the livestock just went crazy

...like kids going after ice cream cones.

over—made 'em just like kids going after ice cream cones. Wouldn't happen every year, but if the rains fell just right, the yucca plants would bloom and you'd have a long, tall shoot with like apples on it. And the livestock *love* that, those apples. It was really somethin' to see 'em. If you're movin' 'em from one pasture to another and you had a lot of yuccas there, oh, they were like kids, you know, just runnin' as fast as they could, tryin' to beat the other one to the yucca.

I don't remember all the grasses that we had, there were lots; they were all native grasses. There was Johnson grass, which was good when it was young—not too good when it got old, too tough—and there was one of the salt grasses. I can't think of the name of the other common grasses out there, but we were primarily grama grass. You only had grama grass if you had really taken good care of your country. Grama grass wasn't as hardy as some of the other grasses, and if you kept it eaten down too much, you would finally lose it.

On the eastern part of the ranch we had mostly blue grama grass, and, of course, that's your best grass. If you take good care of your range, you have lots of blue grama. You have to be careful with grama grass because you can eat it all off and, lot of times, ruin an area for grama. But, it's very good. And then, lots of Johnson grass. The west half the ranch was real sandy country—that's in the Chupadera Draw area, which we've always referred to as the Jornada del Muerto. Whenever you read about the Jornada, it always sounds like the so-called 90-mile Jornada del Muerto strip ended before it got there. The Jornada del Muerto road actually started just north of Fort Selden and went up the east side of the river up by Black Mesa.

The sandy area, at least on our place in the Jornada del Muerto, that blow sand area always has a lotta chamise. That part of the country there used to be a lot of blow sand, a lot of sand storms. But we found out that the sand, if you took care of it properly, you ended up with grass that lasted longer in a drouth than in the higher country that was prettier. The ugly country was longer lasting. If you stocked it right, whenever you get a rain in the sand, the rain would immediately soak

The ugly country was longer lasting.

right in. It never stood in puddles, never ran off, 'cause the sand is very porous. So, your grass in the sandy area had long roots, and in the tighter country where your gramas were, well, the same rain that in the sand country soaked in 3 feet deep, maybe only soaked in 4 or 5 inches where the soils were tighter. There, your grass is a lot more shallow-rooted, so in a drouth or in a period where you go a long time between rains, your ground starts drying out, and when it finally gets to the end of the roots, well, then your grass dies, just like it does when you don't water your lawn. In the sandy area, I don't know whether it dried at a different rate or not, but anyway, it took it a lot longer to dry 3 feet down, and so your grass lasted longer there in periods of drouth.

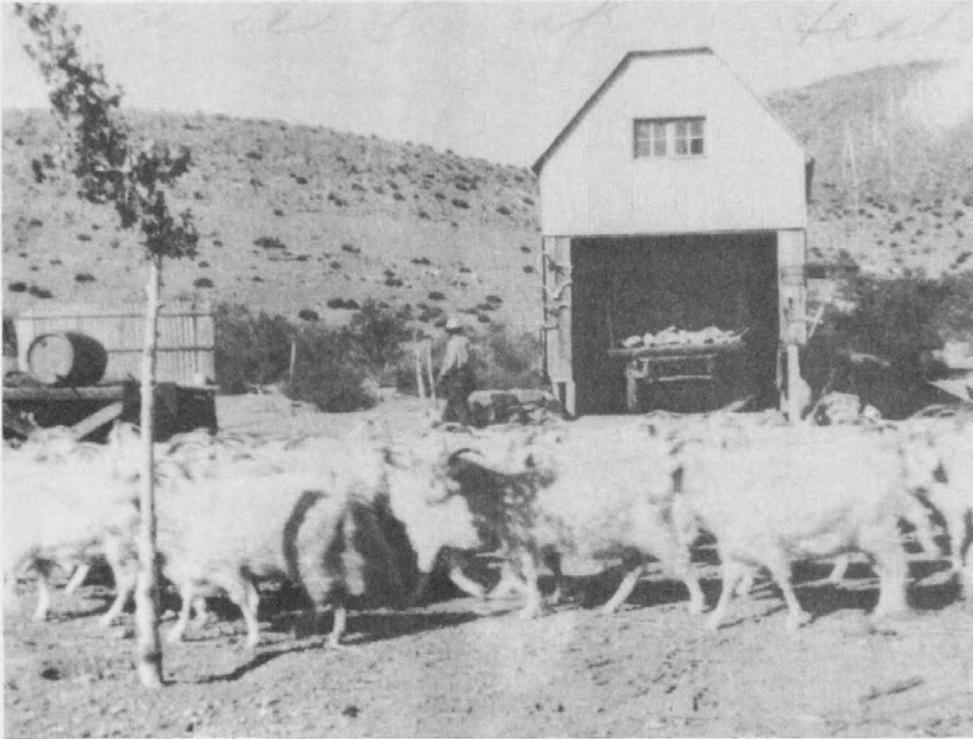


Figure 9. Frank Andregg with Angora goats at the Frank Andregg Ranch, circa 1940.

WELL-BRED BILLIES

Verena Andregg Mahaney

Well, there was quite a bit of grass and, oh, there was a lot of browse for them goats. I don't know the name of all the weeds that they would eat, but there was a lot of weeds—it was pretty green in the summertime. In the wintertime they'd eat other browse, like buck brush, some sagebrush—you know, there's two or three different kinds of sagebrush—but the buck brush was the main thing for 'em, I think. They'd also eat the leaves off of ocotillos, and they'd eat mesquite beans. There was a lot of mesquite out there and a lot of greasewood, and there was a bush—some called it chaparral and some called it just catclaws—and they would eat the leaves off of it. We did have some holly out there, but they didn't eat that. We'd pick the berries off the holly—elderberries is what they called 'em.

The holly and elders are different, but their leaves are shaped a lot alike, but we called it holly berries. Then we found out it was elderberries, could eat 'em, and we'd pick 'em and make jelly and syrup and stuff. But it was pretty green. There was a **...everything looked green and grassy.** lot of cedar trees or juniper, and around the watering holes there was cottonwoods. Down around the old Indian Springs, there was cottonwoods and willows and different kinds of trees. Over on Uncle John's place, there was trees, cottonwoods, and right there at Uncle Frank's place, there was a couple o' young cottonwoods—they weren't too old, so they must have planted them there. They were pretty tall, maybe 10 or 15 feet tall, but they were kindly young. But for the goats to eat, there was plenty, I'm sure, 'cause everything looked green and grassy. I do believe the place over the hill from Uncle Frank's was greener 'cause it was deeper with grass. That was a different kind of valley, you know, it had more grass. Now, Walt Baird's cattle would come up grazing around Grandma's place, too. They didn't have goats down there too much, 'cause I think the cattle took more feed than the goats.

Mellie Potter

Our herd was around 2,000 goats or better. Back in those days, they was runnin' a lot more than that—that was before the Taylor Grazing Act. A goat is not a grass animal, particularly. When grass is startin' young and green, they will nibble a little bit, but they don't strip anything. They take a bite of somethin' here and a bite over there, oh, first one thing, then another, that way. We had buck brush and mahogany. Buck brush grew almost as high as a tree, and they would get their front feet and start goin' up, just as high as they could. And sometimes they would get a foot hung in the fork, and their foot would hang right in there, and they couldn't get out. They would hang there; they would bleat. Sometimes they wouldn't be heard, and they'd hang there until they died. Ya see, you have bells on your

...the sound of the bells... goats: you had a leader and you had two on the side, and you had two drags, the last ones. And the herders would get used to the sound of the bells, and they would know if they lost somethin', if they lost a bell. They each had a different sound, each of those bells.



Figure 10. Alice Andregg and her brother, John Furry. Frank Andregg Ranch, 1934.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

They run the goats in open range. The only time they were fenced up is when they brought 'em in at night and bed 'em down. They kind of drove 'em in where the water was. They're eatin' all day, you know, and they don't want anything to eat after they get in. They just want water, and then they can go to bed. They were really easy to take care of. They did have to have a lead goat. Most generally, Uncle Frank had milk goats for lead goats. They were the best kind of lead goats and, 'course, we'd milk them in the morning and then milk 'em when they come in. Your milk goat is gonna be milked in the morning, and she's gonna be milked in the evening, so she knows about when she's supposed to get home to be milked. So, she'll lead 'em out, you know; she's gonna go out and graze all day. But, she knows she's gotta be back in to get milked, so she's gonna come back in, and the goats will follow her. **...easy to take care of.**

The only time I can remember any goats dying is when they were born; that was the only time that he lost anything, when they were born strange. He had one was born with six legs, and one time, one was born with a head and a half, and they just didn't live—they were freakish. That's the only loss that I can remember, unless it would be the time he did lose an ol' billy, but he was just old age and died. We didn't eat too much goat meat, because that's what made the livin' and you didn't eat it.

Dolly Helms Onsrud

At one time, we had about a thousand head of nanny goats, after they had been taken off the kidding ground, and we had 'em up there about two months. We'd turn the kids loose with the herd and get them used to staying with the herd, because little kids that have been took off the toggle line and out with the herd, they'd take a notion to go back to the house. They were just like a bunch of mischievous kids, you know. One would cut off and the other—there would be maybe 10 or 15 cut off—and the next thing you know, they would be maybe 100 or 500, just lined up to go back home. **...mischievous kids...**

When they were first born, you tie 'em on the toggle line with a little piece of rope about 14 inches long. You tied two of these pieces of rope in a swivel. We made the swivel out of little pieces of wood about maybe a half inch thick and 8 inches long. You put a hole in each end of the stick or the toggle and you tie your rope in that where it would swivel, and you tie one end of this to the toggle line.

We'd run wire on the ground and tie this rope to the wire, and then you would tie the other end of the toggle rope to their front foot. The mothers would come right back to this little kid on a toggle line. At one time, we had 600 on a toggle line.



Figure 11. Kids toggled at Potter Ranch in the shade of large rocks.

You take a little kid, sometimes they can't find their mother—most of the time they can. The mother will hunt them up herself. Once in a while, you get one that can't keep up with its mother, so you pick this little one up and take it to that old nanny. You can't do this very long because instead of her going to that kid, she'd come to you to see if you got her baby. And then, when you turn 'em off the toggle line, take 'em out with the herd, you have to teach 'em to follow that herd because they're in their own little world. You turn 'em loose in the corral, then they stay in the corral; they decide to go back to the corral, they're gone, they'll just go. You have to teach 'em to follow that herd.

They're the most playful little things you ever saw. We used to go out in the corrals after we'd turn 'em off the toggle line, and they'd come up and chew on your hair and chew on your ears, jump up on your shoulders, and just play with you, mm-hm.

The goats we had were mohair; you sheared 'em twice a year. The grown goats were mature wool. The first clip, the first shearing from a young goat is virgin wool—real fine and just snow white.

Well, in the spring of the year, when the nannies start kidding, a lot of the time, a freak storm will hit you, and it'll just freeze those babies, freeze 'em just like takin' a gun and killin' 'em. A cow has a better chance of survivin'. A cow will lick a calf 'til it's dry. If she'll get that baby dry after it's born, why, it's all right. A nanny goat is hard to handle in the spring because you shear just before you kid. Then they're cold and they're havin' new babies—they don't want to stay with one 'til it gets up to suck. If it can get up and suck, then it's fine.

Mr. Dillard had three goat camps—in the mountains and down on the edge of the Malpais, the lava bed. He had his shearing sheds down there, too. The shearing shed was built up high off of the ground. The wool bags were just big burlap bags; each one held 500 pounds of hair. They had holes in the floor of this high-rise shearing shed, with their wool sacks stretched over this round hole in the floor, and wagon wheel rims on that to hold it up. As they sheared the goats, they'd push that mohair off in these big bags. After it got full, they'd tromp it down in the bag, and it would hold 500 pounds of mohair. The sacks were at least 6 or 8 feet long, and real big around.

One was built against the Malpais, the lava beds. Their holdin' corrals come right into a little pen, up into the shearing shed, and they'd have three or four men shearing at one time. When they would shear one goat and turn it out loose on the other side of the shed, why, they'd just pull one in there, yeah. They handled their own goats. They had a little motor-powered turnbuckle that had belts, big belts, and pulleys on it. Goats were sheared twice a year. They'd pull one up on a table—it's kinda like a tilting chute for branding a calf—they'd pull these goats up on that.

You started on the **...one great big beautiful snow-white mat.** back leg and you sheared inside the legs, you know, just start inside the legs. As you sheared it, you'd lay the wool back. It would all come out on one great big beautiful snow-white mat. It was just gorgeous.

Mellie Potter

The first part of March is when we started shearing. That lasted, oh, it depended a lot on weather, all the way from a week to sometimes two weeks. My husband sheared for other people; I went and cooked. When he got through shearin' for other people, we came home, and that was time to start kidding.



Figure 12. Mellie and Uel (Potsy) Potter at Henderson Ranch, 1925.

JO: You said shearing sometimes depended on the weather. Were you not able to shear if it had been raining or snowing?

No, you can't, because the hair's wet, and you cannot sack that hair wet; it will mold. Besides that, it makes the hair heavier, and buyers don't like wet hair—they cut the price on it real drastic.

The nannies are all cut out from the muttuns; they're put in a herd to themselves on the bed ground. There is wires stretched all across on the bed ground, and there is toggles. Each kid has it's own little box, a little shed. For instance, this is a board, here: you have a brace and bit and you drill holes in this, in each end. And then, there's a short rope that you run through here. There's a knot in it to keep it from goin' through this hole. Then, this is a leather strap that goes around the kid's leg and it's tied. This other one is tied to the wire that goes across. Now, the kids are toggled where they can go in and out of this box. If they get too much sun too early, well, it isn't good for 'em at all, so they can go in this little shed.

JO: Did almost all the ranches have sheds built for all the little kids?

Oh, yes, some had metal ones. The Army had these metal caps up there on the top of some of their tents, and the ranchers bought some of those. And a little ol' kid could go in and out. With them, there was a hole, but when we made the wooden ones there was no hole, just the whole front of it. The little sheds was turned to where the evenin' sun wouldn't shine in on 'em. The sheds were built in a V-shape: the front is open with boards across the back. Each nanny knows her own kid's bleat. The nannies are turned loose; they have already had their kids. Then, of a mornin' they will be herded together, and they would be taken off where they can graze. And then, in the afternoon, they come in. They have no herder with 'em, but they will come in to their kids to feed them. The nannies who have not had their kids yet, they will be taken out, and if they get way back—they take the kid by their four feet and they're tied around the nanny's neck with the blade of the amole daggers—if they're cut off, those blades will make a string. So, that's the way she brings her kid in. It doesn't hurt 'em.

One thing that you have to be very careful of is these big old red ants. We had a lot of them. If you put a little ol' kid in close to those red ant dens, they will kill a kid. They'll sting it to death. And then, if one is weak, **They'll sting it to death.** you had to watch and see whether it's gonna stand up and suck the nanny. If it didn't, you had to go and hold the kid up to where it could suck. Sometimes, the nanny won't own her kid, and you have to tie her up.

They're pretty self-sufficient in givin' birth to their babies—that is, if you let your nanny be old enough to have a kid. Some people would allow a young nanny to breed too early. Lots of times, the kid would have to be taken or the nanny would die, if it's too young to have a kid. She's never very much good after she has a kid too young.

Now, occasionally, we did have a nanny that would have cancer. Some of the guys, when they was cullin', would sell those nannies. We didn't; we killed 'em and burned their carcasses, because those goats were generally used for food. Now, they said there was no danger. To us, we would not put on the market what we wouldn't use ourselves, so we never put one of those on the market for food. We just took 'em off down the canyon, killed 'em, and put a lot of brush over 'em. They thought it might transmit from one animal to another, so as soon as they found one, why, she was disposed of.

Sometimes kids would be born at night. The nanny and kid would have to be taken—the kid would be toggled and the nanny would be shown where her kid was. The kids was tied on these wires and, every so often, the wires were stomped down so as they wouldn't be pulled. You had to kinda' watch how you walked. If you didn't, you'd trip yourself on a wire. And after a kid got to a certain age—all the way from a month to two months old, somethin' like that—they were turned loose with the nanny. Then, of a mornin' the nannies and kids were separated. The kids was kept in the corral, and the herder took the nannies out where they could graze. And then, the nannies would be taken, oh, quite a ways; then the herder would come back in. The nanny would come back in to her kid, and all of the din of the kids a-bleatin' and the nannies bleatin', huntin' for mama and mama huntin' for baby.

Sometimes, the wind would get started blowin'. That wasn't too awfully bad, 'til the dirt would get to rollin', and the little ol' kids, they would get so much dirt in their eyes that their eyes would get sore and

'til the dirt would get to rollin'

water. Most of the time the kids would go in their little shed for protection, but sometimes they would get enough dirt in their eyes, why, they'd catch the nanny and milk into the kid's eyes to wash their eyes out. And sometimes, they would fix salt water to wash their eyes. Most of the time, the milk would take care of it. Even babies is taken care of that way.

After the kids got big enough to begin to graze a lot or a little bit, the kids was taken one way and kept out, at first, two or three hours. Then they was brought back, and they was penned up. The nannies would be taken out another way—they would come in on their own.

The billy goats were turned loose after the breeding process was finished. They were turned loose to an area to themselves, and then, later on, they were put with the herd. My mother-in-law wasn't used to the ranch. She was standin' in the kitchen door one day, she said, "Jim, there's a billy goat in that herd." "Yeah," he said, "I know." "Well, look Jim, there's another one." "Yeah," he says, "I know it." "Well, look Jim, there's another one." "Yeah, ol' woman, I know it." "Well," she said, "won't there be some kids when you don't want 'em?" He said, "No, there won't be any kids when we don't want 'em." "Well," she said, "why won't there?" "Because," he said, "the billy goats won't bother the nannies now."

She stopped with her mouth gaped open. She said, "I'd be ashamed of myself, if I was a man, not **"I'd be ashamed of myself, if I was a man..."** to have as much control over myself as a billy goat had." He got a little grin on his face, he got up, and he walked off down to the shed.



Figure 13. Uel (Potsy) and Mellie Potter with daughter Marjorie and Angora goats, circa 1929.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

Usually, the buyers'd come into Tularosa and check with R.D. Champion, the man that stored all the mohair. He had a big warehouse. We brought it in, and he'd put it in his warehouse. Then the wool buyers came in, and they said, "Okay, we'll give you so much a pound," and he sold it.

Your finest hair is your kid hair, up to a year old, the first clipping that comes off—that gets the highest price. In 1935 or '36, when we bought those goats, we sheared twice. In 1937, we sheared again, and then, after the second shearing in 1937, they came along and said, "We'd like some of your mohair." Before that, we couldn't give it away—they didn't have any use for more of it than they had in stock

...Hitler began to mess around...

already. But, due to the fact that in 1936, Hitler began to mess around over there, by '37, they finally caught up with him, and they said, "Hey, we need this mohair for making this and that and something else." They started buying it, 18 cents a pound. For the best quality mohair, we got 18 cents a pound. That was the first batch we sold.

