

[Jap Adams]

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[Range-lore?]

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Maverick, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

Jap Adams was born in Gonzales County in 1867. He moved with his parents to Hamilton County and later to Comanche County. Hearing of

better things further west, he came to Runnels County in 1895, bought a little ranch on Fuzzy Creek where he kept a small herd of cattle and a few horses. After a few years the ranch was disposed of and Mr. Adams went into the mercantile business, retiring in 1920. He now makes his home in Ballinger, Texas.

"I began riding the range for my father when I was ten years old," says Mr. Adams, "and I continued to ride for about thirty years. I didn't have any outstanding experiences as a rider, although I've seen cattle stampedes; and good bronc busters were common. About the most dangerous work we had was handling a herd in a stampede. I saw one 2 rider, they called him Buck, got killed by a steer that was leading a herd in a stampede. I was helping deliver this herd to a fellow who had purchased them from my uncle. Some little noise disturbed the herd that night and they began running. Buck was on guard and tried to turn the leader and got them to circling. The steer ran into the horse he was riding,

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causing him to stumble and fall on the rider, killing him instantly. As a rule, stampedes happened when we were driving the cattle from one pasture to another.

“I never went on any long drives, but on these drives the cattle were herded together and bedded down for the night. If they became restless those on guard would ride around and sing. This seemed to quiet them.

“I don't remember any particular mean horse, but they was all pretty mean 'til we got them broke in. I had one horse I thought a heap of.

He would come to me any time he heard me whistle. And he understood cattle. He sure could stand a lot of hard riding.

“We always had a lot of fun out of new riders, when one would chance to throw in with our outfit. One of our favorite ways of initiating them was to turn 'em across a saddle bench and paddle them 'til they hollered, 'Enough.' We pushed all the dirty work off on the “tenderfoot”

and then laughed at their plight. The toughest horses were turned over to them, too. But I remember one time a new 3 rider got the joke on a bunch of us old hands, as well as the boss. He came to my uncle's ranch and asked for a job. When questioned, he said he could ride a little but didn't know much about cattle. He had a pretty good horse but just a piece of a saddle, in fact, it looked like a kid's saddle to me. And the clothes he was wearing looked as bad and unlike a cowhand's as could have been possible. Our foreman said he'd give him a trial. Well, the first thing he did was to give him the toughest horse on the ranch to ride. At first it looked like he wasn't going to be able to stick with him, but then he decided to have some fun, so he began to spur him and make him pitch. Boy, could that feller ride!

He rode that horse 'til he rode him down, and then asked the boss if he could have the job. We sure felt sheepish, after he got the best of us like that. That was the best bronc rider I

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ever saw and he made a good hand, too. He had a fine saddle and some good clothes hid out in the brush, and after having his fun he hauled them out of the bushes and dressed up 'til he looked like a real cowboy, which he was. After that, we were a little more particular about who we razzed.

“I was never in an Indian fight. I saw lots of Indians but they were friendly ones. My uncles, Captain Jim Cunningham, Bill Cunningham, Dick Cunningham, and Captain Bill Wright were all in the Dove Creek fight. They served on the ranger force and were in several Indian fights.”