

[William Blevins]

1

FolkStuff - Rangelore

Gauthier, Sheldon F.

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. 7. [44?]

Page 1

FEC

William (Billy) Blevins, 81, born Oct. 17, 1866 at De Kalb Co., Ala.; was reared on a farm and lived with his parents until the age of 23. His family moved to Tex. after the Civil War and located on land N. of Ft. Worth. William Blevins joined the Texas Rangers in 1879 and served in the Northern Company under Capt. G. W. Arrington. In 1882 he entered the saloon business in Toyah, Tex. and then moved to Colorado City following the same vocation; later moving to Ft. Worth and was identified with the saloon business for several years.

“My father was William Blevins Sr. and came to Texas after the Civil War with 65 other emigrants. When I became 23 years old I was a good rider. I took a notion I wanted to be a Ranger and along with J.[?]. Clark of my community and brother of Sterling Clark that afterwards was Sheriff of Tarrant Co., I joined the Texas Rangers. We signed with the Northern Company under Capt. G.[?]. Arrington.

“My experience with range life was not as a cowhand or rancher but as a Ranger coming in contact with the range life and as a saloon keeper seeing them at play. After serving

Library of Congress

three years in the Ranger force I [?] a school in the West where about all the folks made their living dealing with cattle. Later I came to Fort Worth and was connected with the saloon business when the cattle was about the most important business in the town. As a Ranger I came in contact with cowhands because our principle work was looking after rustlers and Indian raiders and of course after law violators in general. While operating saloons I [?] the cowhands while at play and shall tell of the early range life as I saw in the two positions named.

“The Northern Company of Rangers had their headquarter at Blanco Canyon and we covered a radius of about [?] miles from there. One of the reasons for [locality?] at the Canyon was its good water. In that section of Texas at that time [?] water was not found on every hand. C 12 [???- Texas?] 2 A great deal of the water we came in contact with was gyp and unfit for man or beast. We builded our headquarters out of mud-blocks adobe with walls nearly two feet thick. there was no flooring but the buildings provided warm shelter.

“We lived in the open most of the time away from headquarters. We had to carry drinking water and tried to carry a sufficient supply but frequently we would run short and get mighty thirsty. Each man did his own cooking of course two or more could and did join in cooking their food together. Our main chuck was white beans and white bacon. We also had all the wild game we cared for. There was an abundance of wild turkey, antelope, deer and other game and we had all the beef we cared for. We could go to any ranch and get [a?] supply without paying. In fact it was an insult to offer a ranchman pay for beef. If we drove up to a ranch headquarters and found no one at home we would take what beef was wanted and leave a note stating that we had called. Our bread was of the sourdough kind such as we could make. All the cooking was done over camp fires using buffalo chips for fuel as a rule.

“Bathing took place when we came to a water hole and had time. As a rule the boys wore [?] and wore their hair long. At times we did not have the appearance of gentlemen and would cause a child to run with fear that would suddenly meet one of us. The Comanche

Library of Congress

Indians were our worst customers. They had given so much trouble and had committed so many beastly acts against the white folks that we had no mercy on them.

“It is now over with and I may tell of the feeling most of us had towards the Comanches. We delighted in having a chance to shoot them and did so if there was a plausible excuse. We were not supposed to do so but did vent our feelings for revenge. I look back now and know we did wrong many times. The Indians were no match for us Rangers. First 3 we were as a whole better shots; second, we carried better arms. They had among their arms some old flintlocks. The Commanche Indians were well built men and [supple?] and were real hossmen. I want to tell what we often did when the opportunity was at hand just to see the Comanche display his hossmanship. If we run on to some Comanches out of bounds. We would shoot his pony out from under him when that hoss hit the ground that Indian never went into a spill but hit the ground running. I have seen many of them go off their hoss that way but not one take a spill. It was really a pretty sight to see the Comanche with his feathered head dress and red breechcloth leave a falling hoss and hit the ground standing up and running. There were [?] when we had scrimmage with them and shot the hoss first to see how nice they could hit the ground and then get the Comanche on the run.

“There was a period when the rustlers both Indians and whites were giving cattlemen a tolerable lot of trouble. There were an organized [and?] west of Ft. Griffen. They would rustle hosses and cattle and drive the animals to New Mexico where they traded them.

