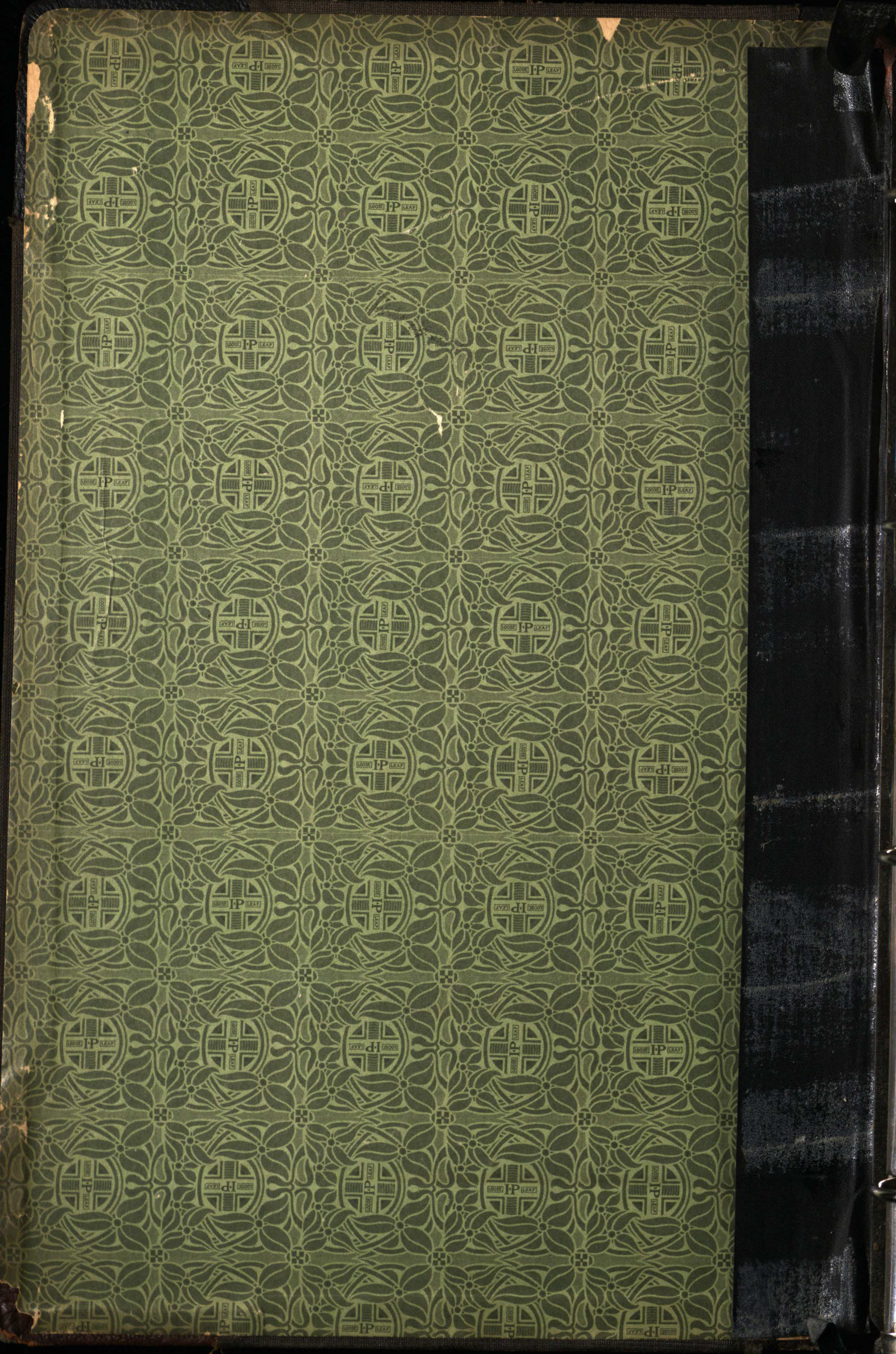
THE DOBIE SCRAPBOOK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THE DOBIE SCRAPBOOK

Compiled by

Mrs. Oma Johnson

Mustang Myth Exploded

SF 5-7-50

Coronado's Expedition Found All Indians Hunting Buffaloes Afoot

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Rumor delights in maligning good men while they are still alive and in romanticizing historical events of remote times. The tenacity with which the moonshiny, the ignorant, the malicious, the zealous and the opinionated cling to rumor frequently drags it into histories and gives it the status of fact. Beliefs long popular that the Indians of the Plains snared their first horses out of herds of mustangs and that the wild-running mustangs sprang from seeds lost by the Coronado and DeSoto expeditions are based on more rumors. Evidence to the contrary is definite.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The preparations for Coronado's expedition from Mexico into what is now the United States were far more carefully planned, more heavily financed and more extensively furnished than the conquest of Mexico by Cortes. There were, according to the best computations, about 1,500 head of horsestock, including mules and other pack animals. Coronado's muster roll, discovered by a scholar only about 12 years ago, lists 556 caballos (at that time stallions) and only two mares. There were probably other mares among the animals not itemized in the muster roll, but the proportion must have been small. The chances for a male to escape with a female and start a heard of wild horses were very small.

Indians All About.

Hundreds of Indians taken along as personal servants, cooks, packers, etc. were all afoot. Some of the cavalrymen had only one horse each; others had extra mounts. Coronado had 23 horses in his mount, among them a handsome brown and swift chestnut. We may be absolutely sure that neither he nor any other caballero rode a mare. Only the humble rode mares and burros. Many a ranchero in Mexico today would feel disgraced if seen on a mare.

The expedition got into the Arizona-New Mexico country in 1540, making a great sensation among the Indians with its horses. The present account is concerned with horses and not with the mirage of the Seven Golden Cities of Cibola and then of the more golden Gran Quivira that led Coronado on and on until he had traversed the Staked Plains of Texas and with a few men ridden clear up into Kansas.

Some of the Pueblo Indians were one day seen secretly smearing their bodies with the sweat of the horses, so as to transfer to themselves the magic of the "Big Dog," just as they ate the marrow out of the bones of deer legs with the idea of transferring swiftness into themselves. The sweat soon evaporated and with it fear of the horses. On a desert march some of the expedition Indians who had fallen behind and were without food and also without so much as a knife found a caballero's worn-out horse abandoned to die. They tied all four of its feet to a tree, heaped up wood around it, started a fire and "burned the horse alive, eating it singed and half-roasted."

HORSES DRIVEN.

Not long after the expedition arrived among the pueblos on the Rio Grande, it was discovered one morning that during the night natives had killed a horse-guard and driven off the horses under his care. The furious and indignant camp commander followed the trail, found the carcasses of two or three arrow-shot horses, on a little farther 25 carcasses, and then heard "a great hullabaloo" coming from a palisaded enclosure. The sweat-anointers were running the horses around "as in a bullring" and shooting arrows into them. Some, yelling defiance, "waved as banners" tails cut from slain horses.

Not many of Coronado's horses got east of the Rio Grande. Onards was to kill them. They plainly had such designs. They did not like the intruders.

On the weary backtrack to Mexico, far west of the plains, many of the expedition's horses perished either from starvation or an epidemic, and others were killed by Indians.

MANY ANIMALS KILLED.

In 1589, a half century after Coronado, Onate established on the upper Rio Grande, in the region of Santa Fe, which soon became the capital of New Mexico, the first Spanish settlement within what is now United States territory. According to Spanish policy, the settlers were provided with cattle, goats, sheep, and horses for breeding as well as for work.

Immediately after establishing themselves, the Spaniards in successive expeditions went out to explore the country east and west. They rode far out on the plains. They reported in writing on geography, on the plant and animal life of the country, and on Indian ways of living, especially the use of dogs as burden-bearers. The Indians were all hunting buffaloes afoot. There were no horses among them or at large to report on. The first wild horses of the West had yet to lift their heads.

Drinking Coffee in a Ranch Kitchen, Awaiting Sunrise, Is a Memory

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM MAY 11 1958

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Some people know and don't want to say; some people who don't know much seem to want to say a lot. It isn't great knowledge, and it isn't learning at all that makes the ideal communicator. He must have something to say, of course, but often his attitude is more important than either idea or fact. For instance, in a note dated April 21, 1958, Fred Turner of Brownfield, Texas, says: "Planting time is here on the South Plains, and we are waiting for daylight to start work. To me, it is wonderful to see the beginning of a new day." Just those two sentences made me experience drinking coffee in a ranch kitchen before daylight, waiting for dawn to light the way for riding in a wonderful new world.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Some communicators etch pictures that stay bright in the memories of darkness. I have a letter from Isaac Rosenbaum of Detroit, occasioned by his reading a book entitled "The Voice of the Coyote." Here is the picture he makes—a picture he's been living with for more than 40 years and that I expect to live with a little myself.

* * *

COYOTE WATCHED.

"In the summer of 1916 I was stationed in Arizona on the Mexican border with the First U. S. Cavalry at a place called Naco, across the line from Naco, Sonora. I was a corporal in charge of company patrol. There was a trail running from Naco to Fort Huachuca that I used to cover in two days. On the first day I used to camp on the north side of the San Pedro River in the vicinity of Monument No. 98. I remember a little knoll this side of the tracks of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad, the tracks running parallel with the trail. Every night at about 9 p. m. when the Golden State Limited arrived at the junctions of track and trail, a lone coyote would seat himself on the knoll and watch the train go by. I covered this trail dozens of times between 1916 and 1917, coming and going, and never failed to see Mr. Coyote in his accustomed spot at train time. Like him, I enjoyed the sight of the lit-up monster crawling along the dusty desert on a purple night."

Will Clayton of Houston, one-time undersecretary of state and assistant secretary of commerce, is a most articulate communicator. When he recently advised his fellow Texans to stop trying to promote the "special interest of certain oil producers against the national interest," he illustrated a form of critical communication that's become rarer and rarer since the end of World War II. Anybody in Texas nowdays who communicates an idea on economics not supported by local oil producers lays himself liable to the charge of being "subversive." I have not heard the founder of the mighty Anderson-Clayton Company accused of being subversive. In some realistic remarks of oil and oil producers quoted in "Time" magazine for March 31, 1958, he was merely illustrating a form of reasoning almost lost to press and politicians.

* * *

HORNS STRAIGHT.

Ralph Velich of Omaha, a taxidermist, writes as follows: "I am busy polishing Texas longhorns that came from Africa. I was in North Africa during the war. I saw the native longhorns, and they ship the horns to this country. The West is flooded with them. It is a laugh to see 'Texas longhorns' proudly displayed in taverns, etc."

The purported longhorns that I see hung up in barber shops and other public places in Texas are more from Africa, I believe, than from Texas or Mexico. I notice that nearly all these horns go straight out so that the spread from tip to tip is much wider than it would be if the horns retained their natural curves. I understand that a horn can be steamed and straightened. One way to see that nature's horns are not falsified is to have them on the skull.

Here's Albert Field of Lampasas, an articulate friend to all wildlife. Not long ago I gave you his story of two pet crows. He writes me approvingly of an article on the road runner that the May issue of "Arizona Highways" has. He goes on to lament that any person who calls himself a sportsman would kill one of these birds, even if a road runner does now and then destroy a quail egg. He concludes: "Along back in January, a lieutenant from Fort Hood kept badgering me to take him to some of the Indian camp sites around here. I finally agreed to take him along, and one Sunday we walked from the road to the mouth of Lynch's Creek, where there was an old site. While we were climbing around on top of the bluff this lieutenant spied a small gray lizard sunning himself on a rock. He immediately grabbed a rock and was going to kill him, but when I yelled to let the lizard alone, he dropped the rock like a hot potato. I proceeded to lecture the lieutenant on the useless destruction of such a harmless creature, and he finally admitted I was right in protecting the lizard. He just hadn't looked at the matter in the right manner, he said. Maybe that's the way a lot of people are towards their fellow creatures."

Ned Armstrong is with a public relations firm in New York. He likes to remember—New Mexico especially—and he likes to communicate to a sympathetic person. He makes me want to pass on what he communicates to me. Thus he writes:

"New Mexico is an awful place for memories. People remember things there—with all those eroded mountains and mesas and timelessness — things they never saw or felt anywhere else.

"I often remember what Bill Shuster told me once—how he came home from World War I, got demobilized, took a train to Philadelphia and was approaching Independence Square—he had his Saturday Evening Post art job waiting for him—and suddenly said: 'I don't want this. I want to go to Santa Fe, N. M., and live the rest of my life there.' He had $57, and he and his wife went to Santa Fe and they're still there, living the good life. He is a fine artist, and makes Zozobra for the folks for fiesta every Labor Day week-end. (Zozobra is gloom, and the burning of gloom is the symbol of the fiesta. I suspect Bill puts a lot of strong personal feeling into ordering those fireworks for Zozobra every year and listens to them explode and rocket off with mounting inner satisfaction)."

Sunday, March 18, 1951

Memories of the Argentine

5-7

Pampas Horse, Captured While Colt, Never Lost Restlessness, Alertness

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

W. H. Hudson was born on the Argentine pampas in 1841 and was 29 when he left them for England, where he died at 81. Whether writing about London birds, Hampshire days, deer in Richmond Park or his own Far Away and Long Ago youth, he never ceased to look pampasward.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Cristiano, the pale dun horse of alertness and unceasing remembrance of his own mustang freedom, was Hudson himself. This is Hudson's account, in 'The Book of a Nat-

"A gaucho of my acquaintance, when I lived on the pampas and was a very young man, owned a favorite riding horse which he had named Cristiano. To the gaucho 'Christian' is simply another word for white man: he gave it that name because one of its eyes was a pale blue-grey, almost white—a color sometimes seen in the eyes of a white man, but never in an Indian. The other eye was normal, though of a much lighter brown than usual. Cristiano, however, could see equally well out of both eyes. His sense of hearing was quite remarkable. His color was a fine deep fawn, with black mane and tail, and altogether he was a handsome and a good, strong, sound animal; his owner was so much attached to him that he would seldom ride any other horse, and as a rule he had him saddled every day.

SOUNDS, SIGHTS EXCITING.

"Every time I was in my gaucho friend's company, when his favorite Cristiano, along with other saddle horses, was standing at the palenque, or row of posts set up before the door of a native rancho for visitors to fasten their horses to, my attention would be attracted to his singular behavior. His master always tied him to the palenque with a long cabresto, or lariat, to give him plenty of space to move his head and whole body about quite freely. And that was just what he was always doing.

"A more restless horse I had never seen. His head was always raised as high as he could raise it—like an ostrich, the gauchos would say—his gaze fixed excitedly on some far object; then presently he would wheel round and stare in another direction, pointing his ears forward to listen intently to some faint, far sound which had touched his sense. The sounds that excited him most were as a rule the alarm cries of lapwings, and the objects he gazed fixedly at with a great show of apprehension would usually turn out to be a horseman on the horizon; but the sounds and sights would for some time be inaudible and invisible to us on account of their distance. Occasionally, when the bird's alarm cries grew loud and the distant rider was found to be approaching, his excitement would increase until it would discharge itself in a resounding snort—the warning of alarm note of the wild horse.

INSTINCT—NOT A GAME.

"One day I remarked to my gaucho friend that his blue-eyed Cristiano amused me more than any other horse I knew. He was just like a child, and when tired of the monotony of standing, tethered to the palenque he would start playing sentimental. He would imagine it was wartime or that an invasion of Indians was expected, and every cry of a lapwing or other alarm-giving bird, or the sight of a horseman in the distance would cause him to give warning. But the other horses would not join in the game; they let him keep watch and wheel about this way and that, spying or pretending to spy something, and blowing his loud trumpet, without taking any notice. They simply dozed with heads down, occasionally switching off the flies with their tails or stamping a hoof to get them off their legs, or rubbing their tongues over the bits to make a rattling sound with the little iron rollers on the bridle-bar.

"He laughed and said I was mistaken, that Cristiano was not amusing himself with a game he had invented. He was born wild and belonged to a district not many leagues away where an extensive marshy area made hunting on horseback impracticable. Here a band of wild horses, a small remnant of an immense troop that had formerly existed in that part, had been able to keep their freedom down to recent years. As they were frequently hunted in dry seasons when the ground was not so bad, they had become exceedingly alert and cunning, and the sight of men on horseback would send them flying to the most inaccessible places in the marshes, where it was impossible to follow them. Eventually plans were laid and the troop driven from their stronghold out into the open country, where the ground was firm, and most of them were captured.

MEMORY AND HABIT.

"Cristiano was one of them, a colt about 4 or 5 months old, and my friend took possession of him, attracted by his blue eye and fine fawn color. In quite a short time the colt became perfectly tame, and when broken turned out an exceptionally good riding-horse. But though so young when captured, the wild alert habit was never dropped. He could never be still; when out grazing with other horses or when standing tied to the palenque, he was perpetually on the watch, and the cry of a plover, the sound of galloping hoofs, the sight of a horseman, would startle him and cause him to trumpet his alarm.

"It strikes me as rather curious that in spite of Cristiano's evident agitation at certain sounds and sights, it never went to the length of a panic; he never attempted to break loose and run away. He behaved just as if the plover's cry or the sound of hoofs, or the sight of mounted men had produced an illusion—that he was once more a wild, hunted horse—yet he never acted as though it was an illusion. It was apparently nothing more than a memory and a habit."

About Texas and Texans STAR TELEGRAM

'Texas Observer' Does Merited Job In Issue Devoted to Roy Bedichek

JUL 5 1959

BY J. FRANK DOBIE .

The Texas Observer, independent weekly newspaper of Austin, which not infrequently gets a scoop on facts relating to the public welfare, has just published a 12-page issue devoted entirely to the life, work, conversation, philosophy and other characteristics of Roy Bedichek. He was the closest comrade of my life and the most interesting man over a sustained period of time that I have known. I myself contributed something to this Bedichek issue of the Texas Observer, but failed to compass the man. Had he published 40 books instead of four, I would still think him larger than anything, indeed than all, that he published. I respect, delight in, and admire his accomplishments, but it was the man himself who aroused my wonder and drew my love.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

He never seemed old to me. That also is a testimony of various young men who delighted in his friendship. In January 1946, when he was going on 67, he wrote me:

"It is rare in my old age that I get a really affectionate letter such as you are able to write. One thing that seems to die out in old people is affection, which, of course, is man's priceless possession."

* * *

SORT OF LONE WOLF.

I wonder what made him say at this particular time that affection fades away in old people. It never faded away from him. A few months before this, while I was in England, he wrote:

"I miss you very much, and I know many others must miss you even more, for after all I'm a sort of lone wolf who never really gets lonesome."

He had too much within himself and was too busy weaving to require constantly a hand to hold his or to be dependent upon what many people get out of religion. A letter written in May 1947 says, in part:

"We are all so damned lonesome in this world that we get pleasure out of finding out that someone has done or felt as we have. Thus your account of destruction of old diaries pleases me, for I thought I was the only one who had ever felt the terrible disgust of looking over an old diary, and dumped it in the fire. And every time I start one I remember and lose heart, knowing that in a few years it also will arouse unpleasant emotions. How have some people written such interesting diaries?"

He might get lonesome sometimes, but was, as the old saying goes, as independent as a hog on ice. He counseled young men to be self-reliant in the Emersonian way. Ronnie Dugger, editor of the Texas Observer, recalls Bedichek's quoting to him these lines from a Persian poet.

Do as thy manhood bids thee do, from none but self expect applause;
He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keeps his selfmade laws.
All other life is living death, a realm where none but phantoms dwell —
A mind, a breath, a sign, a voice, a tinkling of a camel's bell.

* * *

ONE WINTER DAY.

Bedichek was always quoting the Greeks, upon whom many of his ideas about life were molded. According to a Greek he quoted, "Capacity for friendship and the ability to acquire sound learning are the two things a human being must have to be pleasing to the gods."

One winter day I paid Bedi a visit in his shack — as he called his study—taking along a paperbound copy of A. E. Taylor's "Socrates, the Man and His Thought." On the flyleaf I had written:

"Dear Bedi, I give you this book because I would be as bereft if you went away as Crito and the others were when Socrates went. As one of them characterized him, I can characterize you, my friend, 'the wisest and justest and best man that I have ever known.' — Dobie, 24 February 1957."

The next day he wrote:

"Dear, dear Dobie—

"After I had been about an hour at work this morning, I glanced up and saw the volume "Socrates" you gave me yesterday. I remembered that I had seen some writing on the flyleaf which I didn't take time to read while you were here. I had dismissed it momentarily as a 'good wishes' inscription and so had let it escape my attention.

"I reached up and got the volume in my hand 'just to see.' I was affected to tears, and I don't mean metaphorical tears but a real secretion from the lachrymose glands. One got loose from the inner corner of my left eye and it felt wet and warm, so I know they were real.

"The old Greeks (bless them) were not ashamed of tears. That shame was a part of the sentimentalism and masculine assumption of superiority of that romanticism which assigned tears to women. I am profoundly affected, stirred emotionally (in that nervous plexus situated in the abdomen) by your placing me in a unique position in your affections. Truly, I have felt towards you a friendship I never felt for anyone else except for Harry Steger, who died 44 years ago.

"Bless you for recording this where I can turn to it when sometimes: 'the world is dark and I a wanderer who has lost his way.'

"Yours,

Bedi"

* * *

GOOD AS BREAD.

Two or three years before this, standing in a group of friends, I said, "Bedi, you are as good as grass."

"Don Quixote," he responded, "once told Sancho Panza, 'You are as good as bread. Nothing but the sexton and his spade will ever part us.'"

On the night of May 8, 1959, I heard Bedi at a dinner cracking a joke through a quotation and citing the wisdom of James Russell Lowell. On May 20, he was out at Barton Springs sunning himself on what everybody knows as Bedichek Rock. The next day we were to go out in the country in his pickup truck. He usually went to bed with the chickens, got up by four o'clock, and had lunch about 11:30. On this Thursday morning, after working at his typewriter and also attending to some business, he came into the kitchen and told his wife he'd like to have lunch a little early. She already had boiled pearl onions from his garden and fresh string beans with new potatoes on the stove. "I can give it to you right now, Bedi," she said, "but if you'll wait a little bit, I'll have some Southern spoon cooked." "I'll wait for that pan bread," he replied from a chair where he'd already seated himself.

* * *

THE RIGHT TIME.

In a little while Mrs. Bedichek heard something like a snoring sound from him. The "pan bread" was nearly done. Bedi should wait until after lunch for his accustomed nap. She turned and spoke. He did not answer. His legs were stiffening straight out and his arms were coming down. He was dead, a little under 80 years old.

The Roman historian - poet Lucan, as translated by Robert Graves, wrote: "The happiest men are those who choose to die at the right time; next happiest are those compelled to die at the right time." I suppose Bedi was "compelled." He would have delighted in following classical prescription.

In this Bedichek number of 'The Texas Observer," his dear friend and my dear friend Walter Prescott Webb has a letter addressed to "Dear Bedi." One paragraph of it reads:

"You will be interested, and perhaps amused, to learn that you took a good deal of the sting out of your going by the manner of it. Those of us who had listened to your vociferous comments on this subject know that you went exactly the way you wanted to go, as if you had designed it with the skill and determination you used in designing your own life. Few people are able to call their own shots as you did, right up to the end."

San Antonioan Gets Answer

S-T 7/18/31

Oklahoma Author Tells of Having Seen Several Coyotes Raise Tails

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

John Joseph Mathews is a writer hard to classify. As a man he will not fit into one slot either. He is a great-grandson of that fantastic and eccentric character, Old Bill Williams, the Mountain Man about whom several books have been written. He is a member of the Osage Indian tribe, and is Indian not only in keenness of observation but in a spirituality unknown to Wild West interpreters but understood by poets. From the University of Oklahoma he went as a Rhodes scholar to Oxford. He has lived for years on his ranch, The Blackjacks, in the region of Pawhuska, Okla.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

His three books have come at long intervals. The first (1932) was 'Wah 'Kon-Tah: The Osage and the White Man's Road.' Its sincerity and revelation of goodness and nobility among Osage people make it distinguished, though not sensational. His second book "Sundown," is the story of a modern Osage youth. No better translation is to be found anywhere of a boy's long-long thoughts, in the end opposed by money, automobiles and other metallic hardeners of the spirit. Five years ago the third and latest book, "Talking to the Moon," was published by the University of Chicago Press. It says what a mature-minded, civilized man has seen and thought in the blackjacks country of Oklahoma. In understanding of the land and in spiritual insight, this book ranks with Mary Austin's "Land of Little Rain."

MATHEWS ANSWERS QUERY.

Mathews is a sportsman. He would not shoot a coyote any more than an English sportsman would shoot a fox. He and his neighbors chase coyotes with hounds. The talker-to-the-moon appears in all his books; the latest one comprehends him as a fellow creature of the earth.

Some weeks ago C. A. Goeth of San Antonio wrote me a letter asking: "Can a coyote raise his tail?" This canine so cunning, vocable and individual in many other characteristics might, he thought, carry his tail at times otherwise than "hanging down like a rag." I sent copies of this letter to several men better qualified than I am to answer the question. Here, abbreviated, is the response of John Joseph Mathews.

"'Tail hanging down like a rag' can not be improved upon as a simile. The spirit, the dash, the courage, the alertness, the adjustment to new dangers, the voice that means so much to all who know him, and the incredible cleverness, all are belied by that 'rag.' Artists who see him trotting across the prairie like some humble cur but who want to interpret his life instinctively picture him with a banner tail. He actually has no speck of humility, and somehow it seems that a drooping rag belies him.

BRISTLED LIKE BRUSH.

"On several occasions I have seen the tail raised. Just south of my house is a coyote den. Two years ago in May, the ranch pointer, a female, wandered off into the south pasture. She got close to the den. Soon I saw her running for the ranch with tail between her legs. Behind her was the guardian of the den, every hair of her body on end, an animated pin-cushion, bristling like a mother hen after the family cat. Her tail was bristled like a swabbing brush and it was up at a 45-degree angle. Obviously she had no intention of closing with the pointer, but was bent on teaching her a lesson. This was a bluff-attack and nothing more, but it was effective. She looked like something from the world of devils, just as she intended to appear.

"One terrifically windy day, I was riding up wind into a creek valley where rank wire grass and rank bluestem were battling for survival. My horse Brownie, who was ever looking for coyotes, raised her ears and I followed her gaze. There were four coyotes having a wonderful time catching field mice. They would stand on their hind legs for a better view of the grass roots, then pounce. One of the four had his or her tail up in a bow. Like that of Mr. Dan Heinen's coyote, 'it stood out fairly straight for three-fourths of its length and then curved down.'

"Coyotes are individualists. Not all act in the same way when chased by hounds, but this I have seen many times. A running hound gains steadily until his nose almost touches the coyote's rear quarters. Then the coyote will swish his tail in a half circle, which to the hunter appears to be a full circle. I imagine this is protective and intends to baffle or confuse the hound. I have seen several coyotes turn sharply after this tail-ringing, but not every one. It prolongs the race at least. It may enable the coyote to gain a rocky canyon, where the hounds are slowed up; they may go on straight, for the fraction of a minute, at the sharp turn. Slowed up hounds mean a lost race.

MUSK MESSAGE LEFT.

"One dawn I drove to the big pond in the west pasture. It was the first day of the duck season; I had seen gadwalls flying the evening before. I stopped the car out of sight of the pond and stood upon the hood with my glasses. There were no ducks. Looking on the other side of the shallow canyon, I saw a sandstone rock that was too unlike a rock. It was a coyote, who had undoubtedly seen the car but was making no attempt at concealment. I soon found out that it was a female. She seemed nervous. She need not have been nervous about me; she need not have shown herself at all. I thought to myself, 'What's up, Shep?' After sitting for some time, she trotted down toward the dam that makes the pond.

"Suddenly five other sandstones became animated coyotes following her. She turned and flashed back at them with head down, her fangs probably bared. They turned like five yellow flashes, ran back up the slope, and melted into the canyon side. She resumed her original direction and crossed the dam to my side of the canyon. Just out of shotgun range, she began nosing the grass with great earnestness, all the time knowing that I was standing on the hood of the car. She trotted back to the dam. There was nothing in her mouth. She nosed along the dam, seeking messages, I assume.

"She smelled one by one each of the half dozen broom weeds growing on the dam. Finally she turned her back to one, raised her tail and backed well into it, almost bending it. There she left her musk message. For whom? Why? There was definite purpose, but what purpose? Now she trotted up the slope and five sandstone rocks were reanimated, and the band trotted over the ridge out of sight. She had raised her tail."

J. Frank Dobie

History, Humanity — in Anecdotes

San Antonio Light

AUG 1 1958

By J. FRANK DOBIE

Only among the consciously historical-minded will you hear an anecdote now about any character of the American Revolution. It is receding into "1066 and all that." Despite the stream of books, fiction and nonfiction, on the Civil war, popular anecdotes about characters of the Civil war are becoming scarcer and scarcer. I belong to the vanishing generation that occasionally remembers and tells a Civil war anecdote, out of the ever-emptying and ever-filling reservoir of folk anecdotes.

My cherished friend, Dr. Pat Ireland Nixon of San Antonio, is a great anecdote teller. His books, concerned with medical history of Texas and with the "Nixons in Texas," are replete with character anecdotes. I am a kind of connoisseur of anecdotes, and I place character anecdotes at the top of all subjects for anecdotes.

Here is Pat Nixon's Confederate anecdote as contained in a recent letter:

"I guess you knew our friend Umphrey Lee, who was president of Southern Methodist university and who authored several books, died a few weeks ago. I heard him preach what was pernaps his last sermon. He closed by telling about a Confederate preacher-soldier who lost a leg in the war. His peg-leg always announced his coming and wherever he came his interest in souls was intense. He could have inspired the saying. 'The backwoodsman has gone into the forest, and the panther is scarcely more keen scented for his blood than the Methodist preacher is for his soul.'

Visited Son

"In time the old fellow made a visit to his son in Washington, a U. S. senator. Always, when he met his son's friends, his first question was, 'What about your soul?' One night, his senator-son gave a reception for the French ambassador. The old fellow's peg-leg resounded on the stairway. When he was presented to the ambassador, he asked his imperative question, 'How about your soul?'

"A few weeks passed and the old soldier-preacher died. The most beautiful floral piece came from the French ambassador and attached was a card which read: 'In memory of the only man who ever asked me about my soul.'"

The youngest man I know who tells Confederate anecdotes is Frank Wardlaw, director of the University of Texas Press. He is from South Carolina, where the Civil war remains much more immediate than it is to Texans, where the public still takes from and adds to the great reservoir of anecdotes about Confederate figures. Frank Wardlaw came to see me the day I received the letter from Pat Nixon. I showed it to him. Right away he told two Confederate anecdotes, the first one of a preacher.

During the Civil war this preacher held services for soldiers and was praying aloud for them. He prayed, "Oh, Lord, give our men courage!" A modest soldier spoke up in the middle of the prayer and said, "Preacher, you are wasting your breath."

"How's that?" the preacher asked, not very well pleased at being interrupted.

"Why," the soldier said, "we don't need courage; we've got plenty of courage. What we need is more food and more ammunition. Pray the Lord for food and for ammunition."

The other Confederate story Frank Wardlaw told is this: Yankees tunnelled under a concentration of Confederate forces and set dynamite sticks and blew a big crater in the earth. It also blew a lot of Confederate soldiers into the air, but not to hell. The captain of the exploded company preceded properly his men into the air and as he was coming down he saw some of his men going up. He yelled to them, "Rally, boys, as soon as you hit the ground."

Still More

A few years ago, in mockery of the assininities of McCarthyism, the Texas Folklore society entitled one of its volumes "Folk Travelers." In this volume is an essay on "On the Traveling Anecdote." Among the anecdotes quoted is another by Frank Wardlaw on Confederate feelings.

"Some years after the Civil war ended, Gen. Jubal Early of the Confederacy was in Washington during a reunion of the G. A. R. A soldier in blue with both arms and both legs gone struck his attention. After looking at him some time, he stepped up to the wheel chair and put a $10 bill into the veteran's pocket. A reporter who happened to be on the spot said to him, 'Gen. Early, that is the finest example of brotherly love I have ever seen.'

"'Brotherly love, hell,' Gen. Early retorted, 'that's the only example I ever saw of a Yankee carved up enough to suit me'"

"Texas in 1837, An Anonymous Contemporary Narrative," edited with an introduction by Andrew Forest Muir, and published by University of Texas Press, does not have any anecdotes, though it has one that is the very juice of Sam Houston. His name now unknown, the author of this book came to Texas in March, 1837, stayed a few months, went back north and had his writings published in a Columbus, O., magazine named "Hesperian." A part of the book chronicles the author's horseback trip from Houston to San Antonio, but the major part of analyses, or attempts to analyze, the land policy, the government, the navy and other institutions of the Republic of Texas. Apparently this is the first critical work on the Republic of Texas, to be issued.

I shall not summarize, but want to express my admiration for the editorial work of Andrew Forrest Muir. In addition to being a ripe scholar, he is a stylist. Style is often inherent in a sense of irony. Mr. Muir's irony is beautifully polished. Here is a sample: "The land policy of the Republic of Texas in the spring of 1837 was largely unformed, its administrative agencies were undefined, and its economy had not yet reached the maturity of predatoriness."

Sunday, January 28, 1951

Some Dry Reminisces

Texas Might End Over-Population Fears With Yarns About Drouths

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Every day if you live in the city you hear complaints about the increase in population. Even people who profit by the rise of real estate investments complain. The time has come to retard further emigration to overpopulated cities in Texas. My plan is to get all the chambers of commerce to co-operate in distributing a booklet of facts, stories and pictures that will show how bad drouths can be in this section of the world. This document would be in keeping with the oldtime Texas tradition. A Californian will always say that any bad weather in his state is "unusual." The authentic Texas way is to detail something worse.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The only way to keep from crying is to laugh. Hence stories by his fellow drouth-sufferers about the man who fainted at feeling three drops of rain on his face and could be revived only by pouring several buckets of sand over his head. Just as old and just as fresh, is the story of a stiff upper-lipped farmer who hadn't raised a crop in three years and was trying to sell out to a stranger. The cautious prospect asked the farmer if it snowed much in that part of the country. "No," the farmer replied, "but I saw it rain once."

