

## [George L. Flanders]

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Folk Stuff [??] [?] [43?]

Gauthier. Sheldon F.

Rangelore.

Tarrant Co., Dist., #7

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George L. Flanders, 79, living at the Old

Folks Home, Tarrant Co, Texas, was born April 6th,

1858, st St Joseph, MO. His father died when

George was two years old and at the age of nine was compelled to go to work to help support the family.

At the age of 13 he started his career as a cowboy at which time he secured work on the cattle ranch owned by C.H. and V.H. Phenny, whose brand was called the Crazy D. He remained with the Crazy D ranch for six years.

He enlisted, for a term of three years, in the Scout service under General Miles in the year of [1877?], he was then 19 years old.

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The following day after Custer's massacre, June 26th, 1876, he was with General Miles when the General arrived at the Battle Ground on the little Big Horn River and assisted in burying the dead soldiers.

George was in several battles against the Cheyenne Indians. On two occasions he was shot off his horse. He was [convalescing?] from wounds when his term of service ended.

After he regained his health he returned to the Crazy D ranch for a period of one year.

After leaving the Crazy D he secured work as a steady hand with the John Brown ranch where he remained for several for several years. His next place of employment was with the Teddy Roosevelt Horse Ranch in the year of 1891 and then he terminated his range career.

His story of range life follows:

"I was born April 6th, 1858 at St Joseph Mo. my father was a brick mason, but died when I was two years old which caused me to start hustling for myself as soon as I became old enough to find someone that would hire me. That happened when I was nine years old and I have been on my own from that day to this.

"When I was 13 years old I dragged out to Montanis and secured work on the cattle outfit called the Crazy D and which was owned by C.H. and V.H. [Phenny?]. The ranch was called the Crazy D, because their brand was a D laid flat. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 The ranch was located 57 miles West of [?] Mont. At that time about 12 houses was all the building the town had. We had to go there for our mail and supplies, that trip was made once a month. In that 57 miles there was not sign of any dwelling.

"Our camp shelter was made out of gumbo mud and poles.

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The poles were stuck into the ground about two feet and of course stood upright. Also, poles were across the top. / The mud was plastered onto the poles, about six inches on each side. In the mud was the roots of grass which would grow to some extent and that would bind the whole thing together as one piece. After the mud dried it was hard and would turn water and of course wind or cold air could go through the walls. So we had a warm dry place for shelter.

“Our chuck consisted of Beef, buffalo, deer, elk, prairie-hens and other game. Beans and bread with some canned vegetables backed up the meat. I don't want to forget the black coffee, of that we had all we cared to drink.

“Our cook was Fanny Carter. Aunt Fanny we called her and she was the wife of Bill Carter, the top-screw and a good foreman too. Among the waddies nesting at the Crazy D were Joe and Bill Pharris, Will Foills, two [Fimely?] boys, Lew Curtis all top workers. There were about twenty others lesser lights.

Bill Foills was the County Sheriff.

“That country had so few people that the sheriff job was not a regular full time job. The job had to be given to some rawhide or cattlemen, because there was no other kind of people' in the county. 3 “The Crazy D was a large outfit with cattle scattered over a large section of the country. The number of head run into 20,000 it was calculated.

“We lived in the open most of the time during the summer, squatted by [?] the chuck wagon, because most of our work had to be done from thaw to freeze. That, as a rule, was between May, and [May?]. “During those months all our branding, cutting out critters for the market and everything else had to be done. Because when winter set in we drifted the cattle to the Bad Lands. There the critters could find more shelter and the temperature does not drop so low, because of the altitude which is considerable lower.

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than the surrounding country.

“The Bad Lands is like a huge bowl carved out of the earth and in there the critters could find considerable shelter during the winter months, also, fair [grazing?]. What snow fell was dry and would not peck hard so the critters could paw it off the freeze grass. At times a thaw would take place folled by a quick freeze and that would put a crust over the top of the snow. If the crust became too thick for the critters to break through, which was seldom, there was high spots where the wind had blew the snow off and that would give the cattle grass enough to get by on.

“While in the Bad Lands all that we [?] had to do was watch the herd and sort of keep them bunched. There was not much danger of stampeds and night riding was not done. The animals would not leave the spot because of its shelter and feed.

