

## [Sam J. Rogers]

1

Beliefs and Customs - Occupational lore

Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7 [121?]

Page #1

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Sam. J. Rogers, 67, was born in Ill. His father moved the family to Jack Co., Tex., in 1875. His father, who had been a horse trainer in Ill., taught Sam to ride at an early age. His father bought a stock farm in Jack Co., in 1879. This gave Sam an opportunity to learn to work cattle, and learn to be a [cow-boy?]. He was employed as a cowboy by Henry Reynolds, when Sam was 14. He was again employed on the Knox Bros. Jack Co. ranch from 1906 until 1912, then went to their Baylor Co. ranch. After two Yrs., he went back to Jack Co. and assisted H.J. Henson to roundup a herd of cattle. After they completed the work, Sam was elected sheriff of Jack Co., and served from 1914 to 1922. He lost the race in 1922, and was employed as a detective by the Cattle Raisers Ass. to serve in Seymour, Tex., from 1922 to 1926, at which time he retired from all activity, and now resides at 2903 N.W. 26th St. Ft. Worth, Tex. His story:

“Yes sir! I rode the range when men were men and women weren't governors. That sounds old, I know, but men had to be men in them days because their transportation was on hosses, and them ornery rascals'd pitch every morning like they'd never been rode before. Most of them around Jack Co. were them ornery old Mustangs mixed in with

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Spanish hosses. You see, the ranchers'd go out and kill the Mustang studs, and turn a Spanish hoss out to sire the herd. That away, they got a pretty good hoss.

“While I don't recall much about it, I spent my first five years in Ill., before my dad brought us to Texas. I don't recall the place where I was born, but the date was May 22, 1870. After my dad brought us to Texas, he settled in Jack Co., where he went to work for the different ranchers around and about there in Jack Co. What he done was to bust up their wild hoss stock and train them to cut and peg. Dad must have been a wizard at the game because he come to Texas a busted man, and he was able to establish him a stock farm there in Jack Co. in 1879. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Tex. [?] 2 Of course, he wasn't so lousy with stock, but he did have a few over 40 head of stockers, at that. And, I cal'cate he had around 60 head of hosses, all that he busted himself. Busted and caught by his lonesome. The others had to have somebody go with him, but when dad wanted hosses, he went by hisself, and brought back as many's he could handle.

“I recall now how disgusted he used to get with me when he was teaching me to ride a hoss before he got his own spread, the 'MWR', which was his iron. He'd put me up on a hoss, and I'd fall off. He'd put he up there, and tell me he was going to whip me if I didn't go to holding on. Instead, I'd just fall off like a sack of flour. So, he just ups and ties my feet to the stirrups and that away, I learnt to ride a hoss.

Reason he wanted me to learn so bad was, because then he'd be able to do so much more work, and I'd be able to tend to a few chores that he was having to do hisself then. I recall that the heighth of my ambition was to be the hossman my dad was, because he was looked up to by the other cow pokes and ranchers be cause he could just about top off the worst bronc ever you seen. And, he never started busting a hoss he didn't stay right with 'til that rascal was meek as a kitten. He could make them do anything, but sometimes them ornery rascals would realize that other men couldn't ride as well's the man that broke them in, and do you know what they'd do?, why, they'd pitch like they'd never been busted. Meow! Pitch like a sonof-agun son-of-agun! That's where ranchers get their word 'hoss

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sense.' They claim a hoss usually has more sense than the feller that's in the saddle. 3 "Dad's job was to teach a hoss to first take a saddle, then a man in the saddle. Of course, the hoss being used to running wild and free, would try its best to pitch what ever was on its back, off. When it found it couldn't pitch the saddle off, the dad got into the saddle. There'd be times when he'd get pitched off and the hoss'd get away. You see, he didn't use a corral like they do nowadays. He just got on them out in a prairie and rode them. He did use a corral where he was just using the saddle, though. He only had one corral, and every day, he'd have some wild hoss in there a-trying to pitch a saddle off. There were very few that ever pitched him off after he got into the saddle, and I reckon that was the reason he done it out in the open. Might have been that he didn't want them rascals to rub him up against the corral fence like they do when you have a corral and then he might have done that to help his rep' along as a hoss buster. I don't know.