'WE AIN'T SEEN NOTHING.'

In response to my column about drouths published two weeks ago, Rhea J. Vernon writes a letter that makes me think we ain't seen nothing yet. He was born and reared in Palo Pinto County. When his father settled there in 1886, oldtimers were quoting an ancient Indian who claimed to have lived through a drouth that dried up all the waterings in the Palo Pinto country except two or three holes in the Brazos River. To drink at one of these holes the Indians had to fight off deer, wolves and other wild animals crowding into water. All the mesquites and most of other trees died. It is a fact that early comers to a region now within or near Haskell County found stumps of trees that could be accounted for only by drouth.

The view of any drouth depends upon the specs, afforded by time or something else, that the viewer looks through. Rhea Vernon tells this story. A bad drouth was on in the Big Spring country. A good many people from Tennessee had settled in the region and now some were throwing up the sponge. One who had sacrificed his land and was waiting at the station to take the train east told a friend there to see him off that he was going back "where the Negroes plant your crop and the sheriff gathers it."

"Now, John," his friend said, "I'm staying on, but you'll be running into my brother. I've never called on him for anything and I'm not a-going to call on him now. But when you see him, you might sorter hint how I haven't raised a crop in years, how the grass is all gone, how my cattle are dying and how everything is mortgaged. He might feel like helping me without my saying anything at all."

QUART CHANGES VIEW.

"I'll tell him plenty. You need not be doubting that," the man leaving for Tennessee said. "But you need help right now. How about a drink?"

"I'm so dry I'd drink windmill grease," the friend replied.

They both took liberal drags at the quart—and it was a quart and not a fifth, such as these pretending times have brought. "John," the man who was sticking said, "it might rain any time now. Things are bound to get better. They can't get any worse. When you see my brother, just don't say anything about conditions."

"All right," John said. "Maybe I'm making a mistake leaving, but I've already sold out."

They lowered the quart to the bottom. The train was pulling in, bell ringing and whistle blowing. It was drawn by a big steam engine, the symbol of energy, not by something that looks like a blind baggage car. As the waiting passengers moved towards the cars, the man who was sticking raised his voice.

"John," he said, "when you see my brother, tell him I'm doing fine and that I sent him word if he needs any cash just let me know."

HEBBRONVILLE STORY.

They used to tell a story on Oscar Thompson down in the Hebbronville country that has a satisfactory ending in a different way. If this wasn't during the 1916-17 drouth, it was during some other one. While the cattle were dying the prices of hides were going down. Everybody in the prickly pear country was burning it—singeing off the thorns. Meantime the pear was wilting and the price of gasoline used in the pear burners was going up. Oscar Thompson had got his notes renewed, and two or three times the bank had put up additional money for running expenses. Nobody wanted to buy any cattle. (This is not a fictional picture. Such a condition has existed—more than once.)

Oscar Thompson owed everybody he could owe, and everybody he owed was dunning him. For more than a year he had been unable to pay the Hebbronville merchants who supplied groceries, harness, ropes, axes and many other things to the ranch. He took the train for San Antonio to see his banker and try to get an additional loan. Anybody who saw him get off the train at Hebbronville four days later would have known that he had not succeeded. It was dark when he drove his buckboard up to the ranch. At the time his family was not there, only the Mexican hands, including a man cook.

COMING OUT 'EVEN.'

"I guess I better eat a little something, Juan," he said in a dying kind of voice.

"All right," and Juan did not sound cheerful.

Mr. Oscar went into the dining room, dimly lit by a kerosene lamp. The table was set. There were some beans in water too clear to be called bean soup. There was a little warmed over cornbread. There was nothing else.

"Why didn't you cook bacon with these beans, Juan?" Mr. Oscar asked, but he was not reprimanding in tone.

"No hay" (there isn't any).

"I want some coffee, Juan."

"No hay."

"No hay," Mr. Oscar echoed. "I told you before I left for San Antonio to hitch up the wagon and go to town for a load of groceries."

"Yes, Mr. Oscar," Juan replied. "I hitched up the wagon and drove to the store, and the owner he said he would not sell anything without pay."

"All right, Juan," Mr. Oscar said, "all right. Everything has come out even now. No grass, no water, no provisions, no credit, nothing. It's the first time in my life I ever saw everything some out even, but here it is."

J. Frank Dobie San Antonio Light JUL 27

Woman Had Just Sense of Values

I'm not making "A Bride Goes West," by Nannie T. Alderson and Helena Huntington Smith, the subject of my column today in order to promote a new book. This one, published in 1942, has been out of print several years. I've just discovered it and that makes it new to me, as I discovered Herodotus only a few years ago and found him one of the newest writers in the world although he wrote thousands of years ago. "A Bride Goes West" is new and fresh because it is impregnated with a just sense of values about life. When Nannie Tiffany of West Virginia married Walt Alderson, who'd already been on the cattle trail for years, in 1882, they went to Montana to start a little ranch. There's plenty about ranching in this book, but what is most valuable is about life, about people in this ranch country.

DOBIE

Among hundreds of books written by and about range men, there are hardly a dozen valid ones concerning women. I pick "A Bride Goes West" and Agnes Morley Cleveland's "No Life for a Lady," as the two best books pertaining to ranch life by women with a woman's point of view dominating. The great majority of range books, no matter when published, are of the same old dance to the same old tune —the dance of riding and shooting to the tune of sixshooters.

Anybody of any country who has seen his or her young countrymen turned loose as soldiers in a foreign land knows that they act very differently from the way they act at home under the eyes of their families and family friends. Young men on the ranches of the west before the advent of family life shot wilder and lived wilder than young ranchmen who lived with their families.

Comfort to Dying Boy

While Nannie Alderson, as she tells, was in Miles City with her first baby, "One morning the chambermaid told me that a cowboy was dying in a room downstairs. He had come up the trail from Texas, and had been shot, in a barroom quarrel, by the colored cook of an outfit both worked for. Knowing how scarce women were in Miles City, and thinking that the presence of one might be some comfort to the dying boy, I asked the maid to stay with the baby, and went down to him. The room was full of men standing around his bed. I took his hand and said: 'I'm so sorry'—which was all I could say. He had a striking face, with dark blue eyes which never left mine until the doctor closed them. He did not seem to be in great gain. They said he had been shot in the stomach, and his breath just kept coming a little shorter and quicker until he died. It was hard to free my hand from his, which had closed over mine so tightly that the wedding ring cut in.

"I never heard much more about this tragic affair, but I do not believe the cowboy was blameless. They said he had been harsh in his treatment of the negro. I know that no move was ever made to bring the latter to justice. Those young men who traveled north with the herds were far from home and all gentling influences, and they were prone to commit rash and violent acts. It was a pity, and in the case of a young man like this one a great waste as well. For there was great good in these wild and homeless boys, as no one knew better than I."

Understood the Code

Nannie Alderson was ,a man's woman above all her own husband's. She understood the code of the west, defining some of it as follows: "The west was very tolerant toward the lesser faults of human conduct. It was even willing to overlook the greater if they were not repeated. A man's past was not questioned, nor a woman's either; the present was what counted. A man could even be known as wanted elsewhere, yet this was not held against him here so long as he showed a willingness to walk the straight path. Half the charm of the country for me was its broad-mindedness. I loved it from the first."

An incident that illustrates the democracy inherent in the code and also further illustrates Nannie Alderson's sense of values runs as follows: "Four men rode in one evening across the frozen hills. They were the sheriff of Custer county, his deputy, the biggest stockman in our part of Montana—and a prisoner. I knew the last—a harmless fellow we had always thought him, who lived among the Indians, with no real job. They called him Cheyenne Charlie. He was some kind of a foreigner, I don't know what, but I know he was troubled by his poor English, for he had told me that he had sisters and that he was the only member of his family who 'talked broken.' He had been to our house before, and I had given him an old homemade, fur-trimmed cap to keep his ears warm. I think he was accused of butchering the big cattleman's beef.

A Nice Compliment

"Perhaps because of our previous acquaintance, the poor fellow was so embarrassed at the removal of handcuffs while he ate, that I could hardly keep the tears from falling into his coffee while I poured it. One of the men said later that no one could have told from the treatment they received which was the cattle king and which the man under arrest. I thought this one of the nicest compliments I had ever had."

This woman's wisdom about life moves me deeply in some places. Two of her neighbors out in the Cheyenne Indian country were Little Wolf and Mrs. Roland. Little Wolf and Dull Knife had led the Cheyennes in their memorable march back from the Indian territory to their old Montana homeland in the winter of 1878. For a time Little Wolf was chief of the Cheyenne Indian police. Then he killed an Indian he was trying to arrest, and his tribe cut him off. After that he was a deposed king. One of his squaws washed for the Aldersons. His poverty never diminished his dignity or his honesty.

Mrs. Roland's eldest son had married a Cheyenne woman, and he had become an official interpreter. This son had brought his old mother out from the east and located her on his little ranch. She reminded Nannie Alderson of a great tree uprooted after it was old and planted elsewhere. She had to be moved from bed to chair, and the only movement she knew in the chair was when her younger son dragged it from one room to another in their neat shack. She never read; she never complained. Just before Christmas one year the cowboys at the Alderson ranch saw a picture of a wheel chair in a Montgomery Ward catalogue. They chipped in and bought it for Old Lady Roland.

Found Right Person

Nannie Alderson was fortunate in finding the right person to take down her words and put them into a book, that person being Helena Huntington Smith, who took down Teddie Blue Abbott's words and put them into that brave book entitled "We Pointed Them North." Toward the end of her glad and tragic life Nannie Alderson dictated these words:

"When I reflect upon all the frontier folk that I have been associated with, I think the ones that made the most lasting impression on me were old Mrs. Roland, mother of the agency interpreter, and Little Wolf, the war chief of the Cheyennes. They had one impressive trait in common; a quiet resignation to 'the inevitableness of things.' They had other like traits of character, too, despite their widely separated backgrounds—both were kind, both had courage, and both had a child-like interest in simple things—in the sunlight and the beauty out of doors. Each of them appeared happy under conditions that most people would regard as impossible, and it always seemed to me that theirs was the happiness which can only come from integrity and inner peace. Their example more than any other helped me to 'keep my chin up' when things were hard. I don't want to be misunderstood; I wouldn't have exchanged my lot for that of any other woman on earth. But, perhaps just because the rewards were great, the going at times was proportionately rough."

Doesn't Go In for Much Style

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1-21-51

Coyote May Raise His Tail Like Dog, But Only One Case Has Been Recorded

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Not long ago Mr. C. A. Goeth, "Dean of the San Antonio Bar," wrote me that for 40 years while he was a hunting partner with the late Judge Duval West they were concerned with this question: "Can a coyote raise his tail like a dog?" Down in the brush country they saw many coyotes hunting rabbits, rats and other game; they saw them being hunted by dogs; they observed them in both mating and non-mating seasons. They saw time and again a string of amorous males after one female, fighting each other and scratching the ground. They saw coyotes standing still and saw them running, but the tail was always "hanging down like a rag."

J. FRANK DOBIE.

At night while listening to and delighting in coyote concerts, they continued to speculate on whether "under any circumstances a coyote can raise his tail, not that it would detract from his otherwise many outstanding good and bad qualities, but if he could it would give him considerably more style." The answer to this question, Goeth concluded, "would not make much difference to me or you, but do you know whether a coyote can raise his tail?"

I wrote Goeth that I have never seen a coyote with its tail up, but that the speculation is delightful and, therefore, important enough. I said I would inquire from my old trapper friend, Joe E. Hill, of Fort Stockton, who has furnished me more information on coyotes than any other one man.

FLAVORED WITH DETAIL.

Joe Hill's reply is so flavored with detail, with his own character and with the life and land he incorporates in himself that I wish the limitations of space did not require condensation here. After not only living but observing in coyote country most of his 70 years, the last 32 as government trapper, he has just been retired from federal service.

"In my entire life," he writes, "I never saw but one coyote with tail up. That was in the summer of 1916, in the badlands of the Capitan Mountains in New Mexico. This was before I went to working for the government. Larkin Wade and I had been trapping together in Texas for several years and we took a contract to clean coyotes off the range of a large sheep outfit. The coyotes were not only killing sheep that strayed away from the flocks but were charging them on the bedgrounds at night.

"Wade and I got to the Capitans at the pupping season and began den-hunting, each riding out from camp in a different direction. Within a few days my main dog got so sorefooted that one morning I left him in camp and took three rabbit-hunting Walker hound pups that had been tied up. I headed for a sheep camp some miles away where coyotes had been running into the flock for several nights handrunning, as the sheep rustler had informed me the preceding evening. I had the wild pups necked together at the end of a lariat, and when I was not leading them they were leading me.

PUPS TAKE THE TRAIL.

"I circled the bedground, studying the lay of the land off in the distance and watching between times the wild pups to see if they were picking up any scent. They picked up something and wanted to head for rough country to the north. I cut them loose and they took out. It was luck that a jack rabbit did not jump up ahead of them. I kept close behind them until they went up a boxed canyon very rough with boulders. Then my horse could not keep in hearing distance of the pups.

"After a while, just as I was getting out of the canyon box onto more open ground, I heard my hound pups coming back down the canyon, barking and yelling like the devil was after them. I jerked my rifle from the boot and threw a shell into the chamber. Just then they turned a corner and ran head-on into me and my horse. A big female coyote right on their heels was making so many kinds of noises that it almost boogered me.

"This coyote had her tail straight up in the air and every hair of her body was standing straight up. She began to set her brakes at sight of me and came to a sliding stop almost under my horse's neck. She jumped off a little to one side and squatted to urinate just as I shot. It might be that this had something to do with the raised tail.

"The hound pups had not slowed down in speed or yelling. Probably they were running so fast and had their minds so fixed on something else that they did not notice me or my horse when they ran under us. That's up to you to decide.

"Looking up in the direction the female coyote had brought the pups, I saw on a small rise, a little off to the left, a very large coyote, the mate. As I stepped off my horse to get a better shot, he almost flattened himself to the ground. I dropped down on one knee, taken good aim, and over he rolled.

COYOTE PUPS SCALPED.

"It was not any trouble to locate the den of pups. They were several weeks old and had beat out trails from their den under a big rock on the hillside down to brush in the canyon, where there were numerous remains of rabbit feet and a few of lamb skulls.

"Now I walked up from the den to the rise where I had shot the male coyote and drug him and some sotol stalks back to the den. I always carried cord and catfish hooks in my chaps pockets. I tied the hooks to the end of a long sotol pole and went to twisting back into the den for the pups. I pulled out 12, killing and scaling each one as it was pulled out. I scalped the male coyote, and then rode on down and scalped the female, and hit out for camp the way I had come. I thought maybe the hound pups had slowed down at the sheep camp, but they hadn't. Only two were in our camp. The third showed up a few days later in a trap eight or 10 miles south. Its foot was ruined and I shot it.

"Soon after I got back to camp that evening of my experience with these coyotes, Wade rode in. A number of fresh scalps tied to his saddle showed that he had had a successful day also. We swapped experiences. When I told him about the coyote running into me with her tail straight up, he said, 'Here, tell that over again.' I repeated the details.

"He scratched his head, which was beginning to turn grey. 'Well,' he said, 'that's a new one on me.' For several nights after that while we were telling each other our experiences of the day he would put in, 'Have you had aire another coyote come to you with its tail straight up in the air?'

"Well, I've been looking for another coyote with its tail raised ever since that dav in 1916, and up to date I have not found it."

J. Frank Dobie San Antonio Light

He Didn't Belong to a Majority Group

JUN 22 1958

To get to the marrow in the marrow bone, I've about reached the stage where I'd feel ashamed of running very often with the majority. The writers I like best are not on the best selling list; the pictures I like best are not the prize-winners. Two of the two-bittest words in the much-journalesed American language are "prize-winning" and "best-selling." To quote the devil in Kipling's "Tomlinson," "I'm all o'er-sib" with damning a man because he belongs to a minority group or even a splinter group.

DOBIE

The ideal species for staying with the majority are gnats and sugar ants. One winter evening not long before dark I came upon a vast flock of cowbirds—a small blackbird—in an open field. Perhaps there were more than 1000 birds in this flock. They were moving slightly to the east, birds on the western fringe of the flock rising from the ground and flying over the others and lighting at the eastern edge of the flock. In a way they were leapfrogging. Presently one lone cowbird got cut off. I was on the western side of the great flock. This lone cowbird came near me, making the most distressful cries imaginable. It couldn't function except with the mob, except in a majority. It was the opposite of the lone eagle and the lone wolf.

Old Story

I've both heard and read an old-time story of a cowboy who accidentally got into some sort of service in which the preacher wasn't having much success. He was not born with much sense and was not a "natural orator." Finally, in desperation, after floundering around, he called on everybody who would stand up for Jesus to rise. Nobody rose. Then the cowboy stood up by himself. After the crowd had been dismissed somebody asked the cowboy why he stood up.

"Well," he said, "I don't know who this fellow Jesus is, but since nobody else was going to stand up for him, I decided I would."

A lot of people would consider that cowboy's defiance of the majority and his befriending of the friendless more admirable than the epithets bestowed by flunkies of big money on minority figures.

A soldier of the Union army appealed to President Lincoln for clemency. His appeal was not accompanied by a single supporting letter from an officer or any man of influence outside of the army.

No Friends?

"Heavens," exclaimed Mr. Lincoln, "had this man no friends?"

"No, Mr. President, not one friend it seems," answered the adjutant.

"Very well," said Lincoln, "I will be his friend."

Benjamin Franklin seems to me a more modern man than many men who are living; he seems more modern, for instance, than John Foster Dulles. One reason he's so modern is that he had so much common sense. He had a genius for recognizing realities and dealing with them, often improving them. He said: "Where liberty is, there is my home." Tom Paine said: "Where liberty is not, there is my home." Franklin was urbane; Tom Paine was a missionary zealot. He came to America through the encouragement of Franklin. The essay entitled "Common Sense" that he authored in 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence, stirred thousands of soldiers. George Washington thought it great. His essay "The Crisis," contains a sentence, "These are the times that try men's souls," that became a battle cry.

After the end of the Revolutionary war, Tom Paine returned to England and wrote in favor of the French Revolution. He went to France and while there issued "The Age of Reason," advocating a pure morality founded on "natural religion." This incensed the orthodox of England and the U. S. George Washington denied Tom Paine. More than a century later Teddy Roosevelt dubbed him a "dirty little idiot." It is to be remembered that Thomas Jefferson harbored him.

Looked Askance

Now indeed the self righteous, the worshippers of respectability, the future Colonial Dames looked askance upon Tom Paine. He had written in "The Crisis" of "the fair weather patriot and the summer soldier." When I remember how Jefferson stood by Paine at the very end, I salute him with a higher salute and bow to him with a lower bow.

One of the memorable days of my life was in the fall of 1943 at Thetford in Norfolk, England. Thetford was where Tom Paine was born in 1737. Now a great American air base was stationed there, and one of the bombers had been christened "The Tom Paine." I saw that name in bold letters on the side of the bomber, and under it this quotation from Paine: "Tyranny, like hell, is hard to conquer." In honor of Tom Paine and in honor of the newly christened bomber the citizens of Thetford and the officers of the air base were having a kind of celebration. As visiting professor of American history at Cambridge university, I was invited to make a talk on Tom Paine. Somehow he no longer seemed to belong to a splinter group. He was standing tall for the human freedoms that the allied nations were fighting for.

Nobody who knows any history at all will discount a man because he isn't running with the majority. I can't imagine Socrates or Plato or Emerson or any other great thinker as belonging to the majority.

Changed History in Americas

S-T 4/23/50

Horses Were 'Secret Atom Bomb' Of Spaniards in Mexico Conquest

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

No other event has so radically changed the history of the Old World as the discovery of America. Nothing else so changed life on the American continents as the advent of the discoverers. They brought the wheel, the sail, gunpowder and horses. For a few Sundays now I shall talk of horses.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The Spaniards came with horses, not only for war but for exploration, for Christianization of the natives, for colonization. Gold might be the "great pacifier" and "solvent of hardness" and gifts might "break rocks," as wrote Bernal Diaz in his history of the Conquest of Mexico, but the gifts were mere gauds, and in the unrelenting fighting of one against thousands, the horses were "our fortress" and "our only hope of survival." "The horses and mares were our salvation," Cortes reported to Emperor Charles V after his conquest. "My country was won a la gineta" (on horseback, riding Moorish fashion), chronicled the Inca Garcilaso on the Conquest of Peru. In his relation later on of the far-away Coronado expedition, Castaneda said that "next to God, we owed our victory to the horses."

The horses, by which term the early Spaniards designated only males, were enteros (entire). The spaying of mares was at the time unpracticed. All could breed. Of the 16 memorialized animals, along with a colt born aboard ship, first landed on the North American continent, at Vera Cruz in 1519, 11 were stallions and five were mares. More horses came shortly thereafter. Caballeros, in contrast to Arabian warriors, preferred riding stallions to mares as more powerful and proud. They rode mares only when stallions were unobtainable; after horses became plentiful on the continent, no hidago (son of somebody) would deign to ride a mare.

DEVELOPED POWER.

Spanish horses found ranges corresponding to the arid lands of Spain, northern Africa and remote Arabia. They found also that powerfully stimulating sustenance which species introduced to new regions not infrequently find—food and conditions that propel a thriving beyond that of native species. Thus, American prickly pear and English rabbits introduced into Australia without natural enemies to check increase were fertilized into a geometrical progression as spectacular as the spread of a prairie fire before a dry norther. Spanish cattle and horses turned loose in the Americas found the same kind of quickening stimuli. At the same time, they developed their natural powers of defense against predatory enemies.

One of the first acts of any successful Spanish general was to establish a hacienda for raising livestock. In this custom as in many other practices, the Spanish-American countries of today demonstrate what was going on in the 16th Century. A modern soldier-politician of Mexico who advances to a generalship, though he be as poor as Job's turkey before the advancement, is quickly possessed of a hacienda, or ranch. Cortes, Alvarado and other conquistadores were raising horses before some of the conquered Indians of southern Mexico quit raising revolt. Antonio de Mendoza, the first viceroy of New Spain, had 11 or more ranches out in different directions from Mexico City; presumably horses were raised on all of them, but one at least, very extensive, was called a horse ranch. During the years he was in office, 1535-1550, the ranching frontiers of Mexico extended rapidly and the private enterprise of grabbing public lands boomed.

JEWEL-STUDDED SADDLES.

In this period also Oaxaca, Chiapas, Honduras and Nicaragua became extensive horse breeding centers. On Cuba and other islands, meanwhile, the aristocrats of the ranges were raising fancy palominos and pintos and riding a new kind of saddle, jewel-studded and covered with silver inlaid with gold.

During the Conquest of Mexico, horses brought as high as $1,000 each. In South America, farther away from the breeding grounds of the West Indies, initial prices were still higher. Yet only 20 years after Cortes landed, Coronado had no difficulty worthy of mention in assembling 1,000 horses and 500 or 600 pack animals for his great expedition into New Mexico. At far away outposts as well as around their capital bases, the Spaniards continued to raise horses until on some ranges the common run of them had no monetary value whatsoever and whole herds had to be destroyed in order to leave grass for the remainder.

NO HORSES FOR INDIANS.

Almost the first ordinance passed by the conquerors of New Spain was that no Indian should ride a horse; it was kept on the books for 20 years. The horse was to be their atomic bomb secret. It was not the fairness of Spanish complexions—the "Fair God" hoax—that most impressed the Aztecs; it was Spanish horses. At first the combination of mount and man was taken to be something like the centaurs mayhaps imagined by the first beholders of horse riders in Greece. The master race encouraged the Indians to believe that the horses were devouring monsters. When fiercely resisting Tlascalans killed Pedro de Moron's mare, they cut off her head and sent it around to towns to show how the monsters were also mortal. As long as the Spaniards could find tyros, they tried to keep up the myth. Thus, as late as 1582, Antonio Espejo upon meeting a horde of Indians in the New Mexico country gave them "some presents of little value, assuring them that we would not harm them but that our horses might kill them. The horses were very ferocious, we told them, and the Indians must construct a stockade to hold them." The Indians constructed it.

Why Didn't the Indians Keep Them?

STAR TELEGRAM
FEB 28 1960

Taming of Buffalo Apparently an Easy Task

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I love to come across a book of early days bountifully sprinkled with observations and anecdotes of animals and people. The British write such books with better effect than the Americans.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

A long time ago American frontiers men got the habit of thinking that the only interesting thing to put into a book was a fight with the Indians, a killing of some animal, or an encounter with a bad man. I've just found a 45-year-old book entitled "Forty Years in Canada," the reminiscences of S. B. Steele of the Northwest Mounted Police. One of his wildlife sketches follows.

"During the winter (1877) we had proofs of the ease with which buffaloes and antelopes can be tamed. We captured two yearling buffalo calves, which within a few weeks would go out to graze on the prairie every morning and in the evening before dark return to the corral, where they would play with the men. Several times I met them a mile from the fort without exciting in them the slightest alarm. Some antelopes were secured and ere long could be turned loose, and would frolic with the Indian children and the only white child in the post, circling round them like kittens. They would encourage the dogs to chase them, keeping them within a few feet, and then by a sudden burst of speed distance them like a flash.

* * *

EASILY CAUGHT.

"It is a great pity that no attempt was made in those days to domesticate the buffalo on a large scale so that such a useful animal should not be lost to us. They could have been easily captured at a small cost per head. In buffalo hunts the calves were left far behind and when the hunters returned, the calves ran around their horses' legs, taking them for their mothers, and would follow them into camp, where they were killed for their meat and hides."

Why didn't the Indians tame the buffalo for milk, for carrying burdens, for meat? Of course, it's more fun to hunt a wild animal than to slaughter a tame one, and there were plenty of buffaloes to feed Indians in buffalo land. When Columbus landed, no native of the Americas had yet seen a sail or a wheel. Presumably the first human beings to come to the Western Hemisphere from the Eastern Hemisphere by way of the Bering Straits came before wheels and sails had been made use of.

The Indian way of carrying a burden was either on her own head and shoulders or on a pair of poles tied to a dog which dragged them. After horses were introduced by the Spaniards, Indians of the West utilized them to pull travois (poles). The first human beings to get to the Western Hemisphere migrated presumably before people of the Eastern Hemisphere had domesticated cow brutes. Having buffaloes around to milk and for other uses would have been as serviceable to American Indians as it was to domesticators of the cow beyond the oceans.

* * *

ACCUSTOMED TO COWS.

I believe from general reading that Europeans domesticated more buffaloes than is generally known, although the domestication was sporadic and isolated. A British sportsman-naturalist named John Palliser came to America in 1847 and six years later brought out a book entitled "The Solitary Hunter; or Sporting Adventures in the Prairies." There is charm in his account of his tamed buffaloes.

"In October," he wrote, "I reached St. Louis, in order to convey my bisons and other animals down the Mississippi, my menagerie consisting of one very large old bison cow, one cow rising two years old, two calves, one black bear, two Virginian deer, an exquisitely beautiful little forcifer antelope, and my dog Ishmah. Of all these animals, the most remarkable was the old bison cow, Beauty. Some years previously she had been attracted from the prairie by hay which a frontier Morman farmer provided for his milch cows during the winter. Becoming accustomed by degrees to the society of these cows, she at length lost all apprehensions of danger from the men who attended on her domestic companions; and, although she at first fled away on their approach, she afterwards became tame enough to allow herself to be driven home along with the milch-cows. In the breeding season she used to disappear from the country altogether, but invariably returned before winter set in to the society of the farmer's cows, where no one molested her.

"This animal, being old and very fat, the Mormon farmer had sent down to St. Louis to market. I happened to be in time to outbid a butcher and shipped her to Ireland, where she has since become the mother of two splendid calves. She is a magnificent creature, weighing thirteen and a half cwt., far surpassing in size any specimen that has ever been obtained for a zoological collection, having attained her full growth and strength long before the period of her acquaintance with the dairy cows. The gentleness and intelligence of this enormous animal was truly wonderful, rendering her transport very easy. On my embarking her for the first time, she quietly suffered herself to be led along the main-deck of the river-boat, passing fearlessly by the hissing engines on either side to the place prepared for her astern.

"My other bisons were not so easily managed; but, being young, they could be mastered. One is a male. The other will soon calve in Ireland. The bear, antelope, and Ishmah were all on most friendly terms—an object I had taken great pains to effect; and I used frequently to see Bruin and the antelope eating at the same head of cabbage together."

An intelligent bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church named T. A. Morris, after entering Texas and traveling over other parts of the West in the early 1840s brought out a book of miscellaneous essays and sketches and letters in 1854 describing his visit to the Shawnee Indian Mission Farm and School 400 miles above the mouth of the Missouri River. He wrote as follows:

"The Mission Farm has 500 acres fenced, 300 in cultivation and the balance in pasture. Among the horses, cattle, sheep, hogs and poultry are three native buffaloes, which were captured when young and subsequently purchased for the Mission. Two of them are perhaps two years old, and the other a calf six or seven months old. The mode of capturing these animals is very simple. A gentle cow with a young calf is driven into the buffalo range, the calf killed, and its place supplied with a young buffalo calf, which she adopts, and it follows her home."

Frank Collinson, an Englishman who came to Texas sometime after the Civil War, was out on the plains before the buffaloes were thinned out. He told me years ago that he saw Mexican ciboleros (buffalo hunters) from Chihuahua who had come up to Santa Fe and then moved east to the plains working young buffaloes they had roped. They had, he said, from four to eight yokes of oxen to each wagon; they would put the young buffaloes in the swing with trained oxen both in front and behind them and then the buffaloes would have to pull.

Somewhere I've read of a well-gentled team of buffalo-oxen east of the Mississippi, I think, but I don't remember the source of this description. If the Indians had stayed here long enough unmolested by Europeans, they would, following the pattern of evolution, no doubt have domesticated buffaloes.

Indians and Hunger Claimed Them

De Soto Expedition to Florida Had 'Caballada' of More Than 200 Horses

S-T 5-14-1950

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Of all the notabilities of the true faith who explored into the unknown vastnesses of America — to inform the natives of their fealty to emperor and pope, to clarify their minds on the relationship between God and the Holy Ghost, to sack their gold and silver if they had any, and to make them dig for more if veins could be located— Hernando de Soto had perhaps the best horses and suffered the worst disasters to his horses and men. Through his assistance in murdering Atahualpa and raping Peru, he had but recently come into a fortune when at the age of 37 he sailed from Spain to "conquer" Florida, the conquest to include locating the spring famous for renewing the juices of old men that aging Ponce de Leon had missed and, above all, locating a bonanza of Montezuma or Atahualpa richness.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

His caravels bore something over 200 horses and beyond 600 men, also a treaty signed by the emperor forbidding any lawyer to migrate to Florida and a commission appointing De Soto governor of Cuba. His own particular horse, "a most brave and handsome animal," dapples shining through the silver-gray of his coat, was named Aceytuno — or perhaps Aceytunero — after the caballero who had presented it to him.

It has been estimated that a third of all Spanish livestock embarked for America died on the voyages. The Horse Latitudes, an area of the Atlantic in which sailing vessels were often becalmed and their supply of drinking water was exhausted, derived the name from the fact that here dead horses habitually were thrown overboard. Many died from constant exposure on deck and from being slung fast in one position for weeks and months. Almost certainly De Soto lost some horses before landing in Cuba.

FLORIDA INVASION BEGUN.

Here he tarried nearly a year, establishing his governorship, accumulating a great store of supplies, buying additional horses, picked ones, and receiving still others as presents from patriots who wanted to be remembered from Utopia. In May 1539 the expedition sailed for Florida with 243 horses—some say more—and a contingent of hogs that may have ancestored the razorbacks. Also, there were dogs well trained in bringing down Indians. On the voyage of 19 days to Tampa Bay 20 horses died.

Eleven years preceding, Panfilo de Narvaez—with that Cabeza de Vaca who was to survive shipwreck, walk across the continent, tell the story of the Golden Cities of Cibola and thus inspire the Coronado search—had landed in Tampa Bay with 42 horses alive out of 80 with which he had embarked. The place was called the Bay of the Horses (Bahia de los Caballos). As soon as Soto landed, an Indian obligingly showed him the skulls of horses that the Narvaez survivors had butchered upon leaving the land—to them—of death and famine. All but one of the 42 Narvaez horses had been slain in battle or devoured by their masters. What happened to that one horse is not recorded.

The De Soto expeditionary force began fighting at once with the natives, some of whom had already experienced the blessings of Christian civilization. It became mired in the Everglades. It slugged slowly on north and west into Georgia and Alabama, burning habitations, destroying crops, killing and being killed. The Indians "looked upon the horses with as much terror as if they had been tigers or lions" and shot them "with more eagerness than they shot down men." In one battle in which 80 Spaniards were killed outright and 20 more died from wounds, despite having been salved with leaf fat from the interiors of dead Indians, 45 horses were killed. The conquerors salted the flesh, saving the hogs for hard times. From time to time they captured stores of corn, of which the horses had their share.

HORSES BURNED TO DEATH.

