

WORK AROUND AMARILLO

When the job was finished at Waggoner's, Mr. Slaughter and other cattlemen in the Panhandle asked my father to take a job as brand inspector working for the Texas Cattle Raiser's Association. We moved to Amarillo and spent over a year there (1910-1911). We lived in an apartment on South Polk Street. There was a streetcar that operated on Polk Street and my father rode it to work. He had an office downtown and if he needed to travel out of town to inspect cattle, he had a horse and buggy furnished. He also had a saddle horse. He would ride in the buggy and lead the saddle horse to be used whenever it was necessary.

I remember one time in the spring of 1911, we rode in the buggy out West Third street there in Amarillo, to a lake where many people in wagons and buggies had gathered to watch Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. The spectators were parked all around the side of the lake, somewhat above the stage or bed of the lake. Of course most lakes were dry most of the time in the Panhandle. This made quite an amphitheater. Wagons, Indians, Soldiers, and Cowboys were the actors led by Buffalo Bill with his spacious costume, his white horse, his long hair, and his gracious manner. All of this was quite a scene for a three year old boy.

A man came from the Cattle Raiser's Association to brief my father on his new job. He explained various phases of the different activities. He then handed my father a 45 sixshooter saying, "Here, Bob, you may need this." He took the gun, not saying anything. He had never owned a gun and he had never carried a gun. His brother was accidentally killed by one, and he had never wanted to have anything to

do with one. He had observed at different times that men that carried them would at times get into a jam where they had to shoot or be shot. He was not looking for that kind of a job. In the fall of 1911, he resigned, taking a job with a Mr. Jurden of Amarillo.

He related the following incident that occurred during his time with the inspector's job. It was, I guess, natural for various characters to make fun of law officers or anyone trying to do what was right. One particular fellow would make remarks of a derogatory nature and it seemed he was trying to get my father riled up (he almost succeeded). Of course, my father was accustomed to many people making fun of him or kidding him about various things. He paid no attention to any of them. But he said this fellow was different and carried his prodding to the extreme, almost to a point where he could not bear it.

It had gone so far that my father decided to kill this man. He was walking down the street and met the man. He had the gun in his overcoat pocket ready to use when he met him. But he said something or somebody held his hand in his pocket and he walked on by. A little farther on, he stopped at an intersection and stood there. He broke out in a cold sweat. He gave a little prayer and went on.

The fall of 1911, we moved to Panhandle and stayed all winter on a place north of town for Mr. Jurden of Amarillo. He had some two thousand steers (two year olds), wintering them in a pasture and feeding them cottonseed cake. This was the first cake my father had ever fed to cattle.

We arrived in Panhandle on the train. Much of our household had been shipped ahead of us in a box car and had been unloaded at the depot. Mr. Jurden had arranged for a man to meet us with a team and a wagon. My mother and I waited inside the depot while

men loaded the wagon with the things we had to have. They also went by a grocery store and stocked up on supplies. They then drove back to the depot and picked up my mother and me. We climbed in the wagon, wrapped up good, and made ready for the trip of some eight miles to the ranch. We arrived a little after noon. The cook stove had to be put up, pipe cut to fit, and a fire built before we could get warm and get dinner cooked. It was real cold, with the wind in the north and it started snowing about sundown. We were glad that we got settled before the storm started.

That winter of 1911 and 1912 was one of the worst ever recorded. There was snow on the ground from November until March. The 25th of February a real blizzard (snow and wind) started and lasted for two days. It was so bad that they could not get out to feed the cattle. The third day when it slacked up, my father rode out to see what had happened to the cattle. They were in a field, most of them, just south of the pasture. The snow had covered the fence and they just walked over it into this cane field. The cane had been shocked and was ready to haul out. My father let the fence down and drove the remainder of the steers into the field.

He then rode to the man's place that owned the feed, told him what had happened, and started to make a deal with him for the feed. They had been talking trade sometime before, but had not completed the trade. They were going to buy it at so much a bundle and feed it in the pasture when needed. They agreed to count the shocks then average the number of bundles in each shock, thereby determining the final number of bundles to be paid for. So they made the trade and left the cattle in the field until spring. No feed hauling was necessary and the cattle did fine. They were extremely lucky, as many cattle were lost, frozen, or starved that winter.

