

## [Thomas Green Chaney]

1

TALES: Legends [Outlaws?]

Range-lore

Ruby Mosley

San Angelo, Texas. Interview

Page one

### RANGE-LORE

Thomas Green Chaney was born in Hunt County in 1864. His family drifted from one section to another farming a year here and there until they settled in Comanche County. Here he met Miss [Donyanna?] Poynor and later married her. She was the daughter of W.J. (Bill) Poynor, an old Indian fighter. In later years he moved to the Concho County and has lived here since. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas

"I went up the trail three different years, 2 says Thomas Green Chaney. "Each time we took cattle to Yellow House Canyon, out on the plains, near New Mexico to the X.I.T. outfit. This trail work was done for H. R. Martin and G. A. Beeman Company, Comanche County.

"One year, old Burley Taylor was boss of the trail outfit and Charlie Bryson, Jim [Doston?], John Bryson and I went with him. We had about 3,500 steers in the herd. We got everything ready and the chuck wagon started on ahead. About three days after we left Comanche County we got everything bedded down for the night. Two of the boys kept guard while we slept. I always liked to sleep under the wagon and got ny bunk roll and tucked in before someone beat me to it.

## Library of Congress

"I had just stretched out when good an old cow gave a snort, [loap?] and bawl. The next thing I knew I was hugging the couplin' pole of the wagon while cattle played havoc with our camp. Some of the boys got to their horses and some climbed trees. It took about a week to get the cattle together and we never found them all; some were twenty miles away. This was the worst stampede I ever saw. We fellows were so worn out sometimes we would go to sleep on our horses and get behind. One time I went to sleep and my horse grazed along until we lost the trail gang. I found them easy enough by the tracks but a good cowhand never got off like that.

"Outlaws and gun men, I guess I knew 'em about 3 as well as anyone to not have been one myself——Sam Ketchum, Tom Ketchum, Will Carver, Kilpatrick and my own brother W. H. Chaney and his brother-in-law Frank Stedham.

"My brother W. H. Chaney lived in Schleicher County near the county line, between Eldorado and Christoval. His home was a hideout for all the boys. I lived about a quarter of a mile from him but never got mixed up in the bunch. I had a family and we never suspected the outlaws being harbored so near us.

"I guess old Will Carver was the worst one of the bunch; he wasn't scared of the old devil. He was a train robber and killer, one of the most notorious outlaws of that time. Old Will and Kilpatrick took some guy for a spy. They rode in to Sonora one evening late, went into a little store and bought some chuck and horse feed, pretending to be new cowhands of that section. Will and Kilpatrick was doing a little spottin' while the other guy kept watch. Bill Bryant was sheriff at that time and was a little quick on the draw. He walked in and recognized them as they were wanted in every section of the west. Bryant killed Will Carver and shot Kilpatrick. The guy that was on watch broke and ran. He ran all night long to get to my brother to let him know what had happened. My brother was at my house; we were out early that morning working on a 4 windmill. The guy came up and told the whole story. The boys went to Sonora for the purpose of robbing the bank and bringing the loot to my brother's house. I don't guess anyone ever knew the exact reason why they went,

## Library of Congress

but you have my word that they went there for that purpose and I know what I am talking about. There is no harm in telling, as they are all dead.

“My brother, W. H. Chaney, and Frank Stedham were pretty tough guys; they moved to New Mexico from Christoval section. They were afraid to live here any longer. They made several little run-ins in New Mexico and some family trouble came about. The two planned a duel. They had two points about 80 feet apart and the best man was to win out. They each went to the mark with pistols in pockets. When the signal was given each got his man. That was the end of these two. Brother was shot in the head and Frank in the stomach. They were two brave, daring guys to have the nerve to die face to face, knowing each other so well and experiencing so many dangerous battles together.

“I know the Ketchum boys in the San Saba county, and later in the Christoval section. Sam Ketchum was a mighty good man to die an outlaw. He was a very good friend of mine. He never would have been in to anything but got into trouble trying to save Tom.

“One time Tom was on a freight out in the Sheffield 5 country, when he and a train man got into a fight. Tom got shot but was not killed. Sam always went to Tom's rescue and plenty times had to fight or shoot his way out.

“My brother bought horses and grub for the Ketchum boys as well as gave lodging.”  
Range-lore

Ruby Mosley

Sam Angelo, Texas.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Thomas Green Chaney, San Angelo, Texas, interviewed, January 20, 1938.