

[J. H. Hurley]

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

RANGE-LORE

J. H. Hurley was born in West Tennessee in 1858. He came to Texas in 1877, settling first in Wilson County. He moved with his family to Coke County in 1910.

Mr. Hurley says: "I worked for the Withers and Blank outfit in Caldwell County for many years. Their herds ranged along the Nueces river. In the fall we'd work them up the river to a ranch near Lockhart and winter them before driving them to northern markets.

"The longest drive I ever helped make was in 1880. I helped to drive 40,000 head of cattle from Lockhart, Texas, to Montana. There were twenty-four men with the outfit, including the cook and a negro horse wrangler. It took us four months and two days to make the drive. C.12 - 2/[?]/41 - Texas 2 We had some thrilling experiences on our way.

"We had several stampedes, but the worst one happened one night while we were camped on the Solomon river. We were camped there a week. There was plenty of grass and water, and the boss had gone on ahead to figure with some cattle buyers. My brother, a negro boy, and I were guarding the herd when the cattle got restless. Something, we didn't know what, suddenly frightened them, and the leaders made a break, the others following. We didn't even have time to wake the other riders. We started riding, trying to head them off, and my brother and the negro boy did get in front of them. We might have succeeded in turning them, if it hadn't been for a deep gully. Brother and the negro rode

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into it. It was dark and they didn't see it. Brother leaped off his horse just in time, but the negro was thrown from his. When I rode up behind them, I saw the negro. I thought at first he was hurt, but I heard him sayin' something which was not his Sunday School lesson and I knew he was all right.

“A few of the herd had fallen into the gulley but the main herd had turned the other way, but for some reason they turned again and was making straight for the gulley. Well, negro Tom's curses turned to a prayer. He yelled for me to help him out, but I knew I must turn the herd if possible or 3 we'd all be trampled to death. So I began shooting and shouting and managed to get ahead of the lead steer, and when he was in a few yards of the gulley he turned, and the herd missed it.

“I rode on with them until they ran themselves down. When the other riders caught up with us we were five miles from the camp. Mr. Childress, our trail boss, didn't even know about the stampede 'till it was all over, but our big boss, Mr. Withers, sure did commend our riding. Green (Old Pop) Mills, and old Indian fighter and bronc buster was on that drive.”

REFERENCE:- J. H. Hurley, Robert Lee, Texas. Interviewed June 20, 1938. 1 Beliefs and Customs - Occupational lore

Mrs. Annie McAulay

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COWBOY LORE

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J. H. HURLEY was born in West Tennessee in 1858. He came to Texas in 1877, settling first in Wilson County. He moved with his family to Coke County in 1910. He bought a farm near Robert Lee [????] his home ever since.

Mr. Hurley says : "I worked for the Withers and Blank outfit in Caldwell County for many years. Their herds ranged along the Nueces river. In the / Fall we'd work them up the river to a ranch near Lockhart and winter them before driving them to [?] Northern markets.

"The longest drive I ever helped make was in 1880. I helped to drive 40,000 head of cattle from Lockhart, Texas , to Montana. There were twenty-four men with the outfit , including the cook and a Negro horse wrangler. It took us four months and two days to make the drive. We had some thrilling experiences on our way.

"We started with two separate herds, but when we got to Ft. Griffin, they threw the herds together and sent three men back home. There were about one hundred saddle horses, five apiece for each rider. We passed a Federal Indian camp on the Washita river. They just guarded the Indians, or rather herded and fed them. The Indians answered to roll call every night, but they did no work. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 We crossed the Arkansas river , then traveled north through Kansas.

"We had several stampedes, but the worst one happened one night while we were camped on the Solommon Solomon river. We were camped there a week. There was plenty of grass and water, and the boss had gone on ahead to figure with some cattle buyers. My brother, a Negro boy , and I were guarding the herd when the cattle got restless. Something, we didn't know what, suddenly frightened them, and the leaders made a break, the others following. We didn't even have time to wake the other riders. We started riding, trying to head them off, and my brother and the Negro boy did get in front of them. We might have succeeded in turning them, if it hadn't been for a deep gully. Brother and the Negro rode into it. It was dark and they didn't see it. Brother leaped off his horse just in time, but the Negro was thrown from his. When I rode up behind them, I saw

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the Negro. I thought at first he was hurt, but I heard him sayin' something which was not his Sunday School lesson and I knew he was all right.

“A few of the herd had fallen into the gulley but the main herd had turned the other way, but for some reason they turned again and was making straight for the gulley. Well, Negro Tom's curses turned to a prayer. He yelled for me to help him out, but I knew I must turn the herd if [possible?] or we'd all be trampled to death. So I began shooting and shouting and managed to get ahead of the lead steer, and when he was in a few [?] yards of the 3 gulley he turned, and the herd missed it.

“I rode on with them until they [?] ran themselves down. When the other riders caught up with us we were five miles from the camp. Mr. Childress, our trail boss, didn't even know about the stampede 'till 'til it was all over, but our big boss, Mr. Withers , sure did commend our riding. Green (Old Pop) Mills, an old Indian fighter and bronc buster was on that drive.” Bibliography Reference- J. H. Hurley - Robert Lee, Texas. Early Citizen and Cowboy in West Texas. Interviewed June 20.