We were paying for storing four clippings. Things were cheap back then. Our storage probably didn't run \$100, maybe \$200 at the most. I don't know what it was; it couldn't have been much.

We still had horses and mules, and we sold a few horses here and there, and we put those mules to work, and we sold mules for \$400 a pair. We managed to live through all the rest. We didn't spend very much money. We did things like that until times began to get a little

...we didn't have grass.

better as the war got closer. But we were just coming out of the Depression during that period of time. We were also coming out of an extreme drought. That's why we sold the cattle and bought goats. We had brush, but we didn't have grass.

JO: I was curious about that, because up north the drought hit very, very hard in the '30s.

Everybody had a drought there in that period of time. Oklahoma had it, Texas had it, we had it, too. That was back in the dust bowl—and yes, we did—1933-1936, there wasn't enough rain to make a mud puddle. That was the reason why we went to goats. We sold 2-year-old muttons to the sheep men who worked selling their sheep wool at that time. We sold to them so their herders would have something to eat, because they didn't want them eating their good sheep, which was reasonable.



Figure 14. Joe Pete Wood, Jr., 1948.

Mellie Potter

During the war, Roosevelt bought I don't know how many million pounds of Turkish hair. He put it on the market in the States for, I believe, 10 cents a pound. We couldn't sell ours. We had four clips of hair stored in the warehouses at Roswell, at Bondit and Bakers; we couldn't sell it. We couldn't raise it for 10 cents a pound. But, he bought it, I think he said to keep Germany from buyin' it.

The kids' hair is real fine and soft, and just most any kind of material could be made—bedspreads and clothing. There was so much hair put onto the market—the upholsterin' in cars, on couches and chairs, and all such as that was made from mohair.

We got in debt up to here. We borrowed money from the bank to get by on and operating expenses. That's when you learn how to make sweet pickles out of dagger stalks, and prickly pear jelly, and oh, just a lot of things. You could even take prickly pear apples and burn the stickers off of 'em and eat 'em. We went ahead and sheared and hauled the mohair over at Bondit and Bakers—there was no storage here in Tularosa. Some people took theirs to El Paso. We took ours to Roswell.

JO: I thought some people stored at Champion's, here in Tularosa?

We did some, but we didn't do no whole lot after we found out how he was gettin' buyers. One certain one—he was from Uvalde, Texas—he was pawnin' our hair off on the warehouses where they was buyin' hair to work up. He was sellin' it off as Texas hair, and we were gettin' way low prices for it. We had three clips of hair stored all at one time—that was a year and a half. When we finally did sell, we sold for 10 cents a pound, and that was about what it took to pay the bank off and buy groceries to last about six months.

People out in there were quite isolated. If we needed help, we could call on a neighbor for two or three days. There wasn't any money exchanged 'cause nobody had any money to pay with, but we, likewise, went and helped that neighbor. Some of the work my husband did, he was paid for. He went from ranch to ranch and sheared. Lester Greer at Salinas Peak, he got a shearin' outfit. He'd always sheared by hand, and he came by and was watchin' us one day and said, "I've been thinkin' about buyin' me a shearin' outfit and quit shearin' by hand." He looked at my husband, and he said, "providin' you'll come and help me set it up." He said, "Okay." So he went when Lester got all of his stuff and helped him set it up. And then he went for about three years or more and helped Lester shear.

JO: Did the drought that you had mentioned occur just one year?

One. That was along about in 1926, I think, when they were havin' all of the dust storms in Oklahoma, Texas, all around in there. And you know, we had so much dust out there that you could just jiggle a bush, and that dust would fly. We didn't know what was causin' the dust, but we later learned about these storms. Later, in Oklahoma, we were talkin' to a man that went through the dust storms. There was great big tanks, like earthen tanks, and he was talkin' about that and he said, "Some people are callin' those things buffalo wallows," he said, "but they were not. Those was farms. The wind just went in there and swooped that dirt out." He said, "I know; I was here."

ROUNDUP SHOP TALK

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

The Taylor Grazing Act, which came into effect in about '32 or '34, hadn't even been thought of in '15 and '16. That was when they more or less began what we now look at as BLM properties. It was all government land at the time, but, in a sense, free land. In other words, somebody over here said, "Well, I'd like to graze that little plot of ground over there," and if no one objected, they took it and grazed it for awhile. I assume that's what happened in 1915 and '16 or '17 or '18, when they came down here in winter, down here on the flats. The fact is, it was still open range, and they just brought the cattle out of the mountains and dug a few holes to find a little water and let them eat what they could find. That's what Uncle Amnon told me later on. My father wasn't here during that period of time; he was in the service. Amnon said that it got so dry out there that there wasn't any forage, so they brought them out of the mountains and wintered them near Tulie Peak, then took them back the next spring.

We had about 10 or 15 branding irons. They were all shaped about the same, with a little crook on the end. Certain people were good at branding; others, like me, wasn't. My cousin was one of the branders. Howard Wood was a very good brander; Sonny Wood was a very good brander. To my knowledge, nobody out in that part of the country used anything but a running iron. The only stamp irons I ever encountered were my son-in-law's —that's the first time I ever encountered any real stamp irons in use. I've seen them a couple of times, but we didn't use them. You had someone else that was a good fire tender—I was one of them. If I didn't have to tie down, or hold and tie down, whichever the case may be when I was younger, I was a fire tender. You put your branding iron in a pile of fire. You watch your branding irons and make sure that they're beginning to get hot. When they get red, they're ready to go. If they get too hot, then you've got to get them cooled down a little bit before you hand them to the man that's branding, because, well, you don't want to burn all the way through the hide—you want to just take the hair off and singe the hide.

**...nobody...used anything
but a running iron.**

I learned real quick when I was about 10 years old. They sent me to a neighbor's branding operation, and I helped them with the roundup. And then, when it got time to do the branding, they built the fire, and they told me, "Now, you tend to it," so I learned real quickly. Some of them were going to get too hot, and some of them were going to be too cold, and they didn't like it if you handed them cold

...you learn by experience,

iron. No, you learn by experience, just like everything else on a ranch. It doesn't take long to get a lot of experience in whatever you're doing. If you were roping from the horses, you used certain people. Frank Martin was one of the prime ropers in our part of the country, and so was Mr. Charlie Hardin. If we were in a big, tight enclosure or corral, we usually walked in with ropes in our hands. If we let some of them get too big, then sometimes we had to use a snubbing post on them, but we usually did it by hand. We usually ran it in spring, and your average wouldn't probably exceed 250 to 300 pounds. But occasionally, in the fall, we'd let some of the spring calves go, and they'd get pretty heavy by then, 600 to 700 pounds on some of them. You don't just walk up and catch one of them. You have to catch them by the heels and stretch them out good. One roper and two tie-downs probably would be the way that we could work it. It depended a lot on how many you had. If you had seven or eight people, you could run up to two ropers, if you needed to. We branded with a lot less than that.

Usually, we did roundup early in the morning, depending on when we got back to the corral or wherever we were taking them. If it was lunch time, we'd stop and eat. If it wasn't, we'd go to work, build a fire, and start branding. And then, whenever lunch came, we'd stop and have a little bite to eat and go back to work until it was over—until then or dark. You always did all of your work at one time. If you'll bear with me, I'll try to run through the total operation. You catch a calf, and you lay it down and tie it, or someone holds it, either way; it depends on the number you've got and how large your calves are. But, if you've got a pretty good number of people and small calves, two men can hold the calf down real easy. One man would hold the head bent back over the shoulder so that it couldn't kick loose. The other man gets one hand on the upper hind leg and puts his boot heel down underneath the lower hind leg and pushes with his foot. This spreads the animal out. Now, you're gonna lay it on its right side on most occasions, because most brands in this part of the country, that I'm familiar with, are left-hand brands. Then you take your pocket knife, and you lop an ear here or an ear there, depending on what your ear mark is. Then you take your branding iron and you put your brand on it. And if it's a bull, you castrate it. You daub it; you dehorn it; you daub there; turn it loose. That's it.

If it's a small calf, you dehorned with a knife, and then you just burn a little bit up there, and it's done. It takes experience to learn when you've got your burn deep enough so that the horn won't come back. Sometimes they will regrow if you don't burn it good enough, but this is mostly just horn; this is not flesh. We used to have long irons but they weren't crooked or anything; they just had a big knob on the end of them. You just take it, sock it to that horn area, draw it back, turn the head over, and do the same on the other side.



Figure 15. Branding cattle at the José B. Lucero Ranch, circa 1931–1936. José Lucero at right.

I think, originally—and this is just personal opinion—on the larger ranches they probably would tell their people, “You put a notch on each one of those calves so it will be identified as ours, and later we’ll brand.” Okay, this is where the ear marks period started. Then, during the roundup, if you saw this calf with its mother, you’d know that it requires a certain brand, and it belongs to a certain person. This also kept some people from doing too much rustling, if you will. Now, I think it’s more habit than anything else. But, there is a side effect of this. If you have a group of cattle and you’re selling or buying, and you’ve got a brand inspector, which you have to have when **...more habit than anything else.** you’re moving cattle, that man can look at those ear marks and he can tell what brand he’s supposed to be looking at. It’s a lot easier to find an ear mark in the wintertime than it is the brand. If he’s in doubt as to what the animal’s brand is, he can say, “That should be so-and-so, but let’s put him over there and we’ll check him in a few minutes.” Then he goes over and feels, if he can’t see the brand at all, or sometimes they have to shear them.

In the earlier years, we just drove them from our place to Engle, a 26 mile drive, stopped about half way the first night and went on in the next day. In the later years, in the late '40s, early '50s, we trucked them. The buyers would come in, and they'd say, "I'll have a truck here in X number of days from now at a certain time." I'm not sure what happened in '46 or '47 because I was in the Navy, but we were still driving them to Engle in '48 and, I believe, '49 and '50. So, it would have been '51 or '52 when dad finally had a truck come in and pick up his calves. The buyers varied from year to year. One or two times we had the same man come out and buy the whole herd, two years in a row. But most of the time, it was a case of first come, first serve, so to speak. And if the first guy on the ranch offered what dad thought was right, why, he'd say, "Well, okay, when do you want them delivered and where?" And the old boy would say, "Well, I'd like them at Engle," in so many days or so many weeks, or whatever. That's usually the way it worked.



Figure 16. Cattle drive camp on the way to Upham railhead, circa early 1940.
Jack Bruton, second from left.

Usually, it'd take two days worth. If you went by the road it was 26 miles, but if you went cross-country like we did, you could shorten that by quite a bit, so, maybe 20 miles or something of that nature. We'd go about 10 miles from the road, find a place—usually there was water available about 10 miles from the ranch—and we'd stop, throw them on water, and let them graze a little bit. The next morning we'd take off and go on into Engle and get in there late in the afternoon. They had many big corrals there. We'd take them in, and the man would have arranged for the freight train cars, and they'd be sitting on the side. They'd either weigh them out as we got there, or we'd put them in a dry pen and weigh them out the next morning as we loaded. Well, you got a set scales and, depending on what kind of an operation it is, you might weigh two or three calves, or you may weigh 100 all at one time. I say 100—actually, it's probably closer to 20 or 30. But, anyhow, just run them in the chute, and you've got a gate down here, you block them. And between that gate and the gate that you're running them through, there's a set of scales—they just walk in on this wooden platform, and you shut the gates. A man's sitting there reading the scales runs the scale up and down until he finds the balance, gives you a number. You let them out, go back and pick up another bunch, and bring them through.

The ranchers themselves process them all the way through until they're on the train. When he sold out, Dad rode with his all the way to Phoenix. That's sort of a roundabout way, but he got there somehow or another, by railroad. And in later years, we didn't have to go with them; they seemed to have somebody that would **...dad rode with his...to Phoenix.** take care of them. But back in those days, someone would always go with that group of cattle when they were checking them at the stops, to make sure that a steer doesn't get down or a calf doesn't get down or whatever you're hauling. One of the animals gets down and the others will step on it, and they can kill it. A matter of fact, they do a lot of times. The buyer would bear the cost of an accident or death, unless he has hired someone to take care of his cattle on the way. Once you get them through into the stock cars, that's their responsibility from then on.

Most of the time, your steers are bought by the pound. You buy cows and calves by the pair, without a weight. If you're buying for a ranch—maybe you're buying heifers—the criteria would be bred heifers or open heifers. A lot of times you go to sales rings for these. You'll ship them by a truck. You look at a group of heifers out there, they'll bring anywhere from 2 or 3 out to 50, see if somebody wants to bid on the whole 50. If they don't, they'll separate them into smaller groups; they sell them that way. They don't have any weights; they'll average so much, but they're not weighed individually.

Florence Martin

We always had a cowboy; he just stayed there. We'd have some old fellow or something. We had a whole bunch of different ones. They'd go from ranch to ranch. Oftentimes, we'd have an alcoholic. They were fine people; they were knowledgeable, but they were alcoholics.

...a dollar a day.

And every once in awhile, you'd just have to let 'em come in town to go on a binge. And then, the sheriff or what have you would call you, "Well, I've got Jack in jail down here." We'd go down, we'd get Jack out of jail, we'd throw him in the back of the pickup, take him back out to the ranch, and he's tickled to death to be home.

And then, you might work on an adjoining ranch, too. You would get 30 dollars a month, plus room and board. So, that's a dollar a day.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

In the wintertime, we hired goat herders. In the summertime, I could do it. Wintertime, I had to go to school. We got them here in Tularosa; we had one from Roswell; we picked up two in Albuquerque. Dad had a cousin that came out and herded for a couple of years, not constantly, but off and on.

We had an old fellow by the name of Denton that worked here, there, and over here. Just depended on how he felt and how drunk he got before he got so far down on his luck that he had to go back to

...down on his luck

work. If the wrong ranchers came in and spotted him, "Jack, are you ready to go to work?" and he'd herd for them for five or six months. We moved them around: we had a tent and a bedroll, and when we had sheep, we had two burros that we camped with.

Holm O. Bursum III

BM: How did your family acquire the sheep? Did they purchase them locally, or where did they come from?

I don't know exactly. This part of the country was big sheep country in the early days. The Hubbells were sheep ranchers. The Harriets, neighbors of ours, were sheep ranchers. They may have come from the Roswell area. Of course, Roswell was and still is big sheep country. Roswell was probably where the majority of the sheep were raised, maybe where they came from to this part of the country.

I think that most ranchers figured out that there was getting to be a better market for cattle than for sheep. It was a little bit less labor intensive; there was a little more money in cattle. If you had a big family and you didn't have to hire a lot of people, you could probably run sheep and do better, but the cattle were easier to take care of, and it was easier to hire cowboys than sheep herders. Everybody wanted to be a cowboy—**Everybody wanted to be a cowboy—**they still do—no one wants to be a sheep herder.



Figure 17. Holm O. Bursum, Jr., with Rambouillet sheep at the Padilla Ranch, 1945.

It started in the late '20s or early '30s—my father probably was more responsible for starting the changeover from a pure sheep operation to sheep and cattle. So, we ran a combination operation up until, I believe, 1954, and then we went completely out of the sheep business. The reason I remember the year and everything so well and why it was so significant is because we had a terrible drouth here, and we had to move the sheep. We rented pasture in Kansas for the sheep, and then the drouth went on long enough that we couldn't bring 'em back, so we finally sold 'em. It was a bad deal at best, but they would've all starved to death—not only the sheep but us, too—if we'd kept 'em here. And we almost did, anyway. That was a bad year; lost lots of money that year.



Figure 18. Grace, Tom C., and Nina Chiado Wood, 1926.

RANGE REMEDIES

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

It was very dry, and we had a lot of pinkeye and worms. I felt the cattle needed the extra supplement, and I fed them until they quit eating. I was riding every day to bring more into the home pasture. I had all that were sick in the home pasture. We doctored them twice a day. No, we didn't have penicillin at that time. We had a pinkeye medicine that we bought from a drug store or from a feed store, depending on where we were when we were getting it. In T or C, it was a drug store, and a fellow by the name of Davis, whose wife was a Cain, stocked it for us there. He stocked pinkeye medicine; he stocked worm medicine. We used chloroform to kill worms and a tar type of substance to go on the open wound for fly repellent. And he also stocked medication for horses. We had a little bit of distemper, occasionally. We begin using a little bit of what they call pen strip just before we left the ranch—100,000 units for this and 100,000 units for that, and so on down the line. The penicillin was available, but we weren't familiar enough with it to trust it that well, if you will. Sulfa drugs was something new to us. When we branded and docked and everything, we usually used coal-tar smear on cattle we'd dehorned, and we'd use a coal-tar smear for the steers, of course—and that was all we'd use. Every year except '50—that was the year we didn't run into many open sores, in '50.

I was riding every day...

I had three cows that started pinkeye in March, and I brought them into the home ranch. We started doctoring them with the normal medication that we used at that time, and it didn't even begin to touch them. By the time I changed over to another brand—I don't recall what we had at the time—I had 150 head of cows and calves in the pasture. Like I said, we were doctoring them twice a day. What didn't have pinkeye, had worms, and most of them had both. And we tried a little bit of everything then. We just couldn't find anything that would keep everything down.

...we were doctoring them twice a day.

If I got something that looked like it was working on the pinkeye one week, the next week, it wasn't doing any good at all, and the same thing with the worms. We'd kill them out with chloroform and these coal-tar medicines that we got through Davis was four or five different makes. Major companies put them out, and you'd go in and ask for a certain brand, and, "Oh, I'm out of that, use this." And sometimes it was okay, and sometimes it made it worse, and you

...sometimes it made it worse...

never could rely on it to be the same batch next time as it was the time before. I don't know if it was because everybody had more worms or what it was that year, but anyway, we had a terrible time. We were one of the few ranches with an outbreak of pinkeye. Most of them didn't have white-faced Herefords. On further north, Mr. Martin had the same grade of white-face cattle, but he didn't have the problem. His place was probably 15 miles from ours. He was about 1,000 feet lower, with a little bit more moisture. He had enough moisture to keep his diseases down. We had no moisture whatsoever, and it clobbered us. My cousins next door had Brahma cattle mix, and they didn't have any problems. However, we did have one or two cases of bad worms in mixed Brahma calves because of some kind of a break that it had gotten—one of them had either gotten up against a fence somewhere and broken the skin to where the flies could get to it, or something like that happened. And it almost had one ear eaten off by the time we found this one calf.

And first of August, it rained and everything began to clear up. By the middle of August, everything was beautiful. The cattle was feeding good, and they was all putting on weight and licking themselves, no problems. In Herefords, pinkeye, the white around the eye and the pink underneath the eyelids is more susceptible to the pinkeye virus.

...it rained...and everything was beautiful...

'Cause if you go out and you look at a herd of cattle that don't have that white around the eye, they won't have that pink underneath the lid. Now, just what the virus is or how it gets started, I don't know. But I attribute part of it to dryness, and, yeah, maybe dust on the forage that they're gathering. I've never been able to really study it because I left the ranch in 1950 and became a radar operator out here at the base—went to work for Uncle Sam.