Late in 1540 De Soto took up winter quarters in a large Chickasaw Indian town and banqueted the displaced chief on one of his greyhound-shaped hogs, which seem to have done better in woods and swamps than either men or horses. Shortly after this the Chickasaws fired the thatched houses, burning 20 horses to death and killing 60 more with arrows. One arrow shot was so mighty that the athletic De Soto had it notorized in writing; the arrow went clean through the largest and fattest horse of the expedition and stuck in the ground beyond. The conquistadores went on. Soto would never turn back. Mas alla, mas alla, always on and on. Men died from lack of salt. Horses were so famished that many could not carry burdens. Indian women were a great comfort to some of the men.

After two years of wandering and suffering, Soto with his half-naked men and emaciated horses came through tangled and ungrassed woods upon the bank of the Mississippi River. He seems to have had no fine frenzy, like Balboa staring "upon a peak in Darien," at discovering the Father of Waters. While the men hewed logs for barges and bolted them together with iron hammered out of their gear, Indians harrassed them continually and Soto orders "like an admiral." They crossed, the horsemen jumping their horses off the barges into shallow water on the far side and chasing away Indians gathered there to attack. They went on west to cultivated but drouth-withered fields, and De Soto gratified the Indians, who were friendly, by praying down a rain. At a store of salt they next came upon, some soldiers gorged so ravenously that they died, though the instincts of the horses seem to have saved them from any such excess. De Soto turned southward, and about this time one caballero who had gambled away his arms, his clothes, his "fine black horse," an Indian girl who was his concubine, and every other possession, stole off into the wilderness with the girl and was never more heard of. He took no horse with him.

ONLY 40 HORSES LEFT.

Three full years of conquering passed, and Hernando de Soto, wounded more deeply by failure than by any other malady, died in an Indian camp on the west bank of the Mississippi and, as security against desecration by the ungrateful infidels, his followers sealed his body into the hollowed-out trunk of a green oak and sank it by night into water measuring 19 fathoms deep. By now, one chronicler with the expedition says, only 40 horses were left. The surviving men rode and walked westward but came back to the great river farther down and constructed "brigantines." After making jerky of the meat of several horses, they put the remainder, 22 head, aboard. At the mouth of the Mississippi they butchered what horses survived, excepting four or five of the most fleshless, and cured the meat for their cockleshell launchment into the Gulf of Mexico.

The four or five wasted horses abandoned on the swampy, mosquito-tortured delta land were probably stallions and were probably shot by hostiles immediately after the Spaniards left shore. No European to report on such matters came back to the mouth of the Mississippi during many horse generations. No traveler ever reported seeing wild horses in that region.

Samplings of New York Humanity

San Antonio Light MAY 1 1956

By J. FRANK DOBIE

I have been as tired in New York as a sore-footed, wobbly-legged calf. I have been so tired of the machinery, the clangor, the crowds and the air of New York that I would have paid double to change my hotel room for a sweaty saddle blanket spread on mesquite grass away out in the brush somewhere.

I lived in New York as a university student more than 40 years ago, have returned to it numerous times and now am here again, but it never seems inhuman to me. O. Henry translated into his stories more humanity out of New York's "four million" (eight million or something like that now) than he translated out of the sheep ranch he lived on and the cattle ranches he saw in Texas.

City Becomes More Vital

O. Henry was older when he got to New York. For olding me, this city becomes more vital with humanity every time I visit it.

Somebody wrote a play entitled "Life Begins at 8:40." That is the hour when nightly the curtains go up in theaters off Broadway and thousands of people surrender themselves to the mockery, the illumination, the idealization, the satirization, the plummeting of life, in comedy and tragedy, and in the infinity of blendings of both that is life itself.

I had rather be lost to the outside world in a theater of New York or London than stand on top of the Indies. The curtains that go up at 8:40 lower for the final applause at 11:00. Then the crowds surge out.

The other night when I came out of a theater on West Forty-eighth st., the crowds flowed off the sidewalks into the street and so filled it that traffic had to halt.

Alone

Like a drink, a play is best shared with a congenial companion, but I was alone. Yet I did not feel solitary. I had the feeling that every unit in that flowing tide of people was an individual like myself, as real in his compound of human attributes as the character on the stage that had held us captivated a few minutes back. I thought again of Charles Lamb standing amid the stream of moving people on Fleet st. in London and "weeping out of sheer sympathy" for humankind, life surging in him because he was a part of the mass.

Long ago I used to go to the boxoffice early and buy a cheap balcony seat. When I go to New York now, I don't have time or energy to get balcony seats. I go to an agency in the hotel where I stay and buy a seat. The only seats sold by the agency are orchestra seats. They cost $5.75 at the box office; the agency adds a dollar—for "service."

I was having trouble getting a ticket on short notice for Saturday night. Finally a woman at the agency booth got a ticket by telephone for a new play, "Waiting for Godot," that I wanted to see.

"If I had a friend like that in every boxoffice," she said, "I'd get lots of tips."

I already knew that a tip, in addition to the extra dollar, was expected by the agency clerk. "What is the biggest tip you ever got?" I asked.

"One hundred dollars," she replied. "It was while 'South Pacific' was playing. A man stood right where you are standing now and said that two tickets to 'South Pacific' would be worth $100 to him. I got them by phone and he paid for them. Then he planked down a $100 bill. 'I can't change it,' I said. I had looked him over and did think he might tip $10. 'I don't want no change,' he said; 'I told you the tickets would be worth $100 to me.' He was a Texas oil man." I didn't think it necessary to inform her that I wasn't, while I shoved back four bits of the change.

A Sneeze

I was riding down the elevator with nobody in it but me, the operator and a bellhop. The operator sneezed. The bellhop said, "God bless you." The operator said, "Thank you." When we got out I told the bellhop that when a person sneezes in Mexico another will often say "Jesus," an abbreviated form of prayer, to which the sneezer responds, "Thanks."

I don't know from what part of the world this bellhop and the sneezing operator of the elevator hail; perhaps Ireland. I notice more and more gray-haired men operating elevators and serving as bellhops. My room maid has a beautiful voice. "How long have you been over from Ireland?" I asked her. "How did you know I'm from Ireland?" "By your voice." "I came 30 years ago."

Eating a late breakfast at the counter of the hotel drugstore, I noticed how tired the slender bald-headed man who waited on me looked. There was no rush and as he half-leaned on an elbow in his narrow runway, I remarked that he should have a stool to rest on. "There's no place for it," he said dispiritedly. "You could have a folding stool." I said. "Yes, that might work."

Milk Stool

A young man eating eggs and bacon by my side said that his people run a dairy in Vermont and that milkers used to have stools that could be attached to themselves. The idea of a drugstore waiter jumping around with a stool attached to his rear end made us all laugh. I discovered from further talk that this young man was a regular breakfast, with the waiter. He had not eaten more than 75 cents worth of breakfast, but he left a quarter on the counter for a tip. The waiter kept his tips in a drinking glass visible to everybody who sat at his end of the counter. Adding to the contents of the glass seemed to kind of refresh his weary body.

A great majority of the people who eat in New York restaurants—other than those of hotels — are regulars. A stranger can overhear plenty of neighborhood talk in little restaurants on side streets.

Street bus drivers don't usually look so tired as waiters often look. They sit. The other day I was the last passenger off at the Central park terminus of a Sixth ave. bus. As I stepped past the driver, he held up a nickel-colored copper cent taken from the till. "Some feller put that in for a nickel," he said, "and got away with it." "Will you have to pay the difference?" I asked. "No, no," and he gave a kind of serene snort.

I could sit for hours on one of the benches along Central park and watch those 1-horse carriages that carry old ladies, young lovers, families of four, couples of gay Lotharios and all sorts of other specimens of humanity on short drives through the park. They are all individuals. A driver feeding his horse from a nosebag during a brief rest on a traffic-mad street seems to me as much of an individual as a lone cowboy putting the feed bag over his horse's ears at a waterhole in a Wyoming canyon.

Just think, everybody in China, everybody in Russia, everybody in Africa, everybody in the United States, and everybody in New York is a human being, an individual.

Ghost Horse Saga Widespread

10/22/80 S-T

Pacing White Stallion Tradition Enriched by Yarn Published in 1856

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The tradition of the Pacing White Steed of the Prairies, the Ghost Horse of the Plains, the Pacing White Stallion, or whatever other name he went by, amounts to an epic of many parts. Washington Irving made the first mention of this horse, then ranging between the Arkansas and Cimarron Rivers in western Oklahoma, in 1832. In the latest story as to date that I have heard, the great horse was still pacing out in Arizona in 1889. Many tales were told of him from the Brazos prairies in eastern Texas to the "Wild Horse Desert" between the Nueces and the Rio Grande.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

There was no doubt in early days of the existence of a white mustang stallion who could pace faster than any race horse could run and who escaped many pursuers. In time this stallion came to embody and symbolize all superior wild horses. Indians and trappers of the West ascribed supernatural powers to him. I have been trailing him, from the stories, for more than 25 years. Not long ago my good friend Henry Nash Smith, author of "The Virgin Land," who used to be at the University of Texas but is now with the University of Minnesota, put me on to a fresh story.

ANOTHER VERSION OF TALE.

In 1856 Putnam's Magazine published a collection of "Frontier Yarns," in which a character called Kentuck threw in with an Arkansas gambler going by the name of Jake out in Santa Fe. They heard so much talk about the White Steed of the Prairies and Jake had such a run of good luck, that he decided to take his partner and hunt down the horse that had become unhuntable. He bought pack mules, everything needed for packs, and four of the fastest horses in New Mexico.

"I don't know exactly whur to hunt a-tall," Jake said, "but we'll ride on the Great Prairies until we find the hoss or they are burned crisp by the fires of Jedgement Day." He had a kind of fever in his mind.

They rode east on the Santa Fe Trail and then in the country of the Arkansas they rode north and they rode south. They shot buffaloes and lived on hump. They dodged Indians and met no white man. Wherever wild horses tracks led they followed. They saw band after band of wild horses and many stallions without bands — bay horses, black horses, roans, yellows, blues, also whites. They were all wilder than the antelopes but not one among them was as good as the horses ridden by Kentuck and Jake.

SWORN TO GET HIM.

Weeks passed into months. Kentuck, who had never had any heart in the chase, yearned for the comforts of Santa Fe. The longer he hunted and the more mustangs he saw, the hotter Jake grew in his quest.

"Go back in if you want," he said to his partner. "I hev sworn to git what I come to git. If I don't git it, I'll keep on a-hunting till the Day of Jedgmint."

The White Pacer and the Day of Judgment seemed to be the only subjects that occupied his mind. As autumn drew on, he took it into his head that the White Stallion was going to appear from the southwest. The two men rode and camped leisurely, but for days now, whether in camp or on horse, Jake had hardly taken his gaze off the horizon toward the southwest.

At the end of one drizzly and, therefore, almost fireless autumn afternoon, the skies cleared just at sunset. For a half hour or more not a word had been said. Now, while Kentuck managed to get some buffalo chips burning, Jake, squatted, huddled in his serape, remained straining his eyes as if he expected something no bigger than a curlew to show its head above the grass away out yonder. The glow of the sun had melted and a full moon was coming up in the clear sky, when he yelled "Yonder!" and ran for his horse —the fastest one.

WHITE PACER APPEARS.

"I supposed it was Indians and grabbed my rifle," Kentuck told. "It took me more than a minute to pick up the white horse with my eyes. He stood there to the southwest, maybe a hundred yards off, head lifted, facing us, absolutely motionless. In the strong moonlight his proportions appeared all that the tales had given him. He did not move until Jake started toward him. As I made for my horse I saw that Jake was riding without saddle. All he had was a bridle. It did not take me long to follow."

The White Pacer paced east, against the moon. He seemed to glide rather than use his legs, he went so smoothly. He did not seem to be trying to get away, only to hold his distance in front of his pursuers. He moved like a white shadow, and the more wildly his pursuers rode, the more shadowy he looked.

After maybe an hour's run, their horses getting winded, Kentuck, right by Jake's side now, called out, "Jake, I don't like this. There's no sense to it. I'm remembering things we've both heard told. Let's stop."

Jake had lost his hat. His long hair was streaming back. His features were those of an absolute madman. He screamed out: "Stop if yer want to. I've told yer I'm going to foller till the Day of Jedgmint."

JEDGMINT DAY AT LAST.

Not another word was spoken. Kentuck did not stop. Not long after this he made out a long black line across the ground ahead, one of the canyon breaks of the plains. It will soon be settled now, he thought, and we'll know whether the White Stallion can cross space like a ghost. Pulling back hard on his own horse, he yelled to Jake. Something like the word "Jedgmint" came back as Jake lifted his quirt. All his attention now on the madman, Kentuck saw him disappear over the bluff.

Kentuck walked from his heaving horse to examine the brink. He could hear nothing below. All he could see in the moonlight was jags of earth. He called, but there was no response. He hobbled his horse and by daylight had found a trail down into the canyon and had come to what was left of Jake and mount about a hundred feet below the jumping off place. He did the best he could for a grave, got the pack outfit and went back to Santa Fe—where his story was no novelty.

J. FRANK DOBIE

Ol' Joe and 'Wealth'

American Statesman JAN 15 1954

By J. FRANK DOBIE

Joe Small, who publishes True West and Frontier Times in Austin, is just back from Europe, where he conferred with the publisher of an Italian edition of True West. He met various people in England, Holland, and elsewhere who, after finding out he was from Texas, expected something extra from him in certain ways.

On the way back on the Queen Mary the purser invited him to a cocktail party at which there were seven other guests, all Britishers but Joe Small. When he was introduced as being from Texas, they all seemed to understand that Texas was in the United States. One, a musician, kind of smart alecky, had traveled extensively over the United States, giving concerts. He averred that while he was a dinner guest of the late Hugh Cullen, giver of multiplied millions to the University of Houston and to hospitals, the noted oilman shortchanged a waiter at the Shamrock on a tip and that he (the British musician) left $3 extra for the waiter. Probably this was all a lie; anyhow, the company looked to Joe Small of Texas for a response and kept egging him on for a real Texas story. He delivered as follows.

One time a modest young Texan went to New York, where a golden glamorous, gold-digging dame spotted him. "Oh, you're from Texas," she gushed.

"Yes, ma'am, I'm from Texas," he admitted.

"It's wonderful to meet a millionaire so young," she exclaimed.

"No, ma'am, I'm not a millionaire," he said.

"Oh, come now," she gurgled, "I can tell by looking at you that you're rich. I bet you own a whole lot of oil wells."

"No, ma'am," he said. "I don't own but 17 oil wells and only 14 of them are producing. The others are all dry."

"Ah," she exclaimed, "I knew something like that. I can just tell it by looking at you. I suppose you own a whole fleet of cars."

"No, ma'am," he said. "I don't own a whole fleet of cars at all. Don't get me confused with those playboy millionaires."

"Come, come, come," she said. "You own oil wells; so you must own automobiles."

"Oh, well, I do own an automobile or two, ma'am."

"Just two?" she asked.

"Oh, ma'am, I own three."

"What are they?"

"Oh, ma'am, they are Cadillacs. One's blue, one's yellow, and one's pink."

"O-o-o-o," the dame cooed. "And how about land? I guess you've got a big ranch?"

"No, ma'am, I don't have any ranch at all."

"What, Cadillacs, oil wells, and no ranch?"

"No, ma'am, I'm sorry to say I don't own a ranch."

"Well, you've got some land of some sort, havent you?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, I own a few acres."

"How many?"

"Why, ma'am, I don't own but 37 acres."

"Oh, the ridiculous idea of a Texan not owning more than 37 acres. Come, come, where are those 37 acres, anyhow?"

"Why, ma'am, they're in downtown Dallas."

This expectation from Texans reminds me of an experience I had while I was visiting professor of American History at Cambridge University in 1943 and 1944. Not many American civilians were in the British Isles at that time, although millions of military men were. In a way I was a kind of marked man. Two or three reporters came from the London dailies to interview me. One was from the Daily Telegraph.

He began by asking me if I brought over my boots. I told him no, I didn't bring any boots.

"Why," he said, "I suppose you own boots, don't you?

"Yes," I said, "but I wasn't allowed but 40 pounds of luggage and had to bring a portable typewriter and three books and there wasn't any poundage left for boots."

"Well," he said, "how about a sixshooter?"

"No," I said, "I never did carry a sixshooter, and if I'd had a thousand pounds of luggage allowance I wouldn't have brought one."

While we were talking, I offered him a cigarette. I've been a pipe smoker from my youth up, but sometimes keep cigarettes around for other people. The next morning I bought a copy of the "Daily Telegraph" to see what the interviewer had said about me. He reported accurately that I didn't have either boots or sixshooter but he had me say: "Won't you have a cigar?"

Americans are supposed to indicate, even assert, their affluence by smoking cigars, which I never, never smoke, and this kindhearted reporter wasn't going to let down by having me offer a guest a puny little cigarette. He had me offer him a Churchillian cigar.

I won't say that Texans are responsible for the far-away conceptions that we all wear sixshooters and own oil wells and ranches. Hollywood and Western romances are certainly responsible. In the bedrock days when Texans were Texians there wasn't any wealth of any kind to brag about, and if there were any braggers they did not leave their mark on the record.

Noah Smithwick, a colonist before 1836, does not in his "Evolution of a State," as I recall, even suggest that bragging was a Texian quality. As a boy of seven, John H. Jenkins came to Texas in 1828 with his family, who settled in the Bastrop country. Going on 60 years later he wrote down his recollections of those far-off early days. Now his great-great-grandson, John Holmes Jenkins III, has edited them and they have just been issued in book form by the University of Texas Press under title of "Recollections of Early Texas."

In this faithful-to-life account there is not a single brag and there is no evidence of pride in property. Most of the people were as poor as Job's turkey. They had something better than property to be proud of but didn't seem to brag about it. I recommend this book for good reading as well as for revealing pictures and narratives.

Family Got Ahead of Her

12-10-50

Lack of Rattlesnake Bite Gave Girl Inferiority Complex for Long Time

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

There used to live on the Blanco River, in Hays County, a family by the name of Dickens. The head of the family was a great deer hunter, but he got enough brush cleared off his 500 acres of land to plant a patch of corn and was thriving until he built a house. Moving into it upset him. He simply could not bear the idea of being planted, and so he sold out and moved to Runnels County, where he found some good land, raised some good crops, and was in a way trapped into being settled and prosperous. However, this is not a story of the pioneer temperament.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

While living in the hills along the Blanco River, the Dickens family became noted for being bitten by rattlesnakes. There were plenty of rattlers in the country, and one day while Dickens was crawling toward a buck, paying full attention not to making any noise and to his target, a snake bit him in the wrist. He made a slash or two around the bite, sucked out the poisoned blood and came home with venison. Next a snake bit Mrs. Dickens while she was cleaning up camp; it was cool weather, and the rattler had crawled into some bedding for warmth. She got all right.

THEN SONS ARE BITTEN.

Then Sambo, the oldest son, got bit while he and his brother Cottonhead were twisting a cottontail rabbit out of a hollow stump. The family ate lots of rabbit meat when venison was scarce. The dogs had chased this rabbit into the hollow stump, and without waiting to investigate, Sambo had reached in for it and received a sharp bite. The boys cut the rabbit open and laid the hot flesh to the bite, and Sambo got all right. Next Cottonhead and the other boy, Reuben, were bitten, and then Maria.

Finally Dolly, the youngest of the family, was the only one left unbitten. Any visitor who came was sure to be regaled with details of all the snake bites the members of the family had experienced. They expanded on the lengths of the snakes, on the number of rattles each had, and on the horrors of the poison. They had the clan spirit and were exceedingly proud of their record—all but Dolly. When the talk turned on rattlesnakes, she would hide behind her mother's skirt. "Rattlesnakes don't think enough of Dolly to even bite her," Dickens would tease, little knowing how the remark cut the girl to the quick. She would walk around barefooted in high weeds hoping to step on a rattlesnake and receive a good bite, but never a one could she rouse. She was timid at school, and the other children, echoing her father's teasing, made life miserable for her. She became the silent household drudge, hiding her misery in humility. It was a relief to her when the family put their goods in a wagon and, with the boys riding horseback and driving a few cows, set out West.

SECOND FOR SAMBO.

One July day out there while hoeing their first cotton crop, Sambo got bit again. "Well, the second round has started," Dickens said, "maybe Dolly will have her chance yet. This is a good country." All the new neighbors were learning the Dickens family record with rattlesnakes. Dolly's abashment was renewed and intensified. Facing other children at school was a daily agony. She was growing up now. She felt as marked as a child would feel at being the only one not getting a present off a bountiful Christmas tree.

Then one evening while she was walking through broomweeds after the milk cows, a rattlesnake bit her. No maiden was ever more invigorated by a first kiss. She came running to the house, gladness in her eyes, voice and every movement, crying "One bit me, one bit me, one bit me." The bite was only in the calf of her leg, and soaking it in a can of kerosene was the only remedy applied. The snake probably injected only a small amount of poison. Anyway, Dolly went to school next day a changed individual. No longer was she a pariah among the elected. She became the brightest and most eager scholar not only of her family but of the school. In time she received a certificate to teach school, the first of the Dickens family to advance that far in learning. She taught school successfully, and when the talk turned on rattlesnakes, she led it in proud recital of each bite that her father, her mother, her sister and her brothers and she herself had received. She would laugh at how long it took her to offend a rattlesnake. She married a well-to-do rancher and lived happily ever afterward.

BILLY'S METHOD.

Yet neither Dolly nor any of her clan was a professional receiver of rattlesnake venom in the manner of Billy Anderson, who belonged to the Jack Hays company of Texas Rangers during the Mexican War. When he was relaxing, nothing would satisfy him but another drink of whisky and a rattlesnake. His comrades would supply both, paying a drink for each bite that Billy received. He would grasp a captured snake by the neck and holding it in his right hand present the back of his left hand to the fangs.

After a bite he would apply a decoction from the roots of "rattlesnake master weed" to the wound and take another drink. "The rattlesnake master remedy," he said, "ain't sure without the whisky."

Kindness, Essence of Christmas, Reminds Dobie of El Paso Reader

STAR TELEGRAM DEC 23 1936

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Thirty-five years ago a woman in El Paso we'll call Mrs. Hurden received the most Christmasy deed of her life experience. After being a school teacher in New Mexico she had for 20 years been crippled with what was then called rheumatism and was almost blind. She was approaching 60 and was living in a low-priced apartment house. She could not read even a big advertisement, but could see forms and could go up and down stairs on crutches.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Now enters Miss Ruth Dodson, of Nueces County, then 45, always hearty and energetic, laugher and lover of humanity. She had engaged an apartment in El Paso for what was expected to be a brief stay.

On the first evening there after supper she was sitting on the front porch with a few other dwellers in the house when a chair near her was occupied by a woman who came out on crutches, her head enveloped in a scarf pulled down entirely over one eye and leaving the other only partly exposed. Her questioning of the new tenant suggested that this was not the first she had investigated. "What are the newspapers saying?" was one question revealing her curiosity to know what might be going on in the world from which she was barred. Miss Ruth Dodson can tell it better than I can.

NEWS ITEMS CLIPPED.

"The next morning when I read the newspapers, I clipped a few items that I thought might interest Mrs. Hurden and went upstairs to read them to her. At this first call and later ones she told me something of herself, and I learned that the eyes hidden under her scarf were bandaged. She had relatives in El Paso — an old mother, who brought food to her, and at least two sisters, one a teacher; the other was the wife of a prominent official, expected to return immediately with a young daughter from a trip to Europe. They brought her perfume. When I went to her room the next day to read to her, she asked me to read out every word on the bottle. It had been manufactured in New York. That was all that her sister brought to her. 'Picked up in New York,' was Mrs. Hurden's comment. The gift without the giver is bare.

"While I had no idea how long I would be detained in El Paso, I could at least read the papers to this blind, lonely woman until I left. She said that in all the years she had been unable to read, only one person had ever really read to her, and that only for a brief time. This person, an old lady, would read everything on the front page of the newspaper, column by column, turn the page and read everything on that side, through column one, column, two, and so on, without regard to how the items fitted what preceded or followed.

ONE BOOK SHE WANTED.

"One day when I came from a trip to the library, I went directly to Mrs. Hurden's room with a book in my hand. I spoke of the book and she wanted to know who wrote it. I told her the author was G. K. Chesterton. She had never heard of Chesterton.

"So I sat down and began reading to her as well as to myself, since I was going to read the book anyhow. She was delighted with it. That was the beginning.

"A few days later, Mrs. Hurden told me there was one book she should like to be able to read above all other books she knew of. What book, I asked. Romain Rolland's 'Jean Christophe,' the story of the development of a character. The French version, she said, was published in nine volumes, but the English translation, she knew, would be in fewer. Romain Rolland, she added, was exiled from France during World War I on account of his German sympathies.

"I knew I wasn't going to read nine volumes, but investigated. I had a great sympathy for this lovely, brilliant, neglected, perhaps warped, personality. Who wouldn't be warped in her place?

"At the library I found 'Jean Cristophe' in three volumes, each of 500-odd pages. I deliberated as to whether I should begin something I might not be able to finish. I decided in favor of giving this soul as much of the story of Jean Cristophe as I had time for. So I went back to my apartment with the first volume in my hand. I had dedicated myself.

INTERESTED LISTENER.

"Mrs. Hurden dragged herself out of her bed, and on the two crutches groped her way across the room and made coffee for us. I didn't belittle her gesture by offering to relieve her of it. We drank coffee together, and she got back in bed. I placed a chair by the window and sat down. We were ready now for Jean Cristophe.

"I began to read at the beginning of the first chapter. Mrs. Hurden stopped me and asked if there were not something, some quotation, heading the chapter. I told her yes, but that it was written in French and I couldn't read French. She told me to try to read the words and that she would be able to make out the meaning. She begged: 'Don't miss a thing.'

"That day I read until I had to turn on the light, then until late bedtime. During the readings, sometimes Mrs. Hurden would interrupt to explain something or to have me read over some passage that she didn't quite understand or that was particularly pleasing to her. Then when I was ready to quit reading, she seemed to enjoy discussing what we had gone over. The book contains much of politics, art, music, etc., but her interest never lagged.

"When I went to her room as early as I could in the morning, she was always ready for me. I read three times a day: in the morning; in the afternoon; and again at night. One Sunday I read nine hours. Of course, I was getting the benefit of the book, too. It was interesting to me, and I was glad of the opportunity to be reading it with such an enlightened critic. I remember that when I pronounced a certain name that I was not familiar with, she asked, 'Do you know what that is?' 'No.' 'It is an opera that was composed 40 years before Christ was born.'

READING COMPLETED.

"It took me just a week to read the first volume, and I still didn't know when I was going to leave El Paso. Mrs. Hurden was bewailing the fact that I was not going to stay permanently. She said, 'You would be a beautiful reader among beautiful readers.' Upon finishing the first volume, I went at once to the library and came back with the second volume and finished reading that in exactly a week. The same for the third.

"When I told Mrs. Hurden that I must leave El Paso in two more days, she closed her room, including the transom above the door. What she had to tell was of no great importance, except to her. Of course, she was very grateful. She said that no present could have equaled hearing that book read. As well as I can remember she lived several years to enjoy the memory of Jean Christophe. When she died, on a Christmas day, I heard of it through a friend of her sister."

If Christmas isn't kindness, it can't be rich. If it's gifts, the richest gift of all is the kind part of the giver that goes with it. And now, my friends, a warmhearted Christmas to you all!

American Statesman 6-22-38

J. FRANK DOBIE

He Didn't Hold To the Majority

To get to the marrow in the marrow bone, I've about reached the stage where I'd feel ashamed of running very often with the majority. The writers I like best are not on the best selling list; the pictures I like best are not the prize-winners. Two of the two-bittest words in the much-journalesed American language are "prize-winning" and "best-selling." To quote the Devil in Kipling's "Tomlinson," "I'm all o'er-sib" with damning a man because he belongs to a minority group or even a splinter group.

The ideal species for staying with the majority are gnats and sugar ants. One winter evening not long before dark I came upon a vast flock of cowbirds—a small blackbird—in an open field. Perhaps there were more than a thousand birds in this flock. They were moving slightly to the east, birds on the western fringe of the flock rising from the ground and flying over the others lighting at the eastern edge of the flock. In a way they were leap-frogging. Presently one lone cowbird got cut off. I was on the western side of the great flock. This lone cowbird came near me, making the most distressful cries imaginable. It couldn't function except with the mob, except in a majority. It was the opposite of the lone eagle and the lone wolf.

I've both heard and read an old-time story of a cowboy who accidentally got into some sort of service in which the preacher wasn't having much success. He was not born with much sense and was not a "natural orator." Finally, in desperation, after floundering around, he called on everybody who would stand up for Jesus to rise. Nobody rose. Then the cowboy stood up by himself. After the crowd had been dismissed somebody asked the cowboy why he stood up.

"Well," he said, I "don't know who this fellow Jesus is, but since nobody else was going to stand up for him, I decided I would."

A lot of people would consider that cowboy's defiance of the majority and his befriending of the friendless more admirable than the epithets bestowed by flunkies of big money on majority figures.

A soldier of the Union Army appealed to President Lincoln for clemency. His appeal was not accompanied by a single supporting letter from an officer or any man of influence outside of the army.

"Heavens," exclaimed Mr. Lincoln, "had this man no friends?"

"No, Mr. President, not one friend it seems," answered the adjutant.

"Very well," said Lincoln, "I will be his friend."

Benjamin Franklin seems to me a more modern man than many men who are living; he seems more modern, for instance, than John Foster Dulles. One reason he's so modern is that he had so much common sense. He had a genius for recognizing realities and dealing with them, often improving them. He said: "Where liberty is, there is my home." Tom Paine said: "Where liberty is not, there is my home." Franklin was urbane; Tom Paine was a missionary zealot. He came to America through the encouragement of Franklin. The essay entitled "Common Sense" that he authored in 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence, stirred thousands of soldiers. George Washington thought it great. His essay, "The Crisis," contains a sentence, "These are the times that try men's souls," that became a battle cry.

After the end of the Revolutionary War, Tom Paine returned to England and wrote in favor of the French Revolution. He went to France and while there issued "The Age of Reason," advocating a pure morality founded on "natural religion." This incensed the orthodox of England and the United States. George Washington denied Tom Paine. More than a century later Teddy Roosevelt dubbed him a "dirty little idiot." It is to be remembered that Thomas Jefferson harbored him.

Now indeed the self righteous, the worshippers of respectability, the future Colonial Dames looked askance upon Tom Paine. He had written in "The Crisis" of "the fair weather patriot and the summer soldier." When I remember how Jefferson stood by Paine at the very end, I salute him with a higher salute and bow to him with a lower bow.

One of the memorable days of my life was in the fall of 1943 at Thetford in Norfolk, England. Thetford was where Tom Paine was born in 1737. Now a great American air base was stationed there, and one of the bombers had been christened THE TOM PAINE. I saw that name in bold letters on the side of the bomber, and under it this quotation from Paine: "Tyranny, like hell, is hard to conquer." In honor of Tom Paine and in honor of the newly-christened bomber the citizens of Thetford and the officers of the air base were having a kind of celebration. As Visiting Professor of American History at Cambridge University, I was invited to make a talk on Tom Paine. Somehow he no longer seemed to belong to the splinter group. He was standing tall for the human freedoms that the allied nations were fighting for.

Nobody who knows any history at all will discount a man because he isn't running with the majority. I can't imagine Socrates or Plato or Emerson or any other great thinker as belonging to the majority.

Held Powerful Sway Over Arabs

Individualism of Britons Is Pointed Up by Life and Career of Lady Lucy

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

As I read deeper into history I'm forced to the unequivocal conclusion that individualism has gone deeper and been more wide - spread among both women and men of England than among men and women of the United States. To take one area alone no American parallels can be found to the careers of Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope, Lady Ann Blount (the granddaughter of Byron) and the learned Gertrude Bell in leaving England and living among the Arabs of the Middle East.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Born in 1776, the year of Declaration of American Independence, Hester Lucy Stanhope was the granddaughter of William Pitt, first Earl of Chatham. The Great Commoner, as he was called, while as Prime Minister took the part of the people against George III. Hester's father was inventive in the manner of Benjamin Franklin. For a time he resigned his title of nobility and called himself "Citizen" Stanhope. His sympathies were all with the French Revolution and when Hester was 14 he sent her to tend turkeys on the town common, but that did not prevent her from becoming an accomplished horsewoman.

* * *

ROLL UP THE MAP.

Her stepmother prevented her from staying at home, and she became a kind of housekeeper for her uncle, the younger William Pitt, Prime Minister of England. With him she became well acquainted with many of the most important people not only of England but of Europe. She was with him when he died in 1806 in the midst of Napoleonic victories, shortly after having heard him make the immortal sentence: "Roll up the map of Europe. It will not be wanted these 10 years." His last request was that Parliament grant Hester a pension of no less than 1,000 pounds a year for her lifetime. Parliament paid Pitt's debts, which were large, and granted Hester a pension of 1,200 pounds a year for life. In dollars that was about $6,000. In purchasing power it was probably equal to $30,000 now. It was equal to much more in the Arabian world.

About 1810 she fell in love on the Isle of Malta with Michael Bruce, the son of a rich man who had great ambitions for him. Michael fell in love with her and before long they were in Syria, and she was his mistress. She considered it her duty to educate him to hold public office, and she convinced his father by letter that she was accomplishing this aim. For about four years she and Michael spent lots of the old man's money. If he'd had one-fourth as much sense as Lady Hester had, he would have profited enormously by the association. They traveled by camel train. She dressed as a male Bedouin, becoming known as "Queen of the Arabs."

* * *

TREASURE HUNT.