“With the average winter weather the animals would come through in fair shape and when spring gras came on it would 4 only take a month for the critters to be in top shape again.

“All our winters were not of the average weather. I have seen several winters when we had extra heavy cold spells and many critters would freeze. It would be the weaker one, of course, that would go first. During such weather we tried to keep the critters on the move the best we could, but in the brush, as existed, in the Bad Lands, it was a job as easily done as putting your elbow in your ear.

“One of our spring jobs was searching the range for dead critters, which we skinned and removed the tallow. We hands were paid 50¢ extra for each skin that we turned over to the boss.

“We did not have much trouble, in the Bad Lands, with stampedes caused by blizzards as to the case in the open praire ranges. The critters down in the bowl had too many spots for shelter, so would not go off a-running hunting for the lee side of some timber spot or hill.

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“What stampedes we had to deal with during a blizzard were caused by wolves running into the herd to down a calf. That would happen, most of the times, during the fore part of the storm if it was going to take place. The way we delt with a [stomp?] was for a bunch of us [waddies?] to get at the head of the herd and shoot down a few of the leaders. When we did that those coming from behind would go into a spill when they hit the downed critters and pill up and soon a blockade would be formed that would stop the stomp.

“That method would cost a few critters, but as a general thing be less costly then the lost from strays and killed if the stampede was handled in any other way. 5 “I was called away from the cowwork in 1875. The Cheyenne Indians became so bad that a bunch of us cowhands off of

The Crazy D were called into the Scout service under General Miles.

That happened with all the outfits in that section of the country at that time.

“Out of the Crazy outfit, there were the two Finny boys, Joe and Dick Pharris, [Mack?] McKeen, Lew Carter and myself that went into the service and signed up for three years. For the next two and half years I was getting ready for a battle, having one, or in a hospital getting over the wounds received in a battle.

“It was less then a month, after I signed up, that I got my first load of lead during a fight with a bunch of Cheyennes.

[Texas?] Charley was the only other scout that got hit and three of the soldiers were wounded.

“We scouts had located a bunch of the Indians, all fixed in their war rigging, North of Deadwood S.D. and reported their location to General Miles. A detachment of soldiers were sent with us scouts after the red skins. We got into a hot scrimmage with/ them

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and the fight lasted about 15 minutes. It was a running fight and the Indians got away by scattering in the brush.

However, we saw a good number fall off their mounts. We gave them [?], than they received. After they hit the timber we had to let them go because they would have ambushed to a clean out. It would have taken a whole regiment to capture the 100 red skins in that brush.

“When the fighting was over I had a dead hoss and a broken shin bone. A ball went though my shank bone and into 6 my hoss killinf the animal. I was in the hospital for two months and spent another month off duty before that leg got in shape to take its share of the works. I will, of course, wear that scar to my grave and that spot is a good barometer. I can always fore-tell a spell of weather by its feeling.

“After I got well and returned to duty we had a few more small scrimmages, which brought us to June of 1776 and with it came roders to proceed to the little Big Horn and meet General Custer. We arrived June 26th to find that the battle had been fought the day before. All we could do was to help bury some of the dead soldiers.

“I want to tell a tail which was told to my by a Cheyenne Indian that fought under Sitting Bull in that battle. I was told to me several years afterwards. Also, the same tail was told to me by Red Wolf a Souix that claimed to have the tail told him by the Cheyennes. The statement is that Custer was not killed by the Indians, but took his own life. The Cheyenne said: 'Custer had received a wound in the hip and was unable to get up, but continued' shooting until he had used all except one of his cartridges and with that last bullet shot himself'.

“The worst battle I was in against the Cheyennes took place while we were going through from North River to Fort Lyons and a large party of Cheyennes tackled us in the open country just North of Deadwood.

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“The fight lasted for an hour and was hot as hades.