“One time we were scouting for some of them in yellow [?] Canyon and jumped a bunch of rustlers. We tailed them to the sand dunes on the line of New Mexico where their hosses gave out. There was scrub oak covering the top of the dunes and it provided a good place for a battle ground. We had received word that they did not intend to be taken and would fight it out to the last man. We were expecting a good battle and was ready for it. When we approached the dunes we sighted their hosses off at the foot of a dune and reckoned they were in the brush of the dune. We figured wrong because them fellows had left their

Library of Congress

hosses at the dune and walked back for quite a distance and hid in the brush of another dune.

“As we approached the dune they were in we were suddenly treated to a 4 shower of lead. The only casualty worth mentioning was the killing of Ranger Jim Moore. A bullet went through his heart and he dropped dead off his hoss. We surrounded the dune and pened fire on the boys. In less than 30 minutes there was no return fire from the rustlers. We then closed in on them shooting as we slowly closed forward with caution. When we reached the spot where the were we found eight men all branded. Our job was completed so we took Moore's body and left. Inside of 20 minutes after we left the spot we heard the wolves fighting over the bodies. That was about the hardest fight during the time it lasted that I took part in with the Rangers. Beyond a few scratching no one of our crowd excepting Moore got hurt.

“We found many rustlers hung up to dry. Nobody seemed to know how the rustlers happened to get hung to a limb. Some one would tell us: 'I hear said there are some rustlers naturalized over yonder.' We would cut them down and turn the bodies over to the Sheriff of the county. In some parts of the country limbs were scarce and in that case the rustlers would be given a short course in citizenship. We would at times get word that some bodies were seen in a gully or ravin and when we located such bodies we would always find neat bullet holes in the bodies.

“I want to tell about one time that I thought that all the boys had been branded for the eternal range and that I would be the next one. It was one of the times we were scouting in yellow House Canyon and were expecting to run into a bunch of rustlers. It had been repeated that they were a tough bunch. It was my turn guarding the hosses while the others slept. If we didnt guard the hosses we would run the chance of finding ourselves on our hoof because the Indians were always watching for a chance to drive off good hosses. I was off a distance with the hosses and about mid-night suddenly I heard a fusillage of shots down 5 near the camp. Just as [?] as there is a God over us the rustlers have

Library of Congress

sneaked up on the boys and branded them for [the?] eternal range I thought figuring I would be next. I flattened on the ground and I mean I flattened so they could not sky-line me. Sky-lining means to stoop low and loop up towards the sky-line. If an object is between you and the sky line one can see the shadow. When I layed flat on the ground it was impossible to see my shadow. I layed there for what seemed an age and nothing happened. Everything was quiet so I calculated they [?] to see me and the rustlers having gotten the sleeping boys decided to light out. With that thought in mind I began to take courage and shortly considered it safe to go and look at the ruins.

"I crawled toward the camp and as I got close I saw Jack [O'ally?] sitting up with his gun in hand ad the other boys all rolled up in their Navajo blankets. I asked what happened. "We had an awful battle", came the reply from O'Mally. "I know that. Did you fellows spy the rustlers in time to lead them before they got to that bunch?"

"Hell no", said O'Mally, "a drove of hydrophobia cats run into us. Look around out there and you can see them." I glanced around and I guess I saw 25 dead skunks that the boys had killed.

"The hydrophobia cats were so bad in some sections that we had to use skunk-boats to sleep in. That is a canvas with the four corners pulled together. Many range boy has gone loco from being bit by the cats. Therefore we always branded one when we could. They are a pretty thing to look at especially in a moon-light night when the soft light shines on their pretty white stripe running down their back but the perfume they use and give out so freely is alful wiffy on the lee side.

"One night I decided to lie down early and take a nap before I went on guard duty. I no more got in a comfortable position and spied 6 a cat within five feet of so. You see they were a very sociable animal and always willing to make a call. I just did not want any callers at that time and it made me mad I plumb forgot about using my gun. Instead I picked up a buffalo chip laying at my hand and hurled at my caller. To show its

Library of Congress

appreciation of the welcome I gave it the cat shot a wad of its perfume at me. Darned if a part of it didn't hit me in the face. It took me six days to get the other boys to come within talking distance.

