

## [Miss Gula B. Foote]

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Range-Lore

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San Angelo, Texas

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RANGE-LORE - From a diary

A pioneer girl of the West carried a revolver, rode bad horses, roped cattle and herded sheep. These activities were not carried on in a spirit of bravado or daring but as part of the every day work. Miss Gula B. Foote, who came to Ben Ficklin in 1876, has done all of these things and has kept a diary of the things she thought of as ordinary happenings in a busy life.

Miss Foote's father, C.D. Foote, a civil engineer, came to the western part of Texas in 1875. The next year he sent to Michigan for his family which consisted of his wife who was a teacher of piano in a large school; a daughter Gula, aged nine and a small son, Harry. Miss Foote tells in her diary: We had an uneventful train trip to Round Rock, Texas. There we were met by my father. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 We then traveled in a fearful (to mother and me) manner, that is, a brown topped hack drawn by horses. We were afraid of every thing- principally the horses- but we imagined worse things; Indians, rattlesnakes and skunks. My father did all the cooking on the trip as my mother was never good in the culinary arts even in the best equipped kitchen. However, through it all I was thrilled to be going to our new home".

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The diary relates that at an early age she overcame her fear of horses. She delighted to meet the stage at Ben Ficklin; for the driver, W. J. Ellis, after discharging the passengers, would permit Gula to drive the four horses hitched to the big stagecoach down to the corrals.

Miss Foote tells of riding bronchos at fairs in competition with men riders and of winning. She always rode sideways- never astride. "White Bess", an Arabian mare owned by Mr. Foote, would permit no one except Gula to ride her.

After her father became disabled, Miss Foote took over the entire management of their ranch, which they named, "Kiowa Ranch". Here she bred, raised and broke to saddle and harness the fine horses which were the best in show ring or in actual use. She gave them such names as "Lady Bird", "Chaquita", "Chico". Miss Foote had nothing but ridicule for "scrub stock".

On the ranch Miss Foote did all kinds of work even milking the cows which is always a distasteful job to any ranchman or ranchwoman. She tells that one Sunday a somewhat shiftless widower in the neighborhood [stayed?] around the ranch all day. When milking time came and she started out with the milk buckets, the man sidled up to her and said soulfully, "Miss Gula, don't you ever feel the need of a man about the place?" "Yes", replied Miss Foote, "but when I do, I hire one".

The many mementoes tell of her part in the social life of the "gay 90's" and earlier. Dance cards filled with the names of popular gentlemen; engraved cards; pressed flowers; photographs and newspaper clippings attest to the fact that Miss Foote was a much sought- after young lady in the society circles of Ben [Ficklin?] and later of San Angelo.

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After leasing out the ranch, Miss Foote sold her horses and moved to her home in San Angelo. She owned and learned to drive a car but always insisted that she would much prefer driving her favorite team of ranch horses.