

## [Victor R. Scoville]

1

Pioneer [?] [?]

Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7

Page #1

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Victor R. Scoville, 48, was born Dec. 17, 1889, on his father's ranch, 'The 'Cloverleaf', located in [Frio?]. Zavalla, and LaSalle cos., with ranch headquarters about 54 mi. S. of San Antonio, Tex. Scoville's boyhood ambition was to emulate the various cowboys on the ranch in riding and roping, in which he received the continued encouragement of his father. He was able to ride a horse when he was only four years old, and at eight he was able to do anything on a horse that didn't require a man's strength. As a large part of a cowboy's work depends on the horses knowledge and strength, Scoville was able to perform the regular duties of a cowboy. He left the range when he was 18, to work in the various oil booms that occurred in Texas. Whenever possible, he entered various rodeos, winning many contests on account of his skill. He was mustered out of the World War a cripple, and now tours the country with a trained mule. His address is 700 N. Main St., Fort Worth, Tex. His story:

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"I was a cowboy back in the days when they didn't have no fences, everywhere you looked. In fact, when I was a kid, they didn't have a fence nowhere near my dad's place. That was 'way back in the 1890's, though.

"To begin with, I was born on my dad's ranch, Dec. 17, 1889. The ranch was known as 'The Cloverleaf', and was located in Frio, [Eavalla?], and LaSalle counties. Headquarters was in Frio county, about 54 miles south of San Antonio, Tex. Dad had over 50,000 head in the 'VA' and 'Cloverleaf' irons. The last iron wasn't really a cloverleaf design, but kinda looked like one. It was made with two S's, one of them a straight S, with the other made in a horizontal way without leaving an opening in the first S.

"I can remember, now, how anxious I was to be a cowpuncher, and how I'd ride everything I could get on 'til I was able to ride anything that run on four feet, and could get to a snubbing post. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 I rode yearlings 'til I rode 'em down, and I rode every hoss that I could saddle 'til I really did get good at it, for sure. My dad wanted me to be a good rider, so he helped me along by giving me a hoss, now and then, and pointing out my faults. When I was four years old, I could ride real good. Of course, I couldn't ride no wild hosses, but I had several spills from broncs on frosty mornings when they kinda wanted to stretch out. You take any bronc, and he'll do it in spite of anything you can do. I've seen 'em whipped 'til the blood run, but they'd buck again as if they'd never been whipped for it. A regular cowpuncher takes that in a day's work and never gets mad about it, because he knows the bronc wants to limber up.

"Now, I don't mean to brag when I tell you about riding wild hosses, but some people are born with the knack of handling some things good and others not at all. I reckon if you was to ask me to push a typewriter, I couldn't get to first base in ten years; on the other hand, if you was offered a job wrangling hosses, you might do the same as I would in pushing a typewriter. Of course, you can't never tell about those things, but I do know that few people can handle hosses as well as some can.

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“Now, about wild hosses: why, I was riding 'em when I was eight years old; and my dad would bet money that I could ride any hoss, anywhere. Tell you another thing: I was never th'owed after I was eight years old. I rode in rodeos, too; rode man-killers that had already killed several men. One of 'em I rode was named 'North Fork Blue'. He killed six or seven men before &num;3 I got the chance to ride him at the Elko, Nevada Rodeo, in 1915. I rode that hoss and won the contest. All the papers told about the men he'd killed, and said that I was the only man that ever rode him. I knew he was a bad hoss, because a couple of cowpunchers told me about what the hoss had done before. I didn't care much, but I was extra careful.

“The reason I was able to put on such a good show for them, in the rodeo, was because I was always picking out bad actors on the home ranch. I had hosses to fall on me, roped critters from green hosses, and had 'em jerked out from under me, and roped critters too big for any hoss to hold. Speaking of roping big critters, I roped a 1,000 pound steer in a rodeo at Falfurrias, Tex. in 15 seconds, flat. That was in 1904. That same year, two famous hoss riders put up a bet that each one could beat the other. It was Clay McGonigal and Eddie McCarrol. They put up \$5,000.00, with the winner to take the entire gate, too. It come off at the ball park in San Antonio. Dad took me with him into San Antonio, and let me stay to see the whole thing. It was to last four days, and plenty people come out to see it.

“The first day, Clay's roping hoss bucked and lost that day for him; the second day, the same. So I went to him and asked him to use my hoss. I had a good one, one that I'd trained myself. He told me to bring him out for a trial, so the next morning, bright and early, I was there. I says, 'Clay, let me show you what he can do without the bridle on him’.

“He says, 'Strut your stuff'. I took the bridle off, pointed the critter out to the hoss, and we had it roped in short order.

&num;4

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Well, Clay decided to use the hoss, and he won the contest. After the doings was over, Clay offered me \$200.00 for the hoss, but I wouldn't take that. It wasn't long after that, when some other kids and myself was out a-hunting. We'd tied my hoss up at the camp, and was off in the timber. When we come back to the camp my hoss was down, with a bullet in his shoulder. I walked and ran all the way back to San Antonio, 14 miles, for a veterinarian. He came back with me in his buggy and whipped the team all the way, but were too late. He cut a '22' bullet out of the hoss's shoulder.