"I often think of a nigger that we had to deal with and he was what I consider the toughest and bravest person I ever saw. On the Chisholm trail just where we cross the Red River was located Doan's store. It was a trading place for the rawhides drifting cattle and the Indians from the reservation. This nigger's name was Jim and worked for [Dochom?] whose ranch was in [Live?] Oak Co. and was a top hand because he was the [?] boss. We had papers for that nigger and was on the watch for him but was not expecting to see him at Doan's. I will relate the incident leading up to his being wanted.

"About a year previous at Ft. Griffin he shot up a few nigger soldiers that were located there. It happened in Brady's saloon. He got into an argument with some of the colored soldiers and began to settle the [matter?] with lead and killed a few of them and the balance he herded back to their headquarters like a bunch of critters. He made the mistake of going right up to the headquarters with his herd of nigger soldiers. The niggers soon received reinforcements and took after Jim. He retreated shooting all the while. He emptied his two guns while on the run and had gotten a few more of the soldiers but had been hit several times himself. When his guns became empty that nigger stopped running, turned and faced the oncoming soldiers and started to load his guns. There a fusillade of bullets put him down and it looked as though he 7 he was dead so the soldiers left him lay.

"The fight attracted a number of people among whom were a number of negroes living in shacks on the edge of Ft. Griffin. Some of the nigger women picked him up and took Jim to their quarters. When they got him into one of the shacks there appeared signs of life. Instead of a funeral taking place they nursed him back to health. We Rangers were watching and waiting for Jim to get well enough to be moved. He moved one night before we thought him in a condition to move and we did not hear from him for a year. We happened to be at Doan's Store and saw a herd of cattle drifting in and at the head of

Library of Congress

the outfit was nigger Jim. He again was working for Dockman. Capt. Arrington took him in charge without any trouble. He took him to Seymour and turned him over to the authorities. He was tried and turned loose. It was rumored that some of the jurors wanted to give Jim a reward for killing nigger soldiers. We saw the 250 pound nigger several times afterwards and he did not seem any worse from the experience.

“While on the subject of tough characters an incident come to my mind showing how supple the Comanche Indians were and their fine horsemanship. We had papers to pick up Bob Munson who worked for the Mullet outfit. They had the reputation of not taking on anyone that did not have at least one notch in his gun and Munson had several. He was wanted at the time for a killing that took place in Parket Co. We had Munson in charge and was on our way to turn him over to the proper authorities and when we were passing Doan's store he requested a chance to speak to Doan. The Capt. took Bob in to do his chinning and the others remained on the outside.

“While the Capt. and Bob were in the store we saw a number of Comanche Indians trailing in on their [ponys.]. It was a real pretty sight to see them Indians dressed in their feathered head dress and wrapped in a red Navajo blanket. They drove up to the store and stopped. The bucks went inside while the squaw remained on the outside tending to the hosses. Several of us Rangers started to visit with the squaws because they looked might pretty to us. I had not seen a white woman for over a year at that time and an Indian sqaw began to look mighty beautiful to me.

“One of the sqaws said to me, “Sqaw want 'baccy'. I had a full plug of the kind we used; it was such that we could chew, smoke in a pipe or rolled in a cigarette. That sqaw was about to get that whole plug of tobacco when suddenly them bucks came out of the store as if they were shot out of a cannon. Each one of them leaped to their hosses from a distance of five or more feet without laying a hand on the ponies. Everyone landed in the proper place on his hoss. The hosses were on the go the instance the bucks hit their backs.

Library of Congress

“What took place was that inside of the store one of the bucks asked Doan who we were and when he answered Rangers they never waited to take another breath. I wondered why all of them were bending low over their pony's neck as they dragged off. When I found out that they learned who we were I understood their reason; they were expecting a shot in the back at any second. Capt. Arrington would not allow us to disturb them so they all hit it back towards their reservation.

“That was one on the Comanches, now for one on me. [We?] were coming one night in Hardeman Col and while I was on watch suddenly I heard a number of persons talking Comanche Indian. Quanah Parker hung out near by there and when I heard those voices in an undertone coming through the still air I thought Parker and his gang had surrounded us. I flattened on the ground pro and hollered halt and ordered them to stay [where?] they were. Then I went to praying. For a few minutes I visioned. 9 all the Company being shot right there by Quanah's people. There was no question in my mind but that would take place. To hear Comanche Indians talking at the edge of your camp in the middle of the night could not be accounted for except that they were there to get us.

