

[George Murray]

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Date: September [25, 1938?]

Words: [1837?]

Subject: Pioneer Story

Source of Information:

George Murray. Sep 26 1938

I was born in Fort wayne, Indiana, January 15, 1864. My father Joe Murray, and my mother, Elizabeth Erwin, were both born in Ireland. They both came to Fort Wayne, Indiana when they were both very young and grew up there.

They were [?] married in Fort Wayne, Indiana, (I do not know the date) and their children, two boys and two girls, were born there. I was their youngest child.

My parents moved to Richland Springs, in [??] County, Texas, in [1865?], when I was about a year old. I have heard my mother say that they made the trip to Texas in covered wagons, but I do not know what time of the year they made the trip. I also remember my mother saying that Richland Springs was just a wide place in the road when they got there. My father took up a homestead about two miles east of Richland Springs, Texas, where he farmed, raised cattle and owned a few head of horses.

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The woods around our farm was full of wild hogs, antelope, buffalo and deer, in tho'se days and we had all the fresh meat that we wanted, just by going out in the woods and shooting the wild game. With our milk cows and what other things we raised on the farm, it cost us very little to live.

My father was a prize fighter and was killed in Portland Oregon, in a saloon brawl over a prize fight, that he had gone to Portland to see. I do not remember what year he was killed. My mother died in Richland Springs, Texas, in 1892.

In 1887, I hired out to a man named Joe [?], of Richland Springs, Texas, as a cowboy. He was taking a herd of sixteen hundred cattle from Richland Springs, Texas to [Globe?] Arizona.

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Besides Joe Sloan and a foreman, named [Lon?] Roundtree, there were eight cowboys, a cook and a man to take care of the horses. It was late in the fall when we left Richland Springs, Texas, with the cattle. We traveled up the Concho river for sixty miles and crossed the cattle at San Angelo Texas. We had no trouble in crossing the river there as it was at normal stage. From San Angelo Texas on we were on the staked plains and had to make very long drives to water for the cattle. At night, three of the cowboys would stand guard over the cattle, in three hour shifts. The man who looked after the [?] had to stand guard too. We had seventy-five head of horses in the rounds, each cowboy had a mount of seven horses.

There were two covered wagons, drawn by two horses to each wagon. One hauled our beds and the other was the "chuck" wagon. There was a chuck box in the back of the chuck wagon. The cook was a man and he had to use buffalo chips to cook with while we were on the plains. He made sour dough biscuits and baked them in a dutch oven. The only fresh meat we had were the stray yearlings that we found on the plains. We would kill

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them for meat and for a few days we would have nice fresh meat for meals as the weather was cool enough for it to keep well.

Joe Sloan was the only man in the bunch who had a gun. We were never afraid of the Indians or of cattle thieves and we were never bothered by them.

We crossed the Pecos River at Pontoon Crossing, about one hundred and sixty miles east of Pecos City, Texas. We had no trouble in crossing the cattle, altho'ugh we had to swim them across.

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From Pontoon Crossing we went on by way of Pecos City, Texas, (this town is now called Pecos, Texas) and from there we headed in a Northwestern direction for the Sacramento Mountains, in New Mexico. The weather was getting cold and we needed protection for the cattle, as some of them were getting pretty weak. We passed thro'ugh Seven Rivers, New Mexico, which was about fifty miles north of Roswell, New Mexico. Seven Rivers was in Lincoln County at that time. From there we went to Penasco country, in the Sacramento mountains, in New Mexico, where Joe Sloan left five hundred head of the weakest cattle in a pasture, for the winter. We came out of the Sacramento mountains at Tularosa, New Mexico, and to the north of the White Sands, thro'ugh Mocking Bird Gap, in the [Organ?] mountains. We watered at Mal Pais springs, which is just at the foot of the Mal Pais, int the Organ Mountains, and from there we had to drive the cattle a distance of sixty five miles, witho'ut water, until we reached the Rio Grande River. We crossed the Rio Grande near what is now Hot Springs, New Mexico. At Lake Valley New Mexico, we ran into an awful snow storm. This was in Sierra County. I left the herd, just after crossing the line of New Mexico and Arizona, at Duncan, Arizona.

I came back to Moonshine Springs, about thirty-five miles east of Carrizozo, New Mexico, in Lincoln County. I stayed there for a few days and then came over to the [Block Ranch?], which is on the north side of the Capitan Mountains, in Lincoln County. This was in the

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spring of 1888. I went to work as a cow boy on the Block Ranch that spring. This was a very large ranch and was owned by the Thurber Brothers, of New York City. I do not remember the exact length of time I worked them.

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I have worked for every big cattle company in Lincoln County. I have done nothing but punch cattle all my life. I never married and I just drifted from one place to another until the last ten years, when I got too old to ride the range.

At different times I have worked for the following ranchers. I was with the "V V" Cattle company, owned by James [Gree?] and Son, and located on Little Creek, which is twenty-four miles south east of Garrizozo, New Mexico. This is the same ranch that was owned by Pat Garrett in the early days.

I worked for the Bar W outfit, owned by W. C. McDonald, who was the first governor of New Mexico, after it became a State. This ranch is located about three quarters of a mile west of Garrizozo, New Mexico.

I worked for [Hatchet?] Cattle Company, owned by the Thatcher Brothers, of Pueblo, Colorado. This ranch is located about twenty eight miles south of Garrizozo, New Mexico, at Three Rivers, New Mexico.

I worked for many years at these places. I have lived in Lincoln County for the past fifty years. Of all my family only my brother Tom, and myself are left. My two sisters died when they were both young. My brother still lives on our old home place at Richland Springs, Texas. I heard from him about a year ago. He has a big family, seven children, seventeen grandchildren, and seven great grand children.

I live all alone and find it hard to pass the time as I have cataracts on my eyes, and am pretty feeble.

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NARRATOR: George Murray, Aged 74 years, Carrizozo, New Mexico.

CORRECTIONS ON THE GEORGE MURRAY - PIONEER STORY.

Page 1, paragraph 2. Give here the names of the children.

“Maggie, Sam, Mollie, and George”.

Page 4, paragraph 4. Give here the present address of Mr. Murray.

“Carrizozo, New Mexico”.