After Michael left her, she nearly died of the plague, although for many years she had an English doctor with her, privately retained. He made a kind of career out of writing six volumes on her. She took over an ancient monastery and called herself "The Nun of Lebanon." She had no use for English women but got along well with consuls, admirals, generals, dukes and other public men. At great expense she undertook an expedition to find hidden treasure — which, of course, she didn't find. She expected either the East India Company or the British Government to pay her expenses, for she had become the most influential foreigner over a vast area of the Near East. She did not have a tangible power that she could turn over, but the government might have been wise to have made her an agent.

Like many another Englishman, she was fierce in criticism of her own land and her own people: "The first thing to make France pleaing to me would be to shut all the English out, who spoil every place they go to—make people vulgar, extravagant and discontented."

When A. W. Kinglake, weary of "stale civilization and utter respectability," left England for the Mohammedan East in 1834 and visited Lady Hester on his travels, he was given the only room in her ancient monastery that did not leak. As he tells in his delightful travel book, "Eothn," she talked to him for hours of her belief in the second coming of the Messiah, of her power with a divining rod, of her refusal to allow newspapers or books in her establishment, of Arabian horses and of various mystries. She had two notable mares in her stable. One was born swaybacked, with the form of a Turkish saddle on its spine. She said that the Messiah, when He came, would ride this mare and then she would ride the other. She was not mad, according to Kinglake, but had "an inordinate pride most perilously akin to madness."

* * *

FED THE HUNGRY.

In 1938, 100 years after Lady Hester died, the Times of London published an able article on her including this sentence: 'No wise man or woman ever loses a chance of reading or talking or writing about Lady Hester; and no wise person of our own era should think for a moment of laughing at her."

She spent the last meager pounds of her income feeding the hungry. At the end she had no one to aid her except a black servant, in contrast to the legions she'd had before. The British consul and an American missionary rode to her dilipidated monastery to see how ill she was. They found her corpse. They decided to bury her immediately. With aid, they dug a grave in the garden, exhuming the skull of a Frenchman whose corpse she had brought there to bury. By the light of candles struck in the eyesockets of this skull, they covered her body with earth. She despised missionaries, and although she got along well with many consuls, she often reviled the profession.

I have known this extraordinary personality for a number of years through reading. I would fain linger on her character of independence.

* * *

OFFICIAL THREAT.

After Byron met her at Athens (1810) he wrote: "I do not admire that dangerous thing — a female wit." Many individuals crossed by Byron had reason to regard a male wit as equally "dangerous," but Hester Stanhope seems never to have regarded anybody, witty or dull, poor or rich, Christian or Turk, as "dangerous" to her own career. "Provided I have my own way," she said, "the world may have theirs and be welcome." She was born to position. Utterly cut off in Syria by self exilement from her own country, she advanced her position to a fantastic degree — both prophetes and a kind of fief-taker over an undefined shiekdom.

In her old age and loneliness after an official threat had been made to attach her pension in favor of a certain moneylender, she wrote the most Victorian Queen Victoria a letter Lear-like in impotent majesty. She could have said with her latest breath, as she said earlier: "I always speak my mind to a king and a ploughman." Again she said, "Like my grandfather, I must act alone or not at all . . . I can never be happy when pestered and when I feel I am not a free agent." She was many times pestered by people carrying an ax to grind, the "symbol of the damned human race," as Mark Twain called it. But all through her strange life she remained "a free agent," though at the cost of having "respectability" disown her as vigorously as she rejected respectability. "There is my crime," she wrote shortly before her death (in 1839): "to be independent." Her blood "fired at a fraud" affecting others no less than at any attempt to curb her own "so fierce an eccentricity," her inherent independence.

San A. Light 2-12-36

Tales of My Grandpa

By J. FRANK DOBIE

I like to read other people's recollections—sometimes—but have a distrust of anybody's liking to read mine. Nevertheless, I started last week telling about Grandpa Dubose living 50 years ago in the village of Alice. The subject fascinates me.

Grandpa was over 6 feet tall. He was a little stooped, but never had any surplus to belly or flesh. He wore a beard and had an eye that pierced through all pretenders. He had a saying that took in many a one of them: "His looks and my ways would hang any man." His characterization of some man considered passingly capable was, "he can read, write and recollect."

Spanish Supper

One time after I had heard him allude repeatedly to this and that "Spanish supper" he or somebody else had made out on, I asked him what a Spanish supper was. "You tighten up your belt a notch," he defined. He liked to tease Grandma by saying at the table, "mighty good what there is of it, and, being what it is, there's plenty."

He wore an old style broad-brimmed black frontiersman hat day and night, except when at the dining table and in bed. He never wore a coat except in cold weather, but the temperature could not go high enough to make him pull off his vest. It was as much a part of his dress as hat and breeches. Preparatory to going to bed, he pulled off first his shoes and socks, next his pants and vest, and then, having taken the corncob pipe out of his mouth, removed his hat. He wore long drawers, in summer as well as in winter. He slept in them and probably regarded nightshirts — pajamas being in his time unknown in our part of the world — as effete or effeminate.

He also wore to bed his shirt, which was apt to be stained by tobacco juice. When he got up in the morning, he put on his hat first and then got into his vest and pants. Next he loaded and lit his corncob pipe and puffed on it while drawing on socks and shoes.

8-Day Clock

Every Saturday night, with the regularity of Tristram Shandy's father, Granda stood on a rawhide-bottomed chair to wind an enormous 8-day clock hanging on the wall. Its dial showed the days of the week as well as hours and minutes. He seemed, as I reflect upon him now, to take an interest in time as something substantive, something apart from the destinor and regulator of all life. His memory held the exact date of any occurrence out of his past that interested him. Just as a born bibliographer knows the date of a book's publication along with the name of the author.

He set a good deal of store by phases of the moon and did not need an almanac to look them up. He liked to compute them from "La Epacta," the formula of which some wise old Mexican had taught him. While dry March winds were blowing, he might figure out from "La Epacta" the day in May when a new moon would bring a chance for rain. I doubt if he knew the English word "epact" as a term in astronomical computations. "La Epacta" is the number of days old the moon is on the first of January of any year. Knowing that and the 11 days' difference between a lunar year (354 days) and a solar year, one can figure out the date for any new moon in the months to follow and also the epact for the next year, the next, and so on.

After moving to Alice, Grandpa for a while drove the stage to Brownsville, about 150 miles away south by west. On one drive, he met, and in some small way accommodated, Catarino Garza about the time Garza was trying to raise forces on the Texas side of the Rio Grande for overthrowing Porfirio Diaz as president-dictator of Mexico. The international excitement aroused by the revolutionist made no impression on me at the time he was active, though I suppose the semi-weekly Houston Post, which we took, chronicled the movements of rangers and cavalrymen in futile attempts to catch this violator of American soil. It was tracks, remaining long after he himself was washed out, that made this man a name, still lingering with me.

A Justice

When I went to Alice, Grandpa was justice of the peace, and one Saturday his official duties took him to Palito Blanco, about 14 miles away. He asked me if I would like to go with him in the buggy. He kept a horse as well as a cow, which he fed and milked every evening and morning, letting her out to graze by day and the calf by night on the town commons. Palito Blanco—Little Hackberry Tree—was a settlement of a few ranch Mexicans. We drove to a house where we had dinner and were I saw a beautiful young woman dressed in black. On the way home Grandpa told me that she was the wife of Catarino Garza. He had made his headquarters at the house long enough to marry her and she had not left it once since his disappearance, about 1892—some said to Cuba, some to be killed as a filibuster in Honduras. For years I wondered every once in a while if she had yet left the house or put off the black clothes. She remains to me as unaging as the Venus de Milo.

Grandpa's meager earnings as justice of the peace were mainly from marrying Mexicans who could not afford a priest and from trials of misdemeanors. He supplemented them by accompanying trains of cattle to the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and Kansas for pasturage and to Kansas City, St. Louis and Chicago for marketing. The Ft. Worth stockyards had not been established; the cities of Texas were too small to consume much beef; the cattle markets were out of the state, northward. The main shipping was in the spring to "the Territory" and to Kansas bluestem grass.

More cattle, it was said, were being shipped annually from Alice than from any other point in the United States. They were driven there from all the way to Brownsville and on down in Mexico. In the spring vaqueros sometimes held herds for days on the sparse grass south of town waiting their turn at the shipping pens. The Mexican national rr. from Laredo to Corpus Christi, also ran through Alice, but it was narrow gauged and any cattle shipped in its cars had to be unloaded and transferred to standard gauge cars.

Tending Cattle

In the shipping season trains loaded with cattle pulled out of Alice day and night. Grandpa would say, "I've got my money, my tobacco and sixshooters and am ready to ride." Then, without a sixshooter and with next to no money, he would take a small satchel of clothes, bread, cooked meat and hard-boiled eggs, a railroad lantern and a prodpole, walk to the shipping pens, get into a caboose and leave to be gone a week or more. His business would be to get out every time the train stopped, day or night, look into the cars to see that the cattle were standing and if one were down to prod it to its feet, so that it would not be trampled on by otner cattle. While he was away, I would feed, milk and bring in the stovewood.

Alice specialized in shipping cattle bones as well as cattle. The bones were gathered by Mexicans from far away as well as near and hauled in wagons to sell to merchants. One year Alice Mexicans came up to our ranch bone-gathering.

I have looked upon the Rockies and the Alps, but no snow-capped peak towers so high in my memory as the great pile of whitened bones owned by the Newberry merchants beside a railroad switch in Alice. Horns were piled on with the bones. Lem Newberry told me that one time he measured a pair of horns on a steer skull that stretched close to 8 feet across from tip to tip. He had an inclination to keep them, but they would be in the way and he swung them onto the pile to be shipped for fertilizer and glue.

Deer antlers, however, were stacked separately from other bones and the Newberrys got enough to fill a freight car, which some fancier of horns bought.

Poem Jogs Memory

OCT 2 1960 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Donkeys Philosophers and Weather Forecasters

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

A letter received on my 72nd birthday from Dr. Pat Nixon of San Antonio contains these lines:

When the donkey saw the zebra,
He began to switch his tail.
"My goodness," was his comment,
"That mule has been in jail."

I hold them responsible for an idea that suddenly struck me. Here for years and years, I thought, I've used the paisano, the roadrunner, as my totem — not only as an expression of my delight in this interesting bird but as a symbol of my kinship to him and to other earthy things. Now it occurred to me that I am really more akin to the burro. I often remember a passage in one of Barrie's plays (I think it's "Rosalind") in which a character hears "the still, small voice saying, 'Ass, Charles, ass.'" I don't go around proclaiming the fact every time I hear that still, small voice but I do hear it occasionally. Sometimes the voice is quite philosophic.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

One time while I was at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, I viewed an exhibition of modern art. One long hall was full of pictures requiring captions to distinguish them from wallpaper designs. On coming out of this hall of modernity I saw a small oil hanging on the wall at the door. Under it was the title "The Philosopher." Above the title was the head, ears and all, of a most natural burro. Like other philosophers, the burro can be interpreted either to the left or to the right, as you please. In "Platero and I," the Spanish poet Jimenez is as gentle with his burro (Platero) as Mary was with her little lamb. In a kind of fable presaging the Sons of the Republic of Texas, the Spanish artist Goya has a picture of an enormous donkey with satirized ears pawing through an album. "Clear back to his ancestors," the title reads—a satire on ancestor worship.

STORIES HAVE MORALS.

Many folk stories of the ass as weather prognosticator convey to us moral. The lines from Carl Sandburg's "Life of Abraham Lincoln" (Vol. 2 of "The War Years") do.

"On board a government steamer taking a party to Washington's home at Mount Vernon, Seward told Lord Lyons and others that one day some 20 place-hunters from all parts of the Union had taken possession of the president's office 'with bales of credentials and self-recommendations 10 miles long.' And Lincoln joked them, said Seward, 'though Mr. Lincoln never tells a joke for the joke's sake; they are like parables, lessons of wisdom.' One time, minding a mud scow in a bayou near the Yazoo, Lincoln drawled, he read a story of a certain king who called the court minister, said he wanted to go hunting, and asked the minister if it would rain.

"The minister told him the weather would be fair, it would not rain, and he could go hunting. The royal party on the way met a farmer riding a jackass. He told the king to turn back, it was going to rain. The king laughed, went on, and no sooner got started hunting than a heavy downpour of rain drenched him and his party to their royal skins. The king went back to the palace, threw out the minister, and called for the farmer.

" 'Tell me how you knew it would rain.'

" 'I did not know, your majesty, it's not me, it's my jackass. He puts his ears forward when it's going to be wet, and back when it's going to be dry weather.'

"The king sent the farmer away, had the jackass brought and put in the place of the minister.

" 'It was here,' said Lincoln, 'the king made a great mistake.'

" 'How so?' asked some of his audience.

" 'Why, ever since that time, every jackass wants an office!' To which the president added, "Gentlemen, leave your credentials, and when the war is over you'll hear from me."

FOLK TALE MIGRATES.

A folk tale that migrated from Spain to Spanish America runs this way:

During the 16th Century a Spanish lawyer named Gaspar de Espinosa traveled with a burro through Indian villages on the Isthmus of Panama. The natives had never seen or heard a burro. Usually they heard this one before they saw him, for Senor Espinosa had a way of making the burro bray upon entering a village. The amazed Indians would inquire about the animal and his voice. Espinosa would explain that the burro could talk and that it was asking for gold. Then whatever gold the Indians could put their hands on they would immediately hand over. Thus the lawyer collected a fortune.

This reminds me of an anecdote told by August Santleben in his book "A Texas Pioneer." As a boy Santleben had a donkey that carried children to school on weekdays and to church on Sundays. One Sunday while the burro was staked right outside church the preacher started reading a passage from the Bible in which the word "halleluia" appeared several times. Every time it appeared he shouted and somebody in the audience would shout back. I suppose you can't say the donkey had an idea, but he seemed to have one. It was that he should respond to the preacher's loud cries also. He stuck his head in the window and brayed out a prolonged refrain. It's doubtful if the preacher recognized his kinship to the philosopher.

STORY HARD TO BELIEVE.

I hardly know whether to believe this instance of burro sagicity or not. It's told in "Tschiffely's Ride," by A. F. Tschiffely, who rode two Argentine horses from Buenos Aires to Washington about 30 years ago. Some people are always seeing what they are expected to see. Anyhow, here is Tschiffely's story:

"In the north of the Argentine I spent two days with a settler who possessed several burros and asserted that no puma could kill one born in that region, where pumas abounded. For proof, he led a burro to a hollow where he tied him with a long rope to a solitary bush. We lay down to watch some 150 yards off. It was just growing dark; after waiting two hours I began to think there were no pumas in the district.

"It was a bright night and with the help of my field glasses I could see the burro quite well. Presently he doubled his legs and rolled over on his side. Presently my host touched my arm and pointed. Sure enough, there I could see the puma, like a shadow, slowly creeping towards the poor burro, who rolled right over on his back and started to kick wildly with all fours, at the same time making noises terrible to hear. The puma made a large circle around him, slowly slunk away and disappeared. The man said that burros seem to know that a puma attacks by jumping on the neck of his prey."

WATCH STOLEN.

This anecdote about a Basque named Leonis is out of that delicious book of reminiscences by Horace Bell entitled "On the Old West Coast."

"A hundred or more men were shearing sheep in his pens when the foreman's watch was stolen from a vest left hanging on the limb of a tree. Receiving his complaint, Leonis had all the men lined up and demanded that the thief forthwith bring the stolen watch to him. There was no response. 'Very well,' said Leonis, 'I will now proceed to discover the thief. He went from man to man, holding his ear down near the mouth of each as he passed along the line. But no man spoke. This done, he called for a burro. Then he led the ass along the line of men, demanding that each whisper his innocence or confess his guilt into the donkey's ear. After the passage of the line and the whispering in the donkey's tall listener, Leonis led the animal aside and pretended to commune with it for a long while. Then Leonis returned to the uneasy sheep shearers and said: 'Yes, one of you confessed to the burro and now I know the thief. But the principal object is to recover the watch. I will not expose the thief if he will return the stolen article. I now hang the vest back on the tree and tomorrow morning I expect to find the watch reposing in the pocket. If not I shall hang the thief on this same tree until dead.' The gang was dismissed to supper.

"The next morning the watch was in the vest pocket."

ST T 2-6-56

Dobie High School Days Spent With Grandparents

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Long before I was 16 years old, my parents had determined that I should have a college education. I was indifferent to the idea; at that time, in our environment, college was as remote as the pyramids of Egypt. I had not raised a thirst for knowledge commensurate with the ambitions of my parents for me and their other five children, or with their willingness for self denial in trying to fulfill their ambitions. In order to enter college I had to know more than I knew, or, at least, to have graduated from a high school. That meant leaving the ranch and Live Oak County. Grandma Dubose, with Grandpa, lived at Alice. In September 1904 I went to live with them and enroll in the high school.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Forty miles away, Alice was in travel time from our ranch, as distant as New York now is from San Antonio. I had been there on visits a few times with mama and the children. Papa went once or twice maybe; he was always held by ranch affairs. It was an all day drive other travelers on the road was a rarity; on some trips we saw nobody at all. By the time we reached the Avaran Perez Ranch, miles almost to the San Fernando Creek near Alice, we were in a foreign country.

The title to this ranch had been granted by the King of Spain to a certain Perez ancestor, and his descendants had succeeded fairly well in remaining his contemporaries. The land was fenced, of course, for its boundaries were the boundaries of other owners, but the only windmill on it was at ranch headquarters. There were a few little dirt tanks to catch rainwater, but they often were dry. The road passed beside one tank where, as I remember on one trip, dying cattle stood around, too far gone to bawl. Two or three cows were bogged in the mud remaining in the tank.

LEE AND GENERALS.

Grandpa subscribed for The Confederate Veteran, read all the reminiscences and historical sketches that filled its pages, and kept a file of the magazine. I don't recall that he talked much about the Civil War, but he must have contributed to my youthful adoration of Gen. Robert E. Lee and sentimentality over the Lost Cause. The first picture of any kind that I bought, the year I went to College, was a colored print of "Lee and His Generals," and after I went to Austin I used to take off my hat every time I walked past the Confederate monument on the capitol grounds with its "Died for States Rights" half-truth inscription still defying the whole truth of democracy. My salutes in those days sprang from sentiment alone. Sometimes now when I see the small Confederate flags stuck by people, more through hate than love, on their automobiles, I remember how the blood rushed to my head and tears to my eyes when I heard "Dixie" played in a New York theater while I was attending Columbia University.

I recall but one war anecdote by Grandpa. After an all day battle in woods died down at nightfall, he and other exhausted soldiers near him sprawled out on the ground to sleep where they were. It was summer time. Grandpa was thirsty and in darkness he drank from a stagnant pool of water at hand.

When daylight came and he stepped to the pool to wash and drink again, he discovered a dead Yankee in the water at the very spot where he had drunk in the night. I got the impression that the water was more polluted by a dead Yankee than it would have been by a dead Confederate. I was disappointed with life because I had not been born early enough to help Grandpa fight the Yankees, and too late also to drive up the trail with him and Papa and uncles on both sides of the house.

At one time Grandpa was beef buyer for Martin Culver's hide and tallow factory on the coast. Cattle were so cheap that they were slaughtered for their hides and the tallow rendered out of the carcasses, the meat thrown away to feed buzzards and coyotes. Grandpa had in mind the dates of all the drouths and die-ups for the preceding 50 years and told about one, before the country was fenced, that brought mustangs by the thousands from far away to water on Agua Dulce Creek, which used always to hold long pools of water.

MASONIC SIGN HELPED.

He drove horses and mares to Kansas, giving away, just before setting out, colts too young to travel. One year, at least, Uncle Frank Byler put horses he owned in the Dubose herd, and stayed in Caldwell for weeks trading them off and becoming muy amigo with Andy Adams, who had not yet thought of writing The Log of a Cowboy.

Grandpa said that the worst drawback to trail driving was missing out on roasting ears, always traveling north ahead of them and getting back to Texas by train too late for them. He was a loyal Mason and wore the Masonic emblem on a heavy watch chain to which a ponderous watch, carried in vest pocket, was attached. He said that one time in the Indian Territory, while a band of Indian warriors were threatening to drive off several of his horses, he made the Masonic sign. Immediately an Indian who seemed in authority responded and ordered the others to leave.

Sometimes at home Grandpa would break into song, his voice quavering. He sang one trail song in the slow, slow tempo just right for calming wild or restless cattle—and for stirring human imagination. Mere words can not possibly convey the song's coyote lonesomeness and its translation of the hearer to away-out-aloneness in a vast land empty of everything but solitary men moving along at a snail's pace with lowing, dragging cattle on a trail with only an imaginable end.

It's a whoop and a yea and a-driving the dogies,
For camps is fary away,
And it's a whoop and a yea,
get along my little dogies,
For Wyoming may be your new home.

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM NOV 6 1960

Stories Are Many, but Good Tellers Are Few

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Of all the story-tellers who have imparted something out of themselves to me, Railroad Smith alone revealed a plan for stringing together stories that he either half-told, besides a lot untold altogether. Back in the days when the University of Texas campus consisted of 40 acres and no skyscraper, R. R. Smith used to "come home," as he put it, once in a while to talk. He could talk through the day and talk through the night. He was long beyond the longest of art. His figure was as elongated as that of Abraham Lincoln's and his countenance was as tristful as that of Don Quixote, though he had a strong laugh in his belly. He had a long-drawn-out voice that was lingeringly pleasant to hear; his eyes could see a long way into space and also into people. He belonged to the live oaks, mesquites, prickly pear, ranch manners, dry weather, homemade ethics, and take-your-time psychology of Atascosa County, which is down in the brush country.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

He was a lawyer—mainly a criminal lawyer — belonging to times ante-dating the corporation practice of retaining most of the good lawyers of the country. He was proficient in selecting juries and also in swaying them with voice and words; he studied humanity more perhaps than he studied law books. He lived on a few acres including a calf pasture out from Jourdanton. He called his place Goat Hill and his friends called him the Philosopher of Goat Hill. A few people knew that his first name was Ralph, but everybody called him Railroad. He had read a good deal of history and poetry. He admired Jim Hogg — the one statesman, a liberal, that Texas has had for governor since Sam Houston—and he had a genius for letting things soak into him while he rested in the shade.

* * *

BLACKSMITH SHOP.

The bent of some of his ideas may be deduced from a pamphlet that he published in 1925. The title page reads: "A Little Preachment and a Short Episode to the Bigots of Texas, by Brother Railroad Smith. For sale to Students of the University of Inquiring Minds and to Ex-Students of the University of Texas at 25 cents the Copy, Prepaid." The time could come when this will be as much a "collector's item"—often a term for something nobody wants to read—as a pamphlet written by some ignoramus on some criminal of six-shooter notoriety. However, I myself do not expect to see the cult of violence surrender to cultivation of the civilized.

One of my long talks with or, more accurately, listenings to, Railroad Smith was about the time "A Little Preachment" came out. I don't remember where we started, but midnight and then two o'clock found us sitting on the sidewalk at the corner of 23rd and Guadalupe Sts. in front of the University of Texas. One of Railroad's ideas was to write down a collection of old-time Texas stories. They were to be told in a blacksmith shop by a blacksmith sharpening an ax on a grindstone. This blacksmith would pour water on the grindstone to keep it from making the steel too hot and taking away its temper. While he talked on, holding the ax in his hand, the water would evaporate. Meantime, telling on, he would be running his thumb over the ax-blade, testing its sharpness, or dullness. He would spend the whole day watering the grindstone and testing the ax without grinding it at all, but in the end he would have told enough stories to fill the hopper of a corn-grinder waiting to be repaired.

Among the stories that Railroad Smith told me that night and on other occasions was one of two oxen that, after being driven to South Texas by an early settler, got loose and made their way back to the Mississippi River. I put those oxen into The Longhorns. He told me the stories of John Booth's ride of vengeance and of Gregorio Cortez on his little brown mare, both of which I put into a long piece first called "The Saga of the Saddle" and then "Riders of the Stars." After appearing in several places, these rides were finally lodged in The Mustangs. I am not sure, but I think Railroad Smith had defended Gregorio Cortez. Anyhow, he visited Gregorio in the penitentiary in Huntsville, where the convict gave him the details of his ride. It takes details and details to make a story, and Railroad Smith's memory held details as securely as the vise in the blacksmith's shop held the handle of a branding iron. Even better than his memory, was an ability as creator to supply details. "Disremembering" may at times contribute more to art than remembering.

* * *

BEEVILLE CHARACTER.

Story-tellers, story-tellers. They string out in my memory like a long, long recua of pack mules, each of a different brand, different color, and different disposition, twisting through the mountains, going down in the canyons, climbing up over the cumbres, trailing across plains of fine grass to an unreachable beyond. Compared with the ideals of slickness, noise and religiousity, they seem almost mythological characters, but they were more real than facts, all of them belonging to times when folks had to amuse themselves, before machines to furnish amusement had been invented.

There was John Rigby of Beeville, who had bossed herds of Longhorns up the long trail and who for years was brand inspector for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. I judge that he made up a good deal of the story of Old Sancho, the steer that came back to Esperanza Creek in Frio County, Texas, after being trailed clear to Wyoming. I myself did some constructive work on the story. My publishing it and other stories from John Rigby made him an object of derision among certain masculine vulgarians of the town. He did not end life with the joy deserved by a wonderful story-teller. He did not belong among ignorant literalists.

'The Lizards Are Drying Up'

Ranchers Want Rain More Than Ike Wants 'Change,' Oldtimers Agree

ST. 9-14-57 7-6-58

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

"Dry."

"The lizards are drying up."

"I never saw it worse."

"You're apt to yet."

"Well, come on in," the first cowman said.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

While taking chairs on the wide front porch, facing south, they asked about each other's families. Both were reported as being "all right." For a minute they sat in silence, looking far away with that expression that belongs to far-lookers in intense light. A spasmodic flurry of wind made the windmill turn over three times, and then it was motionless.

"Whirlwind," the first cowman commented, without bothering to gesture, for he knew the other one saw it.

"Seems to me I never heard dry weather locusts making so much noise this late in the fall," the second cowman commented.

"Some people say fall don't begin till the equinox," the first remarked.

"September is a fall month," the other said, not argumentatively. "It ought to rain in September."

"I guess we all ought to do things we don't do," was the only rejoinder.

"Reckon it would make any difference on the weather if we did do them?"

LOOKING FOR A SIGN.

"Not a bit. There's not a truer saying in the Bible than the Lord sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. A lot of places where it rains most there ain't no just or unjust either, out in the ocean where people don't live at all."

"Yes, I guess you're right. If it don't rain this fall and we don't get any winter rain like last year, there won't be as many people in this country as there have been."

"Joe," the first cowman spoke, "I'm looking for a sign."

"Well, Tom, you seen any?"

"No, but Bill Noble was by here yesterday and said a Mexican working for him said a rooster had been crowing earlier than usual for three morning and that was sign of change in the weather."

"It couldn't change to any drier. I believe I want a change worse'n Eisenhower does. Talking may get it for Ike, but it won't for us."

SORTA SPUR HOPES.

"I'll tell you, Joe," the cowman named Tom went on, "I don't put no more stock in these signs than I put in planting potatoes according to the moon, but signs are a kind of comfort sometimes. They're like the promises of politicians. They don't fool you, but just the same they spur up your hope. I been wishing the government trappers hadn't killed off so many coyotes. What harm did they ever do us out here in the cow country? None a tall, and when it's dry, dry, and you hear one howling after sunup you take notice. That's the oldest sign of rain I know. I wouldn't bet a rusty fence staple on a coyote's knowing any more about when it's going to rain that a U. S. weather bureau expert, but it's cheering to get his prediction and then to hope he kind of accidentally hit it. I'll say this for coyotes. They talk about what people are interested in. They're interested themselves."

"Now, Tom," his friend Joe speculated, "if you didn't own any cattle and didn't have any ranch interests of any kind and had all your money in oil stocks or something like that, you reckon you'd be concerned about the weather?"

"Yes, I would. A man belongs to the earth whether he knows it or not. When the earth withers, he withers too. Yesterday I was noticing a pair of quail panting over there in the corner of the field. They didn't raise any young ones this year. They looked too frazzled out to take a dust bath. They gave me the same sort of feeling I have when I see a bill for more feed for cattle."

"Mentioning that field, Tom, makes me think. If this was a rainy country it would all be in fields and there wouldn't be any ranches. Which would you rather have, rainy fields or drouthy ranches?"

RAINMAKING NO SIN.

"I'd rather have rainy ranches. When I was a boy, the old settlers had a theory that farming increases the rainfall. They didn't have any more scientific data on the subject than a raincrow has, but that was a theory, as you know."

"Yes."

"Well, now, look. All over the southeastern states they're turning farm land into grazing land and they are having a drouth there. But that country was generally wet when it was discovered and this country was generally dry when it was discovered. Nothing man can do to the ground can change the climate."

"What about what he can do to the skies? What about these rainmakers?"

"I don't believe in 'em. If I did, I'd make a contract tomorrow to have 'em seed the next cloud that floats by."

"I heard some church folks talking the other day and they agreed it's sinful for man to try to interfere with God's plans for rain."

"You just as well say it's interfering with God's plans to wear an overcoat in winter or dig a well for water a hundred miles away from a flowing river or irrigate land with water impounded by a dam on the Rio Grande three hundred miles upstream. I guess these people think it's wicked to try to talk the salt out of ocean water or give cows mineral on grass that lacks minerals. The trouble with these rainmakers ain't sin; it's science."

SORT OF COMFORTING.

The two cowmen sat on the gallery and in silence looked far away.

"Joe," Tom said, "you see that little cloud with its head up over that hill yonder.

"Yeah, and all it is is a lost gulf cloud. You watch it. It ain't got no bottom to it. All it's got is a fluffy top."

Presently a breeze sprang up and the windmill went to pumping. "Wa-ter, wa-ter, wa-ter," the strokes seemed to be saying.

"It's a sort of comforting sound, ain't it," said Tom.

OCT 2 1960 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Fort Worth Writer Tells Brazos Goodby

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

A distinction is to be made between a writer and a writing man. Some writers are too empty, mean, trivial-natured, half-baked to be called men. John Graves of Fort Worth is a writing man. While reading his new book, "Goodbye to a River," I realized that I've been waiting for it a long time. The river is that segment of the Brazos below Possum Kingdom Dam in Palo Pinto County down to near Lake Whitney. Despite "Goodbye" in the title, the book is as much "Hail" as it is "Farewell." It's an interpretation of Brazos River land and people on it from Comanche days to the present. It is also a rarely honest revelation of parts of the man John Graves, especially in relationship to the river, river land and people.

JOHN GRAVES.

The framework of the book is a one-man canoe trip down the river, camping where he wanted to camp. From canoeings and lingerings of years ago, he knew the camping places, coves for ducks, holes for fish; he knew from some reading and much listening numerous individuals and their families who have during the last 10 years and more lived along the river and worn out its lands. His sympathies are strong, his irony is good natured, his ideas clear. Dozens of dramatic incidents come into the narrative, more of them involving the Comanches, whom John Graves calls The People, than anybody else. Here is a sample of integration between human beings and river:

"Captive children, renegades white and black, Mexicans by the hundreds—The People weren't exclusive in terms of race. They'd been winners for too long to be a pure blood, anyhow; women go to winners. They were a spirit, another on the roster of the world's proud savages who had to win totally or lose totally, like Zulus and Araucanians and Moros and Pathans and Fuzzy-Wuzzies. All colonial and imperial histories are smoky with their fighting. There's more pathos in the defeat of gentle and reasonable peoples, but the fall of pride strikes more sparks.

"If the river has meaning for you, you can tell all of that from the sandstone bluffs where the mountains drop away. You don't have to strain to impose the tales on the landscape; they're there . . ."

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SAMPLE OF PERSPECTIVE.

John Graves has been over a good deal of the world. He shoots on the wing and cooks his own meat, but I kind of deduce that he killed more Japanese in the last war than he's ever killed deer. He's talked Spanish in Spain and French in Paris. Here's a sample of perspective that makes him wise:

"If a man couldn't escape what he came from, we would most of us still be peasants in Old World hovels. But if, having escaped or not, he wants in some way to know himself, define himself, and tries to do it without taking into account the thing he came from, he is writing without any ink in his pen. The provincial who cultivates only his roots is in peril, potato-like, of becoming more root than plant. The man who cuts his roots away and denies that they were ever connected with him withers into half a man . . . It's not necessary to like being a Texan, or a Midwesterner, or a Jew, or an Andalusian, or a Negro, or a hybrid child of the international rich. It is, I think, necessary to know in that crystal chamber of the mind where one speaks straight to oneself that one is or was that thing, and for any understanding of the human condition it's probably necessary to know a little about what the thing consists of."

Sometimes floating, sometimes paddling, always steering down the river, John Graves came upon a silent man fishing who talked enough to reveal his unsleeping rage at city money and city people taking over the land to make of him an outcast, one of the dispossessed, an alien to his own soil. The very words, the very pronunciations, very intonations of some of these characters give passages of the book strong flavor—"bare caves" for "barricades," for instance.

"When the city money buys you out, you can live no more in the poor-proud privacy of a shack back in the brush on the land your people wore out long since, raising your kids to the proud bitter mores that you were raised to before them, shaping in their mouths the proud nasal dialect that your grandfather shaped in your father's mouth. Not even if the city money buys your neighbor out, you can't (live on as of yore). The bulldozers scrape bare your privacy and you move away to work in the city, or you take a job on the old ground for the city money and its operations and every once in a while a bathed and shaven and tailored type drives out to inspect that particular one among his holdings and tells you what you're doing wrong, and how to do it better, in language that sounds like a radio announcer . . . Unproud alternatives . . .

"The dispossession must bring much the same feeling the Indians used to have, a century ago . . ."

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RATTLESNAKE INCIDENT.

