

[J. S. Buchannan]

Beliefs and Customs - Occupational Lore [?]

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

RANGE-LORE

J. S. Buchannan was born at Waco, Texas, January 2, 1872. He came to Coke County to make a permanent home with his brother in 1890.

Mr. Buchannan says: "I got my first ranch job from my brother when I was sixteen years old. My work was mostly herdin' horses. My brother had a horse and cattle ranch, too. We had to pen the horses ever night everynight , and we had to break 'em, too. My brother sold them for the saddle or for carriage and work stuff.

"I learned something about punchin' cattle, too. Of course, there was no more open range, but there were some very large pastures and large herds. I sometimes helped with the round-ups and driving to market.

"We'd round-up one pasture or section of pasture one C. 12 - 2/11/41 Tex. Box 1 2 day and then the next day another section until all were brought in. Then we'd cut the stuff we wanted to market, brand the calves, and turn 'em all loose, except the marketing stuff.

"I remember a stampede we had one night. We were on our way to the railroad with 1500 steers. It was foggy and cold. The steers were restless; they kept standing up and pushing each other. I was helping guard on the first shift. Along about eleven o'clock they let loose

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and then those steers just got up and left the country. We ran, too, calling the others to come help. We finally got 'em to circling, but we had to keep it up nearly all night. Next morning we were closer home than when we made camp.

"I worked awhile for the Littlefield Cattle Company, on the L. F. D. ranch. Joe Phelps was manager, Bud Wilson, range boss, and Charlie Walker, trail boss. We made a lot of drives from Boswell to Amarillo while I was there. I don't remember that we had any serious trouble except one time. We was trying to cross a swollen stream, Goose Creek, I think it was. We tried to rush the cattle across the creek. It wasn't wide but pretty swift. One fellow got in the lead and others on the side. We lost several cows and almost lost a rider, he had to let his horse go. We roped him in and pulled him ashore. I never after that wanted to 3 take a bunch of cattle across a stream that was up.

"They used to razz the new hands something ridiculous, especially if they'd never punched cattle before. It was kinda like the boys do in college except a heap worse. They'd whip 'em with boots or leggins', hide their clothes and boots, put pepper in their coffee or anything they might think of. Of course, they'd try to work off all the tough bronco on 'em just to see 'em get thrown.

"I remember one kid went to work for the L. F. D. outfit while I was there. A bunch made it up not to pass him any biscuits at the table. And for two or three meals he didn't get any bread. But finally a big plateful came near enough and he reached out and got 'em. He stuffed one in his mouth and what he couldn't hold in his hands he poked in his pockets. Nobody said a word. But pretty soon they all started laughing. After that he was one of the bunch."

REFERENCE: J. S. Buchannan, Robert Lee, Texas. Interviewed July 19, 1938.