"I do recall though, that he either got \$3.00 for a once rode hoss, or \$5.00 for a second rode hoss, or \$2.00 a year for every year the hoss worked after dad broke him and put him out as ready to work. That was when the ranchers themselves furnished the wild hosses. Dad has had ranchers pay him on a boss for 10 and 12 years after he busted it. They'd finally get too old to work, but the rancher'd keep it on as a pet for somebody, but he'd have to pay dad as long's that hoss lived. That was the contract, and a mighty good one too. I have known hosses to live as longs 18 Yrs but I don't know whether or not dad collected off any like that. In fact, nobody ever knowed much about his business. He always said that a working lip wasn't a working man, and he'd druther work. 4 "Now, [this hoss?] busting's a mighty hard way to make a living, and many's the man that couldn't bust over four in a row before they'd quit for half a year, anyway. You'll see why when you picture a bucking hoss and yourself in the saddle. A man had to be about as good a rider as there was in the country before he could bust the wild ones to start with. Then after he got good enough to bust them, he had to deal with a different hoss every time he got into the saddle. They all pitch a little different. Although, there's four main ways of pitching that take in every hoss's way of bucking. There's a fence row, and so on, that the hosses do.

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But, even after you got it broke up that away, them ornery sonofaguns son-of-a-guns will sometimes change their way of pitching. Not so many of them will change, but enough of them will to make it interesting.

“Now, dad was hard to have the nose bleed. [?] hoss buster that aint so hard to have the nose bleed, will have it every time he gets in the saddle, and hard too. Then, there's another point. In riding them wild ones, and broncs too, you can't wear chaps because they'll slip and you'll be bucked off. You have to just wear pants so's you can help hold on with your knees, gripping with all your might. If you happen to have your mouth open when the hoss comes down stiff legged, you'll just about bust your jaw bone when your jaws pop together. I once saw a bronc buster bite his tongue so bad he couldn't talk for weeks. Its just like somebody going to your chin with his fist. Another thing, if your not set just right, and have your insides all braced for a jar when your hoss comes down stiff legged, you're liable to have your guts popped right out your stomach. Its that bad, and that's the 5 reason why a man that knowed all the angles like my dad did, and could take it like he did, didn't have the least worries about ever getting a job. There were quite a few men as good as my dad who didn't bust any hosses because there's the accident angle that's put so many good men on the shelf for life because there was one hoss come along that got the best of him. Yep! Busting wild hosses wasn't the job every man looked for in the old days. Nowadays, they still have to bust hosses but they don't have the peppery ones they used to have. These hosses of today have been inbred with other races 'til they've all got pretty gentle and easy to handle.

“I said that dad had some hosses of his own. Well, he had them for sale, and did sell lots of them. There was an Englishman that come out to the ranch from some other spread, which one I don't recall, but he asked dad for a hoss, and when dad asked him if he had any certain kind of a hoss in mind, he says, 'I've heard that hosses about 14 foot high are about the best, so I want one about that big.'

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“You talk about the hoo rawing. There was plenty of it went on after that when dad's friends found out about it. What the man should have asked for, was a hoss about 14 hands high. There's lotsa difference between a hand and a foot.

“I've been talking about dad, now I'll jaw about myself for a spell. I reckon I was pretty much of a pest when I was a kid, because I wanted to ride everything I could get on. I'd ride theyearlings 'til I rode them down, then get another. That away, I got to where I could ride pretty fair.

“I know I could do a man's work when I was about 12, because 6 I went on the round ups with the rest of them. The way it was pulled off, all the cattlemen'd go together and roundup every hand on the range, then cut out each man's cattle to do with as he wanted. Since dad had so few, I reckon he'd got about 300 head at this time, he was paid a salary by a couple of the ranchers to represent them, and I hadndled handled dad's stuff myself. Bill Green and the Knox Ranch paid dad's salary.

“We'd be on them roundups for a couple of months at a time in the Spring when there was plenty of cattle, then other times we'd only be out a month. Whatever the time, I was there and helped a lot. The ranchers in Jack were awful lucky about their roundups, because they had so few stampedes. You know, you're likely to have a stomp any time you have any kind of a herd rounded up. [Anything'll?] cause a stomp, and I honestly believe they run sometimes for no reason atall.