Then there's the hermit of Cedar Brakes, Sam Sowell. Sam and Davis Birdsong were walking through the brush in a part of the country where the only openings had grown up in needlegrass marking wornout fields. Coiled in a bare spot along the trail they came upon a diamondback "as thick as a two-bit post." The diamond-back was rattling out his rage.

"Le'm alone!" Sam Sowell said.

"What?" Davis said.

"Le'm be!" Sam said. "Hin bi' me. Hin bi' oo. Le'm be."

According to Davis Birdsong, Sam Sowell, the hermit, went on to say in his way that from its looks this rattlesnake had been around that country as long as either of the men had, that it had given fair warning and hadn't struck when it could have struck and that "By God, it had as much right there as anybody."

Sometimes John Graves didn't want to talk to people he saw on the river. I notice that the people he didn't want to talk to were all intruders, though some might have had title to spots of the land. "The river's aloneness was on me, and I liked it and was going to hold onto it while it lasted." New dams scheduled to be built on the river will lessen the chances for aloneness. People who can't stand themselves in aloneness and confuse aloneness with lonesomeness won't understand some of this genuine book.

Dobie Reports on Travels ST SUN 3-2-52 II 7: 6-8

Most of Old South Changing, Though Some Areas Nurse Old Animosities

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I seldom write about it, but the most interesting subject in the world, to my thinking, is what goes on in the mind and feelings of a human being. After three days in Florida I am in Jackson, the capital city of Mississippi, at the Robert E. Lee Hotel. A copper-engraved replica of his picture on all the elevator doors carries me far back.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The first picture I bought in my life was a chrome print of "Lee and His Generals." That was while I was a freshman in college. I still have it, though it is not hanging on a wall. When I was very young I used to regret almost tearfully that I had not been born early enough to help Grandpa Dubose fight in the Confederate Army. Not long after I acquired the picture of "Lee and His Generals," and Thomas Nelson Page's "Life of General Robert E. Lee," I made my first visit to Austin. I walked up Congress Ave. to the Capitol and when I came to the Confederate Monument with its simple inscription, "Died for States Rights," I took off my hat. For years I took it off every time I passed that monument.

TEXAS NOT 'OLD SOUTH.'

In those years Texas seemed to me an integral part of the Old South. For a long time it has not seemed so, except in a sentimental and unrealistic way and occasionally in a political way. A vast part of Texas land and a majority of the Texas people are no more Old South than they are Tammany Hall. I say Tammany Hall because one of the most curious alliances in all political history is that between the Solid South, rural and Protestant, and the Democratic Party's former headquarters in Catholic New York City.

But my theme is not politics. Flying from Jacksonville, Fla., recently, I got off the plane at Birmingham. The airport station is in the architectural style of a Southern colonial plantation house. The airport at Jackson is still more in that style. Jacksonville has few traditions. It is a new city. It does a far greater business as a port than Charleston, S. C., which goes on fighting for John C. Calhoun's arguments. San Augustine, Fla., not far from Jacksonville, has the traditions, which it sells, along with an enormous amount of historical hokum, to tourists.

It seems to me that one element of the Old South is still sitting up with a corpse. Another element is using the corpse for business and political purposes. The vital part of the region, the forward-looking, is trying to get rid of the corpse.

YOUTH LEADING SOUTH.

The most interesting man I met in Florida is supervisor of the city school of Jacksonville. He told me that about $8,000,000 out of $15,000,000 voted by his city for its school system is being spent on Negro schools. He said that if one wants to know which way the wind of public opinion is blowing not to go to politicians, who are afraid of any new suggestion, but to young people, who have an idea of economic justice quite different from that of the Old South. The same sort of chasm between adherents of tradition and youthful livers is observable here in Mississippi.

Southerners generally seem to regard Texas as away out West, which it is, of course—as Sam Houston knew when he fought secession. As an illustration of how folklore grows, one person in Jacksonville told a story as heard from the proprietor of a tavern near Fort Blanding. One night during World War II a number of soldiers were trying to escape boredom there. The place was quiet and kind of melancholy until the radio turned on "Deep in the Heart of Texas." At once two men stood up. They were Texans, of course.

A few hours after I heard this not unusual anecdote another Floridian told it with additions. He said that one of the Texans tried to make everybody else stand up. One soldier—maybe he was from Brooklyn — objected very strenuously to standing. In fact, he objected to anybody's standing. In the struggle that ensued the patriotic Texan cut off the objector's ear. The objector rescued it, carried it straightway to an Army surgeon and had it replaced, without permanent damage to his looks or hearing ability.

'DIXIE' NOT SO STIRRING.

More pertinent to the story is the fact that nowadays one never hears of patriotic violence over "Dixie." I'll bet there are a lot of young Texans who would not recognize "Dixie" if they heard it. A long time ago I was in New York in a theater one night when a band played some bars from "Dixie." I stood up, alone so far as I could see. I had no idea of trying to make anybody else stand. I would not stand now except to prevent my ear from being cut off in one way or another.

I'll back my respect for General Lee against that of any man who uses Lee's name for advertising purposes, in business or politics, but I'll never forget how an old Mississippian named E. L. Shettles impressed me. In youth he was a big-time gambler, but he always read good books. In Texas he was converted to religion and became a prominent Methodist preacher. When I knew him he had retired from the ministry and was dealing in rare books. He knew more about the history of the South and about books on the South, Texas and the Southwest than anybody I have ever known. His people had been poor during slave times. He often said that the Civil War did more to free white people than it did to free colored people. I'm glad for changes going on over the South. I think that keeping Jeff Davis' birthday a holiday in Texas is absurd. Nobody pays any attention to it but the banks and a few ancestor-worshiping women.

J. Frank Dobie

Blend of Action, Thought

San Antonio Light May 1, 1960

By J. FRANK DOBIE

It was before I learned to read that on winter nights, sitting between the fireplace and a kerosene lamp in a rock room on a ranch in Live Oak county, I heard my father read through "The Scottish Chiefs," by Jane Porter, who died 110 years ago. I've read that the book is still in print; that is fame. I listened to it with intense admiration for the noble, and that is education. Only dimly do I remember the incidents in the lives of Wallace and Bruce; I do not recall any ideas mixed with brave action. A discourse on ethics would at that time have bored me—as, indeed, such still bores me.

DOBIE

I'm afraid to try to reread Jane Porter's "The Scottish Chiefs." I want to retain the illusion. It seems to me, as I remember back, a narrative of action as much as "Robinson Crusoe" is. The novel has been called to memory by the foreword by my fine Friend Herbert Faulkner West to a printing of "Three Fugitive Pieces" by R. B. Cunninghame Graham. In this foreword Herbert West says that near the battlefield of Bannockburn (associated with Robert Bruce) he say this inscription at the base of a flag staff: "We fight not for glory, nor for wealth, nor honour, but only and alone we fight for freedom, which no good man surrenders but with his life."

All people like a good fight if it means something; a lot of people like a fight whether it means anything or not; I myself am bored with naked physical conflict signifying nothing but brute force. The inscription quoted by Herbert West reminds me of the fine words uttered by Cyrano de Bergerac in the play by Rostand: "One does not fight because there is hope of winning! No! No! It is much finer to fight when it is of no use."

Billy the Kid

That adder to the civilization of the southwest which I have frequently mentioned, the University of Oklahoma Press, directed by Savoie Lottinville, is now publishing "A Fitting Death for Billy the Kid," by Ramon F. Adams, the bibliographer of bad men and of range life. It is a kind of debunking of Billy the Kid. It shows him up as a killer and not much else. If you analyze Shakespeare's Hamlet, you'll see that the skeleton of the play is made up of killings wherein buckets of blood are shed, but beyond the killings are poetry and philosophy climaxing the literature of the world. If there's anything else in the Billy the Kid vogue but action unrelieved by aught of poetry or decency or one touch of the admirable I have not encountered it.

In this book of debunking, which relentlessly cites a multitude of liars, Ramon Adams calls the oft-repeated statement that Billy the Kid killed a man for every year of his life a fable. Of the nine possible killings, he says, three men were shot while unarmed; two were shot from ambush; one was killed after the Kid had tampered with his gun to make sure that his attempt to shoot would fail; only three were met on fairly equal terms, and saying this "would be an exaggeration." He finds nothing admirable in Billy the Kid and does not believe that women loved him nearly so madly as the romances would have us imagine. He puts certain purported historians in the same class with dime novelists. Some collectors who do not read books but pay more for a pamphlet on a thug than it costs to buy a first folio of Shakespeare might profit by reading "A Fitting Death for Billy the Kid."

Own Excuse

A good ballad or a good tale is its own excuse for being. When I look at shadows on grass, at a calf sucking a cow, at a lamb capering on a tank dam, I want no explanation. When a horse under me points his ears, I look too. I wouldn't want him to give me a discourse on what he is seeing. When Rosalind dances under a star that danced when she was born I'm in one of the paradises. Who that's betting on a horse race wants a philosopher for commentator? But when a book is written about a character, whether Billy the Kid or Woodrow Wilson, we expect a sense of values. The Hollywood-TV use of the west for themes has cheated the public out of any sense of values and educated millions to disrespect intelligent interpretation. Bare action without thought or interpretation gets to be as low-browed as the noises made by an automobile engine without a muffler.

Will Clayton of Houston, one of the few Texas statesmen of history, has been sending out copies of Hardin Craig's "Woodrow Wilson at Princeton." To admire Woodrow Wilson is to respect intellectual integrity. In thanking Mr. Clayton for a copy of the book I wrote: "I do not believe that freedom in any country can be maintained without the leadership of informed intellect. Of course the country may coast along a while, as it is now coasting, under a leader who makes no pretense to cultivated mind."

As a collector of nearly anything written on range life, I acquired years ago "A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains," by Isabelle L. Bird—a collection of letters written by an English's horsewoman to her sister from Colorado in 1873. I skipped through it and didn't think much of it. Now it has been published by the admirable University of Oklahoma Press with an introduction by Daniel J. Boorstin. Thanks to the gods for sensible interpreters. I quote from this one.

Many Came

"Many Englishmen came to America and many wrote books—famous authors like Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope as well as unknown businessmen and housewives, long-term residents like Fanny Kemble, and people passing through like Isabella Bird. In the mid-nineteenth century, literate English men and women were no more reticent to publish generalizations about "America" or Americans" after a few weeks in New York or New Orleans, than are Americans nowadays to describe "Russia" after a few days in Moscow. It was an age of uncritical generalizations * * *

"Isabella Bird found an oppressive lack of privacy amid the exhilarating solitudes of the wild mountains. She found people pinch-penny, parsimonious, greedy, yet willing to share their short rations or escort her on horseback hundreds of miles through a snowstorm. She noticed an incorrigible indolence among the very people who lived by 'work, work, work' * * * hard, loveless, moral.' She found relentless temperance colonies alongside towns where the saloon was the community center. She saw a landscape where everyone talked of 'progress,' yet all was dominated by changeless mountains."

One of the marvels of contemporary finance is that the University of Oklahoma Press is putting out a whole series of what's called The Western Frontier Library at $2 apiece.

Superstitious or Imaginative?

1-20-52 STT

San Pedro Ghosts Wandered and Wept After Graves Were Defiled

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

People who believe in ghosts are of two classes: those who are not superstitious but enjoy imagination, and those who are superstitious, whether they have imaginations or not. After acting J. M. Barrie's "Peter Pan," Maude Adams used to respond to applause by coming back and saying, "Do you believe in fairies? Please believe in fairies." And through the transporting power of imagination everybody believed in fairies.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

One part of me, the imaginer, believes in all the lost mines about which I have written, but I would not waste my time looking for any one of them. The same part of me believes in ghosts, but no reputation of any haunted house on earth would influence my sleeping or not sleeping in it. The true believers in ghosts add something to the delight of society. The true believers in other superstitions, such as fearing the number 13, fearing to set out on Friday, etc., are an impediment to rational living. However, the human race can not be expected to become rational before evolution has brought another glacial age or two, and so we need not fret ourselves on the subject.

INTRODUCTORY TO STORY.

All of this is introductory to a ghost story I recently have found in "Letters From Mexico," by Rosalie Evans. She was a distilled spirit of intensity. She defied all the generals, politicians and agrarians who tried to take her San Pedro plantation during the Mexican Revolution. She did not write the best of books on Mexico, but I know of no other that reveals so much of the mind and spirit of the writer. What follows is her story, somewhat abbreviated to fit space.

THE GHOSTS OF SAN PEDRO.
BY ROSALIE EVANS.

On Dec. 12, 1923, the grandchildren of Don Fernando and Dona Monica, who once owned and lived at San Pedro, came to remove the remains from the chapel. I fearer disrespectful handling of the bodies and told Iago, my manager, to see that everything was done properly. First, the masonry over the tombs had to be removed. The uncovered bodies, buried 26 years ago, were perfect in form, though mummified in part.

The grandsons had brought two little boxes for ashes and bones. When they found the bodies entire, they tore the flesh off with their hands—parchment-like of course—made my men deathly sick—and broke the bones to the size of their boxes. The cook told me Dona Monica had a little cap on and her shoes stuck to her feet. All this they scattered about the chapel, leaving Iago and my men to pick it up and throw it back into the graves. They then went to the kitchen, ate their dinner, drank beer and drove rollicking off to Puebla.

PEONS BECAME ILL.

I won't repeat the awful curses I heard put on the impious grandsons. I can not account for their brutality. The four peons who had been forced to help them were all ill in bed. One had lost his sight and begged for herbs from her garden to restore it. I gave them—and it did. I asked if the grave had been properly cemented again over the poor remnants of mummified flesh and faded cloths. They said only earth. I gave the order to restore all as before, but had such a horror of my desecrated chapel—it is just back of my room—that I did not enter to see, and decided to banish it from my mind.

My cook is very nice-looking, almost fair—I suppose a Spanish father. Next morning she was pale. I asked what had happened. She said just as she was going to bed something screamed in her ears. I asked what the sound was like. She looked troubled and told me: "As of someone who had gone mad. It slowly died away."

I was very busy all day on horseback with the woodcutters, and my own mind and conscience unusually still. Each day the watchmen and the maid would say they could not sleep—the spirits sobbed so. I thought they were frightened by the cook's tale and did not heed them. I heard nothing myself, and had in the room next to me my maid from Mexico City. We both slept peacefully.

AWOKE IN HORROR.

On about the fifth night I awoke in a horror, not thinking of anything until I remembered the spirits. The agony continued until, in my own mind, I addressed them, saying that "their grandchildren had done it, not I, and I had had their remains buried as best I could" and much more. That calmed me and I fell asleep, but according to the maid, I soon screamed. (Poor maid!) As if in a fog—one on either side of the bed — Don Fernando and Dona Monico stood, while I revolved in my mind what they wanted. In despair I asked if perhaps my orders had not been carried out and their tombs repaired. I woke up then and told the girl. The curious part, both of us were instantly calm and slept quiet until morning, when every one had a new story to tell of weeping and strange sounds—almost a rebellion.

So I told my dream and found they had not obeyed me. You should have seen Iago and the men bringing bricks and stones. The old trojero (he who keeps the barns) said it would not do until a priest came and blessed the tombs and had a mass for their souls—but I heeded him not. Several days more passed and I slept quietly—but with the door well open into the maid's room—for the awful part is that not even Brunhilda (a police dog) wakes in these uncanny scenes.

The last night I was there I had been in bed an hour perhaps and was growing drowsy when I heard someone crying at my window. The most gentle attenuated sobbing; the most pitiful sounds you ever heard. I never for a minute thought of the spirits, but called the girl to light the candle. She heard it too—but the strange part is, I said it was at the back window and she heard it at the front, and neither did she think of spirits. As she opened to see who was there, IT came in sobbing—and we looked at each other and closed the windows. Perhaps you think we were frightened or horrified? I can only answer for myself—it filled me with an intense pity. I only wanted to comfort it and I said to the girl: "If it would only be quiet!" I then promised to have the mass said and invite the people, and it left, sobbing. And we, of course, both went to our beds to sleep dreamlessly till morning.

WEEPING CONTINUED.

In Mexico City for Christmas, even to me, the impression grew dim and I smiled when on my return the old trojero said the spirits still wept and wandered.

The very next day at table, where all were jesting, General Ryan said: "To make things perfect, do you keep an ancestral ghost, too?" It made even Ezio look pale. He then told us: "I will swear I was waked by a ghost dragging the chains of eternity up and down the room last night." That's all. Others heard it, too. The next day was for the fiesta and races, but when at night around the fire I told the tale, even the scoffers firmly wanted a mass said.

Early next morning, before the priest came, I made Rosemary and Hope help me cover the graves with calla lilies, and Ezio, as penance for the bad grandchildren, put a big bunch of them on the tombs. The ceremony of blessing the graves was most touching. No one since has heard the spirits.

J. Frank Dobie

San Antonio

Grass — and Old Superstitions

Light April 17, 1960

"The eyes of the master make a fat horse." Like many another adage, this can be challenged. Let us suppose that the horse is not getting grain but must depend on grazing for sustenance. If there are several horses, besides some cows and goats and sheep, the master will have to know something about grasses in order for his ewes to produce the proverbial fattening.

DOBIE

The first observation of my life on grass — aside from noticing grassburs sticking in bare feet — was made before I began connecting things with each other. An old cow had died in an abondoned field several hundred yards away from our ranch house. I don't know why she wasn't skinned, but she wasn't. This was in early winter. Buzzards and coyotes cleaned the carcass, but left a good deal of hide. I remember seeing a coyote crawl out from under the hide one day. I suppose he'd been gnawing a bone. The following spring or summer I noticed a patch of dark green grass on the ground where this cow had rotted. Many years later I came to wonder why Edward Fitzgerald expressed a doubt that roses grow with a richer redness "where some buried Caesar bled." It would be hard to summon a more contrary-to-nature superstition than the old one that grass will never grow again where blood of a murdered man has dampened soil. I have known several people who would do the earth more good by letting their blood run out on it than they've ever done it otherwise.

In the days of the open range when grazing west of the Mississippi river took its most romantic form, even the most successful of cowmen knew little about grasses. They knew a good turf when they saw it and were expert in judging a range good for cattle, but were mostly ignorant on the results of over-grazing and on ecological relationships now taught in the most elementary courses in botany.

Near House

Going back to the years ending the last century and beginning this one, many grass men did not want grass near the house. I wish I could remember the first lawn I saw. I am positive that I did not see it in the yard of a farmer or a ranchman. Our yard had more flowers in it than any yard in Live Oak county — cape jasmine, roses, chrysanthemums, violets, trumpet vine, honeysuckle, daisies; but any blade of grass that showed up was hoed down. Our yard, shaded by oaks and bordered by pasture, was kept as clean as a patio, the cleaners being boys.

Perhaps this ideal of patio cleanness came from the fact that rattlesnakes were always around. There wasn't going to be any "snake-in-the-grass" in the yard. As a matter of fact, numerous rattlesnakes were killed under the house and in front of it and back of it. I believe a rattlesnake is better camouflaged by bare ground than by green grass. I believe he'd rather travel on bare ground than on green grass.

In some parts of the country, bare clean yards went along with the practice of topping trees. Mary Austin Holly, Stephen F. Austin's cousin and author of the first book on Texas, lamented the practice among Austin's colonists of polling the trees about a house. That form of barbarism is still observable occasionally, but is no longer characteristic. I believe that an aesthetic appreciation of grass and trees is much more common now than it was two generations ago.

Grass Books

I own and have examined several books on grass. They are all reference books, full of facts but not meant to be read. Now I have one meant to be read. The title of it is "Blades of Grass," by H. C. Trumble. It was published in Melbourne, Australia, in 1946, but is no longer in print. The author is as learned in botany as anybody associated with American agriculture; at the same time, British educated, he is a humanist and knows how to write. His study of grasses has been mainly in connection with the sheep ranges of southern Australia. For me, he has the prescription for making two blades of grass grow where there was only one.

During the big drouth of the 50s I came to the conclusion that tens of millions of acres of rangelands in Texas were shorter on legumes than on grass. A legume gives nitrogen to the soil and grass benefits from it. The most popularly know legume in Texas is the bluebonnet, botanically classified as a lupin. Lupin means wolf, and the name was given to this plant long ago in the belief that it depleted the soil, whereas it enriches it. Many other legumes are native to the area. The University of Texas Press in Austin is publishing a book entitled "Legumes of Texas," by B. L. Turner, which lists 391 species and varieties of legumes known to occur in the state. Now I go back to the Australian's book, quoting one paragraph:

"Our field experiments showed how necessary it was to proceed through the clover phase on many of the soils before attaining satisfactory development and persistence of the grasses. They showed how indispensible was the association of grass and legume; that grass by itself led to nitrogen impoverishment, a sod-bound condition of the turf, and a marked falling-off of productivity; that the use of clover with non-persistent grasses led firstly to pure clover forage, not in itself satisfactory for stock, followed by an invasion of what one might justly term rubbish. The grass-legume association, on the other hand, enabled the nitrogen assimilated by the clover to be utilized by perennial grass and clover. This favoured a better balance for food for livestock, greater persistence of both grass and clover, and the exclusion of undesirable weeds and unthrifty species generally."

Scatter Seed

I've seen landholders in their struggle for grass scatter seed prodigally without realizing that the shortest way to grass is through the growth of clover and other legumes. B. C. Thorpe, a botanist of the University of Texas, and author of a book on grasses, once told me he believed broadcasting of bluebonnet seed might be the shortest and most practical way to nitrogenize a good deal of land in these regions.

Grass is as beautiful as sunrise. If any other combination in nature is more pleasing than that of grass, water, and trees, I have not seen it. And now the grass is rising.

Sunday, August 5, 1951

Scars of Colt Days Avenged

Stallion That Battled Panther To Death Was Pet of Little Tots

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

During the war, just before I left for Cambridge University to teach for a year, two of my old cowman friends said something like this: "Now while you are over there in England keep your eye open for a pitching horse. Our horses came from England and Spain and they pitch. It is claimed that horses don't pitch on the other side of the ocean. We want to know if this is a fact."

J. FRANK DOBIE.

It seems to be a fact that genuine pitching was developed by Spanish horses after they were transplanted to the Western hemisphere. The Arabian horses from which Spanish horses were largely derived (by way of the Barbs) have for 1,000 years been raised gentle, as members of the families of their nomadic owners. The traditional way of raising horses in Spain and England is to bring them up gentle. Vicious horses are occasionally found among them, and some few rear and "buck jump," but they don't swallow their heads, paw for the moon, sunfish on the way down, hit the earth on all fours and turn up their sides at the same time.

It is a common belief, in South America as well as North America, that panthers, by jumping on their backs, taught Spanish mares to pitch and that they transmitted this form of "prompititude" to their colts. Biologists say that such "acquired characteristics" as pitching off panthers are not transmissable to offspring.

FEW ENCOUNTERS SEEN.

Whatever brought about pitching, the panther was the most dangerous enemy found by horses introduced to the open ranges of the Americas. For hundreds of years colt meat has been the favorite meat of panthers. Few people have seen encounters between horses and panthers.

My friend Victor Lieb of Houston is one of the few. He is a consultant on mining in Mexico and has spent many years in that country, mostly in Chihuahua and Sonora. This is his story.

While he was working a mine in the Sierra Madre of Chihuahua just before the Madero revolution of 1910, he became the friend of a little ranchero who owned a stallion named Chinaco (Red Jacket). He was a bright red—the color of the uniform worn at one time by the rurales (the rangers or mounted police of Mexico, popularly called Chinacos). Black points and short coupling bespoke his Arab-Barb origin. His neck and face bore scars from clawings by a panther that had leaped upon him while he was a colt. He had had other encounters with the lion of the mountains—mostly, after he was grown, of his own seeking. His owner said that if he struck a fresh track while he was being ridden, the rider had just as well take off bridle and saddle and turn him loose, for there was no controlling him while he was in a frenzy of hate.

THE PANTHER KILL.

Yet he was a family pet. One time Victor Lieb saw half a dozen small children playing around him, all but one naked and that one with only a strip of cloth around his middle. One child was trying to climb up his leg, another was swinging by his tail, and the others were sprawling under and around him. Presently Chinaco decided to leave. He carefully picked up the youngster wearing the cloth and set him to one side, gently nudged another aside, and, picking each step until he was clear of the children, moved away. He had all the bottom that generations of toughness could transmit. His owner would not sell him.

But he owed a note to Don Luis Terrazas, whose haciendas covered millions of acres and who dominated thousands of peons. Now it was either pay the note or enter into a peonage extendable even unto the third and fourth generations. Victor Lieb paid the note. The next day Chinaco was led to his camp. He would not accept the horse to keep but only for riding while he remained in the region.

One early morning he rode out after venison. He was riding on a short stretch of softish mountain trail when Chinaco began to sniff and grow excited. Examining the ground, Victor Lieb saw a fresh panther track. Chinaco was already straining to go on. Lieb removed saddle and bridle, turned him loose and followed afoot. He could not see how the fight started, but when he got around the mountain he saw Chinaco rushing with extended head upon the dead panther's body, grabbing it by the neck, shaking it, flinging it to the ground and striking it with both forefeet at once. After he was satisfied with his conquest, Chinaco showed great pride. He had received no wound. Without any instrument of guidance he bore Victor Lieb bareback to where saddle and bridle had been left.

MAY 15 1960
FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Comfort, Courtesy in Old-Time Ranchero Life

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Time and again I've been warned by Mexican friends against some man said to be "muy ambicioso." The literal translation of this word as "ambitious" does not convey the meaning in the left-handed sense that an "ambicioso" individual is a covetous climber, scheming to take advantage of another, greedy, self-seeking and not to be trusted as far as you can throw a dead cat by the tail. In late years in the United States the profit motive, no matter at what expense, is supposed to be expressive of virtue. Ambition may be a virtue, but it's not nearly so comfortable for unrelated people as the lack of it often is.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

For comfort as well as for courtesy, give me the old-time Mexican ranchero people. When I was a boy in Live Oak County, my father used to buy steers from Don Victoriano Chapa, whose ranch was 12 or 15 miles up in the brush from ours. I went up there once in the summer and saw three worm-eaten animals standing in a tank. That was the only doctoring they got. The last of the Chapa men, without direct heirs, sold his ranch to Tom Lyne, his friend, at a dollar an acre, or maybe it was four dollars an acre, on time for 40 years at 4 per cent interest. All he wanted was enough to be comfortable on in the old style. Part of the contract was that if he died before the note was due, which was inevitable, Tom Lyne was to inherit the property. These terms do not indicate a nature of gnawing ambition.

* * *

ONLY ONE SHIRT.

I've been reading a pleasant little book entitled "The Blond Ranchero," issued by Dawson's Book Shop in Los Angeles. It consists of the recollection of Juan Francisco Dana as related by a grandson. Don Francisco's father came to southern California and married a native Californian long before the Americans took over the country. Here is a picture of life from the book.

"One day while my father was going to the coast he stopped off at the Casmalia Rancho to see his friend Don Diego Olivera. The old ranchero stood at the door of his adobe house with his shirt in his hand, and the following conversation took place:

"'How are you, Don Diego?'

"'I'm very well, my friend. It's true that I have only one shirt, but I wash it and it's soon dry again.'

"Now, considering standards of that day, Don Diego was a well-to-do ranchero but he could not buy an extra shirt when his supply was exhausted because there were no stores for leagues and leagues. He had to wait for a passing ship so he could do some trading or else ride horseback down to Santa Barbara, which would mean a trip of several days, for he would be duty-bound to visit all his 'cousins' on the way!

"The bed of Don Diego was a vast, high-poster, stylish at the time. From the floor up to the springs was equal in height to the space from the springs to the ceiling. Sticks were placed across the top from which a curtain hung. At night the curtain could be drawn, shutting off the occupant. At the bedside was a table upon which were always tobacco and a candle. The bed Chiquito and I were to occupy was not quite as elaborate but just as comfortable.

* * *

UP TO THE DEITY.

"Matches were very scarce and a flint and steel were used almost exclusively. This night, as it was. his custom, Don Diego was preparing to take his before-bed smoke.

"'If God please, I shall smoke,' he said. He rolled a cigarette and hit his steel against the flint time and again, but the cotton string would not ignite. Finally he blew out the candle and lay down to sleep.

"'God did not wish it,' he said in easy resignation.

"Chiquito let out a roar of laughter.

"'But Tio, why didn't you use the candle?" he asked.

"'Would you believe it—I didn't give the candle a thought!' he ruefully exclaimed. 'I use a wick all the time and I simply am not accustomed to any other lighter.'"

Of recent books bringing in the old-time ranchero people of the Texas border, "Trails and Trials of a Texas Ranger" by William Warren Sterling takes easy lead. He was my friend and paisano for many years, and something was lost to me when Bill Sterling died the other day. I kept intending to write about his book but didn't get to it in time for him to read what I have to say. I'm glad he wrote it in his own style instead of in the style that I and other writing people advised him to take.

* * *

WOODEN WHEELS.

One of the characters he pictures was Don Eusebio Garcia of the Hacienda Los Ojuelos not far from Mirando City, down country from Laredo. The family had been at Los Ajuelos a long time. Ojuelos means springs. Here was the only watering on a long route between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. Freighters from northern Mexico hauling salt from El Sal Del Rey in Hidalgo County used to stop at Los Ojuelos.

The wooden wheels of their carts could be heard screeching a long way before they arrived. The bull whackers popping their long plaited rawhide whips could be heard farther. Don Eusebio said that the ranch people used to send a rider out to meet the wagon trains and warn the boss that if his men persisted in cracking their whips they couldn't get water at the springs.

According to Bill Sterling, Tom Coleman was Don Eusebio Garcia's "best friend." Tom Coleman was a cowman from away back. He owned the great Calahan Ranch in Webb and LaSalle Counties and had big interests elsewhere. Before oil was struck in southwest Texas he and Don Eusebio Garcia were riding over one of the Coleman pastures one day when they got to talking about the chance of striking oil. Tom Coleman said it would be mighty fine if a cowman had a few oil wells to help him through the drouths and die-ups and panics.

"I'll tell you what let's do," he said to his friend. "If I strike oil on my ranch, I'll give you a lease on 40 acres. If you strike oil on your ranch, you give me a lease on 40 acres."

"Hecho," replied Don Eusebio —"it's done."

In the great slump in the cattle business after World War I, when far more cowmen went broke than during the depression that started in 1929, Tom Coleman went under. Just about this time an oil field was brought in on the Los Ojuelos ranch.

Now to quote Bill Sterling:

"In 1923 I drove Don Tomas Coleman and Don Eusebio Garcia out to look at the Coleman oil wells on Garcia land. Don Tomas said that the money he and his family were living on at the time came from the wells that he owned through the word of a friend. A few months later he was dead."

Dobie Prefers Jacal Dwelling 1/29/51

Modernized Houses Are Criticized For 'Adding Heat to Hot Weather'

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

A magazine writer called me up the other day and spent about $10 on queries as to what people in Texas do about summer heat. I told him that if they could they left it and if they couldn't they endured it. It is the housed people who feel the heat most. If a lawyer who does not have an air-conditioned office would pick cotton instead of vacationing in Colorado, he would soon come not to notice the heat so much. When you sweat, you evaporate, and evaporation has a cooling effect. Cattle of most breeds can't sweat and they are easily killed by over-heating.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The early architecture of Texas was better adapted to a hot climate than a great deal of modern architecture is. The Spaniards built houses with thick adobe walls. The rooms during the day kept a cellar-like coolness. The English-speaking settlers built double-log cabins, facing south: a wide hall, open at both ends, rooms on either side, a wide gallery clear across the front part of the house, sometimes around other sides. That hall was the coolest room ever built of lumber.

PICTURE FRAME WINDOWS.

Now "picture frame windows" are taking the country. I don't know where they originated. Their imitations in the South are about as sensible as King Canute's whip-lashings of the tide to keep it back. I know a real estate man who bought a fairly cool little cottage near Austin and spent several thousand dollars modernizing it for sale. Across the east side of the living room, which had old fashioned windows on that side and also on the south side, he installed a wide "picture frame window." It can not be opened. It draws in the heat like a sun glass. On the south side of this room he added what he calls a "game room." Its single window on the south wall is so high up that any breeze passing through it goes over the head of anybody standing in the room.

I had rather live in a Mexican jacal with mud-daubed walls of mesquite pickets and with an open shed on the south or east side than in this "modernized" cottage with picture frame window and game room. Any architecture that tries to contradict climate and the ground on which it is built is false. Rattlesnakes are hot country dwellers, but they can't stand intense sunshine. They would die imprisoned behind picture frame windows. During the heat of the day they crawl into a hole or get into shade somewhere.

DROUTH AND PRAYERS.

Heat and drouth go together. I don't set myself up as a weather prophet, but when it does not rain in the fall, especially in September, I expect about 12 months of drouthy weather to follow.

A full history of drouths in the Southwest would include something on prayers. Christianity did not originate prayers, for rain or anything else. Long before America was discovered the Hopi Indians of Arizona were praying, as they still pray, for rain. They use rattlesnakes and other snakes in their ceremonials. The time for the rain prayers is set for the season of rain—when there is any rain. If rain comes, then the main actors will get credit; if it does not come, they are not to blame.

The Aztec gods and ceremonies deeply were concerned with rain. Human sacrifices were added to priestly talk. All human sacrifices are brutal, but the god Tezcatlipoca, who was pretty much the chief of the Aztec pantheon, was honored by a ceremony in which beauty and pathos modified the horrible.

FETED AND EXECUTED.

Some young, brave, handsome and winsome prisoner of war was chosen a full year before the day of his imminent execution. Eight priests who were to remain with him through the year taught him how to conduct himself as a ruler and to receive homage. He learned to play melodies on a flute, and as he walked about playing, people made obeisance to him as if he were the god Tezcatlipoca. He was fed on the delicacies of the land. A month before the day of execution, four lovely girls dressed as goddesses became his intimate companions and servants. One imagines that the victim sometimes fell in love with one of these girls and she with him. But the day of doom was coming.

