

[Hardy Jones]

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[FOLKSTUFF?] - Range lore

Range-Lore

Nellie B. Cox,

San Angelo, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

Although he is 79 years old, Hardy Jones of San Angelo, Texas, is still an active cowboy. Some men of that age become cooks or do other light work (if any) when on cattle works but not so with Mr. Jones. He has his mount allotted to him, rides and accomplishes as much as any other hand and much more than many, because of his years of experience.

"My brother-in-law raised me", says Mr. Jones. "We lived in Milam County which at that time had very few fences except for the farms. We had a few cattle and I learned to handle cattle when I was very small. C12 - Texas 2 In those days we didn't use a chuck wagon but put our cooking outfit on a pack-horse. A skillet, a few pans, a coffee pot and other needed things were tied on the horse and sometimes tin cups were fastened around the horse's neck. My first part in working cattle was to lead the pack-horse. I was mighty little.

"My brother-in-law traded for a few sheep and let them out on shares. The man took the sheep and headed for the West. We moved to Hamilton County, but early each spring we would come to this country to help with the lambing of our sheep and stay to work cattle.

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"I came first in 1879 but later we moved out here, arriving on March 10th, 1882. I have never been back to my home in Milam County.

"There were no fences out here but when we were coming through the country below Coleman, I remember seeing a long, barbed wire fence which had been out between every post. We had to drive around every way. That cut wire was scattered all over the road. There were only three stores that I remember, a small one at Indian Gap, one about the same size at Brownwood, and another one, mostly a buffalo trading post, at Paint Rock.

"We hauled our wool to Abilene to market, using a two horse wagon. There was always strings of ox teams hauling lumber and stuff out of Abilene. When we met them in deep ruts, it was hard for my team to pull my load out of the ruts and over to one side, but the drivers 3 of the oxen would always say, 'Take your time, son. If you can't get out, we'll hitch one of our teams on and pull you out.'

"My first work on a ranch after moving here in 1882 was for the VP outfit, across the Concho River from where Water Valley is now located. Captain Turner had settled in that country a short time prior to that, I think. We had a ranch boss but I don't recall his name but Kearney Mayes, a brother of Ben Mayes, was wagon boss. I was a line rider. When I worked for the [IT's?], I went up the trail. When we were driving a herd of mixed stuff, cows, calves and steers, there wasn't much danger of stampedes but with several thousand head of steers, stampedes were common occurrences. At night four boys generally rode herd, two traveling around one way and two the other way. I couldn't sing but I did whistle. I don't know that it helped quiet the steers any but it was better to have some noise, for if every thing was quiet and a sudden noise was made, every old steer jumped up and began to snort. Even sometimes if a steer belched, it was enough to start the whole bunch off on a wild run. Most cowboys sang as they rode at night, especially on stormy nights. We had, of course, our chuck wagon, our cook, our remuda and our horse

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wrangler. We generally helped wrangle our horses, every one of them. Working cattle out in the open, a horse came to know as much as the man.

“There were no Indians in the country when I came 4 but the soldiers were still at Fort Concho. I have seen the soldiers going out on scout duty to the Fort Stockton Country. I don't know whether there were any Indians out there or not. The soldiers traveled slowly with long wagon trains.

“Many years ago we could get free range by leasing a waterhole but the fencing of the country changed all that.

“Even cattle working isn't what it used to be. If some of these present day cattlemen had to work cattle like we did in the early days, they would be complete failures.” 1 [?] FOLKSTUFF - RANGE LORE (interview)

Range-lore

Nellie B. Cox

San Angelo, Texas

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RANGELORE Hardy Jones

Among the pioneers of the San Angelo area [?] who [???] witnessed some of the exciting episodes of early days, is an old-timer who came here in 1879 and asks that his name be [withiheld?] from the [following story which he gave?]:

“When I was working with the 7D outfit I was line rider and stayed at what was called the “Lone Joe” camp. One day after dinner I rode out as usual on my job. In a thicket of liveoak I came up on the three train robbers who two or three days before had robbed a

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T. P. train [to?] the north. These men, Tom Ketchum and two others, had finished eating their dinner and were dividing their money. They had a stack of silver about this high, (he measured about four feet), besides more green-backs than you ever saw in a bank. They were not disturbed when I C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 rode up for they knew me. They gave me four one-hundred-dollar bills but after taking them, I decided that I didn't want to be caught with any hundred dollar bills, so I gave the money back to them. They divided the money and separated there, each going his own way, but headed generally to the south. They were riding 7D horses but they didn't steal them. They would catch and ride horses off the ranches but always managed to return them.

“The rangers were close behind Ketchum, arriving at the “Lone Joe” a few hours after they were gone. They took one of our riders whom we called Mose, along with them to help them but they (the rangers) all headed for the Concho Country and missed the robbers, entirely. They sent Mose back to the ranch.

“It is said that Ketchum was hung in Arizona, but some say he was not. I wouldn't know any of them now if they were to pass along in front of me.”