Well, you got an open wound, and inside this wound the worms begin to grow. Now, a blowfly lays an egg that takes, I don't know, 2 or 3 or 4 days to hatch. They lay thousands of them, and they'll find this wetness or this open wound to lay those eggs in. Once they become worms, they begin eating on the flesh and growing.

They get about that big before they all become flies—almost an inch, three-quarters of an inch. I've seen them three-quarters of an inch long and half the size of your pencil there. And they eat and they will make an immense sore if you don't catch them. So, you go in there with chloroform to ensure that you get them all the first time. It don't take many drops. No, you just open that wound up and put it in, a few drops of chloroform, right in the wound, whether it's on the head, between the legs, or wherever. And like I say, we had that one calf that had most of an ear eaten off. Well, they'll shake their head or stomp their feet, **They are in pain, yes.** and they're bleeding. They are in pain, yes. They're not feeling real good, no. And they lose weight, naturally, and they'll die if you don't get to them early enough. It just perpetuates itself. We didn't have any major problems with the goats or the sheep, neither one; and none to speak of with the cattle, except that one herd in 1950. It started out dry in the winter and it never rained and it never snowed and it never did anything. I was married in January, and I worked out for a couple of months, then went to the ranch the 13th day of March in 1950. And the 14th, I found this first cow; it had pinkeye in both eyes. And from then until the 1st of August, like I say, we humped it, yeah.

Antibiotics were still not too plentiful; they were things that were there, not necessarily to be trusted too much or depended on. For one thing, when they first brought that stuff out, it was pretty high. And the other thing was the fact that you're getting used to doing things in your own way, and you carry it on down through the years.

Florence Martin

Frank Martin came into the house one morning and said, "I just found seven heifers dead on the flat. The poison weed is ripe. Dramaria is ripe." It has a pod on it and that pod has a little purple liquid **"The poison weed is ripe."** in it that is poison, and if a cow eats one of those, she's dead in a few minutes. Frank said, "I found seven dead cattle in the west pasture. We'll have to round them up and get the cattle into the hills."

We had one boy working for us at the time. We immediately saddled up the horses; we rounded up the cattle in the west pasture and started for the hills before the rest of the cattle died. We got the cattle rounded up and started south, slowly going down the trails. Some other ranchers had come by then and were helping us.

Frank came in—I was riding a little mare; her name was Minnie, one that we had raised and we had trained her and she was a honey—he says, “You’ve got to go around these cattle and get up to the west pasture fence before the cattle get there.” We had closed the gate, and we were driving the cattle. That was about three, four o’clock in the afternoon. Frank said, “You’ve got to get up to that gate before the cattle so they’ll go on through into the Hope Mountains.” Hope, we called them, the Hope Hills. So, I circled out around and got ahead. I could see the cattle coming just a little ways down. I got off of Minnie, got the gate open, thrown back, and I went back to Minnie and tried

My knees were just giving out...

to get on. I didn’t think I was gonna make it up on my horse. My knees were just giving out because I had ridden all day long. But I was able to get to the fence post, pull myself back up on Minnie, and the cattle went through and were saved from the poison weed.

We vaccinated for black leg during branding; we vaccinated all the calves that needed it. At that time, as you were branding and vaccinating, that was about all that you gave them—a shot for black leg. I don’t know if they do that anymore. You had to watch ’em. Usually, the rancher was a very good doctor, and they called the vet.

...he was running and then he would fall...

One time, our stallion, Tom, was running like crazy, and we couldn’t imagine what was wrong with him—he was running and then he would fall and then he’d get up, run. So, we drove in 39 miles south to town. My husband immediately started to call a vet out of Albuquerque. He got to San Antonio, he called him, and the vet met him. He brought the vet back to the ranch. In the meantime, when the stallion would fall, I gave him a lot of aspirin and stuff like that because he was in pain. Oh, he would jump, and it was evidently a colic type of thing, because he would jump and he would kick at his stomach; and then, there was gas. The vet came, and he had gotten so bad that the vet gave him an enema and washed him out, and he was okay.

HOMES ON THE RANGE

The air was fragrant, balmy, aquiver with bird-song and questing bee. The...slopes...were smooth and symmetrical...thin-parked with cedar and live oak and dotted with strange flowers. Cattle and horses grazed leisurely, raising their heads...with mild contemplation. Bands of snow-white Angora goats, escorted by knowing collies, were on their browsing way to the herbs and shrubs of the higher reaches.

— Eugene Manlove Rhodes, "The Enchanted Valley"

Pat Withers

It took approximately 30 days to build our place, on account of having to make the adobe. We just plowed up the top of the ground with the grass on it, where we was going to put the house, you see, and we made our frames 16 foot long and set up whatever the length and width of adobe we wanted, and then we'd build those frames. When it dried and begin to come away from the board, then we'd pick our board up, and we'd stack adobes up on the edge and let them dry. Then we'd take them out and stack them after they dried, and, 'course, as soon as we could pull them off that, we'd fill it full again. I think we had six of those that we could fill up at one time. The adobes were 12 by 16 inches.

We dug the cistern down to solid rock. It wasn't but about 3 or 4 feet down to solid rock, and then we just laid rocks up and plastered the inside with that cement. It'd helt water, just like a barrel. We had a gutter where the water run off the house into the cistern. Oh, yeah, it lasted year-round. Of course, you got moisture **...we didn't have ta do without nothin'.** most of the time, all year round. You get any moisture, if it'd got a little low, why, you'd fill it back up. You turned it out as soon as it got full, to keep it from running over. We never did suffer while we's up there for water. In '34, when it was so dry and the dust blowed in Oklahoma, we still had water in that big tank—we didn't have ta do without nothin'.



Figure 19. Verena Andregg at the Frank Andregg Goat Ranch, 1940.

Dolly Helms Onsrud

We had a little lumber house with two rooms: a kitchen and the bigger part was our bedroom and living room. It was built out of 1-by-12s, with strips on the outside where the 1-by-12s come together to cover up the cracks. We had a corrugated sheet-iron roof because we depended on the rainwater for our household use. We had a little storage tank that we caught the rainwater in. And my father-in-law had a little rock house on his 480 acres, and we dug him a cistern.

We had our outside privy, of course, and we had saddle sheds. The saddle shed was about 14-by-20, -30, something like that. We didn't need any feed for anything except the horses, the milk cow, and chickens. The saddle shed was only about 20 feet from the house. Close to the house we had what you would call sheep-wire corrals. They were pretty good sized 'cause that's where we worked our cattle. And then, away from the house we had picket corrals of cut cedar posts. Art made ours round, and we had another little square one, but he made the biggest one round, because he broke his own horses, and you don't need any foreign objects sticking out at ya' in a corral.

We had surface tanks, yes. They done the surface tanks before we ever put livestock in there—lots of hard work. Then we had horses; we didn't have no farm equipment, but we did have horses. And Art's father had two little mules, a harness, and an old plow. He'd hook up the little mules and plow an area to loosen the soil. Then he would take a **...but we did have horses.** fresno and go in and pull out all this loose dirt, take it downstream. And you'd take that dirt down and dump it where you was gonna build your dam. Then you'd plow your surface again to scoop all that loose dirt up and dump that 'til you get the depth that you wanted your surface tank. A fresno is a metal object, basically like a front-end loader on a Caterpillar; same thing, serves the same purpose, except it was run by manpower and horsepower. You could get them from, maybe 3 feet to 6 feet wide. Pulled by horse—you'd have to have a team. Just scoop up your dirt as you go along. It's a long, hard, slow procedure, but it works.

Alice Gililand Smith

I had a cousin that stayed with us out there, Jim Smith, and he was husky. I was with him when he was around the place. I thought I was a lot of help—I might have been a lot in the way; I don't know.

Anyway, 1922 was a dry year—that's when we had to cut the daggers for the cows. We built the pasture fence—I don't know how old I was, I must not have been too old—my daddy put me up into the wagon to string the wire. Old Buck and Grover, they is supposed to follow these posts that were set. I got to the top of the ridge and they decided that they wanted to go down the ridge, and I didn't know what to do with them. So my daddy had to catch up and stop the horses. We'd strung wire right down the ridge. It was on a spool, and we had a crow bar—just an iron rod they would pound and make square so it could cut, and the other end would be round. Well, they put the spool on that crowbar and put it behind the wagon, and it would turn, you see, as I was stringing it down the fence. I don't remember him letting me do it anymore.

We'd strung wire right down the ridge.

Lewis D. Cain

BM: What kind of equipment did your family use to create the tanks?

We called it a horse-drawn fresno. I guess it would have been better for four horses to pull, but usually, we used three, and 'course, it took a lot of trips with it to make a very big tank.

A fresno is like a scoop: it's made of metal, it's about 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep, with a long handle on the end of it, and you can hold the handle and dig into the dirt. When you get it full, why, push down on the handle and that raises it up, and you can take your dirt to the dam of the tank, dump it, and then come back and do the same again. Yes, that's what we used instead of a bulldozer. It was slow work and hard work.

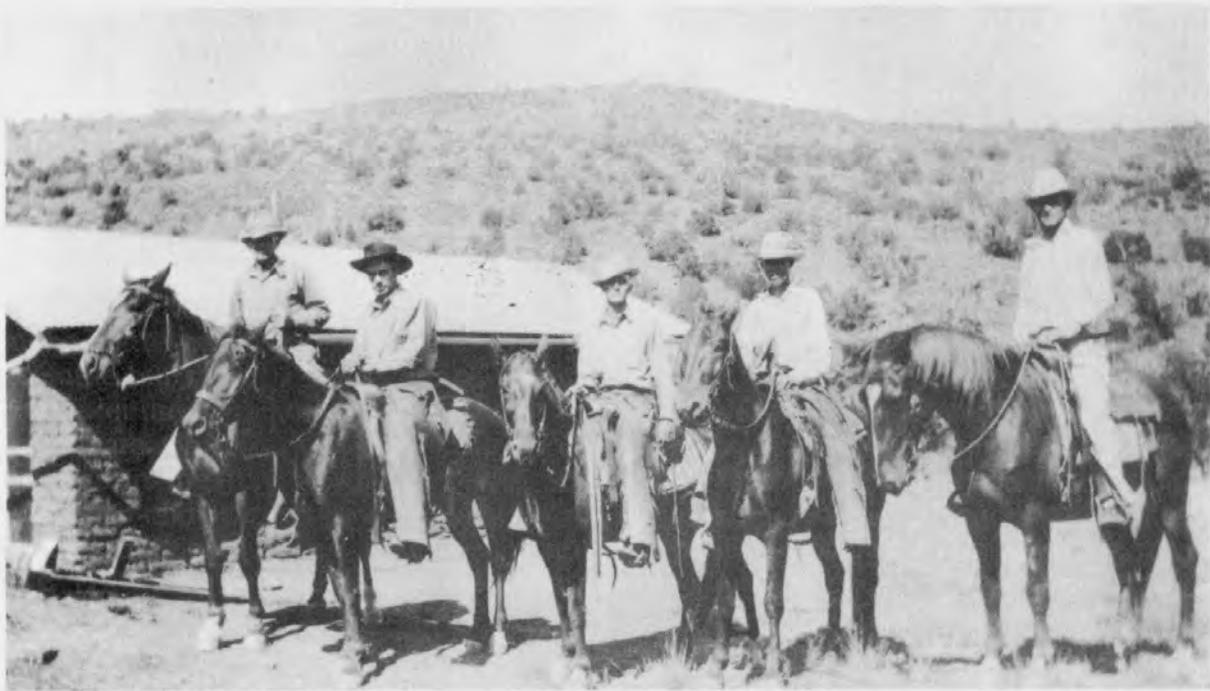


Figure 20. R.C. Withers, Pat Withers, Archie Turnbull, Buck Pounds, and Earl Houston at Withers Ranch, 1938.

Pat Withers

There were no wells in that country. They couldn't get any water until we finally drilled a well. Jay, the oldest brother, he come back from California as a water witch—you've heard of water witches? He witched wells with a stick. They had a well when dad first bought this

He witched wells...

outfit down here. In '42, when they kicked us off the bombing range, had one well that pumped about 5, 6 gallons a minute, and the other, a wasp would drink it pretty near as fast as it would pump. Jay come home, and he took a witch and walked across the ridge up behind the house, and he said, "Dad, why don't you build a well right here?" So, Dad drilled a well there, and we pumped 40 gallons a minute out of it.

He never missed a hole, except one place. Over at Capitan, he hit a cave. He could grip that stick and it would turn down, and he could just twist that stick, too, that's how stout it pulled him. He used mesquite. He got a forked limb to start with, cut it off about 8 inches on that end—'course this, the other end, he could have it where he could get it way out here.

We was going to the ranch one morning in the pickup. He cut his stick before he left home, mesquite limb. He said, "Whoa," and got out, and we traced that stream down on away from the road and marked it. And then I took the old well driller who was a water witch up there, and he used welding rod. You get two welding rods, hold them with your hands, and they'd spread out or come together. I got old Cay Hughy down **"I was checking Jay."** below where Jay marked, and he said, "Why don't you just drill right here?" I took him up where Jay drove the stick into the ground. "Oh," he said, "you was checking me, was you?" "No," I said, "I was checking Jay. I wanted to see Jay use a witch." And he says, "Well, Jay's right in the middle of it."

Two hundred and eighty-five feet—it's just a pure river. My daddy, when he hit water, was ready to quit. Old Cay Hughy, he drilled. Daddy got about 15 gallons a minute, and that'll water your cattle, but it went dry. So, he got old Ray Taylor from over at Lincoln to come over and drill it further down. He went into that 285 feet, drilled awhile and picked up and drilled awhile and picked up, and he said, "Pat, that's square dab in the river." He said, "that's filling up faster than I'm drilling."

Dolly Helms Onsrud

At that time you could go to town once a month and buy a whole pickup load full of groceries for 35 or 40 dollars. You could run real easy on 500 dollars a year, just to buy your groceries. That would buy everything you needed, like your flour, sugar, and coffee, beans, and whatever you had to have. It takes a little more than that now.

MC: If you needed a loan, where would you usually go? Would you go to a bank?

We went to our bank, State Bank in Carrizozo. Used the ranch as collateral, or your livestock. When we was buying our supplies from Mr. Ziggler, sometime he would finance you a loan right there, and he would carry the books on it. And if you didn't have enough money to pay for it, then we'd go to the bank and borrow money from the bank to pay it, and then finish paying the bank out.

Most of the time, that was if you had something unusual happen through the year, between shipping times. If you didn't have the ready cash, they would carry you through that year from one shipping to the next. When you went in and bought your supplies, each item was itemized on a ticket. And then, at the end of the year, when you went in to pay up, why he would just total this up. And I don't ever recall any interest, at all. If you went to the bank, you paid interest.



Figure 21. Tent camp at Wood Ranch, circa 1932-1933.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

R.D. Champion more or less owned Tularosa at the time that we're speaking of, mid '30s. He was sort of banker and general mercantile, etc. He would lend money to ranchers on their goats, their cattle, whatever. And he would dictate the amount of expense money that they could spend in a month's time, if you will. What he was telling Granddad was, "You have \$20 a month to spend over all, for your food, maintenance, and whatever, and all needs." In '35, \$20 a month bought you a lot of groceries and things like that, but it was still quite restricted. He tried to allow people to pay out rather than going in so deep that he would have to take over their operation. This was the way he did it, by saying, "Okay, you can't afford to pay now, but I'll lend you \$20 a month in expenses so you can buy your groceries."

It didn't take into account the size of a family. The general rule was, this is how much you can afford to pay later on, when it comes time for you to pay up. They'd try to pay out if they could, but if they didn't make enough to pay completely out, at least to get back to a lower level of debt before they started over again, which was a continuing thing with most ranchers at that time.

He wasn't the only one that was doing that, carrying people. There was a banker in Tularosa, a bank in Alamogordo. Then there was a banker in Carrizozo that took care of some of the ranchers in the north end of the range. And Bursum had a bank in Socorro, and he took care of some of the ranchers up on that end.

Champion knew how many pounds of wool or mohair each one of them had—this is what they were hawking to him, to be able to pay him later on. He did that not only to my grandfather, he did that to my uncle, my **...sort of a big brother,** aunt and her husband, Dick Gililand, and John H. Wood, Jr., and anyone that traded with him. He restricted them to an expense of so much, because he didn't want them to get so deep in that he would have to take their place over. He was sort of a big brother, as well as a banker and merchant.



Figure 22. Stone construction at the Joe Pete Wood Headquarters Ranch, 1933.

Dixie Gililand Tucker

JO: Do you remember making the trip into town in the wagon?

I remember one time. 'Course, Mama had to stay at home and keep us. Most the time, Papa came to town and got the groceries. And then, after the other kids got big enough, well, then, Mama'd come with him. 'Course, we had a car by that time—I think it's around '31 or '32, I was big enough to remember it—he traded Uncle John the workhorse and 35 dollars for an old Ford.

One time, we started in and—that was when Pete was little; I was 10—we left after school was out, which was 4 o'clock. Frank Martin, our neighbor, needed to come in to the dentist, so he came with us, and it started rainin', and it rained.

...we stayed stuck all night... We got stuck over in that draw, and we stayed stuck all night long. Alice and Sam and Frank would push us out. Papa would do pretty good 'till he'd stop to wait for them, and then he'd get stuck, so we'd push him out again—and we got in town about daylight.



Figure 23. Mrs. Holm O. Bursum with son Holm, Jr., and daughter Ruth, Socorro, circa 1920.

Mama wouldn't let me out 'cause I couldn't push anything. She'd say she had quilts, and she had Lola and Pete and I, made us stay there in the car. My, the rest of 'em was so muddy. Papa started to jack up the car, and he just set down, right in the mud. He said, "Can't get any muddier anyway."

We'd trade some quite a bit in San Marcial. And we got our mail in Engle. You could buy gasoline in Engle, but that's just a little ol' store. Oh, it had some groceries, but if we went that way, we'd go to T or C (Hot Springs) **...an awful lot of bacon.** and get groceries. It'd be flour and beans and bacon and sugar, things like that. We used an awful lot of bacon. 'Course, we butchered our own cows, too.

Mama raised a pretty good garden when Roy and I was goin' together, because if we got a bucket and started to carry water, why, Lola wouldn't follow us. We raised a good garden that year. Besides, he was a gardener, too; he loved to garden, and he helped her a lot. We had to carry all the water to the garden spot, and we had to carry it uphill, and that's the way we had to carry our wash water, see?



Figure 24. Tucker Ranch in Grapevine Canyon.