That morning he told his consorts farewell and then led a procession in his own honor amid jubilation and feasting. Next, he bade farewell to his attendants and walked to a temple. The eight priests walked ahead of him up the temple steps. At each step he broke a flute on which he had played during his year of preparatory living. When he reached the platform, the priests bent him over the sacrificial rock and "wrenched out his heart." Soon after that his skull was added to the skulls of predecessors adorning the facade of the temple.

Facts One Thing, Tales Another

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

MAY 29 1960

Hope-Hunters Can See the Flames Behind Tiniest Vestige of Smoke

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

When a person is writing a story he leaves out what does not contribute to it. Thirty years ago this year I turned over to a publisher the manuscript for a book entitled "Coronado's Children" — tales of lost mines and buried treasures of the Southwest. It is still in print and every year I receive letters from the hunters of lost mines and buried treasures asking for "a little more information" on this and that fortune. I'm not like Augustus Baldwin Longstreet (1790-1870), who, after he became politician, preacher, and professional college president, regretted that he had written what is now his only passport to being remembered. That is the rollicky book, "Georgia Scenes."

J. FRANK. DOBIE.

I'm glad I wrote "Coronado's Children," but here is an irony: whereas its stories are stories of illusion, I have come to be strong on disillusion. I doubt if I ever did believe in ghosts, but I believe in ghost stories. I never would have bet a dollar on the legendary silver bars or the legendary silver mine on the San Saba River, but I wrote the best story I could of the Lost San Saba Mine. Jim Bowie believed in it, hunted for it, and found an Indian fight. After he died in the Alamo a lot of men came to believe he had found silver and to this day the illusion is called the Lost Bowie Mine.

* * *

FACTS ARE KNOWN.

Is there anything to the tale? Oh, yes, there's lots to it, all based on human imagination and human hope. Robert Louis Stevenson said it is better to travel hopeful than to arrive. Humanity has to have hope whether justified by reality or not. The majority of hope-hunters will accept any kind of evidence on anything from a buried pot to the immortality of the soul. Where there's much smoke, there must be some fire, they claim. By this logic, the assertion by millions of orthodox Christian over hundreds of years that the earth is flat would have made it flat.

The following facts are well known to history. In 1757 the Spaniards established a mission on the San Saba River near the present town of Menard and at the same time, as usual on the frontier, a fort (or presidio). The fort and the mission were three miles apart, for the missionaries did not approve of the morals of the soldiers. The purpose of the mission was to "reduce" (convert) Apaches. The Apaches had no ambition to be reduced (converted). Comanches didn't like either Spaniards or Apaches. In March of 1758 they utterly destroyed the mission, and it was never rebuilt. The fort held on uselessly and wastefully until 1769 and then it was abandoned forever.

* * *

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS.

What about the minerals, the mines, the legendary workings on the San Saba and on the Llano by the Spaniards? If you can't prove that a good man is a Communist, then start rumors that he is. Hitler's philosophy was that if the big lie is repeated often enough it will succeed. A remarkable book, beautifully printed, entitled "The San Saba Papers," has been published by the noted bookseller John Howell, 434 Post Street, San Francisco. "The San Saba Papers" is composed of official statements made by soldiers and others shortly after destruction of the San Saba Mission.

One of the deponents was a shepherd, presumably a goatherder. A lieutenant testified that after the massacre several plow oxen were found slain and a few escaped rams and ewes were brought back to the presidio alive. There was, as testimony brings out, a livestock ranch 5 leagues (12 to 15 miles) west of the presidio. People lived at this ranch and it had a substantial horse corral. Colonel Parrilla spoke of horses as being "the first requirement for the proper conduct of every presidio." Seven hundred and fifty horses had been stolen when the mission was destroyed. The ranch was probably more of a horse ranch than a cattle ranch. In all this testimony not a word is spoken of miners or of mining activities.

Another recent book published by the Quivara Society, Berkeley, Cal., is entitled "The Frontiers of New Spain." It is made up of a report of what Nicolas de La-Fora saw on an inspection trip with the Marquez de Rubi in 1766-1768. They got to Texas in 1767, nine years after the San Saba Mission had been destroyed and two years before the San Saba Presidio was abandoned.

* * *

NO WORD ON MINES.

The report comments on the industries, stock raising, featherbedding and other occupations of the Spanish outposts. Without one word concerning silver, or mining, or miners, Nicolas de La-Fora said of the presidio of San Saba, where he found the occupants living in constant fear of the Comanches:

"The garrison consists of a cavalry company of a hundred men, including five officers and a chaplain. It is an annual expense of forty, thousand three hundred and sixty pesos to his majesty and is of no advantage whatsoever." Indeed, the report goes on, this presidio was as useless as some of the missions being maintained at great expense.

If evidence of fabulous stores of silver taken from the San Saba and Llano mines turns up, I'll revert to this subject again.

Rode as if 'Growed to Animal'

1-22-51

Ellie Newman's Rides and Dreams Once the Talk of Southwest Texas

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

To appreciate Ellie Newman's ride, once the talk of Southwest Texas, one must consider his belief in dreams. During the earlier part of his life he had been considerably on the dodge. Once while he was dodging, he went to his uncle's ranch to spend the night. The house was in a small clearing. He staked his horse near by and went to sleep on a pallet on the front gallery. Along in the night he awoke with a start, arousing his uncle, who was sleeping on the same quilt.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"What's the matter?" muttered the uncle.

"I've had a dream that I don't like," Ellie Newman replied. "I dreamed that I heard dogs barking and saw horsemen riding on a clearing."

"Aw," growled the uncle, "all the matter with you is that you ate too many frijoles for supper. Turn over on your belly and go to sleep."

Ellie turned over, but within half an hour he leaped bolt upright out of the pallet.

"What the devil is the matter this time?" swore the uncle.

"By Gosh," answered Ellie—and his voice was steady—"I've dreamed three times now that I heard dogs barking and saw saw horsemen riding on a clearing. I'm riding. Adios."

FOLLOWED HIS DREAM

By the time he had done speaking he had on his boots from which the spurs were never unstrapped. He walked with a low whistle to where his horse was grazing, for it was still too early in the night for horses to sleep. The moon was bright, and in 10 minutes he was riding out of the clearing on which the little ranch house stood and he was entering the mesquite fringe of a hollow to the west.

"Just as I got into the brush," so he used to tell the story, "I heard the dogs at the house open up. I stopped my horse and bent around so I could look back. I saw seven men riding up to the front gallery. They were Rangers."

Thereafter Ellie believed more strongly than ever in his dreams. He always claimed that a dream of stampede or catfish was a sure sign that some of his people needed him badly. Then, no matter where he was, he would get up from his bed and head for home. Once he had started up the trail with a herd of steers and was a week's drive to the north when he dreamed of a stampede. He awoke to find the cook grinding coffee. By the time it was boiling he had his night horse saddled. Then after two hot cups he headed south.

150 MILES, NO STOPS.

The time that he made his famed ride from above Kerrville, he was with the Schreiner outfit on a big roundup. Schreiner was putting up a string of 3,000 steers for a Northwestern contractor and they were about ready for delivery. Then one night Ellie dreamed of a stampede and a catfish together—a combination of omens as direful as a preacher and a gray mare on board a Mississippi steamboat at the same time. In the dream he was pointing the herd into the Llano River. Just as the lead steer, a big rangy brindle, got his feet in the water and was snuffing it, an immense catfish flopped to the surface and splashed water all over the brindle's head. The steer let out a bellow that woke up the drag cattle a half mile away. The stampede that followed, as Ellie always narrated the dream, "shook rocks out of them Llano mountains." With such a stampede and such a catfish in one dream, Ellie absolutely had to ride

His horse was nothing extra—in a way—just a good Spanish cow horse. He crawled on him in rocky country, followed trails partly rocky for 75 miles, passed through San Antonio, got into heavy sand, and before he pulled the saddle off at the Butler ranch in Karnes County had ridden 150 miles without stopping long enough to graze his horse.

SECRET OF EASY RIDE.

Ellie was the kind of rider that cow horse people have always liked to discuss—not because he would "ride anything that grows hair or feathers"—he would—but because he could "get out of a horse all that the horse had in him." A good rider is more than a horse breaker, and many a modern rodeo star couldn't stay long enough to unroll his blankets on a ranch where horses are friends to be cared for and not antagonists for a mere spectacle. Ellie Newman could "ride a horse from hell to breakfast and the horse would never know the difference." A cowman for whom he worked said he could "straddle a played out horse and get more out of him than most other hands could get out of a mount fresh roped from the remuda."

Ellie rode as if he were "growed to the animal." He sat erect, never lounging to one side or the other. The only give in his frame was in the lower six inches of the spine. In that part of his back moved a kind of rhythm with the horse's movement, whether the horse "fox trotted," galloped "like uncoupling freight cars," or "swallowed his head" and pawed at the horns of the moon. Ellie liked to talk of horsemanship and frequently remarked: "If them last six inches of a man's backbone don't give and take, he'll never be sure 'nough rider. A heavy man can ease his horse with that spring, and without it a light man can kill the best buckskin cowpony that ever went up the trail."

Benefit Question

JUN 19 1960

Horse-Cow Argument

STAR TELEGRAM

Debated With Father

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The semiweekly Houston Post had what was called The Children's Page. One of its features was a running debate in which anybody who wrote a letter seemed to get it printed. A debate that interested me was on whether horses or cows are of more benefit to mankind I wanted to write a letter on the side of horses. I don't remember having written it, but I carried on the debate with my father. He said cows had benefited people more by giving them milk, meat, hides for shoes and harness and a great many other useful things. He'd seen horse raising on ranches change from the profit side to the losing side.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

I never did think that we had enough horses. Papa thought we had plenty for doing what ranch work was necessary. Our good neighbors, the Hinnants, had more horses than we had. When we worked cattle at least two of the Hinnant boys usually came over to help, riding their own horses at $1.50 a day, whereas the pay for an American without a horse was six bits a day and for a Mexican without a horse four bits a day. There weren't any better hands than some of the four-bits-a-day vaqueros.

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NEEDED HORSES.

One year, about 1904, the ranch just had to have a few more saddle horses. Papa had stretched his credit buying steer yearlings at $10 a round and had quite a bit of country leased. A wet summer made screw worms bad and we were riding, doctoring and skinning until after dark every day. One of the biggest horse traders in the country was Chato Vela at Alice, 40 miles to the south. He was called Chat and had been reared on the Nueces east of us, his family being so prominent and so numerous that their ranch was called Velena. To show how times were then and how they have changed, one time when Chat came to our ranch, maybe buying mares, I remember Papa's asking him if he were in the habit of eating with the help or with the families. He said down in the Alice country he ate at the first table. He came in and ate with us.

It was a year or two later that Papa wrote Chat Vela to send six or eight good cow horses. He sent straight Spanish horses. The best was one we called Hippy. He was a black. His left hip had been knocked down, but there never was a better stayer than Hippy was. He was about 15 hands high and absolutely tireless. His only drawback was that once in a while he didn't want to start off. He'd sull (provincial for sulk). I don't think he ever sulled after Papa, with help, tied him down and gave him a terrible beating with a cow whip. My flesh crawls now at memory of that beating. My father was not a cruel man — quite the contrary.

I have wondered many times what made Hippy sull just after being saddled. The girth must have pinched him in the wrong way or something like that — something going back to his breaking. He was too entergetic to throw off. Every movement of his had the springiness of vitality; he could not be draggy. He was always watching. I had no such connection then, but I connect him now with a saying of Emerson's, "It is as easy for the strong man to be strong as it is for the weak man to be weak." Hippy was a good cutting horse. I never could understand why Papa let anybody else ride him but himself. He wouldn't let me ride him. On a long trip we made after cattle a hired hand started a setfast on his back. A setfast is a sore that is very hard to heal. It did heal in time but never so that hard riding in hot weather would not take the thin skin off.

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WIND-BROKEN HORSES.

Not nearly so many ranch horses nowadays have setfasts as in the Horse Age. For one thing, modern horses are generally not used so hard. We had two wind-broken horses. They had been over-ridden in hot weather. A wind-broken horse would take "the thumps." His heart was racing terribly. You could hear him struggling for breath a long way off. Like a heart case among human beings, a wind-broken horse had to go easy. Setfasts, galled sides, the heaves, etc., are not in the Hollywood calendar of range romance.

Papa made short shift with horses that didn't want to go. One time we had an iron-gray stallion named Tordillo. I was just a kid. I put my saddle on him and got on him. Instead of going forward he went backward. He got his hindquarters mixed up with the tongue and single-trees of an empty wagon that had been left in the shade of a mulberry tree. Papa grabbed a buggy whip and before long Tordillo was going forward in a repentant way.

I don't think Papa had much use for Tordillo's blood. One winter a Mexican named Panteleon from down country who worked for us bought — on credit to be paid out in wages — a potro (young gelding) sired by Tordillo. He had been ridden a few times when Panteleon bought him. Panteleon made so much over him that Papa said he wondered he didn't put diapers on him. His way of petting a horse didn't make him more docile. For some reason, probably because grass was short in the horse pasture, he turned the potro out in what we called the big pasture, where he got with the wild mares, his old friends. The next time the wild mares were in the pen Panteleon managed (roped by the forefeet) the potro and broke his neck. Expert roping used to break the necks of quite a few horses and also cattle—sometimes on purpose.

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FAVORITE CANELO.

I don't remember anything about a little deep bay horse that Chato Vela sent up except that my brother Elrich fancied him. He was kind of fancy himself. Elrich named him Cardinal (Spanish pronunciation, Red Bird). The horse that I valued out of that bunch was a red roan we called Canelo (Cinnamon). His name brings to mind an esteem for the color that went into sayings such as this: "To hear him talk you'd think they were all red roans and natural born pacers." Canelo wasn't a pacer of any kind; he was expert at putting his head down so that, as he hoped, he wouldn't be seen or roped out of the remuda.

Range people, particularly in a brush or rocky country, where much uneven footage is to be contended with, never have had much use for pacing horses. They stumble too easily. We had a lanky sorrel that paced — and stumbled. Like other ranch people, I have always preferred a hard up-and-down jog trotter that was clear-footed to any pacer. Traditionally ranch people may like a kind of fox trotting horse, but have no more use for pacers than for thin-skinned, glass-eyed calicoes.

Lusty, Careless Vigor Universal 6-17-51

Texas Boasts, Though Delightful, Stem From Centuries-Old Stories

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The other morning while I was eating breakfast in a Fort Worth coffee shop, I unwillingly overheard a woman, whose high voice dominated a table some distance away, say to the waitress: "We are TEXANS and we want our coffee right now."

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Her implication was that Texans are peculiar from other people in wanting coffee "right now" or any other time. Anybody who has ever read or traveled knows that coffee-drinking is worldwide. For instance, there is no little cow town in Texas where men come as near living on coffee as in the tented camps of Arabian nomads.

After writing about the Texas tradition as much as anybody, I have come to regard it more from a comparative slant. My conclusion is that the most peculiar quality in the Texas state of mind is imagining that it is peculiar.

A Texas cowboy used to consider himself original in making a steer get up on a cold night and lie down in his bed to get the benefit of the warmed ground. Sleeping with animals in order to be warm is a primitive custom going back thousands of years. The original heating pads were dogs. Now farmers in Sweden are piping the body warmth of milk cows into adjacent bedrooms.

OLD SAYINGS REVIVED.

One of the so-called "Texas sayings" often heard nowadays is that one should not ask a person where he is from. "If he is a Texan he'll let you know, and if he isn't he won't want to be humiliated by confessing that he is from some other state." This saying was attributed to Virginia before Texas was a state. It has merely been purloined and appropriated by Texas. If Texans want to use it, all right, but to imagine that it is original is to confess ignorance of other peoples. The shortest cut to the feeling of originality and individualism is to maintain ignorance regarding other people and their history.

No class of human beings appropriates from others more constantly than writers. We writers would all be silent if we had to depend entirely on creative originality. It is not borrowing and stealing that gravels me. It is the claim of borrowers and thieves to being original. To illustrate Texas toughness in frontier days there's an old story about the man who would not let a boy working for him use a log for a pillow. The story says something, but it was said long ago in another country.

One of the Camerons of Scotland, as the story goes, was camping with his son in the snow during a raid. He noticed the lad rolling up a snowball to use as a pillow. Just as he was about to lay his head upon it, the father arose and kicked it down the mountain. "No effeminancy, my son," he said in his sternest manner. The old saying that "Texas is hell on women and dogs but all right for men and horses" was applied to England with variations by Robert Burton more than three centuries ago. It was probably hoary then.

BRAGS NOT ORIGINAL.

There's nothing original about boasting itself. "Gasconade," which means boasting, bragging, is an ancient word derived from Gascon, an inhabitant of the province of Gascony in France. You can hear the phrase, "That's Texas talk." Maybe some day the phrase will be shortened into Texasade, Texasism, or something like that.

Gasconade waited for centuries to be distilled into a literary masterpiece. A half century ago the French dramatist Rostand made his play "Cyrano de Bergerac" around the character of a Gascon who died in 1655. It is bright with brave boasting, prickling with wit, and magnificent in nobility.

"Now," cries Cyrano, "I shall be fulminating and frenetical. I want an army all complete to put to rout! I have 10 hearts and 20 arms. I can not be suited with felling dwarfs to earth. Giants are what I want."

But Cyrano's pride is not alone in physical prowess; it is not confined to the realm of things. "My foppery," he says, "is of the inner man. I would not sally forth with my conscience foggy about the eye and my honor crumpled. I plume myself with independence and straightforwardness. It is not just a handsome figure that I hold erect as in a brace; it is my soul. I go decked with exploits in place of ribbon bows. I taper to a point my wit like a moustache. And at my passage through the crowd true sayings ring like spurs."

LUSTY, CARELESS VIGOR.

Here is the boast that compasses the whole round of life. An article on Texas boasting in a recent magazine ("Esquire") leaves the impression that the chief subject of Texas talk is the luxury of the Shamrock Hotel in Houston and the climax of millionaires in oil fields. Whenever boasting compasses the whole round of life, the purely physical is piped down to just proportions.

Yet there is something delightful in any kind of boasting, except that based on mathematical addition—for a while. It expresses a lusty, careless vigor. Stupid people without imagination should never boast, however, unless they want to be taken for bores. It takes invention and variety to prevent boasting from becoming tiresome.

One of my favorite Texas stories based on mere bigness has to do with bedbugs. A Texan was sojourning with "foreigners" bothered by bedbugs. He kept saying that he had not seen or felt anything that in Texas would be classed as a genuine bedbug. One night the people to whom he had been bragging about the size of his Texas bedbugs put several terrapins in his bed. The next morning they asked him if he had noticed any bedbugs.

"Yes," he said, "I did notice a few little fellows. They were about the size of newly hatched bedbugs in Texas, and back there we never pay baby bed bugs any mind."

Case of Richard Burton

JUN 5 19[illegible]

Manuscript Burning Is Hideous Practice

STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Byron died in 1824, not on the battlefield but, just the same, fighting for freedom in Greece, as throughout his short but vivid life of energy he had stood for freedom of the mind and freedom of the human spirit. In August 1959 the Atlantic Monthly featured an extraordinary essay on "The Burning of Byron's Memoirs." They were burned by prudes and cowards. As the manuscripts were torn apart and fed into a hearth fire, one of the inquisitors realized that something of Byron himself was being consumed in the flames.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

It is hideous enough to burn a book merely because one does not agree with its contents. Burning a manuscript of a great mind that has never been printed and that after the burning can never be printed is worse than most murders. The burners are always people afraid of reality or against thought. Always they are stranglers of free minds. In fact a book burner is no better than a burner of a living human body and a burner of manuscripts is lower than a traitor to his country.

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PROFICIENT LINGUIST.

These ideas surge up in me as a result of having read another life of Sir Richard Burton—the third or fourth I've read of that extraordinary man. His 69 years (1821-1890) were compounded of flaming energy both of mind and body. He was one of the two or three most proficient linguists known to history; he spoke at least 29 languages and was master of a dozen or more dialects in addition. He went disguised as a Moslem to Mecca and wrote a fascinating book on his travels. Traveling over the Arabian world as the Arabs traveled, he often told stories out of The Arabian Nights to his servants and to other travelers. His published works, including more than a dozen volumes of travels and translations out of several languages, would probably overflow a ten-foot shelf. He will no doubt live on for centuries as the translator of 16 volumes of The Arabian Nights. This superb translation, still known only to the sophisticated, is matched by thousands of notes on Oriental life and by the famous "Terminal Essay." Burton was as familiar with harem life as he was with the unmapped sources of the Nile. He supplemented Ovid's familiar "Art of Love" with three or four translations out of Oriental lore on that subject.

He was past 40 when he married a 30-year-old woman named Isabel, who was crazy about him, crazy about religion, and crazy anyhow. He had been in the British army in India and elsewhere, but no man of his fierce individualism and originality could expect hospitality from the army mind of any nation. He was received into the foreign office but throughout his career seems to have been regarded as a necessary evil and was kept in out-of-the-way, poor-paying consulates. He had been at Trieste several years when he died. He was an anthropologist as much as he was a linguist and traveler, and it is well known that no true anthropologist accepts the religious creed of any sect, ancient or modern, East or West.

* * *

RITUAL DISREGARDED.

The story is told that after he and Isabel with guides had climbed to the peak of Teneriffe, she persuaded the guides to join her in saying mass. While they were all kneeling, Richard Burton went on smoking a cigar and regarding the ritual as if it were some rite practiced by the aborigines of Africa — into which he made several excursions.

When he died it was found that he had been working on nearly as many manuscripts as he published. Among the manuscripts was a free-spoken diary that he had kept for 40 years. It contained, beyond all doubt, many observations calculated to arouse a critical attitude towards life on earth and many anecdotes classified as "erotica" or "curious."

He had been ailing for some time before the morning of Oct. 20, 1890, when he began to struggle for breath. Isabel hurried out for Dr. Baker. When she returned Burton cried out, "quick, chloroform, ether, or I'm a dead man."

According to Dr. Baker his last words were: "I am a dead man."

He could not take ether or chloroform on account of his weak heart. With convulsive movements he died in Isabel's arms. Now I condense from Burton of Arabia, by Seton Dearden, published in 1937.

"For a moment Isabel was stunned with grief. Then she rallied herself. It must not be the end: Not yet. 'Is he dead?' she asked the doctor. She would not believe his assertion. Her face streaked with paint and tears, a huge yellow wig wobbling on her head, she rushed from the room for a priest.

* * *

"A Slav peasant father with whom she returned asked, 'is he alive?' Isabel lifted an eyelid, forced the peasant to see a gleam of life. 'Quick, father, quick, before it is too late.'

"Into the dead mouth was thrust the holy wafer, and the solemn tones of the Extreme Unction broken by Isabel's weeping filled the little room. Surely that wild untamable spirit will be saved! Surely the outcast will be received into the arms of mother church!

"Richard was saved. He was not in hell fire. But there was his reputation to think of. Soon after the burial, while she was praying in her room at Trieste, his spirit — so she testified — appeared before Isabel, pointed, and said sternly, 'Burn my manuscripts.' Isabel knew what it meant; it meant all his translations and questionable writings; it meant his journal kept daily for nearly 40 years; it meant that vile Scented Garden on which he had been working so gleefully.

"She hurried to the peasant priest and told him all. 'Yes, burn them,' was his verdict also; and returning home Isabel went into his little study and stripped it of manuscripts. Aided by the priest, she built a fire, and one by one the valuable sheets, the records of years of labor, learning, and thought vanished in smoke. Isabel's purge was complete. She had set her seal upon his body, and now it was set upon his work."

Stories of Endurance Recalled

5-27-51

Spanish Pony Tough and Reliable When It Came to Long, Hard Rides

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Man, especially Christian man, long ago decreed that God is made in his own image. Oftener than not, man takes credit also for what his horse does, which is not exactly god-like behavior. The nearest that the Sons and the Daughters of the American Revolution have ever come to the animal that carried Paul Revere is an assumption. It is assumed that he rode a Narrangansett mare. Revere himself merely said that he rode "a very good Horse." So far as public imagination goes, he might have ridden a stick horse.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

In all great rides the horse is understood and guided but acceded to by man. As it takes two who love to make a memorable kiss, it takes two also in rapport to make a memorable ride.

In the end the horse's performance sums up all that is to be said about him. These stories are the finality on the mustang breed. They belong to the times when "a man on foot was no man at all," when "a man's horse was his best friend" and a horseman unhorsed was sin pies — without feet.

SPANISH PONY TOUGH.

One day during the years while Apaches harassed all the trails of Chihuahua, Col. Richard I. Dodge saw on the plaza in El Paso a Spanish pony, hardly 14 hands high, that took his fancy. He located the owner, an American, and offered him what he considered a high price, $40. The owner replied that he would not take less than $600. That ended the conversation. Later Colonel Dodge learned that every week for the past six months the pony had been carrying his owner between El Paso and Chihuahua, traveling only by night, remaining hidden by day, covering the distance in three nights. As the crow flies, it is over 200 miles from El Paso to Chihuahua City; as the trails wound, it was maybe 250 miles. The rider was carrying dispatches; he went south one week and came back the next, getting $100 for each round trip. "Six months of this work had not diminished the fire or flesh of that wonderful pony."

Many and many a pony of the ranges was just as durable but went unnoticed by any enduring record.

Many years ago a little old cowman named W. B. Slaughter, who had once owned great herds but who was coming to the end of his life in San Antonio, told me this story.

CASH IS DEMANDED.

"Early in 1873, before grass had started, my brother J. B. Slaughter and I came down from North Texas to Mason County and contracted for 1,500 head of big steers at $16 a round, spring delivery. I was 23 and already had bossed two herds up the trail to Kansas. J. B. was just 19. From the day we signed the contract, cattle began going up. By the date agreed on for delivery, the middle of April, those steers were worth $10 a head more than the contract price. When we got to Mason with our outfit to receive the steers and start up the trail, we found a down-hearted, sullen set of cowmen. If they could break the contract, they would make $15,000 and they were the kind of men to break a contract if they could.

"'Have you got the cash?' they asked.

"We showed them a letter of credit from a Dallas bank for $50,000. They laughed at it. That was not money. There was a little private bank in the town of Mason. We took the letter of credit there. It didn't have more than $1,000 in the vault. The banker couldn't help us. The stage for San Antonio had just driven into town. I took it. We had three or four days left to complete our side of the contract, which called for 'on or about' April 15.

"Colonel Brackenridge was the main banker in San Antonio. He told me what kind of money belt to buy. After I got it, he helped me put $25,000 in $10 and $20 gold pieces into it. When the gold was all packed away, the belt weighed 104 pounds. I weighed around 135. I went to a store and bought the sorriest looking hat and the most run-down pair of boots in stock. I went to one of the horse pens and picked out a pony that to some people would look disgraceful. He was a dunnish roan, tough and wiry. I paid $15 for him. I saddled him with an old hull that cost $5.

NIGHT RIDE TO MASON.

"Toward sundown I set out. I was expected back in Mason with the cash. The rough Llano River country across Mason County was at that time the hideout for as hard a set of outlaws as Texas ever had. There were so many of them and they were so bold that two years after the Rangers rounded up every human male of that section into a stockade and cut the sheep out from the goats, just as you would cut cattle. The good men had nothing to fear and were glad to be rid of the others. On the straightest possible road, it is about 115 miles from San Antonio to Mason. My route was across the open range west of the stage road. It must have covered over 130 miles. If I met anybody I was to pass as a green youth from Gonzales looking for a job with a trail herd.

"By daylight I had covered, I figured, something less than half the distance. I stopped close to water and staked my horse in a little opening inclosed by brush. Then I crawled into the brush and slept. Of course I had a six-shooter. At dark I saddled up and rode on north. About every two hours I'd unsaddle and let my horse graze. He wallowed once or twice. Lots of the time he traveled in a lope. By sunup I was getting close to Mason. Instead of riding straight in town, I circled it and came from the north. I learned that the stage from San An had been carefully looked by some strange men miles down the road.

"Well, when we plank the gold, those ranche

Bray Stopped by Tiedown?

Mule Tales Touched Off by Tails Question

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM OCT 30 1960

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

"A doctor friend of mine, who has reached the age of 72 and retirement, has in his reminiscences of World War I been wondering if it is true that the mule must raise its tail before it can bray. These mules were used to transport supplies to the front, and upon arrival would bray, thus notifying the Germans to begin shelling the spot. An old sergeant in charge of the animals said that if the mules were unable to raise their tails they could not (or would not) bray. It is also stated in a history of the Civil War that the mule's tail was wired down to keep it from braying to betray the encampments to the enemy.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"I was given the mission, before setting out on a drive through the Ozarks, of obtaining information on this subject. Some natives said 'yes,' others said 'no.' When I saw the Mule Trading Post advertised — 'You are now 100 miles from; 75 miles from, 50, 25, and then there—I could not even purchase a hand-carved Missouri mule, but had to settle for a cedar one sawed on the production line, with a purple-yarn tail and a toothy grin painted on, to mail my doctor friend to let him know I was on the trail of the mule's tail."

* * *

LIMITED EXPERIENCE.

Does and must a mule raise its tail while braying? I can not answer this question posed by Miss Lenore Brannon of the United States Public Health Hospital at Fort Worth. There is a picture in my mind of a shave-tailed sorrel mule raising her tail while braying joyfully to a brown mule being ridden up to a camp in Mexico—but I can't swear whether I'm making the picture or that sorrel mule named Durazno (Peach) is responsible for the picture.

It's true that my experience with mules has been limited, but the hard fact is that my observation on the subject has been much more limited. During Indian days on the Southwestern frontiers, mules were regarded by frontiersmen and also Army men as the most vigilant and perceptive of night guards. A mule was apt to give the alarm of Indians sneaking up in the dark before anybody else was aware of them. It's my understanding—but I may be wrong—that the alarm did not consist of braying but of restless action, maybe snorting. The keen detective powers of the mule resided primarily in a sense of smell. This sense of smell made the mule the best water finder there was in desert country.

But does a mule always raise its tail upon braying and if it can not raise its tail is it unable to bray? I do know that feeding deer raise their tails upon raising their heads to look around. Perhaps the tail is raised a fraction of a second before the head is fully raised. Time and again I have spent an hour or more creeping upon stock deer feeding halfway out in the open on bushes. I could move, keeping semi-covered behind bushes and prickly pear, so long as the deer were browsing. When I saw a white flag—the tail—go up, I would freeze in my tracks. When head and tail went down I could advance a little farther.

Thus I have crept up until I could almost see the eyelashes of a doe, taking my cue from the raising and lowering of the flag. I simply do not know whether the raising and lowering of a mule's tail is so automatic at the process of braying. It might be interesting for somebody to tie down the tail of a domesticated deer and ascertain if this deer could lift its head naturally from browsing with tail fastened down. I suggest this as a useful experiment in science.

* * *

LEFT OUT OF LITERATURE.

It takes mule-users to appreciate mules. A good deal of use is still made of mules in the mountains of Mexico. I have ridden on caminos reales (royal roads) in Mexico made exclusively for mules and horses. I remember the tunnels of one such road leading from an ancient and rich mining camp named Tayoltita in Durango to the coast. Following for miles along a canyon, it had several tunnels cut out for the use of trains of pack mules that brought supplies to the mine and carried out bars of silver.

The arrieros (muleteers) of Spain and of Spanish-American mountainous countries in the Western Hemisphere have been as distinct a type as were the Mountain Men of Kit Carson's day, the cowboys of Charlie Siringo's day, or the loggers of Paul Bunyan fame, but they've never received their due in literature.

One can learn a good deal about them and their mules from George Barrow's wonderful "Bible in Spain" and from other writings.

Grant Shepherd, whose father partly owned and totally managed the once-famous Batopilas mine in Chihuahua, wrote a book entitled "The Silver Magnet" that's never had much notice but that contains as much appreciation of and accurate observation on mules and arrieros as you are apt to find in any other book pertaining to the Sierra Madre. I quote this instance from Grant Shepherd's "The Silver Magnet."

"I remember one old veteran of the pack-train who had so much personality she was beloved by all the regular arrieros, even if she did give them the trouble to pick up her aparejo (pack saddle) wherever she had dropped it in the corral at the end of the day's march. In the morning you would put on her pack-saddle, and when her turn came you would put on her load. She was ready and willing to leave at or near the head of the train, be it a small one or one consisting of a hundred or more mules. She was a black mule with a Roman nose, and was 15 years old when we retired her. You could always locate her, for she never failed to be at or near the head of the pack-train all day long.

"She was absolutely sure to be the first mule into the station enclosure at the end of the day's travel, right up front too, at the edge of the portal to have her load removed first. Until the load was taken off she was as patient and well-behaved as any mule could be, but once the load was gone, instead of waiting with the others to have the saddle removed in turn, she immediately sought and found a corner of a corral post against which she would get the edge of the aparejo. Then she would heave and draw in her belly and slip out of the saddle, although the cinch had been tight enough to carry her along all day with no danger of any loosening in the load. She would give herself a vigorous shake, find a suitable spot to have a gratifying roll, shake herself once more, close her old eyes and go to sleep until feeding time."

Sunday, April 8, 1951

Let 'Em Know Who Was Boss

Bob Lemmons, Negro and Champ Mustanger, Lived With Wild Horses

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The most original mustanger I ever met either in person or through hearsay, was an ex-slave named Bob Lemmons. He was not a pure-blooded Negro. He had an Indian look. Certainly as a kinsman to wild animals he was Indian in both naturalness and mystery. He was 84 years old when I talked with him on his little ranch out from Carrizo Springs, west of the Nueces, in 1931. He had grown up with the mustangs and had known no other life than that of range and trail.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"I acted like I was a mustang," he said. "I made the mustangs think I was one of them. Maybe I was in them days. After I stayed with a bunch long enough they'd foller me instid of me having to foller them. Show them you're the boss. That's the secret."