They no doubt had been on the watch for us and figured that that the time and place was proper one get our scalp. They out 7 numbered us two to one. But, they under calculated our fighting ability and guts. In our crowd was about 50 scouts and an additional 100 soldires. Most of the scouts were fromer cowhands and a good number of them from West Texas. Buffalo Bill and Bill Hichcock was with us that time. So there were 50 dam good shots and fellows that were not afraid to face fire. All of them, more or less, had faced fire before. If not in Indian fighting, they did on the range and were as cool as a cow's nose in the summer time. We were all mounted and riding [two?] abreast with everything looking quiet and rosey. Then suddenly, bang, bang it began to hail lead. They tackled us from both sides and the time was just about an hour before sun.

“We scouts didn't hesitated ansecond. The suddenness of the attack plumb riled us and we drove into them devils a-cussing at the top of our voice and shooting fast and true. We did not know how many Indians were killed, as they would carry off all that they could, but we counted 100 dead Indians after the battle.

“They were not armed with up to date guns was we were and was not as good shoots. With their first volley of lead all the damage done was a few slight wounds, not a man was put out of action. The soldiers got into the action too, pronto, following the first volley, but we scouts had surprised the Indians with our dash into them, [insteadof?] backing away. Our dash caused the Indians to scatter and then it was a running fight.

“We followed their move and divided into squads and 8 each squad would pick out a few Indians and go after them, watching not to get pulled too far off from our main body of men.

It was a fast fierce battle but we were getting ten to one. At the end of an hour there were nine dead soldiers and one dead scout, with about 20 wounded. The Indians were at all

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times working back towards the black timber of the hills and when they reached the timber line they scattered in the brush.

They went in all directions and of course met at some point, decided upon before the battle.

“In that battle I again was one of the wounded. That time I received a wound in the calf of my left leg. The former leg wound was in the right leg so I am branded in both legs.

The second leg wound was received along about the middle of the the fight, but the hit did not stop me from fighting. In fact, it did not bother me, except to sting a little and I felt the blood soaking my sock, but I was too busy to give it any mind. However, before the fight was over my hoss got shot from under me and I hit the ground. Because, of the condition of my leg I couldn't handle it properly and broke it in the fall. That put me out of action and in the hospital again. Buffalo Bill got nicked that time too. A bullet went through his cap and singed his hair.

“By the time my leg was well enough to depend upon it I had put in two and half years of my three years service period.

I then had two weak legs, with the last wound still quite tender, so I was given an honorable discharged

“I was in Deadwood and stayed around there until my leg was well enough to take its bumps if I received a spill off 9 a pitching hoss. When I was satisfied with the condition of the leg I returned to the Crazy D range.

“While hanging round Deadwood I saw some of the rough life. The town was then off by its self set there in the Black Hills and the law was what the local people held to be the proper conduct and some of it was not taken from the Book of Mosses.

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“When folks speak about hard buckaroos, none were harder than some of the folks that nested in Deadwood. The six-gun decided arguments and the fellow that drew first and shot true knew the best law.

“At that time Deadwood Dick, Clamity Jane, Carter and others that become known through the country were top characters of the town. There has been many tails told about Clamity Jane and from what I saw of the women I reckon that all the tails are about true. She was a wild cat in a fight with her fist or gun. But she was liberal with her money and had tender feeling for any down and outter. She was never known to turn a broke cowhand down when he asked her for help. That woman had a just reputation for never backing away from a fight. Everybody had respect for her scouting ability. She never asked any man to take her part she handled all such of her troubles herself.

“I saw her shooting one time to show what she could do. A person stood off 25 paces and held a match between the thumb and first finger. Jane shot a lit that match, doing the trick time and again without a miss. There were a few other women in that town that could handle a gun too. If a person wanted to live there he had to be able to shoot fast and true.

“I want to tell one more Indian deal before I start 10 chinning about cows again. This Indian affair was a battle in which 13 Indians were killed without a shoot being fired. The Indians were out after a small bunch of us scouts that were scouting for war Indians. We had camped West of Firgus Falls,

Minn near the head of the Red River of the North. A band of 13 Indians, Under/ Chief Laughing Smily, sneaked upon our camp intending to [scalpums?]. It so happened that we scouts had gone to the river for a bath at the time and the Indians found the camp deserted.