“Another thing about the ranches: they always kept two or three spoilt hosses on hand to try out new hands. You'd get on 'em like you would a plow hoss, and no tellin' when he'd come unbuckled. That was lots of fun. Sometimes a fellow'd get hurt a little, but we was always on hand to help him out of a tight spot.

“I remember one greenhorn that come out to the place, looking for a 16 foot hoss that'd been genteeled. Well, you wouldn't ask for a better set up for some fun than that. We led out an old broke-down looking hoss for him to try, and he almost turned the hoss down on account of it's looks. We told him to try it, so we'd get an idea what he meant by a 'genteeled' hoss. Well, he got on, and was th'owed off in less time that it takes to tell it. He never did try another hoss, under no circumstances, no matter how much we talked, but it was worth it. The cowpunchers was fit to be tied, and there wasn't no work that day. They kidded the greenhorn 'til he left the place. The main give-a-way was when &#5 he asked for a 16 foot high hoss. He should have said a '16 hands high', and that's a big hoss.

“The way we got our hosses for the cow work, was to catch wild ones out on the range. We had native Mustangs, and we'd turn a young Cleveland Bay, or a Kentucky Blackhawk stud out with 'em. We'd have to hunt out the old studs first, though, or they'd kill the young ones, because they'd be on the young ones before they'd know anything about what was going on.

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“The way we caught 'em up was to let Blackie Edwards, a crack shot, crease 'em. The way that was done, we'd raise the herd and chase 'em for a day, sometimes two or three days, according to the spirit the stud had. You see, the stud always led the mares to the waterholes, or everywhere the herd went, and if he had lots of spirit, or was extra cagy, we'd have to chase 'em 'til they was plum run down. After we'd run 'em 'til they was too tired to be cagy, we'd run 'em past Blackie and he'd shoot the ones we wanted, right in the muscle over the neck - the one on top. That'd numb 'em, and they'd drop like they were dead. It wouldn't last but about five minutes, but that was just long enough for one man to hawg tie 'em and we'd go on, 'til we got all the hosses we wanted.

“When we had all we needed, we'd go back to each one, untie him, and one of us would ride him 'til he was partly broke; then, we'd go on 'til we had 'em all part broke, then head for the regular hoss corral, or remuda. There was a regular hoss wrangler in charge of the remuda. His job was to break the hosses and 'tend to them all the time. I liked that job pretty well, but I liked &num;6 to get around over the range too well to stay put for a wrangler, so I never helt the job very long at a time.

“I was about ten year old, on my first trail drive. Some folks wouldn't call it much trail driving, because we didn't run the herd very far; but it was done just like a long trail drive, so I just call it a trail drive. We only had two trail drives, and they was both to San Antonio, a 54 mile drive.

“The rest of the cattle that was took off the place went by rail. The railroad put a spur right up to the ranch headquarters, so it was too easy, and saved a lot of money by going that way. Then, too, there was lots less danger of stampedes that way, so it saved money that way too, because you can figure an losing from a dozen to a 100 critters anytime there's a stampede. They'll either run off a cliff, canyon, or some of 'em'll fall and the rest of 'em will stamp 'em down. When a stampede gets under way, You'd better figure on stopping

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it and stopping it quick. The quicker it's stopped, the less beef they run off, if some of 'em aint kilt, too.

“The way a stampede is stopped, is to have a rider get in front and turn the leader. You see, the herd follows a leader, and if he's turned, you keep turning him 'til the herd is milling around and going no where. They'll soon get tired, and one of 'em will bawl. Talk about a nice sound! The first bawl is certainly welcome, because that means that the herd will be stopped still in less than five minutes. That's kinda like a wild hoss. If he ever bawls, you've got him licked. Of course, the bawl is different from a squeal. When he squeals, that means he's still [figating?] &7 mad; and you'd better not give him a chance to stomp you or you're a goner.

“On account of having a bad stomach, a left-over from the fracas overseas, I'm really as old as an 80, or a 90 year old. I get such pains at times 'til I'll do anything to anybody, if they cross me. That's caused me to forget lots of things, and I don't remember so much because of it. After I left the ranch, I was an oil field boomer, working in first one field, then another. Everytime I got a chance, though, I'd enter a contest. Besides riding at Elko, Nev., I rode here in Fort Worth for nine straight rodeos. Then, I rode at Mineral Well, Tex. and Rawlings, Wyo. I rode and roped at these rodeos, and made pretty good money at it because I pretty nearly always finished in the money.

“Since the war, I've worked here and there at different things, but not for long at a time because my stomach goes to tripping me up, and then I have to quit. My main way of making a living, now, is a throwback from my hoss riding days. My knack of handling hosses helped me to train a mule to do anything a mule could be taught. I work for advertising people everywhere, with that mule. About the main thing we do is to work for beer companies. I fix up a clown suit and walk down the street with the mule. He'll bow to one side, then another, and by the time we reach a beer joint that handles the beer we're advertising, I holler 'Hey!' at him, and he turns his ears to me. Then, I act like I'm whispering something in his ear, and I'll point toward the joint. He'll shake his head up and

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down, then we'll go inside. This attracts the crowds inside, and we go right up to the bar, &#8 where I'll order two bottles of the kind we're advertising. Just set his bottle on the bar, and he picks it up in his mouth, holding on to the neck with his teeth, then empties the bottle. Likes it, too. I'd hate to have to pay for all he could hold, because he can sure out-drink me.