He always mustanged alone. It was never his aim to "dry out" a band—starve it for water—or to deaden it for want of sleep and rest. He rode a horse with a good bottom but seldom struck a run. For the first few days he followed them more by tracks and direction than by sight. He followed one bunch for five days without seeing it except when it started. How could he do this in a country of many wild horses? He knew how many horses were in that bunch, and he knew the individual tracks, differing from all other tracks, made by two or three of the animals. He could read all the signs. About the second day droppings from pursued horses will be dry in contrast to the moister and softer droppings of horses that are undisturbed and are eating regularly. The trail of any band of horses thus is well marked.

DIDN'T WANT HELP.

After he began following a manada, he stayed with it without changing horse or clothes until he led it into a pen. Any help except at the pen would have been a hindrance. Occasionally while out he might communicate with some man from the ranch on which he worked, but he would not allow the man to approach nearer than 100 yards, to receive directions as to where a supply of provisions was to be placed or to exchange words on some other subject. The provisions were in a morral—the Mexican fiber bag—hung on a tree. When he rode up to it, he took out the contents and put them in his own morral, to the smell of which the wild horses had grown accustomed. His bedding was a Mexican blanket that served also as slicker.

Within a week the band he was after usually would allow him to direct their course. His purpose was to get them to accept him as their leader. Towards the end of the second week, if nothing intervened, he would have gone far towards supplanting the stallion as commander. At this stage he would begin working them away from the range over which they had been circling, for on strange ground they would surrender more readily than at home.

By long and patient observation, he had come to know not only the habits but the preferences of wild horses as to water, grass, bed ground, movement and other elementals. When he led them to a watering, he considered direction of wind and lay of the ground so that they would feel free of attack by an enemy—panther, leopard or jaguar. Sometimes, to show his power, he would not allow them to drink when they wanted to drink. When they did drink, he rode into the water with them.

GRAZED DURING NIGHT.

He would not allow them to come too near his horse, though they were curious and eager to associate with him more intimately. He knew that if the stallion had a chance he would fight the horse or run him off. At night he unsaddled in front of the mustangs and picketed his horse at his own head. When the mustangs saw him afoot, they kept their distance, though when mounted he could move very near, even among them. Once in a great while he encountered a fierce stallion that would rush against him on horseback.

He was a light sleeper. Many a night he was awakened by a nicker, telling him that stallion or mare wanted to leave and was calling the other mustangs to come along. Certain mares, after they were fairly mastered, would not want to leave. They had given, in the manner of females, their allegiance and were not willing to turn from the horseback leader. When he was awakened by a restless nicker, he would saddle, round up the manada in the manner of a stallion and leave with it. Some mustangs, like some domestic horses, needed more sleep than others. The colts lay down more than the mares, some of which seemed always to sleep standing, resting only one hind leg. All grazed during the night, but, almost without exception, they took a nap just before daylight.

If, with his manada, Bob Lemmons saw a man riding a long way off, he would gaze at him with a demonstration of alertness and distrust—just as if he were a wild horse — and then lead in flight. If his band came to a wagon road, he would snort his suspicion and run away. If he detected a fresh panther sign, he was as wary as a mare that had lost her colt to a panther. Once he saw where a leopard cat had killed a colt. He led the stampede from that place. If a man placed a piece of brush or a chunk of wood in a trail through a thicket that mustangs were used to traveling, they would "climb the mesquites" in order to get around it.

RELIED ON WIND.

If he left the manada for any reason he would upon returning come with the wind so that the mustangs would recognize him by smell and not be alarmed. Thus day and night, for week following week, across prairies and through thickets, huddled in rain, spread out on the ground in sunshine, listening in starlight to the encircling coyote concerts lingering for the grazers as unhurried as the shadow of a circling buzzard, this lone man amidst primitive silence and solitude lived with the mustangs and, except in not eating grass and in having the long, long thoughts that only a human being can have, lived as one of them.

No Indian medicine man, mounted on a white horse, a "buffalo stone" in his hand, bleating like a buffalo calf, maneuvering at precise distances and gaits, and employing other ruses, showed the primordial skill—the magic, if one wishes—in leading a herd of buffaloes by moonlight to the pis kun, or slaughter pen, that Bob Lemmons sustained until he actually became the leader of a band of wild horses that entered a pen as fresh as they had been when he first sighted them.

Habitually, after he got a band under control, he led them homeward, taking plenty of time. One day he would see a rider. Giving the mustangs to understand that they were to remain behind, he would ride towards him and from the distance he always maintained learn what day of the week it was. He had usually lost count. Then he would name the day for penning the mustangs—if the wind was right.

The corral had, like other mustang pens, long wings semi-hidden in brush. They flanged out southward so that wild horses coming into them with the prevailing wind would not catch the scent of lurking men. As they approached the wings, Bob Lemmons, riding ahead, would increase his speed, which they increased likewise. When he was sure that the waylayers were behind the horses, he would break into a dead run. After he entered the gate, he would dash across the big corral and be let out at a small gate kept in readiness by a man placed there for the purpose. This man and one or two others would suddenly appear before the now terrorized horses, waving blankets and shouting in order to get them milling and prevent their dashing into the fence.

Meanwhile the wide entrance to the pen had been strongly barred. After the horses had milled until they were tired, ropers would enter to catch and clog them for the subduing process necessary before the long drive to market.

OCT 16 1960
FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Western Raconteur Long on Gold, Bear

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

To approach Nat Straw logically I must go away back in time. When "Coronado's Children" came out in 1931 as a Literary Guild book, the promoters held something of a blowout in New York. At one function Vanity Fair commissioned me to write two pieces. I wrote one entitling it "Golden Liars of the Golden West"—mostly a concatenation of yarns. One of them I had heard told by a hunter of mountain lions on the Double Circle Ranch in Arizona. He credited it to Nat Straw. It's a bear story. As I know now but didn't know then, it is a folk tale that has traveled from one host to another.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Nat Strawn had tamed a grizzly to ride and one day rode him up the mountain just for exercise, or maybe to enjoy the scenery. He didn't take a gun with him, and so couldn't shoot when he came upon another bear away up in the tall timber. This second bear wasn't a bit shy and the saddlebear wasn't either, and so Nat Strawn dismounted and let them fight. He rode without saddle or bridle. The two bears fought and they fit, and Nat got scared that his bear was getting the worst of it. Easing up to the bears, he grabbed one by the ear, straddled him and headed him down the mountain. About half way down he became unable to guide the animal and in pulling its ears noticed that one of them was gotched—not his bear at all.

* * *

NOT ONLY ONE.

At the time that Vanity Fair published "Golden Liars of the Golden West," with Nat Straw leading all the rest, a friend of mine named Clarence Insall was covering lots of country gathering walnut roots to ship to France so they could be made into briar pipes and shipped back to the United States for us smokers. He knew Nat Straw and, expecting to see him on the Gila River, took him a copy of the magazine making vain use of his name. After reading the piece, Nat Straw told the walnut root hunter to tell me that he certainly was not the only liar in the West.

Maybe seven years later, I was in New Mexico trailing down the Lost Adams Diggings, one of the happiest trails I was ever on. After having received, high up in the Mogollones, among the mountain tops, authentic tidings of things both visible and invisible, I went to Santa Fe on the road to Texas. Here I ran into two old friends, Stokely Ligon, naturalist, and Dub Evans, rancher and lion hunter. When I told them what I'd been doing, they said, "The idea of being on the trail of the Lost Adams Diggings and not seeing Nat Straw! Why, Nat Straw took up with a Navajo squaw so he could learn the tribal secrets of the Adams gold. You've simply got to see him before you leave New Mexico. He's got more lore on the Adams Diggings than any other man in the country."

* * *

POETIC CONCLUSION.

I found Nat Straw on the Gila River above Silver City, living with a young couple. They came in drunk about an hour after my arrival. Out a short distance from their house I camped under the biggest cottonwood tree I've ever seen. Nat had quit yearning, he said, and had lost all interest in the Adams Diggings. He said that at the time he lost interest he wrote high up on an aspen:

"The Adams Diggins is a
shadowy naught
That lies in the valley of
fanciful thought."

Yet he had experienced some fine stories before he came to that poetical conclusion. While he was telling all he knew and a little that he didn't know about the Adams Diggings, he kept bringing in bears, bears, bears. Frequently I had to pull him off bears back to gold. He never did say anything about the Navajo woman. He was as a man very modest.

After I had pumped him dry on the main subject, I encouraged him to head out on bears. When he got wound up on Old Susie, the last famous grizzly killed in New Mexico, I said, "Mr. Straw, I can sell your bear stories to The Saturday Evening Post. I'll give you 20 per cent of the check."

I spent another day with him getting bear stories, and on the road to Austin composed the piece in my mind; it was rising like yeast and composed itself. Within two or three weeks Wesley Stout of the Post had written as warm a reception as anything of mine sent to an editor ever aroused. Maybe this was the happiest experience I have had with a story-teller that I hadn't been looking for. If you are ready, you'll meet them when you're looking for them, and you'll meet them when you're not looking for them. They show up as deer show up—or don't show up—to a deer hunter.

TAR-TELEGRAM 8-12-56

Like Puns, Puns and Coffee for Breakfast

Story-Telling Is a Diminishing Art, but Radio and TV Can't Kill It

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I could not go out now and readily find the kind of story-tellers I found plentiful a third of a century ago. They were not clever, but they were not mechanical. Sometimes they were both illiterate and graphic. Illiteracy is no detraction at all to imagination, and literacy is no indication at all of intelligence. The art of story-telling is developed among people who have to rely upon themselves for entertainment, people who can not buy entertainment in cans. In this respect, story-tellers resemble first-class cooks. "Public relations" men—the Dale Carnegie ideals—are glib and vocable; the stuff they relay to the public all tastes of the can. If they are intelligent, they get sick sometimes at the banality and false logic of it; they are not out to win a hearing for truth; they are out to win buyers for what they are hired to sell. A good story-teller believes, in imagination at least, what he tells. He may not believe in ghosts as a fact of nature, though he may; with all his imagination he believes in them as characters in his story.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

I used to think that radio and television would kill invention by story-tellers. They can't, for vitality won't be permanently bored. Current conversation stories incline more than formerly, perhaps, to sophistication and they savor of machinery, though old stories are constantly being revised and applied to new conditions.

DRIVERS GET OUT.

A friend told this story—and I often wonder at the anonymous cleverness of the inventors of such stories. A man was driving west on a good but empty highway when he saw a car coming east, slowly weaving from one side of the road to the other. The driver of the first car simply pulled off to one side and stopped in a shallow bar pit. The other car came on steadily criss-crossing the pavement. As it came nearer, it decreased in speed and increased the breadth of its weaves. Then it ran smack into the halted car and stopped. Both drivers got out. The weaver was full of apologies, his thick voice and unsteady legs indicating that he was full of something else. "All my fau't, all my fau't," he said. "I'll pay for the damages, pay for the damages."

"No, no," the other drive said. "All my fault. You gave me plenty of time to get out and cut the fence wires with my pliers and then drive into that pasture out of reach. You gave me plenty of time to get away, and I just waited here beside the road. Thanks to you, courteous sir, I have learned my lesson."

Probably as many good anecdotes as ever spring forth from a company of people get going on a common subject if it is started off right. Take the old subject of puns. It came up the other evening. A former dietician at Yale University told about a woman working somewhere, no matter where, during the war who was driving everybody to distraction with incessant punning. The more her captive listeners objected to the puns, the more she punned.

'PUN-ISHMENT.'

Finally they got together and went to the boss and told him that they simply could not stand any more of the woman's punning. He had had to listen to some of it, was sympathetic, but very short on help. He confronted the punster and told her that if she did not quit her ceaseless punning she would be fired.

"Well, that would be pun-ishment," she exclaimed.

Then a lady from the University of Texas told this one. One time an inveterate punster was put in jail and told he'd have to stay there until he had made up a 100 puns. He made up two dozen or so right off hand—probably out of his often-rehearsed repertoire; then he began to slow down. The jailer was conscientious and kept a careful list of the pun words, numbering each and checking off any repetitions. Making a hundred puns in a row proved to be no one-day exercise, especially with no key words being suggested by a second party. At the end of the first day the punster was up to about 40. He got along fairly well until he was up to around 75; then the puns came only in weak spurts and driblets, some of them too feeble to count.

OVERNIGHT REST.

The jailer was probably not familiar with Charles Lamb's theory that the worst puns are the best. Finally the punster got up to 90. At the end of the week he had reached 99 and seemed absolutely stumped for another—just one more pun.

"Take a rest over night," the jailer advised.

When he appeared at the jail the punster chirped out, "O-pun the door." And the jailer opened it.

"Readiness in repartee is repertoire," Brander Matthews used to say. His illustration was about two brothers who always appeared together, one of them quite witty at times, the other never making more than a chance remark. Then somebody noticed that the chance remark invariably gave the bright talker an opening and that he brightened only when an obviously prepared line was thrown to him. Well, I happen to have a pun story in my repertoire, and when the chance came, I gave it.

One time Dr. Johnson was walking along with a pair of gay companions who got to punning. "Punning is such a low form of wit that I can make a pun on any subject you suggest," Dr. Johnson boasted.

"Then make a pun on the king," one said.

"The king is not a subject," Dr. Johnson retorted.

Thomas Jefferson

MAR 12 1961

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Eternal Opponent of Tyranny Over Mind

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

As secretary of state under non-partisan Washington and as vice president under Federalist John Adams, Thomas Jefferson took the lead in organizing the party that has ever since at least acknowledged, though not always practiced, his principles. It was called the Republican Party in his day, but the name changed in Jackson's time to the Democrat Party. Jefferson's party smashed the Federalists to smithereens. He was one of the least politician-natured of all American presidents, but he founded what has been called the "Virginia Dynasty," and his successors, Madison and Monroe, were able projections of the Jefferson shadow.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The Louisiana Purchase that Jefferson accomplished in 1803 was, as he himself considered, in violation of the Constitution. But he was too much of a realist to be straight-jacketed by forms. He was not a theorist. The United States had already expanded so far that the Mississippi was necessary to its unified existence. For about $12,000,000 (60,000,000 francs) he bought from Napoleon not only the Mississippi River but the lands now comprised by Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota, besides parts of Louisiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, Colorado, Montana and Wyoming — areas well settled within less than a century and worth multiplied billions of dollars. The Louisiana Purchase broke, permanently perhaps, the power of Massachusetts and New York over the nation

* * *

STRENGTH REINFORCED.

At 66 Jefferson retired to Monticello, where he wrote: "My mornings are devoted to correspondence. From breakfast to dinner, I am in my shops, my garden, or on horseback among my farms; from dinner to dark, I give to society and recreation with my neighbors and friends; and from candlelight to early bedtime, I read. My health is perfect, and my strength considerably reinforced by the activity of the course I pursue; perhaps it is as great as usually falls to the lot of near 67 years of age.

"I talk of ploughs and harrows, of seeding and harvesting, with my neighbors, and of politics too, if they choose, with as little reserve as the rest of my fellow - citizens, and feel, at length, the blessing of being free to say and do what I please without being responsible for it to any mortal.

"No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden. Such a variety of subjects, some one always coming to perfection, the failure of one thing repaired by the success of another, and instead of one harvest a continued one through the year. Under a total want of demand except for our family table, I am still devoted to the garden." . . . "I am not afraid of new inventions or improvements, nor bigoted to the practices of our forefathers. It is that bigotry which keeps the Indians in a state of barbarism . . . and still keeps Connecticut where their ancestors were when they landed on these shores . . ."

* * *

LIBRARIES URGED.

He proposed a circulating library for every county. He invented a new kind of plow. He took an interest in the growth of the American language, holding that any people who add to their experience must add to their speech. Above all, he established the University of Virginia. As the leading architect of America he designed the buildings and as a lifelong believer in emancipated minds as being necessary to liberty and democracy, he planned faculty and curriculum.

As a scientist, Jefferson recognized the supreme object of all science to be the freedom and happiness of man. A lay agronomist, he brought from Italy rice seed to improve the yield of South Carolina fields. Botanist, he surveyed the flora of his native Virginia. With grandchildren surrounding him, he would plant tulip and hyacinth bulbs, giving each a fine name—Marcus Aurelius, King of the Gold Mine, Roman Empress, Queen of the Amazons. Then, what delight, when later the children would rush to him calling, "Grandpa, the Queen of the Amazons is up!" What delight in going with them to see the marvel!

All scientific development looks to the future, and in Jefferson's own words, he was against going "backwards instead of forwards to look for improvement." Decades before Darwin announced the law of evolution in the physical world, Jefferson fixed his faith on it in the world of human society. He would have been the last man in our own century to go blind in that idea of materialistic darkness which supposes that the amelioration of mankind's lot lies in the "normalcy" of the past.

* * *

LIBERATION OF MINDS.

He never valued machinery in itself but only for its power to emancipate man. He advocated non-sectarian education because he thought it would enlighten men and liberate their minds more than the machinery of church-education had shown itself capable of doing.

He befriended Tom Paine at a time when it was popular to revile him, because he recognized Paine as an emancipator of the human intellect. When Dr. Joseph Priestley, chemist and disciple of Benjamin Franklin, was being persecuted in England because of his sympathy for the French Revolution, Jefferson offered him a home. America's laws, he wrote, "were made for the good and the wise like you."

July 4, 1826, marked the 15th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Jeferson and "honest" John Adams, surviving signers, had been aksed to come to Washington to be honored in the celebration of the day. The infirmities of age prevented either from accepting. A little before midnight preceding the Fourth, Nicholas Trist, who had married one of Jefferson's granddaughters and who was sitting by Jefferson's bed heard him ask, "This is the Fourth?" Trist nodded assent.

"Ah," Jefferson said. At 10 minutes to one he breathed his last breath. He was 83. About sundown of that same 4th of July day, at his farm in Massachusetts, John Adams spent his last words and was words and was gathered to his fathers. The last words and was gathered to his fathers. The last words were: "Thomas Jefferson still lives."

* * *

NOT A WORD MORE.

Two days before he died, Jefferson told his daughter that she would find in a certain drawer something intended for her. She found eight lines of verse telling her farewell—"The last pang of life is in parting from you"—and on the back of an old envelope the words he wanted graved on a plain headstone for his grave—"not a word more."

Only eight days preceding his final Fourth of July, he had written in one of thousands of letters he kept on answering: "All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others."

The words, representing what he considered the most important achievements of his life, chosen by Jefferson for his own epitaph may be read in the family graveyard at Monticello:

"Here was buried
Thomas Jefferson
Author of the Declaration
of American Independence,
Of the Statute of Virginia
for Religious Freedom,
And Father of the University
of Virginia."

What Jefferson considered his most memorable deeds during his 83 years on earth is confined to the unending struggle for liberty, through political freedom, religious freedom and education for maintaining the freedoms.

Jefferson was author of what is to me the most far-ringing sentence I know in the language since the Declaration of Independence. That sentence, which he wrote in 1800 and never deviated from in principle, is:

"I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

6-2-57

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Birds Sing Again

Change to Plentiful Rainfall Brings Abundant Plant Life, Lift in Spirits

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Many times in these spring weeks of 1957 while I have been riding and looking at the spreads of wild flowers, or have sat and rested my eyes upon certain glades of them, the words "jocund company" into my consciousness and made the flowers and me both more gladsome. The wild flowers, thanks be to nature, are there whether a human being receives them or not. William Wordsworth, thanks be to nature also, has made many a human being more receptive. In a way Wordsworth is an additive to the flowers themselves. One day, all at once, he came upon "a crowd,

J. FRANK DOBIE.

A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze . . .
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company."

The way to feast is to get ravenously hungry. After all the years of drouth, dying trees, barren ground and parched air, the ground itself would seem to have become ravenous for green and color. Rains and more rains came and over vast areas of Texas there has been a prodigality of wild flowers, both in plants and colors, and a luxuriance of leafage that memory can hardly match — because memory fades like the flowers themselves. "The leafy month of June" is a description from New England. Over most of Texas spring has mostly gone by June, but this year leafing goes on. Foreground, background and ground beneath are all so green that one scarcely notices the brown stark trees that stood out last year as markers of famine.

The earlier weeds covering wornout fields and much bare pasture land have given way to later weed crops more luxuriant than the first. People who have been hoping and waiting for years for rains to cover their land with grass now find weeds on it so dense that the grass can't come up. Some are mowing the weeds; some are waiting for the weeds to die naturally. A chemical condition in the soil is even more essential to good grasses than abundant rain. Nobody seems to know how many generations of weeds are required to make barren ground hospitable to grass.

All wild flowers, I suppose, are classed as weeds. This year I have noticed as never before their colonial nature. Here this species and there that species seems to usurp a patch of earth against all contenders.

Contenders who bloom in the territory are so scattered and isolated that they have little voice in the mass say-so, but the most massive and extensive colonies come to boundaries set by soil, other flowers and perhaps more subtle conditions.

The most widespread flats of pink-to-purple verbena may be contained on one side by dull but stubborn broomweed and on the other give way to the white splendor of wild poppies starring the earth. Now comes a sweep of evening-primroses—yellow on one kind of soil, pink on another kind.

There are basins of daisies and slopes of coneflowers. More golden than gold and infinitely various in design of petal and combination of hues are the familes of gillardia (firewheel, Indian blanket) and coreopsis (black-eyed Susans), the individuals of each clan banding together, though sometimes a person may in a few steps pass from one claim to another.

ABUNDANCE NOTED.

Travelers over Texas while the land was still pristine and was mostly covered with primary grasses noted again and again the extraordinary abundance, variety, and beauty of wild flowers. This would seem to mean that many "weeds" and the better grasses are not hostile to each other but are complementary.

You don't see the finest wild flowers — weeds — on soil deficient in nitrogen, potash, phosphorous and lime any more than you see the finest grasses there. This spring I have seen veritable lakes of wild verbena on soil that for five years I had supposed too poor to hatch lizard eggs.

Plant life is so astoundingly prodigal of seeds that some seeds seem to be always — always, no matter for how long a time — waiting for the right conditions to germinate and grow.

I write this from a plot of ground in the hills of Burnet County that we call Cherry Springs, though last year the springs finally dried up and many of the wild cherry trees died. I see sprouts coming up from some of the roots, just as some of the tens of thousands of dead Spanish Oaks over the country are sending up sprouts from the roots.

One bird that I grew up with and have spent many happy hours watching on the wing is the bullbat, more properly called night hawk. Since 1952 I have not seen a bullbat within 15 miles of Cherry Springs. The other evening I saw five bullbats hunting and catching insects right over our front yard and heard that joyful zooming noise they make when they dive for prey.

If five acres of soilless rocks had suddenly been covered with rich sideoats grama, big blue stem and other fine grasses, I could not have felt so happy. Like cowmen locating on fresh range back in the pristine days of free grass, these bullbats are evidently spreading out. Lots of moisture and greenery make lots of insects. The bullbats I saw here could have migrated from the 6th St. area in Austin, where the lights of evening, drouth or no drouth, perenially attract insects and these beautiful insect hunters.

LIFE'S HERE NOW.

Three years ago I knew two bee trees at Cherry Springs. Last year or the year before the bees quit coming to the flowers of irrigated honeysuckle. I am sure that the bees in those trees starved to death, though my good neighbor Morris Middleton still has a bee tree. If seasonable weather lasts long enough swarms of bees escaping from man-made hives will probably discover the hollow oaks again.

Despite the dearth of bees, William Butler Yeats's "bee-loud glade" often comes into my mind on account of the unaccustomed plentitude of dickcissels and their unending six-sic-sic-ing. Called also "blackthroated bunting," they customarily migrate through Central Texas in the spring to nesting grounds farther north.

I became acquainted with them and their notes in Oklahoma. But if the weed crops and accompanying crops of insect life are good, the dickcissels occasionally stop in this part of the country to nest and raise their young. Instead of a "bee-loud glade," this year I have a dickcissel-loud glade.

The change from great dearth to great plenty in rainfall has affected the spirits of people living on and dependent upon the soil as much as it has affected plant life. The economic lift is only a part of the lift that comes from being a part of burgeoning life. The sedge was withered from the lake and no birds sang.

Now the lake — just a dirt tank dry for three years — is full of water surrounded upspringing sedge; the brilliant-hued dragon flies dart over the water in amorous play as gaily as any fiddler ever fiddled "Coming Through the Rye," and birds are singing all the time, by night as well as by day. Oh, I know that "youth's a stuff will not endure," that all green browns and all blossoms wither, but the rains came and life's here NOW.

'Stifles Young Minds'

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

MAY 21 1961

School Bureaucracy Draws Writer's Fire

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Others may define poetry. Plumtree Joe (alias Fred H. Turner) of Brownfield sent me these verses under the title of "Fasten Down the Lid." They make me glad in the way that coyotes yipping out in the night make me glad.

Coyote—Coyote, Oh Brother,
A-singing on the hill,
Have you been a-drinking
From Pappy's whisky still?

Sounds as if you'd had a lap.
(Bet a skin you did.)
Guess I'd better tell my Pap
To fasten down the lid.

Your nose, is it a-pointing to the sky,
Or sniffing of the ground?
When you set your yip up high,
Are you running 'round and 'round?

I'd hide and watch you from the hill
But might myself go sin.
By lapping from that whisky still;
Then, yip, I'd join in.

One function—maybe the main one — of literature is to make imagination go gallivanting. This paragraph is from a high school pupil: "When I was in elementary school, I read more widely than most of my classmates. Our school readers were so excrutiatingly boring that they seemed to stimulate not-reading rather than reading in good books."

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Some recommended books in school literature are rewritten versions of Dickens, Scott, Poe, and other writers of enduring literature. Most of this rewriting is done by hacks out of education departments. They seem to have a missionary zeal to make everybody else as dull as they are. They don't want a new word introduced into the mind of a pupil. My mother was born the year the Civil War ended.

Time and again I've heard her tell how as a girl she read Scott, Dickens, and Mark Twain aloud to her brother, half brothers and three or four other ranch boys. Her auditors considered her reading a treat. She could command them by threatening not to read or not to allow one of them to hear her read.

What idiocy it would have been for her to have read aloud some water-weak, dull rewrite of Poe's "Purloined Letter" or Dickens' "David Copperfield" or Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" instead of the real thing.

* * *

BILL IN LEGISLATURE.

A bill is in the Texas Legislature now to cut down by half the education courses required by law for anyone who wants to get a certificate to teach. Of course, the executives of public schools are against it.

They belong to a bureaucracy as stifling to the young minds of America as the Communist Party is to all the people in the Soviet Union. I think that the influence on the country of all these law-enforced education courses is as damnable as Communist rule is on any other country.

Now I quote from a letter written by a man living in the biggest city of Texas.

"Today at lunchtime I stood at a window on the 29th floor of a new skyscraper looking out from the exclusive costliness of the most elegant club. Before me as far as my eyes could see stretched miles of buildings, large and small, frame and masonry, business and residence, old and new; but my mind did not dwell on the stationary buildings.

"My attention was absolutely commanded by endless motion: The coming and the going, the timeless effort of my fellow men to get from here to there in a hurry. Miles on miles of six-lane and eight-lane traffic in two-way freeways curved, dipped, ascended, descended, went over, went under, divided and converged.

"Thousands of automobiles were speeding to various destinations—or to nowhere but away—and the drivers chafed and griped at slow-moving traffic and bottlenecks. In spite of millions being spent continually on freeways, the cement-pouring never catches up with the increasing traffic.

* * *

RAPID TRANSITION.

"As soon as my day's work was over, I rushed to my car and drove in the peak of 5 p. m. traffic—five miles in four-lane traffic and three more miles in three-lane and two-lane traffic. So ended, as it had begun, my business day in the big city. There remained only what is called leisure time. What did I do with mine?

"The minute the evening meal was over, I picked up a book to read of buffalo hunting on the Plains back in 1874. At that time buffaloes sometimes covered a prairie as completely as our big city does now. The slow-moving oxcarts used to haul the buffalo hides and all other life in the wide-open spaces have lasting appeal to me. Often I read of hunting, fishing, eexploring, and riding in horseback days.

"These things of a simple world carry me far away from life on the concrete span. No doubt other people who in younger years lived in the country respond as I do to stories of country folks."

What solace the rhetoric, what translation from the dullness, the sterility, the bareness of cement to green grass and plain life lie in books. I've been reading some Tolstoy of late. This is from his "Kholstromer: The Story of a Horse."

* * *

SENATOR'S BEST.

"In reality there was something noble in the form of this horse, and in the terrible union in him of the repulsive signs of decrepitude, the increased variegatedness of his hide, his actions, the expression of self-dependence, and the calm consciousness of beauty and strength. Like a living ruin, he stood in the middle of the dewy field, alone; while not far away from him were heard the galloping, the neighing, the lively whinnying, the snorting, of the scattered herd."

I can't remember any story of Texas stampdes, bronco-busters, Wild West long riders or anything emanating from Hollywood or Madison Ave. approaching the imaginative, reflective quality of this Tolstoy passage. I guess it would be all right for the education quacks to rewrite most of the Will James horse stories—they are already so forced.

"Lincoln for the Ages" is the title of a book just out containing 72 short essays bearing on Lincoln. Of about 20 that I read, the best written is by Senator Ralph Yarborough, who is probably the best read man Texas has ever sent to Washington. The shoddiest essay, slovenly with adverbs and adjectives, of the lot that I read is by Bruce Catton, who seems unable to restrain himself in the writing race for riches and notoriety.

He edits American Heritage, the chief snob magazine of America. In the history it publishes no Colonial Dame, no Son or Daughter of the American Revolution, no other person devoted to the perpetuation of petrifaction will ever find a disturbing note. R. I. P.

J. Frank Dobie

5-23-57

Two hours away we began getting glimpses through pines and rocks of green fields—which proved to be mostly of oats and wheat—on the slopes of the narrow valley made by the Tamazula River below us. As we rode around a sharp bend in the trail an hour and a half later, having come into a new kind of vegetation, we saw two men drying tiles made out of clay and then, still fat below us, a cluster of tile roofs. We were coming to Canelas, in Durango, the first town in four and a half days' ride.

A half hour later the shod feet of our horses and mules were making music on the cobblestones of a very narrow, steeply sloped street, everybody at the doors to view us. Then we rode through the wide-opened doors and over the rock-paved floor of the zaguan (hall) of the town's Casa de Huspedes (House of Guests), stopping in the half-walled patio to unsaddle and unpack. Our animals as well as we knew or felt that we had arrived at a special place.

Running Water

One specialty of the place was running water, from uphill—not into the House of Guests itself but at a hydrant outside, handy to the kitchen and to anybody who wanted to use it in washpan or otherwise. Any guest wanting a real bath could go to the river. The proprietor, Don Donasiano Arrieta, told me that he has plans to install a bath and add some rooms when the highway reaches Canelas and brings traffic. He is about sixty-five years old but looks eighty and can barely walk on account of arthritic knees. His father was the noted General Andres Arrieta in the Mexican Revolution that began in 1910, and he had three uncles who were also generals.

His wife, as chipper as a cricket does all the cooking and housekeeping, except that a 10-year-old granddaughter sweeps the earthen and stone floors with a short broom made of weeds. When a hotel matron can't afford to pay a servant three dollars a month, her establishment is not thriving. There is no sign outside denoting this house of guests, just as not a single store or other business place of the town has a sign.

Long before Mexico revolted from Spain this house was the home and stronghold of a rich Spanish don—rich, that is, for the time and place. Canelas was established in 1601 as a center for gold mining, but the mines long since went caduca—petered out.

The beds in the rooms of our house of guests are wooden frames laced across with ropes and rawhide, the mattress a towsack containing a sparse amount of cotton. My custom in such places is to unroll my bedroll on the platform serving as a bed. A table covered with oil cloth, a coaloil lamp on the table, a plank bench, a leather seated chair, a pair of cowhorns nailed to the wall to hang things on, a washpan and a bucket of water on the bench and a "night service" under the bed compose the other furnishings of the room.

No Windows

It has no window, and when the doors are shut even at midday one sees only dimly the great beams high overhead and the whitewashed walls. A pair of doors opening on the street are barred with a strong pole fitted horizontally into the zaguan are barred by a 10-foot pine pole running up from a goughed-out hole in the earthern floor to a crosspiece on one of the doors.

The only fire in the house is in the kitchen oven, covered with an iron plate on which tortillas are baked and which gets hot enough to boil the contents of pots and fry anything in a skillet. The smoke from the oven goes out over the wall left open at the top at one end of the kitchen. The absence of chimneys in this part of the country is justified, though hardly explained, by Henry David Thoreau's claim that a person is rich in proportion to what he can do without.

The oilcloth-covered, benched, napkinless and silverless table in a not ample dining place to me. Here we could have a wide choice of drinks: coffee, coffee with milk, boiled milk, cinnamon tea, orange juice. (You can buy cinnamon bark and chamber pots nearly anywhere in Mexico that you can buy beans and cones of brown sugar. Oranges grow in Canelas.) We always had Don Donasiano Arrieta for company at the table. A swig of cognac was a great treat to him and he glowed with it. We had hot tortillas and hot beans three times a day and "starred" (fried) eggs for the other meals as well as for breakfast if we wanted them. The constant vegetable was fresh onions, and the constant desert was coffee-cake. The proprietress did not usually put too much lard in boiled meat and chicken; like most Mexican women she made excellent soup.