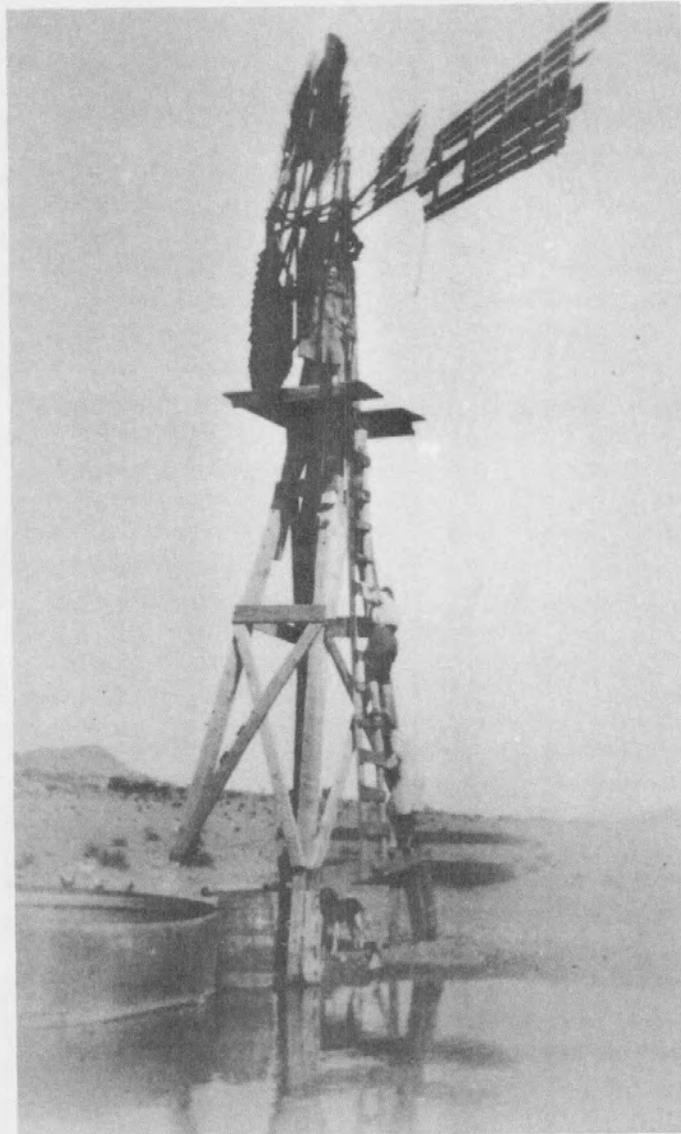


Figure 25. Wooden windmill at the Joe Pete Wood Headquarters Ranch, circa 1936.

WOOD SMOKE AND GOOD, PLAIN FOOD

Hot biscuits, black coffee, bacon and reckless rabbit; then the shade of the wagon, coat and boots for heading. It will be pleasant to remember these things hereafter.

— Eugene Manlove Rhodes, "Consider the Lizard"

Dolly Helms Onsrud

We had a wood stove, a big wood stove. They're made out of cast iron. Well, it was nothing for a big cook stove to weigh 500 pounds. It takes three men to load it, if you had to move it. That's what I cooked on. As soon as the top gets hot, you can cook on it, but it takes your oven a little longer to heat. Your first firebox will heat that stove where you can put a little wood in it to keep your even temperature, and then go ahead and cook in it. But you have to keep a bed of coals back in there. On the back of the stove, there is a little vent, comes up from the top, and you put your stovepipes on that, and then run it out through your ceiling, and the draft takes smoke out.

I didn't even think about how difficult it was to cook on, because I grew up with that kind of cooking. It depends on the type of wood you'd use. We preferred cedar and alligator juniper. We liked these, because they were good, clean-burning wood. And the chips you had from it, you know, was clean, and the bark was clean. It was not like when you'd use mesquite wood—you got a lot of dirt, because you're normally using mesquite roots. And the ash from cedar and juniper is real clean. It wasn't sooty or anything like that. Pine will make pretty rotten soot. You're having constant cleanup when you're using pine wood. If you can get out of it, don't use pine wood.

If you can get out of it, don't use pine...

Alice Gililand Smith

We used "Texas wood." Mama'd have me go down and pick up cow chips in a tow sack, and we used a lot of that. It worked all right, you know. Mama said there's nothing in Texas to burn, you know, and she called it "Texas wood."

Lewis D. Cain

BM: What kind of wood did you use in a wood stove?

It was cedar and piñon wood. The Wood boys lived higher up the mountains, and that's where we'd go to get it, in their pasture. We'd leave real early in the morning to get back by noon, unload our wood, and then take off just after the noon meal, and it would be dark when we'd get back with the second load. We'd haul wood for probably a week or more every fall to get our winter supply. We took a wagon and a team. We would high trot them; take 30 or 40 minutes. 'Be slower coming back with the load, but about 30 or 40 minutes we could get up there, and then the horses could rest while we were loading the wagon.



Figure 26. Winter wood supply at Potter Ranch.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

BM: You mentioned that your mother sometimes cooked at the camps. Sounds like your family took pretty good care of the goat herders.

Oh, they did; they really did. Uncle Frank, when he'd bring out the supplies, you know, he'd bring 'em each a quart of whiskey, and it would last 'em a whole month. Or maybe he'd bring 'em a little beer to drink or somethin'. He took care of 'em, he really did, and they all liked him very well. You didn't say anything too bad about my uncle in front of 'em. They were just like family. At the ranch, at the headquarters—well, even over in **...just like family.** camp—we always carried our bingo, or checkers, or something along, and at night, after they'd bed the goats down and had supper and we's doin' dishes, well, everybody played games, 'cause we wouldn't have a radio. It's just the headquarters that had the radio. They were kinda like family, you know. They'd play games right along with us.

BM: When your mother was doing the cooking in one of the camps, what kind of meals would she prepare?

If they didn't have any meat, maybe Dad or the boys'd go out and get a deer or two. Then she would fry meat, and she'd make gravy, water gravy, most generally. She carried her ol' sourdough starter with her, you know, and she'd make biscuits for bread.

They had little cabin-like houses, you know, maybe they was two or three rooms. They would have a big cook stove in 'em, like the big Monarchs or Home Comforts. They had tables, long tables, and stuff in 'em, too, chairs or benches. See, Monarch was a company that put out cook stoves, and the Home Comfort was another one. I think the Home Comfort was putting out the enameled ones when Monarch was just the black iron ones. And they were equipped with old iron skillets and tin dishes and Dutch ovens, and this sort of thing. That's **...iron skillets and tin dishes** what you used to cook in. There would be a porch or something that they slept on. They most generally had bedrolls. They'd roll out their bedrolls, if they didn't have bunks to sleep in. They stayed over at the main ranch in the wintertime 'cause they'd have the bunkhouse, you know, and, of course, they have the heater in the bunkhouse in the wintertime.

BM: So your mother would make biscuits and fry up some meat?

And potatoes, and she would cook beans—she'd put a lot of red chiles in the beans, and salt pork. For breakfast, she'd usually have salt pork, and sometimes, if Grandma's old chickens was layin', they'd be plenty o' eggs. If they weren't, well, she'd fry potatoes and gravy and biscuits, or we'd just have pancakes and gravy, or pancakes and syrup and fried potatoes, or somethin' like that—maybe some deer meat or somethin'. Seemed like we eat an awful lot of fried meat, rather than roasted meat. Mama'd flour up the ribs; she'd break up the ribs and, if she didn't take the ribs out, strip 'em out and make a roast. Well, she would chop 'em up, you know, and brown 'em, and then steam 'em—they were awfully good that way.

...a lot of red chiles...

Anna Lee Gaume

We always butchered our own meat. I helped Daddy skin many a beef out in the corral, when we wanted some meat. We could do that better after we finally got ice freezers, but in the summer it was real hard, because I jerked it, that was the only way that we could save it. I really jerked many a pound of beef. In the '30s, they came out with a

...a kerosene ice box...

kerosene icebox, and we had one. And then, after we sold and moved to the O-Bar, we had two of them, and Mama set one of them up to where meat and things would freeze in it. We couldn't run a freezer off of the wind charger, because it didn't produce enough electricity. You couldn't depend on the wind, you know, to keep your batteries charged up to where it wouldn't go out on you, so we had that kerosene icebox, two of them—one Mama made a freezer, the other one we used as a regular icebox.

We canned all of our fruits; dried fruits and canned fruits is what we had. We had two peach trees out in the backyard. One year, I never in my life saw so many peaches on one tree—I canned 80 quarts of peaches. I just peel them and slice them and put them in your jars, and then make your syrup to pour over them, and seal them and put

I have so many jars I quit canning.

them in a canner, where you could get seven jars in one canner. Oh, you buy the jars at the store; we saved them. I have so many jars, I quit canning. Eighty quarts of peaches lasted us two years—you knew maybe you wouldn't get any the next year.

Mama had to make her own jelly, most always grape. Grapes were easy to come by, so we'd always make grape jelly. And canned peaches, pickled peaches, preserved peaches—lots of peaches, pears or whatever fruit come in. I usually put up some quince preserves and some quince jelly, and we really enjoyed that. And then, Daddy always bought in the wintertime fruit—used to come in little wooden boxes—dried prunes and apricots and peaches. You can still get them in the store, and they're delicious. You can cook them and that way, we run out, this we could fall back on. We bought potatoes by the hundred pounds, flour by the hundred pounds, beans by the hundred pounds, and that was your staples. You raised your own meat. We usually went in to the store about every two weeks.

...canned peaches, pickled peaches—lots of peaches...

Pat Withers

In the summertime, we never did butcher—just what little that we needed was all. We always waited 'til winter and hung it on the north side of the house every night and wrapped it in a tarp in the daytime, keep it cool. Of course, in the wintertime, it'd freeze. Eventually, it will dry out, or just keep eating it—go out there and cut off what you want and take it in the house and cook it. We had two dogs. You could hang that meat to where it wasn't that far (a foot) from the ground; they wouldn't touch it. No sir, they wouldn't touch it.

Alice Gililland Smith

When we had the cows, we used the clabber milk, but if you wasn't where you had a cow, you had to use sourdough. At least part of the people from back East think that clabber milk is spoiled. Buttermilk is off of the butter—when we churned we would get buttermilk and it's a little sour, I mean, not *too* sour; it's not spoiled. Clabber, you skim the cream off, then you got solid milk. This milk will spoil, but fresh milk will clabber, and it's good, you know.

...fresh milk will clabber, and it's good...

Then you can take it and heat it just a little bit and put it in flour sacks or something, hang it up, and let it drain, and you'd have your cottage cheese—it's the same thing as cottage cheese, same thing as clabber. There's a lot of people that think it's spoiled milk, but it's good then. A lot of times, that's what we would have for supper and all, our clabber milk or cornbread and milk.

In the winter, we could butcher meat and keep it; in the summer, there was no way to keep it. Mama kept milk in a cow trough. You have a box built over the float. Take this milk down there and cover it over with cloths and keep it cool in the water, in this box, so cows wouldn't get into it. She finally made her a place under the arbor. She built the arbor with brush and whatnot and built her a box in there, and then have gunny sacks and a pan of water, kinda kept it cool. It'd make good clabber. If we'd have enough sweet milk, milk that mornin' and the next day, we'd skim the cream off. There wasn't very much cream from range cows—took quite a few to get enough cream off to make butter, but we had good butter.

And then, in the wintertime, when we butchered a beef, we could take it and cut it in chunks and put a wire in it, and then hang it out. Then you could just take and cut it and fry it, you know—good meat. The outside would be dry, but it would be good on the inside. Well, we'd eat the outside, too, because it wasn't strong or anything like that. And, then, we made a lot of jerky.



Figure 27. Butchering cattle at the Gililand Ranch.

You cut it up in strips about 6 inches long, and you hang it out at night. Then in the daytime, bring it in and cover it with quilts or whatever to keep the cold in; then, in the night, we hang it out again. It was thin and after it would get dry, then you could store it away. Most mornings, we'd get up—we'd have a smoothin' iron and hammer—and you would pound it up, then you'd put that in your gravy.

We always had plenty of eggs 'cause we had chickens. We even took the chickens down to Bear Den when we moved there. So, we didn't never go hungry, but we didn't have vegetables and fruit. **...we didn't never go hungry...** We would go algerita berry pickin' every once in awhile. We'd have those for pies—they were pretty sour, but anything tastes pretty good. The canned fruit that we had, you could make pie, but Mama didn't make very many pies, she mostly made cake for some reason. For one thing, she was afraid of using all of her grease—it takes quite a little grease to make a good pie crust.

Mellie Potter

Ol' Uncle Lum Wood came by when we got our first refrigerator; it was gas—that was probably in 1937—and Ol' Uncle Lum got down off his horse and came in. He said, "I heard you got one of those dad gone boxes that you build a fire in it, and the dad gum thing makes ice." "Now," he said, "I want to see it. Anybody that can build a fire in a dad gone box and make ice in that dad gone box, I wanna see it." Well, first I opened the door and showed him the ice. "Well, now, where's the fire?" **"Dad gone" was his word.** I took the bottom off of it, showed 'im where the fire was. "Well, dad gone, it sure does." "Dad gone" was his word. He never used any other kind of profanity but "dad gone."

Up in the top, it just had trays for ice. It was slower making ice than our electric ones we have today, but it made good hard ice. And, oh, it was wonderful to have iced tea in the summertime. Some of the time, we milked two cows and the bottom of it was left for milk, and we would have that full of milk down there. The cream could rise, and we would have whipped cream, ice cream. One of the trays was about 6, 7 inches deep and about 12 inches long. Ice cream was made with eggs, a little bit of sugar, little bit of milk, and plain ol' heavy whipped cream. That was beat up, and it was frozen. Now, you couldn't eat very much of it—it was too rich. **...oh, it was wonderful...iced tea in the summertime.**

You separated your eggs, and you'd beat your whites and your yolk—you beat 'em separate. And then, you folded the yolk in with the white and then, very gently, you folded it in the cream, and it was whipping cream. Gosh, we ate a lot of that.

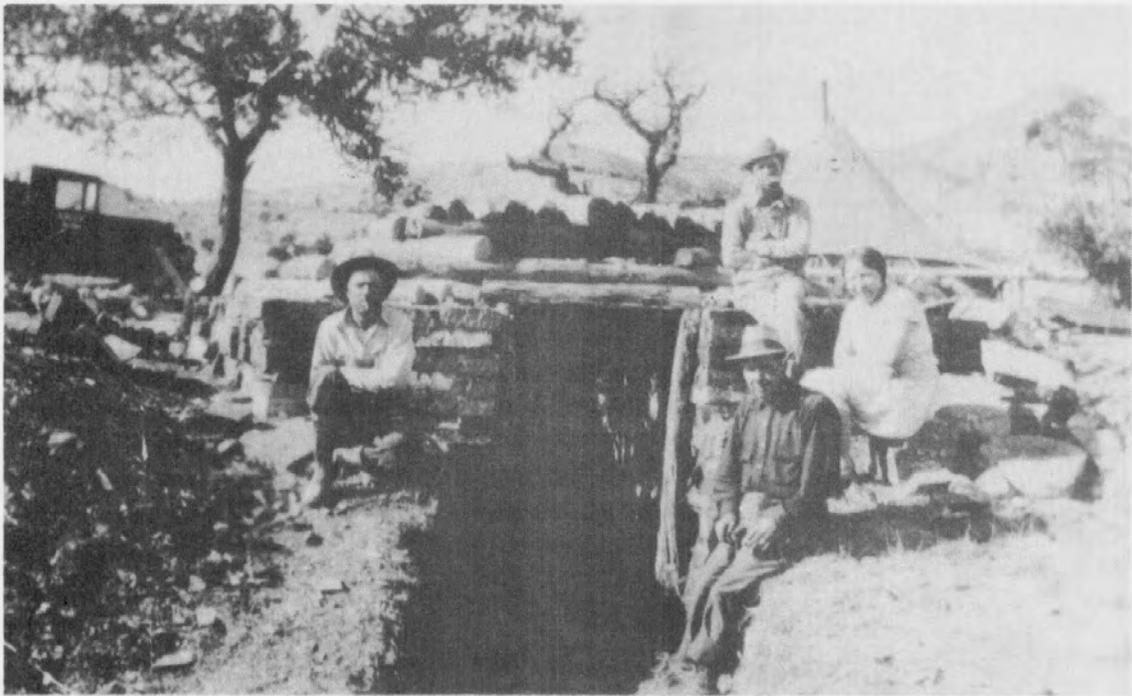


Figure 28. Cribbed roof dugout "hogan" built in part by Nina Wood, later used as a summer kitchen.
From left: Joe Pete Wood, Sr.; Henry Amnon Wood (top); Frank Buster; Nina Wood; circa 1933.

NEIGHBORLY WAYS

She stepped into the kitchen and closed the door behind her. She looked across the room at the stove and at the strange man who was stoking it with firewood. The man raised his bristly chin as he turned in her direction. "Howdy," he said. "You're Harry's good lady?"

— Alice Marriott, *Hell on Horses and Women*

Dixie Gililand Tucker

We never knew how many we 'as goin' to cook for or who was goin' be there at mealtime, and if they came any time of the day, you had to feed 'em. We did feed 'em, that was just the rancher's way. And, if you **...just the rancher's way.** was gone, we never locked our doors. If anybody came, they rode up. If they wanted to eat, they fixed their meals. The only thing required was to clean up your dishes.

My first bean pot was a syrup can, and you just built a fire and put 'em on there and let 'em boil. I guess we had pretty good water. Couldn't do that in the Tularosa water. But we always had to have a pot of beans, my husband thought.

When we first got married, he'd been out in goat camp and knew how to make sourdough bread, so he said, "I'll make the bread. Now, you have everything out when I come in from herding the goats, and I'll make the bread." Several times, I thought, that's not right. I should go ahead and have supper cooked when he gets home. One time, two **"...I'll make the bread."** goat herders came out. My husband had already fixed bread for my dad's and his and my dinner, but we ate it all, naturally. These two guys came out, and Roy said, "I'll come back up and make the bread if I get a chance, but we're goin' to start countin' goats and you'll have to do the best you can." We knew they hadn't had lunch, so I put rolls on right then. I'd let it rise, and when they came up, they thought that was the best stuff they'd ate.

JO: So, what went into a starter for sourdough?

He'd boil a potato and then put the potato water in, and sometimes they'd leave the potato in the jug, and then just stir in flour. Then it'd ferment, you know, and sour by the next day for the meal. We had a bowl of flour, and we made a nest and poured the sourdough in, put in baking powder and soda, salt, and a little sugar, and then we mixed it up, roped it like you would rolls. 'Course, we couldn't let it rise when he made it, 'cause we had to cook it for supper, but when I made it, I'd let it rise. It really wasn't quite as heavy, but he could really make good bread.

There wasn't too much to do in the morning. I didn't have any hand work or anything like that. But we'd get up at 4 o'clock, get the goats off by sunup, get 'em out of the pen. And then, 'course, I'd clean up the house, but it didn't take long—we just had to heat water on the stove. They'd haul the wood up for me, and then I would cut the wood. We had a tank out there by the side of the house—I just carried the water in. I didn't have it piped in, but it was right there.



Figure 29. Young riders near Albuquerque, 1927. Frank Ault, Jr., third from left.
[Wood family photo.]

