

[Pinkney Joel Webb]

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Range-Lore

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San Angelo, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

Pinkney (Pink) Joel Webb, an old-time cowboy tells:

"I have worked on several ranches on what seems now to have been sorry pay but our needs were not many and there is no work that carries with it the pleasure, freedom and comradeship which we found when we worked on the ranches. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas

"One winter I camped on Spring Creek in a big pasture where we kept some calf- heavy cows and some old, poor cows. I had a tent with two wires stretched around it to keep off the stock. I kept my chuck box out and my beans and coffee on the fire. Anyone who came along was welcome to help himself. The Mexicans all around were my good friends. They were careful to keep my gates shut and to prop up my fences 2 if they found them down. I was kept busy that winter tailing up old poor cows.

"While I was working on the Foote Ranch, fifteen miles southeast of San Angelo, we had a big flood. Bridges were washed out and there were places on Lipan Flat that a man on horseback could hardly get through. We got out of grub on the ranch. We ate nearly all the chickens- hens and all. One day a fat sheep showed up. We didn't know where it came from for there were no sheep any where near. We kept the sheep two days and finally

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butchered and ate it. The women said that the Lord sent it; Maybe so. Finally, four of us rode horseback in to town, tied our horses to little mesquite trees somewhere in what is now Glenmore Addition, crossed the river on a makeshift footbridge, got our groceries and carried them back to the ranch in feed sacks across our saddles.

“Booger Red or Tom Privett was breaking horses at that time on the Foote Ranch. He was the best bronc rider that was ever in the country. He made breaking horses his business. Later he rode at fairs and stock shows. Booger won lots of prizes. One time he won a saddle at the Ft. Worth Fat Stock Show. It was a fine saddle with silver mountings. When Booger left it at a hotel while he went [?] home, the hotel clerk wanted to give him some kind of a claim check. Booger Red said, 'Look at me right good and if an uglier devil than me comes along, give him the saddle'. Booger Red and his family had a pretty good circus. They could all do fine riding and roping stunts. 3 “I used to work for the 7's, which was later changed to the (f h triangle). This ranch was owned by Claude [Anson?] and Hubert Verner. They were Englishmen and, I think, belonged to the nobility. Their headquarters were on Kickapoo Creek. Anson always rode for his best mount, a gray cuttin' horse. A story is told of two negroes who worked on the ranch. At one time when Anson and Verner were away on a trip, possibly to England, these two negroes, one tall like Anson and one low in stature like Verner, would put on the Englishmen's clothes, ride their top horses and go to town; passing themselves off as ['Mr.?] Anson and ['Mr.?] Verner. That wasn't impossible. People in those days didn't inquire anything about you as long as you attended to your own business.

“I worked awhile, too, on the Rocking Chair Ranch, staying at the headquarters for awhile but later they moved a small house for me to live in.

“People used to be permitted to hunt and fish on the creeks and rivers. We always were careful to build our fires away from trees and away from the places where the stock came down to water. We burned the labels off all cans and then turned the cans upside down in a bunch of prickly pear, for cattle will sometimes get cans in their throats or fastened on

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their jaws. We never took dogs with us because they might 'chouse' the cattle. People were also permitted to haul wood from the pastures. One man had an order from Willis Johnson to haul wood and this fellow was to pay a dollar a load when any of the riders found him. He hauled 4 nine loads and only paid for one. He didn't sneak around and get the wood but the pastures were so large that he just wasn't found and the order to the ranch foremen stated that the man was to pay one dollar when found with a load of wood. We don't have the big pastures anymore. Everything is cut up in to small pastures. There ain't as many cattle either, even on the big ranches. When the three Sugg brothers came out from Oklahoma and bought out the [7D's?] and VP's, they rounded up 60,000 head.

“Wherever night found us, we put down our bed-roll and slept. If anyone came along we said, 'Get down and stay all night'. A man might give you some foul words from the mouth but in his heart he would have nothing but the best of feeling for you. 'Come on, podner, have one with me', was always the invitation from a stranger.

“Those were indeed the good old days.”