“I never was in but one real stampede, and it was while working on the Knox spread. Before I went to work there, though, I worked a couple of years for Henry Reynolds. He had a small ranch there in Jack, sorta like my dad's. I don't recall just how many head he run, but I reckon 'twas around 500 in the 'HR Connected iron. You make it like this: .

“The money Reynolds paid me looked like all the money in the world to me. Boy! How I did strut around in the clothes that little old \$15.00 a month got me. I wasn't out anything

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for my grub or flop, you see, because I either flopped in the bunkhouse while in at headquarters, or I flopped on the ground when away. My grub was furnished, just like all the rest of the ranches. Their wages was always so much, then everybody paid chuck too. 7 "After I worked for Henry Reynolds awhile, I went to work for Bill Green. He run around 8,000 head in his 'Lazy H' iron. Its easy to make. Like this: , see?

"The work there was just like on the Reynolds spread, only that there was more cattle, and more men to handle them. I don't recollect just how long I did work for Green 'til I got a job with Geo. Adkisson. We made one Spring roundup, then he propositioned me to go to his King Co. spread for a roundup. Well, I wanted to go, so we went.

"We rounded up a little over 1,000 head of three year old steers, then he said, 'We're taking these to Mexico.'

"I didn't know what to think about that, but was always anxious to do something different, so I said, 'Let's go!' We started out, and had quite a bit of trouble keeping the herd rounded up 'til we got about 50 miles away from the home spread where they'd been used to living. About 10 days after we got away from the home spread, I got to thinking about Mexico being so different from what I was used to, and what could happen to a boy a stranger away from home, so I folded up and went back to Jack. I was 10 days on the trail, so you can't say I didn't go up the trail, can you!?"

"When I got back, I helped H.J. Henson to roundup a herd of cattle, then went to work for the Knox Bros. Ranch in 1906. I hired out to J.[?]. Moore, who was the wagon boss and foreman, too. He said my job depended on what I was able to do, and I got me a berth as a regular cow puncher. They hired 14 regular men, then 16 to 20 men extra during roundup season.

"The reason it takes so many extras during roundup is because cattle'll drift away from the homespread. They'll go 8 several hundred miles away, and stay in the brush lots of times 'til it looks like they're hiding from you. Actually, I've found Knox cattle as much as

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300 miles South of headquarters. Now, that all takes a lot of men, and that's the reason all the ranchers'll pitch in and hire extras, then send every man jack they can get a-hold of, out to the roundup. Even women work them. They'd usually do the cooking for the chuck wagon [when?] they were along. A few of them could ride right well, but I don't recollect any of them as being any great shakes at it, right now.

“Along about in 1912, the Knox Bros. decided to get rid of their spread in Baylor Co., and sent me up there to take charge and fit the stock up for sale. Well, I took the job on, and got the stock all fattened up for sale by 1914. They then sold out and I come back to Jack to run for sheriff. I ran, and was elected.

“I was sheriff of Jack Co. from 1914 'til 1922, when the Ku Klux finally got me. You see, I fought them all the way from law, and they tried to get me every year. They failed to make the grade 'til 1922, and then I went to work as a detective for the Texas Cattle Raiser's Ass.

“They assigned me to Seymour, Texas, because there was some high handed and fancy free rustling going on there, and the regular Seymour man couldn't uncover it. He either couldn't uncover it, or his hands were tied. I don't know, but you can put it down that three months after I got there and got into the field, there wasn't anything but a little petty larceny rustling going on.

And, that's a thing you'll never put a stop to. Not only not put a stop to, but its getting worse every year. You see, its easier to lift cattle now than it was before. Now, you can drive a truck right out to a herd in a pasture [????] 9 drive it to market. The rustlers used to be able to drive the cattle away, but they'd have to do it overland, and they'd be trailed. If the cattlemen got on their trail before rain or something erased it, and outnumbered the rustlers, then the cattlemen'd get their cattle back, and the rustler'd get hung from the closest tree. That or get shot. Now, its different. even after they get caught now, some shyster lawyer gets them off scott free. That's the way of it now.

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“After I stopped the rustling around Seymour, I quit in 1923, and came here to Fort Worth to live. I've been here ever since. When I first came here, I bought and sold a few head of cattle, but I even quit that and now live the life of Reilly, if Reilly didn't want too much to live on.