Florence Martin

The women often sewed; they made their men's shirts lots of times. Then again, there are the wool shirts, like that good ol' Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Wards, and you ordered them. Oh, I've seen a hundred of 'em. Everything in there, you watch, you'd order. Usually, we'd get our mail about once a week. So, when you were in one week, they'd have the order ready to mail, and then you'd come in the next week, and the order was there—with new socks and shoes and whatever you needed—sweaters, shirts, underwear.

They usually had material at the stores. And you got your flour with the flour sack—the hundred pound sack had a pretty print. So, you saved your flour sacks. Then, you would make your curtains out of flour sacks. **...the hundred pound sack had a pretty print.** You'd also make some of your clothes. You could choose the pattern that you wanted. If they had a flour sack with roses on it, you tried to get one that matched it so you'd have several yards of roses. You could match them and they would look great. All your dish towels were made with flour sacks.

Dixie Gililand Tucker

We made all of our clothes. Grandma made all their clothes. She never would use a sewing machine; she sewed 'em by hand. Grandpa bought her a sewing machine, and she wouldn't have it, so he gave it to **...Levi's... a dollar a pair.** Mama. Mama made our coats. She made everything. Of course, the boys' pants, why, she had to buy them. They'd be Levi's, and they wouldn't cost over a dollar a pair.

Lewis Cain

BM: What about the bedding? You told me your mother liked to quilt?

Yes, she did. She made nearly all of her bedding. Some of her quilts would be hand-sewed all the way across the quilt. There'd be a million stitches in those. **...a million stitches...** Others would be stitched. I know these hand-sewed ones took so much longer—that's what she was proud of. But in our bedroom, we'd get these old stitched quilts.

She had a quilting frame. As I remember, it was a 1-by-4 split half in two. It'd have holes about ever' 3 or 4 inches on the ends and side boards that would hang from the ceiling. As they would quilt one side, why, they'd roll it up on this board and put another peg in the corners to hold it tight. She was proud of those ol' quilting boards.

...little pulleys in the ceiling...

When she wasn't using them, why, she would put them in a safe place somewhere, so as they wouldn't get broken. She had little pulleys in the ceiling with strings fastened to the corner of the quilting boards. When they weren't quilting, why, she'd pull the quilting board up to the ceiling and get it out of there.

Quilting parties was popular then. They would be settin' in the center of the building with room for chairs all the way around it. Get a bunch of ladies there, well, that's when quilting went the fastest.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

BM: You said the boys all knew how to sew. How did that happen?

Well, with nothin' else to do, Mom told 'em that they ought to learn to sew. So, they'd either sew their own patches on their britches or their shirts, or we'd sit around and cut quilt blocks and they'd sew 'em. They made bed tops out of canvas. They'd give Mom the scraps of the canvas and she would unravel it, and that's what we used for

He liked embroidery.

thread. And, you know, it was strong. Joe, he didn't care too much about that sewin', but he could sew. He liked embroidery. He was the oldest. He would rather go on up to headquarters and help up there than he would stay around home, so he was gone quite a bit.

And I think it was these colored guys that was up there had lost a .22 in the canyon, and Joe found it later on, hikin' around. It was all rusted and he cleaned it all up. Uncle Frank and Dad decided he needed some bullets. So, when somebody'd go to town, they'd bring 'im back some .22 shells. Then he had to share it with the rest of us. So, Joe was always takin' that .22 and his shells and goin' to the upper ranch, up to headquarters. He got bobcat, and he'd kill deer for 'em to eat up there. He'd rather not stay home with the rest of us.

Frank, he was a kinda homebody, and he was pretty creative with making quilts. The goat herders smoked Bull Durham, you know, comes in those little sacks. They'd save all their sacks for us, and we'd wash 'em. Frank, he took these sacks, and he'd cut out little men or women and applique 'em onto these little sacks, or trees or cactus or whatever—he was pretty creative.

I wasn't that creative. I just made plain ol' nine-patch quilt, myself. But Perry, when he was old enough, he learned to sew, too. Val and the rest of 'em learned later on, but the four older ones, we all learned to sew and cook.

Dad made Mom a set of quilting frames. When we'd have a quilt ready for batting, we had these carding combs. We worked the mohair with carding combs, and she'd make batting out of that and put it in the quilts. Then, we would either quilt it or tie it—we'd tie it pretty close so it wouldn't mat up. If we was gonna' quilt it, we'd put the corners on chairs or tables and get around—Mom would mark it off how she wanted her quilt, and everybody'd get around and quilt.

Dixie Gililand Tucker

We washed on the rub board. And we had to carry our water. There was an arroyo down through the corral, and we had to get the buckets or the tubs. If we had two of us, we'd get a tub and fill it up and carry the water from the well, and fill up the wash pot and build a fire around it **She was very particular...** and Mama would wash her clothes. And then, we had to have another pot for her to boil her white clothes. And then, we had to have two rinse waters for her. She was very particular about her clothes.

I remember one time, my dad got a barrel and went down there and filled it up and hauled us some water. We didn't have to go get the water, and I thought that was real nice of him. But I can't remember it but one time. He always had somethin' else to do.

We washed every Monday, we ironed on Tuesday, and we patched on Wednesday. Whenever we was ironin', why, we baked a cake or bread or whatever, because we had to have a fire in the stove anyway. We had to heat the old sad irons on the wood stove.

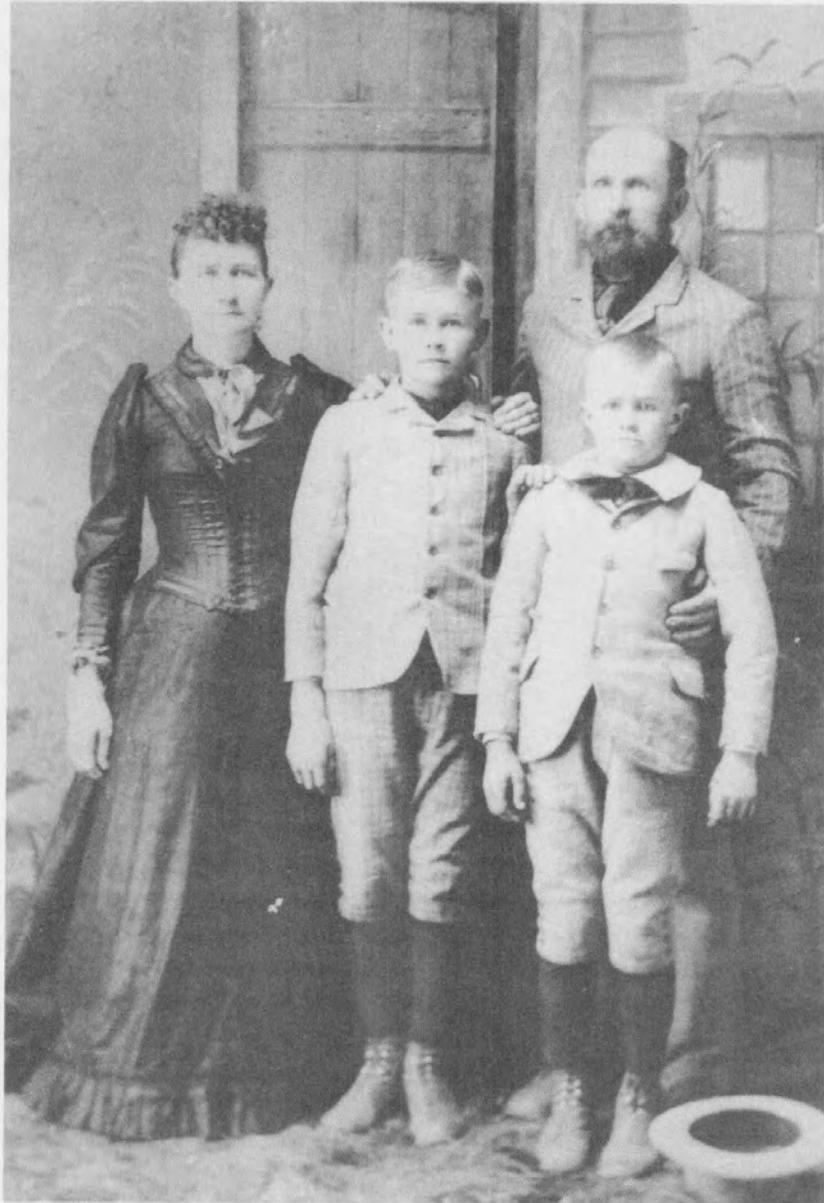


Figure 30. William Pete and Emma Harriet Withers with sons Charlie and R.C., circa 1890, Wichita Falls, Texas.

REMEDIOS Y NINOS

"We'll make a smoke with some of that piñon wax, and we'll steep some of it in boiling water and breathe the steam of it; we'll burn my wet powder, and when that's done, we'll think of something else; and we'll make old bones yet, every damn one of us!"

— Eugene Manlove Rhodes, *Paso Por Aqui*

Pat Withers

The only person that I know of that did get snake bit was an old boy that I went to school with. He was out over here at Piñon with one of the Gages, and they's sitting on a log with their feet hanging off. This snake crawled up behind old Cafit and bit him right between the shoulders. Chuck Gage dipped snuff that he put it in his mouth. He **...it turned that snuff green.** split those two fangs together, yeah, he cut it, and then he filled it full of that snuff, and it never did even swell up. Drawed that poison out of there, you see, with that snuff. They said it turned that snuff green. He lived; all he's got is a couple of fang marks and a scar.

Dolly Helms Onsrud

If you just had a sprain—bone or ankle, foot, leg, hand, arm—why, you treated it yourself. Basically, if it was a arm, you'd put it in a sling, and just take care of it and bathe it in hot water or whatever. We couldn't use ice, we didn't have any ice out there. Our own home remedies for colds **...you treated it yourself.** was basically Vicks Vapor Rub. We had Vapor Rub, and then we took aspirin. Sometime we'd make hot lemonade, and I'm not sure what value you would get out of it, but when you made a hot lemonade, we always put a little whiskey in it, sorta' like a hot toddy. Flu and chest colds, and you bet, it sure don't hurt. Carrizozo was our nearest doctor, which around by road was closely on to about 45 or 50 miles.

Mellie Potter

Babies were born at home. Back during the Depression, there was one baby down here at La Luz that was born in a chicken house.

...born in a chicken house.

They had no money, but ol' Dr. Robinson never failed to come out. I've helped him deliver babies several times. When I would be here in town, if there was a baby gonna come, he would come and get me. If somethin' happened up here in the mountains, he would come and get my husband, and he would sleep while my husband drove.

Sometimes, we wouldn't pay Dr. Robinson for six months. If I needed anything, well, some of the neighboring ranchers would go and tell him what I needed. He'd fix it up, and he'd send it to me.

One time—it was a year I had no money to pay 'im—he would buy what I needed at the drug store if he didn't have it. I told him this particular time, I said, "Dr. Robinson, I don't have any money to pay you. I don't know when I'll have any, but I do know that some day I'll pay you. So put all of this down, keep track of all of it, so you'll know how much I owe ya when we sell some hair." "All right," he said.

Well, it was over a year, and Patsy went in, and he said, "Doc, how much do I owe ya?" "Oh," he said, "a couple of dollars." "Are you sure?" Dr. Robinson said, "Yes." Well, Patsy gave 'im \$2. He come to the ranch, and he handed me that receipt. I said, "Is that all you paid 'im?" He said, "I asked 'im how much I owed 'im, and he said a couple of dollars." And he said, "How much you owe 'im?" "Well," I said, "that medicine that you got for your feet was \$4. He made some house calls down there for Marjorie." And he said, "Well, next time you go to town, you'll just have to go and make 'im think."

So, I went to town the next time anybody went in. "Dr. Robinson," I said, "I told you to keep track of everything I've gotten so I could pay you." "Well," he said, "Uel paid me." "He paid ya \$2," I said. "Well,

...I started fussin' at him.

wasn't that all you owed?" And, oh, I started fussin' at him. He says, "Don't get mad at me; you know what ya got." I said, "I may not remember everything." He'd tell me how many ounces, and finally I said, "That's all I can think of." He said, "That's all of it then." I said, "I don't know whether it's all of it or not." And he says, "Well, this is all right."

Dixie Gililand Tucker

Grandma was a pretty good doctor, and so was my dad. She died back there in 1915, but she was a midwife; she went around delivering. And Grandma Wood—if we got sick, well, Mama'd call for Grandma to come and doctor us. We used home remedies.

When Mama had that pneumonia up there at San Marcial, Grandma used so much camphorated oil, Alice said it'd soaked plumb through the mattress and was down on the floor. We always had a flannel cloth to put on our chest. When our youngest son, G.L., was a baby, I didn't bathe him with water. All that winter, I'd just bathe him with camphorated oil—he never had a cold all winter long.

...so much camphorated oil... it'd soaked through the mattress...

My Grandpa Wood did pull teeth with pliers. He was the tooth doctor. And we made a throat gargle out of vinegar and alum and sage and honey. I still use that myself, but I can't get my kids to 'cause it tastes too bad. You make a half vinegar and half water mix, if you make up a cup of that mix. Then, I'd put about a teaspoonful of sage and half a teaspoonful of alum. And then, I'd put a couple of tablespoons of honey in it—you can't get too much honey. And you heat that until all this is dissolved.

JO: What about childbirth?

We had to move to town for all but Lola. Mama was fixin' to go to Albuquerque the next day. Lola decided to come a month early, and Mama had her out there on the range. Alice was 13, and I was 8. My dad was working down on the flats. There was a hill up here, and he said if she needed him, to go up there and build a fire. She sent Alice and I up there to build a fire. Alice played and played. And I didn't even know she was expectin' a baby. When we got back down there, Lola was already born. Alice finally went in, and Mama said she'd forgot her scissors. She said, "Hand me the scissors." Well, Alice looked in and Mama 'as settin' up, so she pitched the scissors in there on the bed, and Mama said, "Be a little careful." Alice said, "I decided I'd better go to the corrals. I wasn't needed there." And Mama said, "You tell Dixie to go get water, and you come in here and help me." So, they 'as in there cleaning her up, and when she finally let me in, why, I said, "Mama, what's wrong with her head?" "She's redheaded." Sam and I'd ordered a boy. Sam was redheaded, and Alice was redheaded, and now, here's another redheaded one. And I thought I was adopted. I was gonna leave. Sam talked me into stayin'.

Sam had gone on up to my Uncle John's on our only horse and stayed all night. We didn't have a horse. We could've walked up to Uncle John's, what time we's playin' around on that hill. Mama was in labor, I guess it wasn't an hour, when she told us. The next day, Sam and Uncle John's wife was comin' down, bringing a bunch of cows.

"I don't need anything. I'm fine."

Alice told Aunt Eva, "We got a baby girl at our house." She said, "You have!" She hit that old horse down the leg and went to the house to see about Mama. That was about noon the next day. Mama's uncle came by and went where Papa was and said, "By shot, I think you better get home. You got a big girl at your house." So, he came and asked Mama if she needed a doctor. She said, "I don't need anything. I'm fine."

Alice Gililand Smith

When I was 13, Lola was born. Mama sent me up on the hill, said, "You take Dixie and go up on the hill and build a fire so Papa can come home." Well, we had washed all day, and she was supposed to go to Albuquerque to have the baby, but she didn't say "come back" or "stay gone" or nothin' else.

So, I stayed up there, but had to get back off the hill before night, so I went to the corral. I kept Dixie down at the corral, and Dixie said, "I hear a baby cryin'." I said, "You don't hear no such a thing. You come on back here." I wouldn't let her go to the house. It got dark and I thought, "Well, can't stay down here all night; we've got to go to the house, but I don't know what's goin' on."

I went to the house. Mama was sittin' up in bed, and she said she had forgot scissors—they was in the kitchen. She said, "Give me my scissors, and keep Dixie out of here." She's sittin' up in bed, so I pitch the scissors in and then decided I'd stay out, too. She said, "Be a little careful." I thought I'd better go back to the corral where I belong; I don't belong in here. Mama said, "You stay in here 'cause I'm gonna need you after a while. You build a fire in the stove, and send Dixie after some water." I built a fire and got the water hot to try to clean up the baby—it was like a little jackrabbit. I was

...like a little jackrabbit.

used to calves, not babies, especially as dirty as she was. Mama said, "You better dress her. You're gonna freeze her to death." I guess Mama was gave out by that time. Mama'd made the clothes, and they'd fit a year old. So, I thought, "Freeze to death? This is the 12th of August. How can she freeze to death? It's hot."

Anyway, we just made it fine; Mama did good. Next day, I didn't have nothin' but the Model T. I didn't have a horse, nothin'. We didn't have any Lysol, but I could've walked 4 miles up to Uncle John's and got some. Mama didn't think about that, I guess. Papa had told her to build a fire up on the hill and he'd see it; but he couldn't—he was on over at the ranch.

Dixie Gililand Tucker

I had three of my five without a doctor. My mother was with me when Cloma Jane was born. When I had Leon, the one we lost, I was over at Las Palomas, and Clay's two sisters was there. Sent Roy's brother after the doctor, and she had company, so he went in and set there and listened 'til they left. He didn't know anything, and we didn't tell him to hurry back. He said, "You want me to go now?" She said, "Why didn't you tell me who you was?" She didn't have any idea who he was. They got there 15 minutes after the baby was born.

"Why didn't you tell me...?"

Cloma Jane was born during the war, in 1942, and her doctor was sick with a heart attack. He died two days after. I never thought to go to Alamogordo and get another doctor or anything. We got up that mornin' and I wasn't feelin' very good, so we went up to the farm, to Roy's folks. We ground corn relish all day. I'd grind and have a pain and about noon, she said, "I think you better go down to Alamogordo and see about gettin' a doctor." Well, it was too late. We started home and went by Mama's. I said, "Mama, come and go with us." She said, "I can't. I've got my bread on the rise and everything." And then I started cryin'. I said, "Mama won't even go with me and help me." She said, "Where are you goin'?" I said, "I'm goin' home to have this baby." Mama said, "I'll go with you." She delivered her and cut the cord and all. I'd had three boys already, and Mama said, "It's a girl." She went in the kitchen to do somethin' and came back in and I had her diaper off. Mama said, "That baby wet already?" And, I said, "No." I hated to tell her that I didn't believe her. "What are you doin'?" I said, "I'm tryin' to see what she is." By that time, I'd seen.

When Ginevra was born, why, the doctor came by all day checkin' me. About six o'clock, he checked me, and he said, "Go home and take a big dose of castor oil. I'll be back by about nine o'clock, or later on." It was Thanksgiving Day, and he was goin' down to his girlfriend's house. We didn't have any phones. I went to the house, took a big dose of castor oil, and said, "Here it comes." Roy said, "Well, here he comes, too." He could tell by his car; wasn't too many cars back then. He got there in time to cut the cord, and that was it.

I always thought the castor oil helped. I tried to get my granddaughter to take castor oil, but she just took a little teaspoonful. I made a call up to Albuquerque to tell her not to just take a little bit, to take half a cup, where it would help. I said, "You just took enough to make it taste bad."



Figure 31. Lola Cain with son Lewis at the Olden Place, circa 1916.