“Prior to going to the river, I had mixed some wolf bait, there was a bounty paid for wolf scalps, and I was intending to place the bait along the river. The bait was a mixture of floor

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and strychnine stirred in water making a paste. That was left in a pan at the camp and when Laughing Smily and his braves saw the mixed flour, which they no doubt took for flap-jack batter, they filled their flue with the mixture.

“When we returned to the camp we found 13 mourning Indians and it a short time there was 13 good Indians which became wolf food. That is how Chief Laughing Smily met his death.

“When I returned to the Crazy D outfit I nested there for a year and then drifted to several outfits, but finally lit on the ZV outfit owned by John Brown. The outfit was located 32 miles West of Glendive Mont,. The outfit was estimated to to be the largest in the Northwest. At that time they run around 35,000 head and used the same system for winter grazing as the Crazy D outfit, that was to drift the cattle into the Bad Lands.

“The next outfit that I nested with was a hoss outfit 11 as a steady hand. It was located on the Little Missouri River

near Widers So Dak,. The outfit belong to Teddy Roosevet. He run over 3,000 head of hosses and had a jump outfit.

“There I found some of the best hoss wranglers that I ever worked with. There was Jim Bates, Chas and Fred Austin.

them three were from Texas, and Teddy himself was a real wrangler.

He could wrangle with the best of us, with the exception of Bates and I reckon that no man could best him. Teddy's daughter Alice was around 10 years old/ then and she was a good rider for a kid girl.

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"Roosevelt run of one of the best hoss outfits in the country. Everything was always kept in a shiptop shape. The best belly- shester chester I ever lined my flue behid behind was on that hoss ranch.

I know him by the name of Dutch Charley, because that was what every body called him. He could take nothing and make something fit to eat out of it. Now, on the R hoss ranch plenty of good material out of which to fix chuck was supplied, so with a top cooky we lived top.

"Roosevelt most always was working with us waddies.

He would not miss a roundup if he could help from doing so, and he worked as any of us waddies did. He [?], also, [?] a good job lining his flue squatted on his haunches behind the chuck wagon as any waddy that I ever saw.

"In after years when he sold out and then became President, and the only ex-cowboy to reach the big office of President of the United States, I often have heard folks talk and say it was all [bunk?] about Teddy being a good waddy and that it was just paper talk. Well, if the chinnners had seen him wrangle some of the 12 hosses that I did they would say that the paper didn't say half of it.

"There were some hosses in the herd that were called Oregon hosses. They were larger than the ordinary bronco and would pitch longer and with more tricks. I have seen Teddy wangle one of those critters that did the piegon-wing. Any old timer will tell you that a fellow whatcould stay with a piegon-wing cutter was a rider.

"Jim Bates, I think, was the top rider in this country during his day. I never saw him get busted by a hoss, and that tells a heap about a waddies riding ability, and I have seen him on some of the worst critters in the herd. As soon as he hit the tree he would start [faning?] the critter's ears ad racking its sides with the gut hooks. He knew how to handle

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his lid to put the proper sting on the critter's ears and generally it was not long until the hoss became discouraged and steeled down.

“When a hoss gets the feeling that the rider is going to stay in the tree, it don't take long for that animal to give in, unless it is loco and then it will pitch itself down. I watched Bates ride one that pitched until it dropped. That critter layed on the ground quivering for 30 minutes and when it got to its feet Bates mounted it again and the loco beast again pitched itself down. That animal was doing the piegon-wing so you can get an idea what kind of a rider Bates was.

“I want to give you an idea what the piegon-wing cutter is doing while pitching. The critter elevates and when it comes down the four feet are pulled up. The hoss drops within a few feet of the ground, then suddenly straightens out its feet. That 13 of course will cause a sudden stop and at the same time the hoss starts another elevation of two feet or so. A waddie that can stay with that move can be reckoned as a rider.

“While I am rattling about hosses and pitching I want to tell about [my?] hoss Pin Ears. It was the worst looking hoss, and the fastest, as well as the best working hoss, that I ever owned.

I bought Pin Ears for \$10, including the saddle from a broke waddie.

At that time it was in the early 1900's. I was working a small coal mine that I owned during the winter months and then range during the summer. This fellow came to me at the mine and said to me; 'This hoss is the best cutting out hoss that walks on four feet, if you can ride it'.