“I was shortly relieved somewhat when an answer came to my command in English with an Indian accent: 'I will stay here, you call Capt. Arrington. Quanah wants to talk to him.' I told them to [?] where they were and called the Capt. 'Tell him to come with his crowd holding their hands high and advance to the camp fire,' said Arrington; 'when they get there build up the fire.'

“I repeated the order and the party complied with the command. Capt. Arrington and the other boys came out of their blankets with their two 44's in hand and stood off. They were in the light and the boys in the dark. In case shooting starts from any Comanche from the outside we could get Quanah and the three men with him. Quanah was a majestic looking person standing there with his arms folded across his chest and in full Indian dress while his interpreter stated his request. Quanah wanted Arrington to give him permission to go into Parker Co. for the purpose of transacting some business. The Capt. had no

Library of Congress

right to grant such request and told him so. He said to Parker, "Why don't you take off that war dress and go in a peaceful darb?" But Quannah did not think much of that and left disappointed.

"Some time later a party of Indians had come off the reservation and engaged in rustling some cattle by means of stampeding the herd and picking up the strays, they also had killed a waddie. We were trying to locate the gang and was looking for their camp. We were camped in a gully near a dry creek bed and this particular morning the Capt. and a few of the boys left to see if they could pick up a trail while the balance of us remained in the camp. 10 "After they had left Pete Clark and I asked permission of the orderly, Bud Kimble, to go down the creek a piece and shoot some turkeys where there were hundred of them. Bud swore as usual but gave us the permit saying, 'If you damn fools gets lost three times and the rest of us will come down and kill both of you.' Now I want to explain about Kimble and his swearing ability. That fellow could swear the best that I ever heard any man do it. His method was that smooth but vicious way. It would not [asp?] a fellow but go through you like a sharp knife. In fact it was amusing to hear Bud pour it on. A little later that day I sure enjoyed hearing Kimble swear.

"Clark and I went after the turkeys and had gone down the bed of the creek a mile or so and there shot two. We looked around a bit taking out [ime?] before starting back to camp. There were all kinds of game jumping out of the bramble which we enjoyed watching but did not shoot any because we were satisfied with what we had. We kept on walking and finally it seemed to me that we had gone far enough to have reached the camp. We parleyed a bit and decided to go on because we were sure we had not passed the camp and we had stayed in the creek bed. It was not long till the sun was setting and darkness came. We knew [that?] in some way we had passed the camp but could not figure how we did it. We tried to decide [whether?] we were N. or S. of it and how far past but could'nt agree on were we were. To find our way in the night was impossible. We decided to shoot a signal which we did and waited for an answer but none came. After waiting for some time we shot another and again no answer came. A shot can be heard a long distance

Library of Congress

on a still night in the open country and the lack of an answer to our shots indicated that something was wrong. I said something is wrong, if the boys are at the camp and heard our signal there would be an answer.

“He suggested that we try again and we did. That time a couple of 11 shots were heard from up the creek in the direction we were headed. I said to Clark that is not our crowd up there, what we have done is give our location to a bunch of Comanches.

“Outside of us Rangers the only people likely to be in that section would be the Comanches. We concluded that if our crowd had heard the shots they would have answered our first signal. The Indians heard and waited until the third signal and then answered thinking that we would wait for them. We figured that they would circle us and close in. He and I flattened on the ground to wait our end. After a while we heard voiced at a distance and felt sure our conclusions were correct. We could hear off at a distance the noise of people walking through the [bramble?]. The two of us decided to get as many Indians as we could while they were getting us. We took off two cartridge belts and laid these on the ground in front of us and waited for the short fight and our end.

“We did not have long to wait until I heard the smooth smearing of Bud Kimble. He was pouring it on the bramble and us and I did not blame him. I enjoyed hearing him swear that time for sure. I hollered 'Here we are if its us you're looking for.'

“'What in hell and this place is it; do you ***** think we are looking for rhuematism?', said Kimble. Arrington came forward and asked, 'Are you boys lost?'

“No I answered 'We are not lost but the camp has been moved a tolerable distance. Give us a drink of water.'

“'Water! Don't you mention that word again. We've been without it tramping all over this ***** country looking for you two so don't mention water.'

Library of Congress

"I understand you Capt. let's get going to camp so we can get some water.' 12 "The next time you mention the word water we'll brand you!"

"Alright, alright, let's get going; where is the camp?"

"See that butt over yonder, it's a short way beyond that."

"I don't think so', I said, He insisted it was and we started for the [butt]. When we reached it the whole party concluded that we were wrong and it was best to wait till daylight to get our bearings. We slept that chilly night without blankets or water. What happened to Clark and I was we took a tributary of the creek by being careless and interested in the wild game and went astray.

"I was the first one up and hollered at the others saying: 'Let's get going. I want some water.' I had to dodge Arrington's boot, he said, 'The next time you say water it will be lead coming your way.' We soon got our bearings and then it was easy to reach camp. I still had my two turkeys.

"I'm going to leave the Rangers by saying they were a brave lot of fellows those days. They were men that could take it and give it. I was with a fine bunch and under a real Capt.. Arrington was not so big in size but what there was to him was all man. He would not back away from a bunch of wild cats. However among the top Rangers of those days we all have to doff our hats to Bill McDonald who worked with the Southern Company and later used as a trouble shooter.

"One time four Mexicans layed for him and shot at him from ambush. They fired one shot and that was all; Bill returned the fire so quick and true that he got all four before they could do any additional shooting. McDonald was a big man well put together. One that impressed a person as a man that could do what he started out to do. When he spoke his voice made you feel that he meant what he said. Whenever I saw him he always wore a large black hat and a black Prince Albert coat that went well with his black hair and beard.

Library of Congress

He walked with 13 an easy and sure stride. When he went to settle trouble fellows gave him their ear. One of the feuds common in those days took place up at Amarillo. Uncle Will was sent there to settle the trouble. He called all the parties together and said, 'Now, you fellows place your guns in a pile as I direct and we will settle [this?] matter in a proper way.' He talked in a friendly way but they knew that they had better heed him and settle the matter.

"When my three years were up in 1882 I went to Toyah, Tex., 25 miles west of Pecos and it was then two miles beyond a road. There were just trails running into the town. It was plenty tough and the law was what the [local?] folks made and enforced themselves. Everybody made their living by working for or owning a cattle outfit; except the merchants who of course made theirs from the cowmen.

"A story used to be told of a drunken cowhand that got onto a train going [West?] out of Ft. Worth. The conductor asked the waddy where he wanted to go. 'To hell', answered the waddy. 'Well I'll take you as far as this road goes then you'll have go get a hoss and ride into Toyah', answered the conductor.

"I put up a [lon?] building, it was just thrown together but it served my purpose. I had a good size bar in front and a pool and billard table in the rear. The style those days was to decorate the back bar with fancy colored glasses by pyramiding them at different parts. I soon learned the discard the attractive glasses. The cowhands would come in and get a drink. With the [?] drink he would push his hat back a little, with the next one hat would go back a little further and so on until that hat was setting on the back part of the fellows head. Then the cowhand was ready for some kind of action.

"Those pretty glasses I had on the backbar always drew the attention of the man with his hat setting at the back of his head. If there 14 were several together they would have a shooting match using the fancy glasses as their target. Of Course they would hit the glasses and continue the game until the targets were all gone or become tired of the sport

Library of Congress

and turn their attention to something else. Perhaps it would be the billard balls they would decide to shoot off the table. They [?] stop with the billard balls or turn to the light and shoot those.

"I never questioned them about their shooting. In fact I would join in with them saying, "Hell boys you can't shoot. Watch me." I was a good shot and could shoot with the best of them and my act of joining in with them shooting up my own furniture always gave them a great kick. When one of them sprees were pulled buy a bunch of cowhands I knew that the next day they would be back and pay for the damage to my furniture that they did. They never failed to do such with me. The real cowhand was a square man. I never hesitated to loan them money and they always paid it back. It was not necessary to take a note or any other forms of evidence of the debt.

"During the two years I was at Tayah I had only one piece of trouble. A cowhand had gone so far that his hat would not stay on his head. He got to hearing things that was not said and must have heard me say something that hurt his feelings. He was standing in front of me and suddenly pulled his gun and fired. I was holding a quart bottle about full and let him have it over the head. His bullet never came close to me, it landed in the back bar, the poor fellow dropped when I hit him. We took his gun away from him and that always made a cowhand feel cheap. When eh came to in a short time he could keep his hat on his head. He came back the next day and apologized, I gave his gun and we became the best of friends after that.

"I have had the boys pull all kinds of trick on me such as riding their mounts into the bar-room and let the animals stand there while 15 they drank or ask to be served in their saddles. The hosses would rough up the floor but that was made of planks so it did not matter. They boys were spending their money and what they did outside of shooting at me was all right. I have seen fellows come in with a year's pay and stay on a spree until the money was gone. Many times I have had a cowhand give me a sack of money and say: "Keep the money till its gone and then let me know." They did that because they knew that

Library of Congress

when they got too drunk they were easy marks for a certain element of folks around there that would help themselves to the money.

“I remember the first key of beer from Dallas that arrived out there. It was an introductory half barrel keg. It was suggested by the foreman of an outfit with headquarters five miles from there that we have a bar-be-cue on his ranch with all invited. We were to furnish the beer and the cowhands the meat. It was so arranged and the Dallas beer was tapped that [cat?]. That was some beer. The first glass caused one to see things and the next to hear things and with the third glass every person that talked to you would insult you. There were good crowd from Toyah and cowhands from other outfits. Among the town folks was Jim Massey, a good friend of mine. We all ate bar-be-cue and drank beer for a good spell. The crowd first became noisy, then quarrelsome and trying to keep the boys apart and from drawing their guns. Then suddenly Massey and I were shooting at each other and the rest of the crowd were trying to part us. Neither of us came close. Everytime I shot I could see several Masseys and always picked the wrong one. It was the same with him he told me afterwards. That shooting exhibition ended the bar-be-cue. The boys loaded the town gang in wagons and hauled us back to town. That gave the Dallas beer a good reputation 16 and it had the leading sale thereafter.

“I left Toyah after a two years stay and during that time I guess there were 100 men in and around Toyah found shot to death unaccountably. There were other shooting, plenty of [them?], when men settled quarrels by shooting and one of them would get killed and a couple time both were branded. It was always established that the fellow killed made for his gun first and that justified the killing. I moved to Colorado City after leaving Toyah. I run a saloon there for 8 years, it was the cow center of that section and no Sunday School meeting town at that [time?].

“John Good was the big cowmen in them parts those days and plenty tough if you crossed him. He built the first home in Colorado City. His soninlaw was also reckoned as a tough buckaroo and there were many others of the same stamp. They were all big hearted men

Library of Congress

but would fit at the drop of a hat when their rights were stomped on. They reckoned that the country was theirs and resented any act towards telling them they could not run the country. There were some folks that tried to [t?] tell the cowmen how to run their country but did not get very far with it and if they became to presistent they would get branded. Colorado City had city officials and things were run in a better order than at Toyah. During my 8 [years?] there I had no trouble. I used the same system I used in Toyah. When the boys came into my place to play I joined in with them. I had the respect of the cowhands and we got along fine. They resorted to the same find of tricks to amuse themselves.

“We town folks would often put on some form of extra entertainment. The cowhand for miles around would come in and generally they would have contest among themselves such as roping, riding, shooting and other stunts. A dance was always provided and a general good time would be had. 17 “I often think of a funny incident that happened during one of those celebrations. There were certain people that always came to town to pick up a little extra change by divers means. Among much persons were always some hotdog vendors. This particular time a fellow from Ft. Worth dropped in and set his stand. A cowhand from the Good outfit name [Buck?] Jones put the fellow's joint out of business. Buck came into my place after his act and told what took place. Said he:

“My worm was getting hungry for some chuck so I stopped at that gents stand and called for a hotdog sandwich. I saw him put the ingredients together and it appeared to me that he put a good size dog between the bun. I took the outfit he handed me and began to eat. I tasted the mustar, onion, and bread but didn't get that taste of the dog. I looked inside the bun and could not see any signs of dog. Knowing that I had guffed several doses of pizen I figured that my eyes or mind was playing me false someway so I finished the sandwich.

“Then I decided to try the game once more and watch with more care out of the corner of my eye so he wouldn't notice me. That fellow started to put the ingredients together and I was keeping a close eye for his hotdogs. I spied one about his diggings so kept my eye on it. When he was ready for the last act of putting the dog between the bread I give him

Library of Congress

close attention and what I saw was this: he held the bun in left hand and picked up the dog with his right and slapped it into the bun with a great flourish. When he closed the bun darn if he didn't slip the dog out and held it in the palm of his hand while handing the sandwich to me. That was a clever act but I reckoned it was getting money under false colors which plumb riled me to the point of where I couldn't hold myself.'

"After leaving Colorado City I came back to Ft. Worth. At that time the town was a [?] town. 18 The Cattlemen's Association was an important organization and its conventions were held here. When the convention was on the town was lively. There were always plenty of entertainment provided for the cattlemen and the cowhands that came to the convention. Among the big events was the cownmen's dance. No one was allowed to attend in a dress suit or evening dress. You had to come in your plain working rigging but without the six-gun. For several years the dance was held in the Summit Ave. skating rink. Burk Burnett, Tom Waggoner, Sam Cowan, Geo. Reynolds, Walter Scott and the rest of the old timers would attend that dance and swing their heffiers to a fair-the well.

"Dan Wheeler, the celebrated cowboy caller, who was known all over the West for his ability was on hand as prompter for the dance. It was worth while attending that dance just to hear Dan do his calling. He had a barytone voice that could be heard for blocks if he turned on in full force and he could call all night and be going strong at the end with his voice clear. That man would be chanting all through the dancing in key with the music: "Come on boys an' show yo' ditty shake yo' feet an' ketch yo' kitty. Swing the cow an' now the calf now yo' partner once an' half. 'Circle eight til yo' all get straight swing them ladies like swinging on a gate left foot up an' right foot down make that big foot jar the ground.'

"All the cownmen came to town loaded with money and if any of them ran short one never had to worry about making one of them a loan in the amount the asked for. I have made many of them loans and never have lost on one. It was a pleasure to deal with them. They were square good natured, big hearted men who played hard as they worked and enjoyed a good joke. To illustrate how the cownmen enjoyed a good joke 19 I will tell one told by F.

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Simmons, an old time bartender: 'One morning early a cowman came into my bar, a fellow from the West here having a good time. He looked as a fellow that had two sprees rolled into one. His tongue was so dry that he could hardly talk like one that came off the desert. The fellow placed a silver dollar on the bar and said: 'Give me the best drink in the house. If the dollar is not enough I have another to go with it. I had a hell of a time last night and don't know if its a hat or stone on my head.' I reached for the largest glass I had and threw some ice in it then filled it up with water and set it on the bar before him. He picked it up and gulped it down ending with a satisfying grunt. The he asked, 'Will the dollar cover the charge?' 'Yes and you have a tolerable lot of change come', I said. "To show how the waddies resent interference with what they reckoned was their rights in fun or otherwise I want to relate an incident that took place here in Ft. Worth during the late 19th century that the old bartenders are found of talking about when they get together in a talk fest about the old days. The affray took place in a cowboy restruant and Weatherford St. between a policeman and several cowboys. The cowboys were having their fun but were only [oiay?] while attending to the act of filling their flue.

"Among the waddies were a couple of the McClean boys in from their outfit. The policeman told one of them to keep quiet and that he had better start for home or he may be arrested. The McClean lad said: 'I am an American citizen and have the right to talk loud or soft, sing loud or low and that I'm going to do as the fancy strikes me. I'll go home when I get ready and you can't send me home or arrest me if I don't.' The policeman did not want to back up so he decided to show his power and arrest the waddie. He made a start to draw his gun and started to tell the McClean boy that he was under arrest. The waddie 20 showed his contempt for that officer by not drawing his gun gun but cracked the cop on the jaw. The blow knocked the policeman down and then the McClean boy took the officer's gun away from him.

"There were a number of waddies in town front off the Watson, Collins, and other ranches. Word soon reached them about the affair. They all joined together and mounted their hosses and then took the town in to show the officer that they were American citizens

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standing up for their right. The bunch of about 26 rode from saloon to saloon singing and shooting in the air. At that time there were three saloons around the Court House Square that a hoss could be drove into and into those place they rode their hosses. At that time most of the business houses were around that district and within that district the bunch drove around for two hours without any interference.

“The policeman called upon the Sheriff for help to take charge of the cowboys but the Sheriff went to the boys and told them, 'Now, boys have your fun but don't hurt anybody.' That act on the part of the Sheriff seemed to satisfy the bunch that their rights had been respected so they left town for the various ranches shooting out several street lights as they departed.