Natalia Lucero DiMatteo

I remember my mother giving us *Hierba de San José*, Saint Joseph's Herb. It was for stomachache. It tasted like mint, but it was kind of hot, like chile. Mother would make a tea, and we would drink it. There was another one, Mexican elder. Mother used to have one. I'm the only one, I think, of the six of us, that got whooping cough when we were at the ranch, and Mother brewed some of those little yellow flowers. That's what she gave the girls for whooping cough, and it cured them. I tell my son Michael now, when this tree's in bloom, "I want those little flowers." "What for?" "They're good for whooping cough." "Mother, I don't think in this day and age we're going to get the whooping cough." But, you never know.

One time, an ant bit my sister, Izzie. It was ants that I have never seen anywhere but at the ranch. They looked like little velvet bugs—they were bright orange with little black stripes, and they were big. My mother would say, “Stay away from them; they’re poisonous.” Izzie was bitten by one, and her foot got real swollen. Mother cured her. She got some peach leaves and boiled them for a little while. Then she put them on Izzie’s foot, and she kept changing the bandage, and three, four days later, the swelling went down; she got well. **...peach leaves...**

Verena Andregg Mahaney

When they’d trail the goats, they cut soles out of ole tires and put ’em on the bottom of their shoes, so that they could walk all day and it wouldn’t hurt their feet. At night, they soaked their feet in greasewood water. Greasewood is that bush with the little yellow flowers; they’re kindly a dingy green. They boil up the water, soak their feet in it, and that took all the tiredness out of ’em.

Perry was choppin’ wood one time under a little cedar tree and caught the axe and hit hisself on the top of his foot. Mom just squeezed it shut and taped it real tight—never had no stitches in it. Didn’t lose too much blood ’cause she stuck his foot down in some kerosene or coal oil, and that curdled the blood and stopped the bleeding. We had sore throats and stuff like that, but we gargled kerosene, or Daddy’d make us cough drops with sugar and kerosene. Put kerosene over the sugar and then burn it—strike a match an’ light it; then it sets up. It’s hard, like cough drops. If we was fortunate enough to have onions, Mom would make us onion syrup. **...we gargled kerosene...**

We drank a lot of that Mormon tea, and there was another tea—a little bush; it was really green, and it had little tiny yellow flowers on it—Dad called it Doña Ana tea. We drank a lot of that. I really liked the taste of it better than I did the cowboy tea. One time they thought Perry had an attack of appendicitis. He complained of his side a-hurtin’, and Dad went out and gathered this little bush. The leaves were thick, like they were full of water. They made a tea out of that—it’s kinda real dark green and bitter as gall. About two cups of that, Perry didn’t have any more attacks—cured ’im.

They did make hand creams out of goat tallow and ammonia. They mixed turpentine with it, too, and that was good for warts. You was always playing with the tadpoles in the goat tanks, and we’d get warts from ’em. They put turpentine in this goat tallow, and we’d use that for our warts. That took ’em off.

The Mormon tea, we didn't drink it for sore throats or anything, we just drank it 'cause we liked it. This Doña Ana tea, we drank a lot of it. It was for aches and pains but not for colds.

One summer Frank, Perry, and I were trailing goats. Perry is always the stubborn one of the family, and he got to raisin' Cain. Frank told 'im to go back to the house; he didn't want 'im along. We weren't very far from the house yet, and all of sudden, he began to holler and roll on the ground. I run down to see what was wrong. He had two punctures on his leg above his shoe top, just like a snake bite. I told Frank, "Yeah, he's snake bit," and he come a-runnin' down there and says, "Well, you sit on 'im." Frank cut it—we always carried the snake medicine kit—and he sucked the blood out, then put the

**...he never did complain about
gettin' snake bit no more.**

snake medicine on and put a bandage around there. Then Perry says, "I just stuck that mescal in my leg." I guess he'd run against one of them mescals, and it punctured his leg just like the fangs of a rattlesnake. We done it so quick that he couldn't tell us that he wasn't snake bit. But, he never did complain about gettin' snake bit no more.

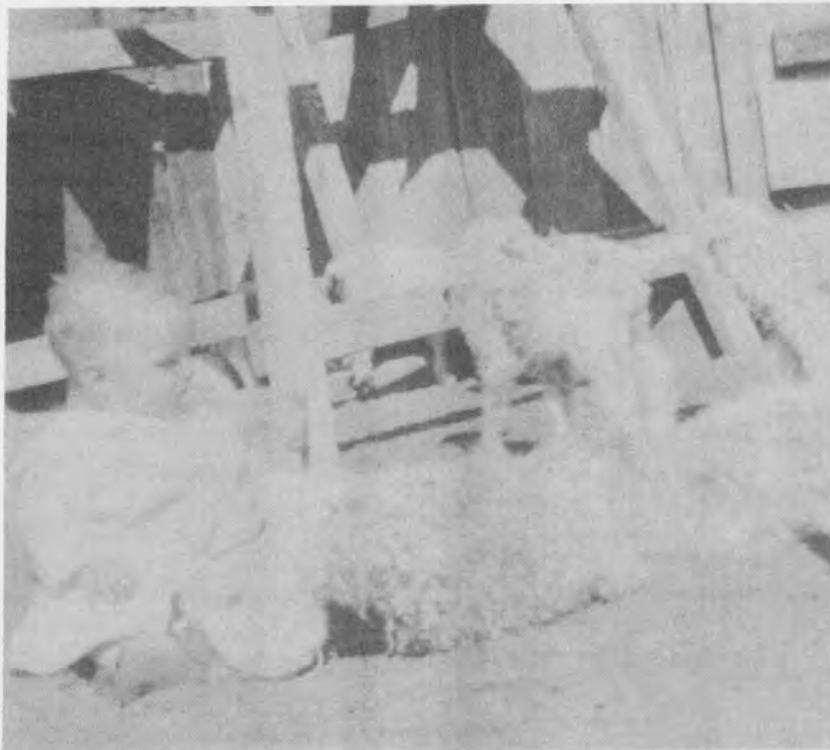


Figure 32. Thomas Potter and kid goats in front of mohair press, circa 1926.

RANCHER'S CHILD

Elsie was completely angry for one of the few times in her gentle life. In righteous wrath she...returned to the porch for a third bucket....she was in no mood for foolishness from any cow...Deliberately, she drew back her left foot and cold-bloodedly she planted it in the cow's side.

— Alice Marriott, *Hell on Horses and Women*

Dixie Gililand Tucker

Mama made fudge one time; I guess I was pretty small. She was out sweeping the yard, and I thought, "That's an awful little bit of candy." So, I went and got a little sack from behind the door where she got her sugar and poured it in, and I got the salt and poured it in. She came in to stir her candy, and said, "What'd you do?" I said, "Nothin'." She said, "I know what you did. You poured it full of salt. That's all the sugar I've got." I said, "But Mama, you could make some **"You poured it full of salt."** more." She said, "That's all the sugar I've got. I've got to make this last 'til we go to town again." So, I didn't get any at all. A little bit'd've been better than nothin'. So, she taught me not to meddle with her food. She said, "Next time, just leave things alone."

After we got a car, we could find things to go to town for, but back when you went on a wagon or horseback, well, you didn't just pick up and go. Mama stayed up there with us kids, and Papa would come to town, do the shopping and all that kind of stuff.

JO: Did he bring you treats, then, when he came back from town?

He did one time. Mama stayed over at Hot Springs, and I was staying out there with him, 'cause we had to have one more to keep the school goin'. The Cains and all of 'em and Papa went to town. He said, "What can I bring you back?" He felt kinda sorry for me. Papa bring me a pair of bibbed overalls—they probably cost, maybe a dollar and a half, so he brought me a pair. I'd wear 'em to school, then, that night, I'd wash 'em out and wear 'em. He said, "If I'd known you wanted 'em that bad, I'd've bought you two pair."

Papa always bought hard candy, apples, and oranges, especially for Christmas. That was the favorite time. He really liked Christmas, but if he saw anything that he wanted you to have, he wouldn't wait 'til Christmas to give it to you. If it was in July, he'd buy it for you right then. We'd have parties and a Christmas tree over at the schoolhouse, and everybody'd come. One time—I was, I guess, 2 or 3 years old—I kept asking Mama, "Where's Uncle Tom?" You know, everybody's

Santa Claus came in...

he got his beard afire...

supposed to be there. She said, "Well, he had to work late, and he didn't get here." Santa Claus came in. They had candles on the Christmas tree, and he got his beard afire and took it off. I said, "Oh, there's Uncle Tom!" Mama said, "No, it's not. He's standing there all the time," and she talked me plumb out of that, turned my head to where I couldn't really see what was goin' on. He jerked that beard off, and then, "Oh, there's Uncle Tom!"

They had candles on the Christmas tree; it was somethin' to see. Now, they have electric ones, you know, with little bulbs, but this was real candles, and they'd light 'em all. 'Course, that's all we had. We'd take all the presents over there and put 'em under the tree, and old Santa Claus would come. 'Course, he got a little too close that time.

Natalia Lucero DiMatteo

We did have a drought, a very dry spell. I'm not too sure about the year, but I think it had to be around 1933–34, because my brother, which is Sonny, Betsy's husband, Joe R., he was about 10 years old, and he was born in 1924. We had asked Dad—why, I have no idea, it was no big deal—my sister Julie, Izzie, myself, and Bertha, we asked Mom and Dad if we could sleep outside one evening; we wanted to sleep outside. We had little cots that you could take out. Dad said, "Outside on the porch?" There was a big long porch, screened in; it was on the east side facing a gate and the Sacramento Mountains.

There was a lot of animals out there; a lot of cattle that were very thirsty. Evidently, there was no more water in the troughs or Dad had closed the gate. All of sudden—it must have been close to midnight—we hear all this mooing going on, "Mooooo!" We wake up, and my dad gets up and gets dressed, and there's all these cattle—they had thrown down the barbed-wire fence and had even jumped into the tank. They were after water. They had a time getting these cows out of the tank, because the tank was about 3½ or 4 feet deep. We were outside sleeping, scared to death, and my mother kept screaming, "*Mi hijitas, mi hijitas!*", "my little children, my little children!" We all grabbed our blankets and just walked in, "Where did these cows come from? Daddy, you didn't lock the gate?"

Julie and Izzie and Bertha were so mean. They had been playing with a wood stove that mother had discarded—it was one of these small wood stoves, kind of short. They were mixing dirt and making biscuits. I came out, and I said, “I want to play, too.” They said, “No, you can’t play; only three of us can play.” Mother built a fire for washing clothes. She used to wash clothes in a tub. There was a pile of ashes, and I got some ashes and just threw it on their old biscuits, so Julie, the oldest, spanked me. I went around the house and sat there against the wall underneath the kitchen. I was just sitting there, crying, because they didn’t let me play, and I looked up—there was this coyote looking at me from outside the fence. It scared me. I looked, and the window was open, and I yelled, “Daddy, Daddy!” So, Dad comes—my dad was 6-foot-3, he’s a big man—and he said, “What’s wrong?” I said, “Dad, there’s a coyote that wants to eat me up.” Dad looked, and sure enough, there was, and he said, “No problem.” He just got his rifle and opened the window, shot into the air, and the coyote went away. Then he brought me through the window. “What were you doing there? Why are you crying?” And then, I told him. He said, “That coyote thought you were another coyote. That’s why he came. You must never cry again, not like that and when you’re alone.”

**...there was this coyote
looking at me...**



Figure 33. Skipper Moran on “Gucchi.” Helms Ranch, Oscura Mountains, 1949.

Alice Gililand Smith

I had cows to milk. I was 13 when Lola was born, when the other three younger children started. We had to milk around 12 range cows to have enough milk, because they just don't give that much—maybe a quart, you know—so I would have to have quite a few. If I'd see a cow that I thought would give quite a bit of milk, well, I could pen her up and milk her, if she didn't have a steer calf. If she had a steer calf, I had to leave it, let it get milk so it would grow, so we could sell it.

Some of them were hard to milk, some of them milk rather easy, and some of them put their foot in your bucket, if you weren't careful. I would put my head in their flank, you know, and then, if they were to move, I could move. I couldn't sit down and milk—I had to more or less stand up.

...some of them put their foot in your bucket...

We didn't get up too awfully early, except when we had to go to school. Naturally, I had cows to milk and everything before we'd go to school. Then, whenever we'd get out, I would have to go round them up, bring them in, and I milked them twice a day. My daddy, he'd get out there and go to milking them, and he'd go to fighting. I didn't like for 'im to fight 'em—it didn't do any good.

Natalia Lucero DiMatteo

My Uncle Felipe's ranch was only about five miles south of us—that's not very far. We'd go on horseback over there like wild Indians. One time, my Uncle Felipe and his cowboys were skinning a cow—had just killed one, I guess, to dry the meat. I was on a horse called Berrendo, which means "like a deer," and he was fast. The other was Ronny Boy, a little Indian pony that Bertha was riding. We saw my Uncle Felipe's ranch; we were getting real close. I don't know what happened to Ronny Boy, but something scared him, and he just started running like everything and whatnot was after him. That's the way horses are: one horse starts running and going fast; the other one's going to go, too. I mean to tell you, mine just took off and went past Ronny Boy. We were just lucky that the gate was open to the corrals because we just ran in through that gate—the gate was wide open, thank God. We stopped the horses, finally—at first, we just couldn't slow them down. My Uncle Felipe comes up, and he said, "*Pero muchachas, que vienen los indios tras de ustedes?*", "But girls," he says, "are the Indians after you?" He says, "You rode in here like the Indians were after you. What were you thinking of?" And he did bawl us out, because, he said, the gate could have been closed, and he was right.

...he was fast...

We got down to visit with him. They were skinning a cow; they were going to make jerky. Oh, my goodness, they would kill three or four calves just to make jerky—they did a lot of that. We used to have clothesline from one end of the fence to the other end, clear across the tank, real high up. They were made of that wire they used to pack up alfalfa, to tie up the bale. They were up higher than usual for the clotheslines where Mother would wash, you know. All of us could hang clothes, but when it came to making jerky, Dad and our other cowboy or Julie and Izzie would have to stand up on barrels to put the jerky way up high, because we did have wild animals—we had coyotes that roamed freely, and then, I always had beautiful white cats.

The jerky was always dried up way on top. It isn't like the jerky you buy now. Some people do make jerky, but it doesn't taste like what Mother used to make. I would like to make some jerky, if I could get Michael to put me up a clothesline—I don't even have a clothesline. I would just buy me a good piece of beef and slice it into thin strips, put salt and pepper on it, the way that Mother would do it. We'd have as many as six, seven sacks of jerky during the summer, because, during the summer, they didn't believe in killing cattle, 'cause we didn't have any way to keep fresh meat; we didn't have iceboxes.

So, that's the meat that we would eat in the summertime, if we were out at the ranch, and it was good. After it was dried, they put it in gunnysacks, and they would hang it within the porch from the ceiling on hooks. Mother would take out just so much jerky to make, say, gravy, or she would make it with fried potatoes, onion, and the jerky. We did have these anvils; they used to use those a lot when they would be shoeing horses. Mother kept two of them on the porch, and we would get a hammer, and we would hammer that jerky down.

We ate more of the jerky than what we would give my mom, half the time. She would say, "Is this all? I gave you lots more than that. You'll have to do some more." We'd just go ahead and cut it into pieces, say four, six pieces. One went into your mouth, and the other five went into the bowl, and it was really good.



Figure 34. José B. Lucero on "Buck."

Lewis D. Cain

BM: You mentioned that you had gone to the Ritch School for awhile. What was the school like?

I'm trying to think of the size of the schoolhouse. Seemed like it was about the size of this trailer house. This is 20 by 40, and that Ritch School was about like that, with a partition that went a quarter of it, cut off as a living quarters for the school teacher. And then, the benches, blackboard, and everything was in the big part of it. They'd have little community dances. Why, they'd move the benches up next to the wall, and it was big enough for several to dance in there.

I was a sophomore in high school, and Alice Gililland was a freshman. We went to T or C for the junior and senior year, and the younger kids, they went to Ritch School. One teacher taught two of us in high school, and the rest of it was all grade school. I guess it was just the one year that they had this teacher that taught the high school subjects, Mr. Sitz. He didn't spend all of his time with the two of us in high school, he probably taught the seventh and eight grade or something like that. His wife took the little kids. Day after Labor Day was first school day. As a rule, why, we'd make every school day, try to make the whole year without missing a day, if we could.



Figure 35. Ritch School, Gililland Ranch, 1926–1927. Back row, left to right: unidentified, Miss Leftwich (teacher), Alice Gililland holding Lola Gililland, Emmett Henderson, Andy Henderson, Sam Gililland, Hodges Henderson, and Frank Martin. Front row: Dixie Gililland, Vera Martin, unidentified.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

BM: You told me that your uncle would bring your schoolwork from Las Cruces. Can you tell me about that?

My Uncle Frank would go to town for supplies. He would go to our teachers at Alameda school in Las Cruces, and he would get work for us to do—homework and books and stuff. Mom would kindly teach us, and then he'd take all this back, you know, when he'd go back for supplies again. He'd take it in to the school and get more work and have 'em to grade it, and we got report cards like everybody else. But, we didn't really go to school, only when we was in town, but we did have our homework to do—and we done it.

**...we didn't really go to school...
but we did have homework to do.**

Well, we knew what grades we were gonna be in, and he knew where Alameda school was—when we were in town, that's the school that we went to—we knew the teachers. He went there and found the teachers for each grade that we'd be in and talked to 'em and told about us staying at the ranch. He wanted books and assignments, you know, whatever we needed. He would pay for 'em all. He bought us pencils and tablets and stuff like this; they furnished the assignments and the books. And then we took it all back as we were through with 'em. They'd give a list of what we's supposed to do, each one of us, and he would bring it out to us in a big box.

Mama'd make us do schoolwork before we went out and done anything else. She thought it was really necessary, and she loved for us to read, so we'd read to her. And she would grade us, what she'd think we should have, and then she would send the papers in, and, sure enough, we'd get pert' near the same thing, maybe not as high. She would go over our stuff. Mom never had much schoolin'; I think she went to the fourth grade or somethin' like that. We didn't have a real schedule; we got it all done and then went out and played 'er gather wood or whatever.

...she loved for us to read...

It would probably take us up to noon or a little better. I was always slow, so with mine, it would take me longer; it took several hours. We's always up at daylight and got started really early. We didn't do too much at night, unless it was reading or studying spelling. We usually liked to just sit around and sew.

RODEO, RELIGION, REVELRY, AND ROCKETS

The bronco fairly screamed with fright as he went up into the air, and fence-railed, bawling, across the corral, zigzag bucking...Three jumps, four, five—At the next plunge, saddle and man left the horse's back together....He bucked again, stiff-legged, bawling, straight up and down....The horse was high in the air again, head between his feet.

— Eugene Manlove Rhodes, *The Trusty Knaves*

Pat Withers

I broke horses on contract. Been bucked off a lot of times; never been kicked. You got to be pretty good. Some horses are as smart as a man or smarter; then, you got the dumb horses. You start out by tying up the hind foot, saddling them. And they'll buck with you, but after two or three times, why, they get gentle.

We got our first horses from old man **Been bucked off a lot...** Rentfrow, and he wanted them gentle.

Wayne and I asked him what he considered gentle. He said, "Oh, any time that old man can ride them," talking about our daddy. Two weeks to a day, Dad took one of the broncs we was riding and went to town to get the mail and some groceries. That old man Rentfrow threatened Wayne and I. He said, "That old man rides things that you darn buttons won't." Well, he could ride horses that Wayne and I couldn't ride, far as that goes.

Now, my oldest brother Jay got kicked when we was kids there at Jal. The horse kicked him across the hand, broke his hand. That's the only one of us that's ever been kicked. You got to be afraid of the horse; the main thing is be afraid of the horse's heels. Now, they all wanted to kick. These horses we got now never offered to kick when they was young. 'Course, most of them are raised in corrals; high-blooded horses aren't. Those broom tails that we caught, they'd kick you, they'd paw you, whichever they got a shot at, until you got them used to you. You pet them, not be mean to them.

I had a little paint horse, little white horse, that was the kickingest booger you ever saw. I mean, he'd kick you. You could ride him all day long, and you would think he would give out, but ride close to a tree or a bush or even a cactus and drag your foot through it, and he'd kick it. If you just drug your foot out there where it could scrape your chaps, he'd go off and kick it.

Wayne took him over to the Lomas wagon, and the boss let the boys take time out roping the calves and branding and cutting the herd, and Wayne swapped out with Zino Farris. Zino rode that paint

...he never did...kick no more.

one day, and Wayne rode him the next day, and when Wayne was riding him dragging the calves, Zino was picking at him, catch him on the hind leg when he's having to work. Finally got where Zino was leaning his elbow on that sucker's head—he never did offer to kick no more.



Figure 36. Henry Amnon Wood at Joe Pete Wood Headquarters Ranch, 1926.

I had a horse, a blaze-faced horse, that was the best horse that I ever owned. You could put kids on him or anything else. He was just really gentle; he was a good cow horse. He could do anything under the sun—go out, if you killed a deer, throw it up in the saddle, climb up in the saddle with it, come to the house—do anything.

I put my oldest grandson on him when he wasn't but five. We was moving some cows from here down to the tank, and old Blaze didn't want to go. I was riding a bronc, and he just got off of the trail, and when I looked back, old Blaze was cutting out a 2-year-old heifer, going to bring her back. I turned that bronc loose, I mean, 'cause I knew what was going to happen. Blaze loved to play after he cut that first cow, until he got warmed up. Every time you cut a cow out, he had to buck a little bit—not hard, just buck a little bit—and I knew that's what he was going to do when he got that yearling started back. Sure enough, he was bucking and dodging.

That grandson, he was hanging on. I stepped off of the bronc and caught him just as he missed the saddle. He had the horn, he was up in that saddle on both knees for about the last three jumps, and I caught him just as he missed the saddle, and he went crying 'cause he was scared to death.

**...caught him just as
he missed the saddle...**

Horses' hooves did not normally get grown over, not in that rocky country. They do in sandy country, where they had some wild horses, but mountain country kept 'em wore down good. Their ol' hooves got just as hard as flint, and you never seen one of those loose horses lame. Now, after we caught 'em and rode 'em and run 'em, runnin' them wild cattle, wild horses, well, we had to shoe 'em because you'd tear their hoof up. We had a big horse, part thoroughbred, never was shod. His ol' hoof was so hard, you couldn't even drive a nail in it.

Oh, a shoe'll last about 30 days, 6 weeks, somethin' like that. They'd just wear out—you gotta take the pieces off. But, we usually pulled the shoes 'bout every 30 days, if we wasn't a ridin' 'em hard. If we had to work 'em, had to ride 'em, why, we'd shoe 'em, but other than that, why, we didn't shoe too much.

We had one horse that's easy shod—he'd kick like the dickens, but if you tied up his hind foot, he laid down. He always laid down next to the fence. We just rode 'im up against the fence, tie his feet crossways to the fence, and stand up there and shoe that sucker. Well, that's a whole lot easier than when you tie a foot up—you can't pull it back out here where it's comfortable, you've got to work it up in under his belly. It's the hardest way in the world to shoe a horse, but we had two or three that you had to tie their hind foot up if you were gonna put a shoe on it, and they sure would kick.

Most of 'em would gentle out where you could put the shoe on. That brown horse had that saddle on 'im, you could tie him to the fence—you couldn't just lay your reins down—and he'd pick his foot up and hold it for ya.

Natalia Lucero DiMatteo

We had chickens and rabbits, mostly for food. My mother killed the chickens, and she killed the rabbits—not wild rabbits, these were the domestic kind. Dad bought two little females and two males. He kept them in the saddle room, and they made burrows down under, so we never knew how many babies they had. But we had a lot of rabbits running around. My mother, of course, would be the one to kill them and fry them for us. We had a bunch of chickens, and she didn't even keep them in a chicken coop. They just came home to roost at night, and usually they stayed in the garage. I had one chicken that was a beautiful white chicken. I named her Clarabelle, after a movie star. Every time that I knew that mother was going to kill a chicken, I'd go find mine, and I'd shoo it to the mesquites, "Go, go Clarabelle," 'cause I was so afraid my mother was going to kill my chicken.

Mellie Potter

We had a dog, Ol' White Man, and the goats learned early to obey. He didn't particularly get vicious with 'em. He'd get 'em by the tail, and he'd sit down on their tail, and if they went to goin' the other way, why he'd get 'em by the ear.

He was trained. He was so old, yard work was about all he did anymore. Sometimes, he would beg to go with the herd so bad that if my husband was home, he'd let Ol' White Man go with 'em. But he wouldn't let him go with any of the herders, because some of the herders would get lazy, and they'd wanna make the dog do the work, and then get in under the shade of the tree. Ol' Rowdy was another one of the dogs that was very good, but Rowdy, if a herder got to workin' him too much, got too hot. No herder was allowed a dog unless he carried water for the dog. Rowdy would get hot and tired and thirsty, and he would get rough on the goats. We had a herder that was making Rowdy work too much one time. My husband told that herder, "You're using Rowdy too much. He's gettin' too tired." "No, I don't use him much, not hardly any."

Potsy said, "I know you are, because these goats have ears chewed up, and Rowdy don't do it; only when he gets too tired." "Now," he said, "you either stop it, or you can't have 'im on herd with you." He didn't stop right away, so Potsy got watching the herd closer. He told 'im, he says, "You can't have Rowdy no more." The guy says, "I'll quit then." Potsy says, "All right, you quit, but you can't have 'im." He quit.

Rowdy and White Man were a mixture of shepherd and collie. I'm not talking about German shepherd; there is a different kind. They're not high-tempered like a German shepherd. They were protective of the goats, unless, like Rowdy, they got to workin' too hard and got short-tempered. Ol' White Man was gettin' old and deaf, and he wasn't used for anything, only yard work. My father-in-law, he was goin' along there with his legs straddled out tryin' to head that old mutton, and that old mutton went right between his legs, and he landed flat on his back. Thomas was a little fella, and he got tickled and went to laughin.' He said, "Grandpa tried to ride that old mutton, and that old mutton threw him off." Anyway, he was pretty well perturbed at that old mutton. He said, "Now, get him, White Man." **Those things would fight a dog.** They would rear up, and they would butt. They were no more afraid of a dog than nothin'. Well, Ol' White Man taught 'em to mind. He got that old mutton by the ear, and he took him right up to the chute. One of his main holds was gettin' 'em by the tail, and he would set down on their tail and hold 'em.

If we was missin' a kid, we always got him out there to hunt. When he found a kid, he'd stand there and look back at you. We had a lot of big old mesquites. Well, it was hard for an adult to get in around those mesquites. My husband used to say, "Get in there, White Man, and bring it out." He would start in after that little ol' kid; when he touched it, it would bleat, and it made him afraid that he was hurtin' it. He would turn it loose, and he would look and look at it. My **...afraid that he was hurtin' it.** husband would have to scold him; make him get in and bring it out. He'd bring it out, and the little ol' thing would be scared. He would turn it loose and look at it, and if it started to run, my husband used to yell, "Hold it, White Man, hold it!" He would lay down, put his front paws right around under its neck, kind of lay his head down on its back, and it couldn't get away.

He was very, very smart. He could work any kind of stock. When he got to where he couldn't hear, you could send him with motions. You would have to use a hat that he could see. As long as he could see you make a motion, he knew he was supposed to go further, and he would bring in goats that you didn't even know was missing.

Florence Martin

We used to go to horse races, to rodeos, and all that ridin' stuff. We had this one man that worked for us, Old Man Jim Milton. He was an alcoholic, but we'd take him. I used to sit in the car with him, and we'd look at the horses. They'd have races, you know, they'd bet 20, 100 dollars or somethin'.

I would sit with Old Man Jim Milton—very knowledgeable about cattle, very knowledgeable about horses—and we'd look. Old Man said, "All right, you look, that's the horse's back. If you will look at the space between the front shoulders, the length here, the hips—he'll win the race. That one's not so good; she's too short." Old Jim Milton never failed; he always picked winners.

We'd have ropings on a Sunday; we'd have potlucks—election was always a big time. Elections were held down at the schoolhouse. Charlie Hardin and all the local men were officials. Charlie Hardin used to always barbecue a goat and bring it over, and we would take a potluck—so election day was always a get-together. There were judges and clerks and ballot boxes. One man, usually one of the ranchers, was a judge. After all those ballots were in, they were counted; then one guy would go on to the county courthouse; read the ballot boxes.

...election was always a big time.

Lots of people would come over on Sundays—you had get-togethers. They used to have churches: at one time, there's a church up at the schoolhouse, and then at Engle, the fourth Sunday of each month, and then one at the old schoolhouse at Engle. The ranchers from that area come in; a preacher, Jack Cain from T or C, preaches; and then fiddle music and potluck and a get-together. Still have the ranchers' Sunday school, church, I think, at Engle.

Frank and I went together for a long time and married in Las Vegas, at my family's home. I was teaching school when Frank and I met. We met at a dance. We loved to dance whenever there was one.

The local residents frowned on that; didn't like for the teachers to dance. There were just two or three places that you could go to dance. At fair time, they had a street dance, and the teachers were encouraged to go. And so, I just happened to meet Frank. I was teaching up around Tularosa, and I kept books at the local store after school on Saturdays. I held down two jobs.

I held down two jobs.

We lived in a house in Tularosa. When we had our cattle there, I moved to the ranch. We moved to Socorro; I substituted for them. I had all the certifications for teaching, so, when my children were in school, I got a job teaching. I became principal and then retired.

There was a good Baptist family in Tularosa, and they had two little girls—they were cute little girls, and I had them in school. One Sunday, the preacher said, “The saloon is the den of hell,” and he started raving. This one little girl said, “Gosh, that preacher said ‘The saloon’s a den of hell.’ I wonder what it looks like?” She went in the saloon to see what hell was like. I thought that was nice. That preacher did, too, but the family was very upset. But that was the attitude of the times.

Our superintendent told us that, because we were young people going to go to a dance, for goodness sakes, get out of town. There were only just a few places that a teacher could go. A teacher could not even get married back in those days—they didn’t allow her to be a teacher. If you were a young teacher, and you got married, you automatically were fired.

They had some married teachers—two or three that had been in the system for awhile—but the younger ones, no. I know a number of girls that were teachers in the local area. They married, but they kept it a secret until after being in the school. A lot of the teachers were men; they were allowed to be married.

Dolly Helms Onsrud

There was always a lot of moonshine at the dances. We had a very good gentleman that kept everybody pretty well supplied. It was pretty good. That was about '25—in the '20s, '30s, and '40s.

MC: Did you ever have a nip of it? I've never had any. Was it stout?

A little bit. It depends on how many times—here, I'm talking just like a moonshiner's daughter—it'd depend on how many times you run it through the still. You could run it through 'til you had 190 proof. My oldest sister's husband was quite a moonshiner. He made it, and it was strong. When it comes out, it runs out white, clear. To get the color, you age it in oak barrels. Or you can add a little caramel color, or scorch sugar and add a little to your moonshine.

MC: So, sometimes a little moonshine was present at these dances. Did that ever lead to any trouble?

Well, sometime, instead of having a dance hall, they'd turn it into a butcher shop. You know how the cowboys are. And maybe the girls are a little too flirtatious. Sometimes **You know how cowboys are.** it didn't work; it would create a little disagreement. We'd just have to go outside and talk about it. Fights were pretty common—you couldn't have a dance without a fight, but I think mostly feelings got hurt.

Pat Withers

Toad's wife was jealous of a certain woman, so they had made up when they come to dance that they wouldn't dance with either one of them. But, of course, Toad drank a whole lot, and he got a little lit and went and got this woman that he wasn't supposed to dance with. When he did, his wife went and got old Red Hayes. **Toad...quit dancing and ...invited him outside.** Toad just quit dancing and got Red Hayes and invited him outside. He had Red bent over on the banister on the little porch outside the little schoolhouse, when my daddy pulled him off and threw him about 30 feet.

My daddy, R.C., was built like a bull. When Toad got up, he charged my daddy. Daddy had a pipe in his mouth; he'd been smoking, and Toad hit at him and missed, but hit his pipe—broke the stem out of his mouth and filled his eyes full of ashes. Daddy was pawing at his eyes, and when **My daddy...was built like a bull...** he got the ashes out, Toad was getting up out there about 30 feet away. Daddy said he knew he didn't hit him; they didn't know who hit him.

But the next day, you could tell who hit him. Wayne had stuck a cedar splinter just under the hide, right across his hand—just a small one—and pulled it out and doctored it. **Never did have any more trouble with Toad...** Wayne had hit Toad with that fist, and that next morning, that sucker was swelled up. You could sure tell who hit Toad. Well, Wayne had run in there and come in under Dad's arm and hit him. Toad went home and took his wife and emptied his gun in the air. Never did have any more trouble with Toad, though.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

When I first came to the ranch, about '37 or '38, we had a couple of burros in the pen. A neighbor boy came over one evening to stay all night with us. He said, "Let's go out and ride the burros." I said, "Okay, let's go." We went out there, and one of us crawled up on the burro, and it wouldn't do anything; just standing there. We couldn't get it to move. Anyhow, to make a long story short, I was up on this burro, and he walked over and got a tin can and put four or five small rocks in it, and walked up behind this burro and shook it. I guess it sounded like a rattlesnake, 'cause the burro moved. **It not only moved, it bucked me off.** He thought that was great. I wouldn't get back on it again.



Figure 37. Andregg family with Old Whitey (left to right): Alfred Clay (Sr.), Verena, Perry, Val Dee, Clay, Eunice (wife of Alfred Clay), Joe, and Frank Andregg, dogs Coco and Boots, circa 1939.

My grandfather had tournament poles on this ranch before we moved there—they were located in this flat—there was four of them. This is a game, all right? You take some poles that are high enough to where a man sitting on a horse can raise his arm to about a level like this or down, maybe, depending on the height of the horse and the man—about shoulder height. You have a pole with a wire on it and a bend in it and a ring on that wire. This ring is about 2 inch diameter.

My grandfather had tournament poles...

This wire is located so that you run one direction only, and off of these wires, these rings are hanging. You have a pole in your hand and you run down this line—if you catch all four rings and the other guy that's competing with you only catches three, you win the tournament. They run that for years there. When we went to the ranch, one of those poles had fallen down, and we never did get everything gathered back up and have another tournament after I got there. But the boys, my cousins, and I used to find a couple of old rings once in awhile, and we'd go out there on the two remaining poles that were left and try to snag them.

It was a timed event. If you did it faster than the next guy and you only caught two rings, and he caught two rings and was slower, well, you would win that way. But the first criteria was how many rings have you gotten, and the second one was how fast did you do it. If there was a tie on numbers of rings, then the fastest would count.

I never saw anyplace else in this part of the country where they had tournament poles set up. I read one time about them having them in Texas. And I assume Grandfather must have saw it down there and brought it out here with him. But, it was unique in the sense that I've never seen anyplace else. Believe me, it does take skill; I've tried it. What you do, you get your height: as you're going along, you point your spear; by looking, you can tell about where your height is. You try hold that height, and you try to steer your pole whichever direction it is to pick up that ring. It's fun.

For many years, the ranchers seemed to all join in there at my grandfather's place around the 4th of July for a big picnic and horse races, tournament poles, foot races. We had lots of people that were pretty fast on foot or thought they were, until we got them there, and

...competition that was harmless...

so on down the line. It was just a general fun type thing. Whatever anybody could think up for competition that was harmless, if you will, was tried. There was usually a bucking horse or two around. We didn't have anything like that at our place, but Mr. Miller, up on top, threw a regular rodeo and barbecue a couple of times during the '30s.

We'd go up there, and he always had a couple of old mean horses that liked to buck, and two or three cows or bulls, and a few goats—we'd rope goats. Once in awhile, he'd have a couple to three milk-pen calves that he'd let them rope, but most generally, it was goat roping. And we had horse races and foot races, so on and so forth, and barbecue and a dance at night and the whole nine yards.

If he didn't do it July the 4th, then it was usually in the early fall, just before school started—actually, late summer, not really fall—in late August. For one thing, he wanted to get through the better part of the year and see how your stock were coming along.

We also had dances at the schoolhouse and people's houses. They'd last from about sundown to sunup—like a housewarming, for instance. Potters built a new house and they had a housewarming, and that included a dance. And we had traveling salesmen that would come through on rare occasions. One group came through selling, I think it was aluminum, some kind of aluminum cookery. They cooked a **...from...sundown to sunup.** meal, and after the meal was over, two or three of them got their musical instruments out, and we had a dance, and so on down the line. This is usually the way it all happened. We held plays at the schoolhouse, and we had dances after the plays. This usually occurred at least twice a year, during Christmas and at the end of the year, and sometimes one or two dances in between, depending on how affluent everybody felt.

Lewis D. Cain

BM: Did they have bands or use a phonograph at the dances they had at Ritch School?

They'd have their fiddle and guitar. Dad and his brothers were fiddle and guitar pickers, and the Woods boys. Gilillands, they had the French harp music, and that was about it. It would just be the close neighbors that would come to the dances, and they had a fiddle and guitar and a French harp for the music.

One time, had a dance right in the mouth of Rhodes Canyon—might've been one of the Potter boys gave it. But anyway, Wilbur Sitz was staying with me at the Buckhorn, and we left right after dinner one day—it was about a 20-mile ride across there—and we went up through the mountains and picked up a neighbor boy, and then got down to the ranch house a little before sundown. We unsaddled our horses and put them in the corral, went up to the house, and they had barbecued goat for supper.

Wilbur Sitz, he'd never eaten goat, so he didn't eat any supper. The dance started a little after dark, and, at midnight, why, they had a
...he'd never eaten goat... midnight lunch with coffee and barbecued goat. Wilbur still wasn't hungry for goat meat. About sunup the next morning, the dance broke up, and they had breakfast with barbecued goat. Wilbur ate breakfast that morning.



Figure 38. Jack Bruton and Henry Tanner, Rhodes Canyon, circa 1924–1925.

Dixie Gililland Tucker

We'd bake a cake and carry it in a flour sack, and then, at midnight, we'd have cake and coffee and visit. One time, my dad carried his fiddle on the horse. It was pretty close to 20 miles and real rough

He played all night long.

country, just the horse could go, and we had to go single file. We carried our cake, and Dad carried his fiddle. He played all night long. They gave him 15 dollars—that was back there in the '30s, and that was a lot of money. He said, "Well, that was really good to get that much money for anything."

I saw something in this Sears Roebuck Catalog from 1909. I was interested in the price on the fiddle. You could get one for \$1.95, and they go all the way up to \$20, \$22.45. So, when you talk about 15 dollars he earned for playing, that was some amount of money in those times. That was in '31 when he did that, and you could bring your wagon into town and load up with groceries for 50 dollars.

Natalia Lucero DiMatteo

Remember now, my dad didn't have any boys up until Sonny—Sonny was four years younger than I was, so when he was 10, I was 14, Izzie was 16, Julie was 18. Dad always treated us like tomboys. We were tomboys. He taught us at a very early age to ride horses, to get on a pony, how to ride them and to tame 'em. We were brought up on bucking **...we were tomboys.** horses. The Fourth of July, my dad would get heifers, 1-, 2-, or 3-year-old heifers, which are small bulls [sic], but not too small, and he would have us ride them. I hated that. They just put one rope around their front forelegs and that's all you're going to hold onto. He had two heifers that Julie and Izzie already were pretty good at staying on. He wanted Bertha and I to get on these other two heifers. Bertha, being younger than I, but smarter, said, "You go ahead and pick the one you want." I said, "Well, I don't want the big one. I want the little one." I thought the little one would not pitch as hard as the big one, and, if I fell off, it won't hurt me. She said, "Okay." She got on the big one, and it just pitched one or two or three times and went right against the corral boards where you climb up. Bertha, she got off, climbed the corral—she's sitting up there on the board, fine.

When it was my turn, my heifer was not as big, so, big deal, I got on it, and, I mean, it really pitched to high heaven, and over I went. When he pitched me off, he was angry. He mooed and bawled and came right after me. If that saddle room had not been there—and thank God the door was not locked—I crawled on all my four feet **...it pitched to high heaven...** through manure and whatnot and got in there just in time and got away from that darned little heifer. After I came out, my mother had been watching—she was not a very big person; she was only about 5-foot-4—but she really let my dad have it. She said, "Do you realize what you have done? Don't you realize that my little girl could have been killed by that bull?"

I mean to tell you, he had fun. My dad was a big teaser, and he never grew up, is what my mom always said. We were tomboys. Whatever he said we had to do, we did it. When it came to our 3-year-old horses, they needed to be ridden; the girls had to do it. I would hide under the bed when I knew it was my turn because I didn't want to get on a bucking horse. There was one that they called *Huerfanito*, which meant "orphan, little orphan," because its mother had passed away. I got on that bucking horse, and it threw me twice. My dad made me get up the third time. I was about 13 years old, and I got up that third time, and he said, "You better stay up there," and you know that I did. I finally stayed on a bucking horse.

At the age of 16, there was a rodeo at Silver City, and I entered. That was one of my first exciting experiences. I got on a bucking horse, and I was on it for the required time, which was 15 seconds. It was bucking up a storm, but it did not throw me off. I won a saddle at that rodeo. I was 16 years old; I was real proud of myself.

At that point is when I started getting self-confidence, you know, instead of feeling sorry for myself. Dad always took Julie and Izzie out on the range, if there were any stray cattle. If they were up at Ash Canyon or had gone to another part of the range, he would send them up. But Bertha and I could not go—we were too young and we wouldn't know where to look. Then, when I won that saddle, I could tell them I won a saddle. Long after we were all married, I would bring that up.



Figure 39. Natalia Lucero (DiMatteo), José B. Lucero Ranch, circa 1931–1936.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

One Christmas, we were here at the ranch, all gathered in the sitting room, and the goat herders and everybody was playing bingo and listening to the radio. We heard this “jing, jing, jing,” like sleigh bells. We heard the door open, and we started to go in there, but Uncle Frank wouldn’t let us. Then, we heard some rustling around in there—no talking, just a hustle bustle, you know. And then, all of sudden, we heard the door slam, and this “jing, jing, jing, jing, jing” just **...Santa Claus had been there.** kinda went out of sight, like sleigh bells. Then he let us go in, and Santa Claus had been there. So, I really believed in Santa Claus—I was probably 8 then. He’d left dogs and trucks that really worked, had light, you know, batteries, and left all kinds of school supplies, and candy and oranges and apples and nuts, and it was really neat. I still don’t know today who was there, if it wasn’t Santa Claus. Nobody ever told. Mom said she didn’t even know. So, I just believe it was Santa Claus.



Figure 40. Verena and Val Dee Andregg at Indian Springs, circa 1930?

Alice Gililand Smith

We didn't have no religion. In fact, first church I ever went to was when I went to school in Hot Springs. When I moved in Tularosa, well, my mother, she was one of these Holy Rollers, you know. Well, I liked the Baptist. I went to the Nazarene; I went to the Methodist. Me and my friend, we liked the Baptist. She was really a Methodist, but the young people, the BYPU people, were down at the Baptist Church, and she played the piano and sang.

Over on the Jornada, where Clay was raised, Preacher Lewis would walk and knit sweaters and caps and give 'em to the kids that joined the church. That was the Episcopal Church. So, most of the Smiths was in the Episcopal Church. Clay was out in cow camp so much and all, that he got into it. When the whole family started church and we moved back here, I said, "Well, what do we wear? Let's go see what the Episcopal Church is like." "What do we wear? What do we do?" Because Catholics had to wear a hat on their head. "Oh," he said, "we'll just go down to the Baptist Church."

We didn't have any funerals. Well, the Martins lost a couple of kids, and he took and buried 'em down there by a tree in the pasture. They said that's where he should've been buried, you know, when he died, but they brought him up to High Rolls. His brothers more or less did that. But we were just lucky—outside of little Buster and Grandpa, and they was buried in Tularosa.

Mellie Potter

JO: We were talking about the gasoline pump the Potters put in shortly after the state road was built. Could you describe what that pump was like and what you had to do to pump gas for a customer?

There was no electricity; it was all done by hand. The bowl up at the top held 10 gallons. The gas tank was buried under the ground, and whenever they delivered gas to us, well, they had hose that they put under the ground. It held 500 gallons, from Phillips 66 out of Tularosa. I think the tank come from Phillips 66. When we quit selling gas, well, they came out and got it. Gas wasn't very high then. It paid for our gas that we used around on the ranch. They could take the trucks and the pickups and go to the west side camp and all of the rest of 'em. They could go to the wells and the springs—the seep they couldn't get to. There was no road up in there; all of that was pack horses. It was a boost for the ranch.

...500 gallons from Phillips 66.

Betsy Lucero

We usually didn't stay at the ranch for Christmas. We'd come into town two or three days or the day before Christmas. No, we didn't stay out there for the holidays. By the time we were getting ready to leave, when we were living there, they were firing a lot of V-2 rockets. They would tell us to get out, and we would have to go. Sometimes, they would fire after we were back in, because we weren't warned.

I can remember one time the men had left real early in the morning; they were gonna go out to the old well. We had already gotten up and gone back to the ranch. They usually hung signs and everything else—well, supposedly. Anyway, they were gone. The men went to check some fence. I heard the "OOOoooOOO;" they had fired. I got outside, and one of those V-2 rockets

had fell in the pasture. I got up on top of the windmill, trying to see where it fell, because I knew it wasn't very far from the house. But I didn't dare go out there, because I didn't know whether the guys would be coming in, and then they wouldn't find me in the house, and they'd be worried to death. Well, as it was, they *were* worried, because they saw the cloud of dust that it stirred up—left a crater. They rushed home because they thought it had fell at the house. And it wasn't very funny; it wasn't very far from the house. I kept going up in the windmill—had a little ladder, and I climbed up to see if I couldn't see them coming. But then, they always told me, "Well, as long as you hear the noise, it's going overhead. When the noise stops, that's when it's coming down." That's when you have to be careful. I never was scared. 'Course, I was young then; maybe I didn't know any better.

**...one of those V-2 rockets
had fell in the pasture.**

Holm O. Bursum III

BM: You mentioned that your family was on the ranch when the bomb was tested at Trinity. Could you tell me a little bit about that?

I was really the only one on the ranch at that time, in August of 1945 [the first atomic bomb was tested at Trinity, July 16, 1945]. My mother and father and my little brother lived in town. When they set that off, I was at the Adobe Ranch, about 18 miles north, northeast of Trinity Site. I think they were suppose to set it off around midnight, and I think it rained that night and delayed it, so they set it off about 4:30 in the morning—it woke us up there at the Adobe. There was an old adobe house, and I was sleeping on the top deck of a double-decker bunk bed, and it rocked that bed enough that it woke me up.

It was real bright, but in the wrong direction, 'cause my bed was next to a south window. That was the wrong way for the sun to come up, but it looked like the sun was coming up. It shook the house, and I remember there were cases of cans that were used for canning in the

...it looked like the sun was coming up.

house, just empty cans that had not been used yet, new cans; I remember that it really rattled those cans. It was kind of a strange sound. The highway, Highway 380, was blocked off, and there was no traffic. I don't know for how long, but I guess it didn't make any difference—we weren't going anywhere, anyway. There was lots of Army traffic on that highway.

On the ranch itself, we had quite a few cattle that were lying down and asleep at that time, and the side facing the blast—these were

...their beards turned white.

Hereford cattle, they were red in color—the side facing the Trinity Site turned white, and several of the sheep herders that were closer, who had black beards—they were all young people—their beards turned white. We had one black cat, in particular, that I know of, that turned white.

There were apparently no adverse effects. The Atomic Energy Commission bought two carloads of our livestock and took 'em to

...they all died of natural old age.

Knoxville, Tennessee, and they all died of natural old age. No adverse effect as far as health or reproduction—they continued to produce normal calves the rest of their producing lives. And none of the sheep herders seemed to have any problem, and I didn't have any problems.

THE GOOD LIFE

Time was when campfires were nightly merry...when songs were gay to echo...when this had been the only watering place to break the long span across the desert. The railroad had changed all this, and the silent leagues of that old road lay untrodden in the sun.

— Eugene Manlove Rhodes, *Bransford of Rainbow Range*

Betsy Lucero

It was so peaceful and so quiet, and I just love the outdoors, anyway. I used to enjoy going for long walks out there. There was never a dull moment. I thoroughly enjoyed it. In the afternoons, we would play cards, or we would play washers with the workmen, horseshoes. We found lots to keep entertained. And then, sometimes we'd take off in the truck and go rabbit hunting.

We'd watch the rains go down the arroyos, see if the arroyo was running over by the dirt tank. It wasn't a rushed pace, not for me, anyway. I'd get up **We'd watch the rains...** in the morning—shoot, there wasn't a thing to clean, not that little house. My husband helped me a lot—he helped cook, and he'd bring in water and do things—and the workmen did, too. Sometimes he would make bread. You know, we took turns.

Holm O. Bursum III

The peace and quiet of the country, I think, is somethin' that you never get over, that affects you all of your life. Having been raised in that atmosphere was almost like living in paradise. It was great, and I really loved **...like living in paradise.** it, and I say to this day, if I can go to an area like that, you just have a different feeling. I was fortunate to live in a nice place. It was a comfortable house, even though it sounds crude by today's standards. You know, it was very comfortable, and I had loving parents that took good care of us, and all that together was probably my fondest memories of that period and still are.

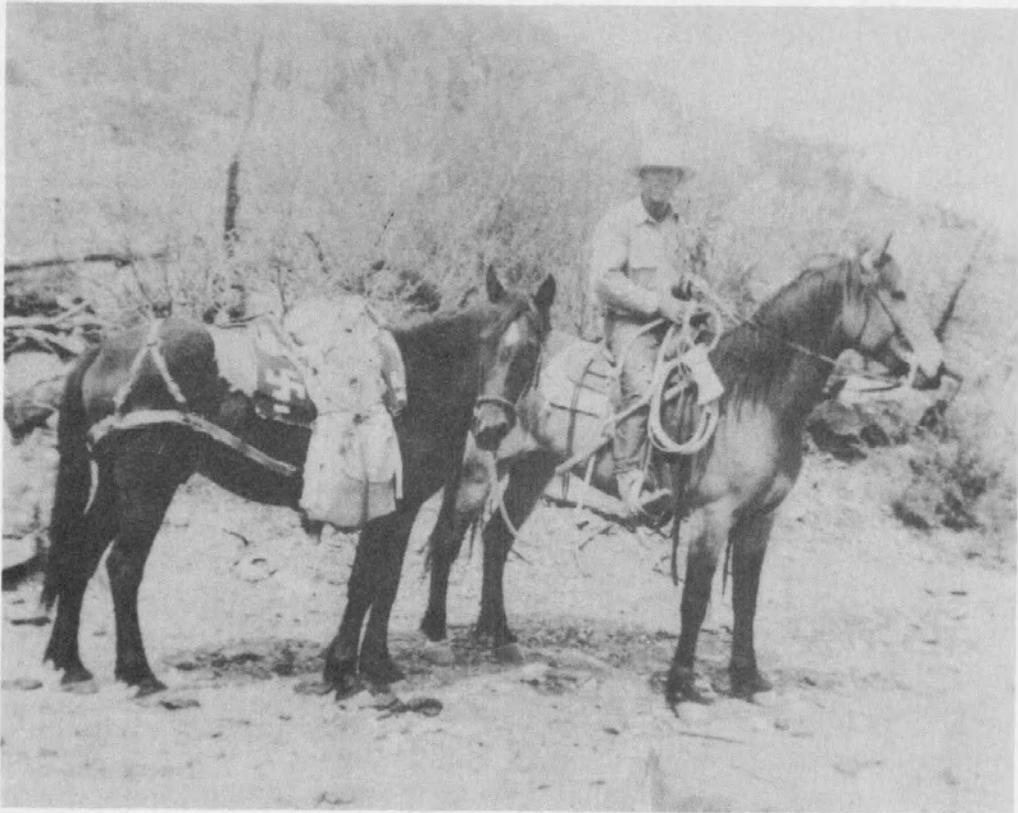


Figure 41. Paul Fite on his way to help with roundup at the Stovall Ranch, 1940-41.

INTERVIEWERS

The White Sands Missile Range Ranching Heritage Oral History Project, a joint effort of Human Systems Research and New Mexico State University's Center for Anthropological Research, drew upon student expertise in conducting interviews, transcribing tapes, copying photographs, and many other related duties. Interviewers included NMSU graduate students Mark Carter, Janie O'Cain, Michelle Nawrocki, and Beth Morgan, Human Systems Research oral historian. Morgan also coordinated project operations, devised data-management strategies, and shot still, copy, and video photography, in addition to selecting and conducting a preliminary edit of transcript excerpts for this volume. Dr. Neal Ackerly supervised NMSU student efforts. Austin Hoover and Tim Blevins, Rio Grande Historical Collections, NMSU, arranged archival curation of tapes, documents, and photographs, and Blevins directed archival photographic copy efforts. Pete Eidenbach, HSR, directed the overall project, conducted oral and video interviews, and edited and composed the popular report. Bob Burton, WSMR archaeologist, acquired the Legacy Program funding and served as a catalyst, offering advice and inspiration throughout the project. Short biographies of the interviewers are included below.

Mark Carter

Mark Carter, a graduate student at New Mexico State University, received undergraduate degrees in history and government and is currently working toward a master's degree in public administration. His background includes several years experience in the mining industry and a tour of duty with the U.S. Army. A native New Mexican, Carter has an avid interest in the history of the Southwest, in general, and New Mexico, in particular.

Beth Morgan

Beth Morgan is an editor and oral historian for Human Systems Research. A native New Mexican, she earned a bachelor's degree in journalism at the University of New Mexico in 1976. Her master's studies in English, completed at New Mexico State University in 1992, included a subspecialty in folklore and oral history. She has worked as a reporter at various New Mexico newspapers, as a freelance writer, and in public relations at NMSU and for the Orchestra of Santa Fe. Morgan also served as co-editor in the production of this publication.

Janie O'Cain

Janie O'Cain is a graduate student in anthropology at New Mexico State University. She received her undergraduate degree in sociology from Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana. Prior to graduate school, O'Cain was employed for a number of years in the human services field in Montana and North Dakota.

Michelle Nawrocki

Michelle Nawrocki is a graduate student in anthropology at New Mexico State University. She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and anthropology from the University of Florida in Gainesville. Nawrocki worked as a medical writer for the University of Florida Health Science Center and Shands Teaching Hospital and as a sports editor and general writer for a college newspaper. She is presently working on a study of general American tattooing practices for her thesis project.

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We're criticized by environmentalists for ruining the range, which is not the truth—it never has been, it never will be. Matter of fact, the latest big study they did, the range was in better shape than it's been in for over 50 years, and yet, they're chastising the rancher, trying to move him off the BLM land. If they finally manage to do it, you and I are going to see \$20-a-pound hamburger before it's over with. Whether you like hamburger or not, that's the way it's going to go.

If you get used to being a herdsman with the cow/calf operation, it's rather difficult to change your tactics and decide to go to a different type of operation. About the only way you might do this would be a complete sellout, like we did with the goats and the sheep. But the thing was, when we went from goats to sheep and from sheep to the cattle, we were going in one direction all the time. Our goal was to restock cattle to start with, but not at that instant in time because there

Cattle was dad's first love...

was nothing there for them to eat due to the drought. Cattle was dad's first love, if you will. Not that he didn't know goats or sheep—he was probably as knowledgeable or more knowledgeable about goats than he was about cattle—but he liked cattle better. And there again, this is just a matter of preference with people. We could've gotten along just as well with sheep or goats as we did with cattle. Matter of fact, we may have been a little better off with sheep than we were with cattle. At that instant in time, it was more of a hassle to have sheep. We didn't have the sheep-proof pastures, and so on and so forth, that one of our neighbors had.

Dolly Helms Onsrud

Our forage was really good. We had a lot of black head grama, white sage, mahogany brush, and buck brush, what they call buck brush. It's kinda a little bush that stays semi-evergreen all the time. The livestock ate that and they would graze on the mahogany. In the wintertime, our cows would go to the mountains. Yeah, 1941, we had a lot of snowfall in the winter, and then we had early spring rains, and everybody was real happy over that. We had little springs pop out over the property. We had a little spring show up that we didn't know existed. The water table had risen so that a spring began to run. Yeah, there was one southwest of our house. We kept hearing this rushing sound. We didn't know what it could be and Art said, "Well, I'm a just gonna saddle my horse and go look and see." There was a stream of water 3 foot wide and a foot deep coming out of the side of the mountain, out from under a great big rock that was half as big as this house. Of course, there was nowhere for it to go, except out in the pasture, but it run like that all summer long. That was a definite spot we was gonna develop water, because it had to have been there.