Musicians

About four in the morning after we arrived in Canelas I was awakened by musicians playing "Las Mananitas"—the counterpart to "Happy Birthday to You," though much more beautiful. Several young blades, it turned out, were using a room in the house of guests for drinking headquarters and, with four musicians in tow, were serenading the town. The singing and playing went on for about three hours, sometimes out of hearing and sometimes beautifully far away, before the celebrants returned to headquarters. It was el dia de San Jose—St. Joseph's Day—and all males named Jose and all females named Josefa could consider their birthdays honored. When I went out on the portal about seven a.m., three of the celebrants, already well lit up, insisted on my drinking cognac with them. I usually start the day with water, but this was a holiday.

Two days later school closed for another holiday honoring the birth of Benito Juarez—noblest of Mexico's patriots. There was speech-making to school children gathered on the plaza three or four times during the day. Along about five p.m. one of the school teachers gave a longish review, ending with a fervid eulogy, of Juarez's life. His audience consisted of about a hundred kindergarteners and first-graders. They did not appear to be absorbed in the oration.

Unscheduled Rain

It is not supposed to rain much anywhere in northern Mexico in March. Not long after sunup on Saint Joseph's Day the skies turned loose and rain continued through a good part of the night that followed.

The road—the mule trail—from Canelas west to Tamazula, on the way to Culican, is right down the Tamazula River—a deep, crooked gash amidst mountains of descending height. It is two days' ride down the river to Tamazula, the trail zigzagging across the rocky river bed from one side to the other "as many times as there are days in the year." A trail over the mountains would take four days to Tamazula. After the day of rain we waited another day for the river to run down, for there's no traveling along the valleyless bed when high muddy water is rolling boulders along.

There was plenty of time to savor the town. The most interesting new thing in it to me is the public library—a room about the size of an ordinary bedroom containing about 100 paper-bound books and half the many old magazines, some dating back 30 years. Canelas is sizeable enough in population to have about 500 children in school. Even if the town does not have any sewers or cesspools, it now has a public library. This fact signifies something in the progress of Mexico.

High River

On the morning of the third day it was evident that the river had not run down and would not be travelable for several days. We had engaged a new guide to lead us over the tortuous four-days' route to Tamazula and were about ready to set out when I learned that a single-seated airplane—a Piper Cub—sometimes landed with a passenger in a little pasture on the edge of town.

While we were making enquiries about it, it flew into sight. The pilot, whose main occupation is dusting cotton, agreed to take the three Americans to Culican, one by one. On account of the prevailing winds he could land only in early morning and late evening. He took my companions in on Juarez's birthday and I left the next morning.

After our guide and three mozos from Tepehuanes had been paid off upon arrival of the airplane, they could have started home but wanted to spend another day in Canelas. In the early morning we all rode horseback to the landing field. We had had a little voyage in life together as well as a ride across the Sierra Madre. Iam not likely to forget their "May God accompany you, Don Francisco," parting words. In exactly 40 minutes I was in Culican. We flew right down the crooked river. It would have taken four plus two days to cover the distance in a saddle.

Unlike Longhorns

MAR 26 1961 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Bred-up Cows Just Don't Have Bog-Hole Instinct

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Graves Peeler was to see me not long ago. He ranches down in a section of the Brush Country where a drouth lasted for 13 years until it broke late in 1960. Every one of those years he fed prickly pear to his cattle. He has more longhorn cattle than any other rancher north of the Rio Grande, and they can do on less of anything else but prickly pear than any other breed. Graves Peeler belongs with them. He used to shoot deer from horseback while he and the bucks were both running. He's been shot at himself.

FRANK DOBIE.

He knew my Uncle Jim Dobie well, and he was telling me about going to Uncle Jim's Olmos Ranch one time during a drouth when cattle were bogging up in the waterholes along the Nueces River, which runs through the Olmos in black dirt—sacahuista country. Graves Peeler said the vaqueros were coming in at the end of the day reporting on cows they had pulled out of the bog, some to lie down and die and be skinned and a few to recover.

Talking about the bog-damned critters, Uncle Jim said, "We're changing too fast, living too fast. These bred-up cattle don't know how to take care of themselves. I've seen old-time Texas longhorns come to the edge of a bog-hole, get down on their knees, and reach way out as far as they could to drink the water and then get up and back off. Some of these fine bred-up cows walk right out into the mud to drink and then try to keep on going. They don't know enough to back out. They'd never have the instinct to kneel down on the edge of the mud and drink without stepping into it."

* * *

AVERAGE, WEIGHT.

Graves Peeler said that one time after Uncle Jim brought a string of Florida steers—all of them runts in those days—and shipped them out to his country in LaSalle and Webb Counties, he was in San Antonio and saw a feeder who told him he wanted to buy steers.

"Well," Uncle Jim said, "I've got the steers. What ages do you want?"

"Oh, four, five, six, seven, eight years old—somewhere along in there," the feeder replied.

"Well, I've got them."

"How much do they weigh?"

"Oh, four, five, six, seven hundred, some of them eight—something like that," Uncle Jim replied. Of course, he knew no feeder who knew hair from hoofs would buy Florida snowbird stuff to throw away feed on.

Graves Peeler said one time he went down to a cow camp in some leased country that Bill Jennings had stocked with Mexican steers. It was hot and dry—as usual. As soon as Bill Jennings drove into camp, he pulled out a bottle of whisky, poured some of it into a tin cup with water and went over under the shade of a mesquite—which is about as dense sometimes as the shade made by a sieve—to drink it. He was a big-framed man and he was sitting on the ground with back against the mesquite trunk when a smart alec who didn't belong to the outfit came loping up and jerked his horse back just about the time he got next to the chuckwagon, throwing dust and sand into everything—the bread, the pots and pans, the cocinero's face. The cocinero called out, looking to Bill Jennings, "Mira no mas!" which could be translated, "Just look! Just look!" While Bill Jennings was just looking, this would-be wild and woolly cowboy got off his horse, tied him to the ground with the bridle reins and about that time saw the bottle of whisky on the chuck box table.

He said, "Mira no mas!" grabbed the bottle and, pulling the cork as he raised it, swallowed four or five big swallows. He had an Adam's apple, and you could see that Adam's apple going up and down. He put the cork back in and started over to Bill Jennings. Bill Jennings said, "He rides his horse like a kid and drinks his whisky like a man." Bill Jennings took another swig in his tin cup, and after a while the cow crowd brought in a herd of those slab-sided, many-hued Mexican steers. They were held off some distance on open ground. One of them drifted up close to the chuck wagon. Bill Jennings, still leaning up against the mesquite tree, contemplated this critter and said, "High in front and low behind, and mighty pore."

Bill Jennings was what people called a character. He knew that people expected him to say something, and he frequently said it. He looked as if he had never smiled.

* * *

COLD STEEL.

One time, as I've heard the anecdote, Bill Blocker, brother to John Blocker and Ab Blocker, all three noted cowmen, gave his son John a sheepskin coat to wear on a winter trip with him into the plains. Johnnie was young and eager and had heard lots about wild cowboys and lots about the wild West. The West used to be farther on from where you were. At a jerkwater town on the plains, some smart cowboy traded Johnnie a six-shooter and belt for his sheepskin coat. A few mornings later Bill Blocker woke Johnnie up in a tent. "Johnnie," he called, "the norther's hit us. Crawl out of those blankets, buckle your sixshooter belt on and wear your sixshooter. You're going to need something to keep you warm."

* * *

TRUSTWORTHY.

One of the authentic cowmen of Mitchell County, where he had a ranch, and surrounding country was 80 John Wallace. He was a Negro who worked many years for Clay Mann, starting in with him before the days of barbed wire. When he was 25, he rode to Navarro County and spent three or four months in school. He tried plowing while he was in Navarro County but didn't think any more of it than Ab Blocker thought of it, and went back West. After Clay Mann died in 1889, 80 John kept on working for Mrs. Mann. At the same time he was accumulating land for himself. He joined the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. All cowmen who knew him respected him. A little book entitled "The Story of 80 John," by Hettye Wallace Branch, his daughter, does not bring out much picturesqueness, but it brings out trustworthiness. The book was printed in New York but can be procured from Mrs. Hettye Wallace Branch, Box 1093, Colorado City, Texas. Reading it, I came to a high respect for the subject.

Primitive and Rugged ST T 4-28-37

Mexico Mountain Life Remains Fascinating

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Anybody who wants to know how people lived in the provinces of France at the time of the French Revolution can do no better than read Arthur Young's "Travels in France" (1792). Anybody curious about country life in Texas a hundred years ago — and there was little other life at the time — should read "A Journey through Texas, or A Saddle Trip on the Southwestern Frontier," by Frederick Law Olmsted (1857). I have never had any idea of making a social-economic survey of rural Mexican life, but am struck by the fact that few of the thousands of American tourists in Mexico get more than an outward glimpse of how the people in the mountains live.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

On a trip last month across the Sierra Madre of Northern Durango into Sinaloa, the main change I noticed as having come during the last 30 years—for it was nearly that long ago that I made my first Mexican pack trip—is the presence in kitchens of a hand-mill to grind the corn for making tortillas. In the poorest hovels the women still grind corn on the stone metate; in many villages and towns there is a central power mill to which individuals bring their corn for grinding. Grinding water-soaked corn by hand is very hard work, but not so hard as mashing it between stones into a paste of fine-textured meal. Nearly all country people raise their own corn. If they have to buy it, they buy it whole. I doubt if corn meal is for sale anywhere in Mexico except in sophisticated stores.

The house in which we spent the night of March 16 is in a rough depression surrounded by mountains. It overlooks a steep canyon. On the slope across the canyon is a spring, the water from which runs down into the canyon. This spring is on higher ground than that occupied by the house. Many years ago an aqueduct of hollowed-out pine logs roughly joined together conveyed spring water to a barrel near the house. The logs rotted away and the generations of women resumed the wearisome business of going down the steep trail to the canyon with jars on their heads and pails in their hands to fetch water back up. I saw them, both young and oldish, panting into the house with their burdens. While a woman of about 45 years was starting to the spring, I suggested to a young man in our hire that he bring a load of water. When he offered to make the trip for her, she turned and with much spirit said that this was her work and she would do it. He remained at ease. The ranchero has no funds with which to buy pump and pipe. Besides, what would the women folks do if they did not have to haul water and grind corn and pat the dough into tortillas?

It was drizzling and the wind was raw while we saddled and packed for another day's ride. "This house is yours if you care to wait for better weather," the ranchero of worn and honest features said. And I knew he was not motivated by greed for a few pesos that accommodating us another day would bring. When I told his equally hospitable wife goodby, she said, "May God accompany you."

HOW TO STAY WARM.

The rain was thickening and the cold was sharpening when late in the afternoon we rode up to a log house at Las Cienagas. (A Cienaga is seepy ground, a marsh.) This place in a valley pocket is well named. There are several log shacks about, the house that gave us "posada" (lodging) being the chief one. Before a near-by truck road, impassible in wet weather, was built about five years ago to haul lumber and mining supplies, the house was a noted stopping place for muleteers. A good corral with sheds and plenty of provender were available for our horses and mules. All our equipment and baggage were hauled into the big front room.

A door opposite the one by which we entered opened into the kitchen. At one end of the room another door opened into a shed-room occupied by a milk cow, pigs and chickens. At the other end of the room a good fire blazed on the dirt floor. The smoke went out an open gable; smoke from the kitchen fire went out the same kind of opening. It is cold in this high country most months of the year, and no room with part of a wall missing — to let out smoke — can ever be warmed, but here generation after generation families live in houses without a chimney. Many times I have observed that comfort is not a primary desideratum in Mexico. When the sun shines the men can go out and stand or sit in it and the women can keep warm by hauling water and grinding corn.

There was a plank bench against the front wall by the fire, and male visitors drifted in and out and sat on it to inspect the strangers who had come to Las Cienagas. The three gringos and the four Mexicans of our party found places on the floor to make down our pallets. I slept comfortably warm — though now and then I heard a baby crying in the kitchen. About three o'clock I was awakened by a bright light in the room. A boy of the family about 12 years old had built up the fire and was sitting by it with a little brother. They had been too cold in the kitchen to sleep and had come into the main warming place for comfort.

40-CENT VENISON.

About an hour after we arrived at Las Cienagas one of our men said that a native had brought in a deer. L. J. Maxwell and I went down to his cabin — one room with a fire on the floor for cooking as well as family comfort. He had skinned the deer, a hornless fawn of last summer. It was not really fat but was in good living condition. I asked him if he would sell a backstrap. Yes. How much? At first he wanted me to name the price, but I persisted that he name it. Finally he said five pesos (40 cents). I sent out for flour, paying a peso for some brought in a plate. Then I fried the venison for supper and made gravy out of canned milk. There was plenty of meat for all seven of us and we left some the next morning for our hosts.

The young man who killed this deer, with a .22 rifle, said he hid behind a tree near the road on which we passed and waited for us to get out of sight before bringing the carcass down on his back. He was afraid some "federal officer" might see him. Here was an illustration of why game is so very scarce in all the vast mountain country of Mexico.

BIBLE ONLY BOOK

FEB 19 1961
FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Ex-Slave, Uncle Beverly, Carried Meat Wrapping

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Dear Reader: You may be tired of my harping on the Civil War. I mean for you to be. I hope that you are — as tired as I get of looking at pictures in classic art. I'm hell-bent on being in style, and for years now the market has been flooded with books about the Civil War. They all sympathize with the South. Frank Vandiver, professor of history at Rice Institute, wrote an essay once showing how the South actually won the war—in literature.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Many stories of Civil War times are woven around Negroes. Generally the Negro slaves and their "marsters" are idealized in Thomas Nelson Page style. Somehow we Southerners don't want the other style. I remember a bronze statue at a town in Louisiana representing this chivalric ideal: An old Negro, hat in hand, bent in servility and loyalty to an unseen flyer of Confederate flags. The ex-slave I knew best was Uncle Beverly. He never had much to tell of slave days. He was very young when freed, but his character and manners were out of slavery times. He was as humble as any Daughter of the Confederacy could wish.

* * *

EXTRA VENISON.

Along in the 20s he was making a living in Austin carrying clothes between houses of white people and Negro washerwomen. He drove a very subdued horse to an equally subdued buggy. He was a preacher and supplemented his delivery services with contributions from meager congregations. He was as religious as anybody banking on the hereafter for happiness should be. More than once I knew him to arrive at our house shouting-happy.

One winter after I'd come back from a deer hunt and we had some extra baked venison ribs in the oven, I asked him if he wouldn't like some. He would, and I gave him quite a hunk of meat. He took it and began eating right away. "Wait a minute, Uncle Beverly," I said, "and I'll wrap it up for you to take home."

With happiness in his whole countenance, he replied, "I'se got the wrapping right here," and he proceeded to finish the wrapping right there.

* * *

NOTHING BUT BIBLE.

One cold day while he was waiting in the kitchen for clothes, I invited him to come into my study. He looked around at all the books. "Maybe you'd like to take a magazine or some book to read," I suggested.

"No, sir, I couldn't read nothing you got here," he surprised me by saying.

"Why you told me about reading the Bible," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "and that's all anybody needs to read. You got too many other books here —too worldly."

"But," I persisted, "if you can read the Bible, why can't you read something else?"

"I don't know," he said, "but that's the way it is."

"Well, how did you learn to read the Bible?"

"I'll tell you," he said. "I tried a long time to read it and couldn't. I wrastled and I tussled with the Lawd, and one night after I'd been wrastling and tussling, I got down on my knees and I said to Him, 'Oh, Lawd, give me to understand thy Word.' Then I opened the Good Book and put it under my pillow and went to sleep like a child. The next morning when I woke up it was daylight. I tuk up the pillow and looked at the Holy Word, and Praise God! I could read it, and I been reading it ever since."

Uncle Beverly could quote scripture on heaven. "Up there I'se gonna be white like you is. I'll sit at the right hand of God at the banquet table."

"How many people will be there, you guess? I asked.

"One hundred and eighty-five thousand," Uncle Beverly asserted without a quibble. "That's what the Good Book say. Glory, Hallelujah! On that happy Golden Shore."

* * *

NOBODY ELSE.

Jim Shaw tells that several years before the Civil War his grandfather rode over into Louisiana and bought a 4-year-old girl and brought her home behind him on his horse. "He and my grandmother raised her in the house, and she stayed with us until she died. She was a yellow Negro and married a black who had a good field and pasture. She had helped raise all my grandparents' children. When my father would go by her house, she'd always make him come in. 'Now there's your room, and that's your bed in it,' she'd say. 'Nobody ever gets into that bed but you.' If my father would take a nap, she'd have fried chicken and all the fixin's for him when he woke up.

"After she got old, she came to live with us in Taylor. She stayed in a little house out in the yard. We called her Aunt Lize. She wasn't sick much but got too weak to work. When she finally died, we got the hearse to carry her body to the graveyard. Up to that time all Negro corpses had been carried in a wagon. Aunt Lize had as fine a funeral as any white person. She was our folks. The funeral sermon was preached by a bank janitor. He wasn't exactly a preacher, he claimed, 'jest a local. I jest talks in local places,' he explained. Local or not, his prayer at Aunt Lize's funeral was beautiful. His words sang like a hymn."

J. Frank Dobie San A. Light 4-21-57

Elderly Guide a Talkative One

By J. FRANK DOBIE

I have been sketching something of life recently experienced along one of the old pack mule routes across the Sierra Madre. Most memorable to me of any experience on this trip is the guide and master of affairs who conducted it. Sixty-three years old, he spent a while during the great depression in California, but has lived most of his life in the mountains of Durango. I do not think of him as a hired mozo, an alien to me in status, nationality or in any other way, but as a fellowman much more congenial as a companion than many university professors, governors, financially successful business men, etc. whom I have known. He was working for $1.60 a day, plus found. On the second day of our riding he began opening his "word-horde" and his inner self to me and we became muy amigos.

"Look," he said, "I have never been in Austin, Texas, where you live, or in the Pennsylvania from which Don Juan comes, or in Houston, where Don Leonardo has his domicile, but in my house I have a book of knowledge with maps and I know all these places. I know where England is and Spain and China and Germany and Portugal and Russia and many other lands.

"We call the Chinese orientals, but why? To get to China we keep going west. If some famous Chinese captain had kept sailing east and discovered American before Columbus sailed west, he would have called America the Orient and now we'd be orientals. This book of knowledge does not advance superstition like the 'clericos.' Superstition is the worst evil people have, and the clericos give them more of it than anybody else."

No Notice

I noticed that when we rode past a shrine at a little cluster of cabins in a certain valley, Don Miguel appeared not to notice it, whereas Julian, who wore sandals, took off his hat. It happened to be drizzling that day and Don Miguel wore a long sleeveless cape that was once waterproof—the Mexican form of slicker. Sitting tall and erect in the saddle, his shrouded shoulders giving with the gait of the not large mule he rode, he suggested to me pictures of Don Quixote. I told him so and he was not unpleased. When I asked him if he had read "Don Quixote de la Mancha," he replied, "Only some chapters." He looked more like a sheik of some nomadic Arabian tribe than like Don Quixote, I guess.

He has had certain sheikish experiences with women, for he has been married four times, his present wife being quite young and the preceding three all being alive. "Matrimony," he observed, quoting one of the proverbs with which Spanish speech is bountifully sprinkled, "is a corral of the blind. The ones inside are trying to get out, and the ones outside are trying to get in." He told of a man in the Sierras who married at the age of 114 and died two years later. "How much longer would be have lived if he had not married?" I asked. "Perhaps four more years."

"One time there was a man," he went on, "who asked another man: 'In what month of the year do women talk less?'

"'I hear them talking all the time,' the second man responded, 'but I don't know in what month they talk less. Tell me.'

"'In February. It has only 28 days.'"

Loquacious

No Don Miguel himself is the very antipodes of silence. I often marveled at how he and another Mexican riding for hours along together seemed unable to endure even a small stretch of silence. I have often noticed this garrulity, invariably cheerful, among Mexican men. They can chatter unbrokenly for hours without saying anything at all that goes into the inner ear. When I told Don Miguel that in my observation some men out-talk the most talkative of women, he assented with a tolerant smile.

He told little folk tales that were old 1000 years ago. One time a king said to a subject: "I will give you three days to tell me how much I am worth. If at the end of that time you do not give a just answer, you must die. Now take your time and think. You have three days."

In about 15 minutes the man said, "My king, I need no more time. I have the answer."

"All right," the king said, "How much am I worth?"

Twenty-nine reales" (bits at 12½ cents each), the man said.

"What," the king exclaimed, "I, your king you rate me so low. Explain."

"I cannot rate you above or even equal to Jesus Christ," the man said. "His value was set at 30 reales and he was sold for that. I put your value next to his—29 reales."

The king had to let his subject go free.

After Don Miguel told this ancient tale beside a roaring fire on the freezing night during which none of us slept soundly, Don Juan Stiteler of Pennsylvania, contributed a story of a king also—another ancient folk tale of world-wide circulation. It might have been told by Don Miguel himself.

Favor Owed

One time a king ordered a certain man killed. The official headsman happened to have received a great favor from the man he was to kill and now he did his best to repay it.

"Look," he said to the victim, "it is in my power to offer you your choice of the ways to die. You can have your head cut off. You can be hanged. You can be shot. You can be drowned. You can be stabbed to death. Choose any way you want to die and your choice will be granted."

"I choose to die of old age," the victim replied.

"That may give you more suffering than any other way," the king spoke up. "Go and die of old age."

The only way to tell the next story is orally, with appropriate gestures. It is one of a thousand "chistes" (jests) in the picaresque, or trickster, tradition that have come down by word of mouth from ancient Spain. I heard Don Miguel tell this story at least four times to the same audience, and it was at each telling increasingly delightful with his pantomime and the rimes. I can't possibly show the gestures in print and my translation of the rimes misses the delicious absurdity of the original. Anyway, here is the story.

One time an old woman boiling a pot of soup over a fire—a fire out in the campo this was—saw a rascally beggarman coming. She knew that his purpose was to get something to eat and never to pay anything in any way for what he received. As he came up, she punched a fresh stick under the pot and said to it:

Boil, boil, little boiling pot,
But all this day you'll hardly get hot.

The rascally beggarman saw which way the wind was blowing and picked up another stick and put it into the fire and said:

Boil, boil, little boiling pot,
Today I'll surely not leave this spot.

He stayed and he stayed and of course he got the soup. The next day he went on. Away up in the mountains a woman who had just made a fine lot of tamales and cooked them and was ready to take them away from the fire for her people to eat saw him coming and recognized him as a rascal always getting and never giving. She was accustomed to cook at this fire. Now it was burned out so that only a great heap of ashes marked the place. She turned her back to the approaching beggarman and, spraddling her legs, bent over so that her long black skirt hid what she was doing while she placed the tamales under the ashes.

Asks Distance

The beggar rascal came up and greeted her and she greeted him. He looked all around and, seeming to see nothing to eat, asked, "Is it far to the next little ranch?"

"No, no," she said. "It is a very little short way."

"What is the direction?" he asked.

"Oh," she said, "you follow up that little bit of canyon until you come to where the trail forks to the right. Take that and then when you are on the crest, you will see a trail forking off to the left to go down into the next canyon. Just follow your directions down there and no more."

"I think I understand," the beggarman said, "but let me be certain." He picked up a stick and pointed it toward the ash pile. "I follow up that little bit of canyon to where the trail forks to the right," and here he made a deep thrust into the ash pile and gave an upward jerk so that several shuck-ends of tamales were exposed. "I go up that fork to the crest and then I turn left on another fork." He rammed the stick into the ash pile and plowed up the main nest of tamales.

In the end the woman had to let him eat what he had discovered.

Fascinating Volume

STAR TELEGRAM

APR 9 1961

Pet Fox Made Great Medicine for Indian

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Accounts of pet crows, paisanos, raccoons, coyotes, skunks and numerous other wild creatures of the land are not uncommon, but I have not heard of many pet foxes. The most interesting account I know is in "My Life as an Indian," by James Willard Schultz. Not long after the Civil War, he went to the Montana country, married a Blackfoot Indian maiden and with her lived among the tribesmen for many years. In American literature there is not a more understanding and interesting book revealing Indian life than Schultz' autobiographic "My Life as an Indian."

J. FRANK DOBIE.

In the slapdash, black-and-white caricatures of pulp fiction and radio and television usages, no hero can exist without a villain, and when the Indian comes in, he's usually the villain. It is always easier to arouse the mob againt an enemy, even if he has to be invented, than for a friend. It is always easier for the demagog to appeal to prejudice than to appeal to reasonableness and understanding. In Schultz's account of this pet fox among the Blackfeet are interwoven humane aspects of Plains Indians not often seen on the television screens. The story was told to Schultz by his Blackfoot wife. Her grandfather had a dream commanding him to catch a kit fox, tame it, and be kind to it. After trying unsuccessfully to snare a kit at its den, he saw the entrance to their den in the side of a coulee. The playground was near a considerable patch of wild rye, a tall bunch grass. With the aid of his wife, using a shoulder blade of a buffalo for a shovel, this grandfather got a hole dug out in the middle of the tall rye and therein hid himself until finally the foxes came playing within reach. He took one home, and from here on I quote.

* * *

ONE-MAN FOX.

"Puh-po-kan (Dream) my grandfather named the little animal. From the very beginning it had no fear of him, and soon made friends with the dogs of the lodge. An old bitch loved it at once, and if any strange dog came nosing around where it was, she would drive the stranger away. The fox ate readily the bits of meat my grandfather gave it, and learned to drink water and soup. He forbade anyone to pet it, or feed it, or call it by name; so it was friendly only with him. It wanted to follow him wherever he went, and at night would crawl under the robes and sleep beside him. When camp was moved, it had a little nest in a travois load, where it would lie quite still to the journey's end. It was such a funny little one; always wanting to play with my grandfather or with the lodge dogs; and when it got scared at anything it would run to him, making short, gasping, hoarse little barks, just as we hear them at night out beyond the lodges. I did so want to play with it, take it up in my arms and pet it, but always my mother would say: 'Don't you dare do it; 'tis a sacred one, and if you touch it something dreadful will happen to you. Perhaps you would go blind.'

"As it grew older it would wander around at times during the night until chased by some dog, and then it would rush in and crawl into bed beside my grandfather. Not a mouse wandered in under the lodge-skin but Puh-po-kan had found and killed it, and often he would bring home a bird or ground squirrel. About the time when Puh-po-kan had seen two winters, we were camping on the Little River, just north of the Bear's Paw Mountains. One night, after the lodge fires had all died out and everyone was asleep, Puh-po-kan awoke my grandfather by backing up against his head and barking in a way it had when scared. 'Stop that,' said my grandfather, reaching up and giving the little one a light slap. 'Stop barking and go to sleep.'

* * *

MOTIONLESS OBJECT.

"But Puh-po-kan would not stop; instead, he barked harder than ever, trembling because he was so excited. My grandfather raised up on his elbow and looked around. The moon was shining down through the smoke-hole, so that he could make out [illegible] ferent objects in the lod[illegible] by the doorway there w[illegible] thing that did not belo[illegible] a dark, motionless obj[illegible] looked like a person crou[illegible]

"'Who are you?' he as[illegible] 'What do you want here?'

"No answer.

"Then my grandfather spoke again: 'Tell me quickly who you are. Get up and talk, or I will shoot you.'

"Still there was no answer. Puh-po-kan kept on barking. My grandfather quietly reached out for his gun, which lay at the head of his bed, cocked it without noise, aimed and fired it. With a fearful scream a man—for such the object proved to be—sprang up and fell dead right in the hot ashes and coals of the fireplace, from whence my grandfather quickly dragged him. Of course the shot aroused the camp, and the screams of the frightened women in my grandfather's lodge brought everyone to it.

"A fire was quickly built and the light showed that the dead one was an enemy of a far-away tribe, a Sioux. He had no weapon except a big long knife, still firmly gripped in his right hand. Evidently he had entered the lodge intending to steal a gun, and would have stabbed anyone who interfered with him. When the fox gave warning of his presence, he most likely thought that by remaining crouched to the ground he would not be discovered, and that those aroused would soon again fall asleep. He seemed to have come to the camp alone, for no trace of others could be found. No horses were stolen.

"All the talk in camp was about the fox, and my grandfather's dream. It was all great medicine. And my grandfather—how pleased he was. He made many sacrifices, prayed much, and loved Puh-po-kan more than ever. Two more winters the little one lived, and then one summer night it was bitten by a rattlesnake and soon died. The women wrapped the swollen little body in robes and buried it on a scaffold they made in a cottonwood tree, just as if it had been a person."

J. Frank Dobie

San A. Light 3-3-57

Most Independent Man of All

By J. FRANK DOBIE

The nearest to a national holiday that Texas has is March 2, marking the day that Texas formally declared its independence of Mexico 121 years ago. The desire for independence probably tops all other desires felt by human beings throughout the world. Independence includes all sorts of freedoms, social, religious, economic, political, intellectual. A wholly independent man can look bosses, bankers, gossips, accusers, popes, voters, everybody, in the eye and walk on his own way serenely. I am not aware of ever having met a wholly independent man. The more one looks into himself, the more acutely he realizes that even the highest form of independence is but an approach and a compromise.

I propose to celebrate Texas independence day by sketching the most admirably independent man that, to my limited knowledge, history records. Socrates died at the age of 70, 399 years before Christ was born. Everybody knows that he drank "the fatal hemlock." To know how and why he drank it is to know more of the man.

He was an Athenian in the Golden Age of Grecian civilization. During the long war waged by Greece to maintain her independence and civilization against Spartan brute force and materialism, Socrates distinguished himself for endurance and bravery. He was a whole man physically as well as mentally and morally. He is remembered for his lifetime search for truth. "I am a lover of knowledge," he said—especially of self-knowledge. Only through knowledge, he held, could a man's soul achieve supreme goodness. Many scholars with rights to opinion regard Socrates as the greatest philosopher who ever lived and influenced thought, though nothing that he wrote remains. His thoughts were preserved mostly through the dialogues of Plato.

'Corruption'

In 399 B. C. charges were legally preferred in Athens against Socrates for "not believing in the gods of the city and for corrupting the youth." The accusers asked for conviction and the death penalty. Trial procedure and the jury system were very different from those familiar in English-speaking courts, but Athens was a democracy. The jury consisted of about 500 citizens. The chief accusers and prosecutors were politicians, and politicians were then what politicians are now.

For a long time it had been the custom of Socrates to go about in Athens puncturing balloons. He knew that he himself was ignorant of much and was constantly examining himself. Nobody was offended by that, but when he exposed the ignorance of public men pretending to be wise and of greed pretending to be pious and altruistic, he cut deep. Men he had exposed jumped at the chance to shut him up permanently. He believed that government requires more training, knowledge and skill than any other art—and he was an authority on literature and the fine arts. He was deeply spiritual, but whited sepulchers always brand unorthodoxy as infidelity.

Socrates answered his accusers. He asked that one youth corrupted by his teachings come forward or be cited by parents. No youth afforded evidence. The accusers were not embarrassed. It was exposure of the self-satisfied ignorance of elders that cut them. Who ever heard of a population, even in highly civilized Greece itself, more moved by the reasonable than by personal feeling?

Found Guilty

The jury voted Socrates guilty by 281 votes against 220. The majority ruled. He was surprised that it was not larger. He had the right to propose an alternative to the death penalty and was expected to propose banishment, but his mission, he said, was to benefit Athens. Like Joan of Arc, he had heard voices. He would not admit guilt by leaving his country. A mere fine, however, was not evil. He was a poor man, and all he could offer to pay was a "mina"—the regular ransom for a prisoner of war. His friends offered to put up 30 mina. Some of the jurors were incensed at this light way of treating a crime and the majority for imposing the death penalty was increased.

In a speech that Socrates now made to the assemblage he scoffed at fear of death and said that for a good man death meant entry on a better life. Socrates was put in prison, where for about a month he spent the days in philosophic colloquies with some very superior-minded young men who loved him. The wealthy Crito and others bribed the guards and made all arrangements for flight, but when Socrates was notified of the plan he said that he had always been law-abiding and believed that a good citizen must obey the laws of his country. He refused to escape.

Noble Thoughts

There is no space here to give samples of the noble and also cheerful thoughts expressed by Socrates during this period of waiting for the draft of hemlock that would end his life. When the day came, the official poison-bearer said, "I know, Socrates, that I shall not find you unreasonable like other men, who curse me when I bid them drink the poison. All along I have found you the noblest and gentlest and best man who has ever come here. Farewell." Then he turned weeping to go out.

Socrates looked up at him and said, "Farewell. I will do as you say."

Then he turned to his followers and said, "How courteous the man is! The whole time that I have been here he has constantly come in to see me, and sometimes he has talked to me and has been the best of men. And, now, how generously he weeps for me! Come, Crito, let us obey him. Let the poison be brought."

Crito urged Socrates to delay a little while. "By delaying," Socrates responded, "I should gain only my own contempt for greedily saving up a life that is already spent. So do not refuse to do as I say."

Sent for Poison

Then Crito sent a slave to call the poison-bearer. When he came in carrying the cup of hemlock tea, Socrates said to him, "You understand these things, my good sir. What have I to do?"

"You have only to drink this," he replied, "and walk around until your legs feel heavy, and then lie down; and it will act of itself."

With that he handed the cup to Socrates, who took it cheerfully without trembling or change of color or feature. He wanted to pour out a little of the fluid in the ceremony of a libation, but the poison-bearer told him there was none to spare. "Then," said Socrates, "I pray to the gods that my journey hence may be prosperous." Thereupon he put the cup to his lips and drank calmly and cheerfully.

Every friend present now broke into sobs. "My friends," Socrates exclaimed, "what are you doing? I sent away the women chiefly in order that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in silence. So calm yourselves and bear up."

The weeping ceased and Socrates walked about until he said his legs were growing heavy. