

[O. M. Ratliff]

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

RANGE-LORE

O. M. Ratliff was born at Gideon, Lee County, Texas, in 1880. He lived there until he was 9 years old, when his parents moved to Coleman County. Mr. Ratliff moved to Coke County in 1907, where he has made his home ever since.

He says: "My father was a rancher in Coleman County for many years, also in Reagan County for awhile. I always helped on his ranch as long as I stayed at home. I helped with many round-ups and drives although I never made any long ones. I heard my father tell about going up the trail once. He was driving north and had camped one night near the Ford crossing on the Red River. Some Indians kept prowling around and trying to steal their horses. C12 - [???] - Texas 2 The horses were tied in a clump of bushes or small tress, not far from where the cattle were bedded down.

"When the guards discovered them they had one horse loose. One of the men shot at them and must have hit one on the foot or leg. They trailed them awhile next day by the bloody tracks they left.

"They didn't try to run off the herd, but all the excitement caused them to stampede. They ran right back the way they had come for several miles before they got them to milling, and then they didn't have 'em all together. They had to hunt the stragglers next day.

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“My mother taught school on the banks of Leon River in Comanche County, before her marriage. She knew Quannah Parker well, being present when Quannah had a fight with a neighbor at a big blow-out at Henrietta.

“My mother said she always carried her gun to school with her, and some of her older pupils did, too. 'You never could tell about the Indians,' she said. She'd seen them snooping around many times but they never tried to bother her while she was teaching.

“I worked on a fourteen section ranch near Styles and Big Lake. I learned to ride broncs while there - I busted lots of tough ones, too. They usually drove the cattle to Midland and shipped to a northern market when they got ready to sell. 3 “They believed in putting things on in great style out at Styles. When they'd put up a new building they'd always have about a three day celebration. They'd have barbecue, racing and roping, and bronc riding, and so on, then we'd dance all night. They'd usually pull one about once a month. Women were scarce out there, and the men would bring their daughters and wives and put up at the hotel. Most of the men would have to sleep in the wagon yard. Oh, but them were the good old days. Even if us cowpunchers was always broke we had a wallop good time.

“I went to Blackwell in 1907. They had started the town in 1906. There was just a store or two, a hotel, and a school there then. I worked on ranches for some time, helping neighbors with round-ups and drivers drives . But I finally got into the confectionery business there. I still own a cafe and confectionery there and at Robert Lee.”

REFERENCE:- O. M. Ratliff, Robert Lee, Texas. Interviewed August 2, 1938. 1 Beliefs and customs - Occupational lore

Mrs. Annie McAulay

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Runnels County [Typed?]

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COWBOY LORE

O. M. RATLIFF was born at Gideon, Lee County, Texas, in 1880. He lived there until he was 9 years old, when his parents moved to Coleman County. His parents, who are still living and have been married 62 years, live in San Angelo at the present time. Mr. Ratliff moved to Coke County in 1907, where he has made his home ever since. Mr. Ratliff says, He says: "My father was a rancher , therefore I learned to ride and work cattle before I was hardly knee high to a duck. My father ranched in Coleman County for many years, also in Reagan County for awhile. I always helped on his ranch as long as I stayed at home. I helped with many round-ups and drives although I never made any long ones. I heard my father tell about going up the trail once. He was driving north and had camped one night near the Ford crossing on the Red River. Some Indians kept prowling around and trying to steal their horses. The horses were tied in a clump of bushes or small tress, not far from where the cattle were bedded down.

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"My / Mother taught school on the banks of Leon River in Commanche Comanche C12 - Texas 2 Page 2.

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“I worked on a fourteen section ranch near [?] Styles and Big Lake. I learned to ride broncs while there-I busted lots of tough ones, too. They usually drove the cattle to Midland and shipped to a northern market when they got ready to sell.

“They believed in putting things on in great style out at Styles. When they'd put up a new building they'd always have about a three day celebration. They'd have barbecue and , racing and roping, and [?] bronc riding, and so on, then we'd dance all night. They'd usually pull one about once a month. Women were scarce out there, and the men would bring their daughters and wives and put up at the hotel. Most of the men would have to sleep in the wagon yard. Oh, but them were the good old days. Even if us cowpunchers was always broke we had a walloping good time.

“I went to Blackwell in 1907. My brother was townsite agent there. They had started the town in 1906. There was just a store or two, a hotel, and a school there when I then. went there. I worked on ranches for some time , helping neighbors neighbors with round-ups and drives. But I finally got into the confectionary confectionery business there. I still own a cafe and confection [?] confectionery there and at Robert Lee. “ Bibliography, O. M. Ratliff, Robert Lee Texas. Confectionary businessman, and old Cowhand in Coke County. Interviewed Aug. 2.