“As far as the riding I was sure of being able to do it.

I reckoned that if he could I could also. The price was so cheap I took a chance and brought the hoss.

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“The hoss was a buckskin and the ugliest looking thing I ever saw rolled into hoss hide. It looked as though it was just slopped togeded. Its ears were real small and came to a point.

That was why he was called Pin Ears. The animal's hind lefs had an extra curve that made those look like the letter V.

“The first thing I did, after buying it, was to test its riding and pitching ability. I was near a straw stack ad when I mounted that animal/ it showed me a move that was new and one that I neve have seen the equal of. Thos V shaped legs made it possible for the hoss to execute the trick. When that critter came down from its elevation it lit on its hind legs, going into sort of a 14 15 squat and rocked, quickly, to its front feet. By the time the critter got to its front feet it was elevating again. I failed to follow the movement and when it started the second elevation I went onto the straw pile.

“I began to reckon about the movements of that hoss, because I wanted to get my \$10 of service out of the critter.

After calculating on the action of the hoss for some time, I sort of felt that I had figured out how to meet its movements. I tried the hoss out again and the second time I stayed with the critter, but had a tussle and a close call. After that the animal made me a good mount.

“I worked that hoss in the spring roundup bra ding branding. I found Pin Ears ust just as the fellow had told me, the best cutting out hoss I had ever watched work in among the cows. That animal had a world of speed, not expected from the looks of it, you have heard tell of cutting out hosses that could work alone. Well, Pin Ears was the one of them and the fastest thing with the work that I had ever straddled.

“Another funny thing about that hoss was that any waddy could ride it around a bunch of cattle, but a very few could do anything with the hoss away from the heard.

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"While working the roundup several of the boys had rode the hoss to see how it rode. I kept to myself how he acted away from the heard so the boys were not wise to the animal's tricks.

After the roundup was over there was a little doings put on in [Miders?] and of course of course a lot of cowhands were in town for 15 a little fun. I was there with Pin Ears who had by the that time won a reputation and the [boys?] were talking about the critters work during the roundup.

"It was not long until a strange cowhnad hit me up for a jog on the hoss to see how it saddled. I said to the fellow:

"Its alright with me, if the hoss is willing"

"Do you reckon I can't ride the critter?"

"That is what I calculate to chin", I said.

"If you'll allow me to look the saddle over, I'll bet \$25 I can"

"Your on", I answered and the money was put up.

"The waddy looked the saddle rigging over for burrs and other agitation agitating material and was satisfied, so mounted the critter and took his spill with the first landing of the hoss.

" A waddy that had rode the hoss at the roundup, chinned in and and offered to bet \$25 he could ride the hoss using his own saddle. That bet was taken and there was a number of other bets between others, so the deal was creating tolerable lot of excitement.

When the second waddy got all set her mounted and received a surprise because he had rode the hoss at the roundup and was sure of himself. He also went into a spill pronto. That move Pin Ears had was something they had not reckoned with.

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"There was a free-for-all race put on by the merchants and I rode Pin Ears in that race and darned if that V shaped leg hoss didn't win the race and do it with ease.

"Pin Ears became the ralk talk of the town and that evening a merchant came to me and asked me how much I wanted for the hoss. 16 [?] I knew the merchant and said:

"A\$1000 from you, but \$1,500 from any other person."

"I don't have that much cash to spare right now.

I'll give you \$900 cash and two bronco." he offered.

"I accepted the offer and parted with my \$ 10 investment.

"During the winter months when working the cattle in the Bad Lands, and we had tolerable lot of time on our hands, our time was spent practicing shooting, riding, roping, hunting game, trapping wolves and such out side sport. At night in the bunk house we followed the sport of reading the wish book, reading [adds?] and answering those for the fun of reading the answer. Especially the adds in the Heart and Hand paper. The main business of the Heart and Hand was publishing advertisments of men and women that were looking for a mate. The boys answeredd all such adds and had a heck of a time reading each others answer. In fact, once in a while a cowhand would get himself a mailorder wife that way.

"The wish book, gave us many hours of enjoyment. We always had several mail-order catalogues and would pour through theme, time after time, wishing for this and that article pictured and described.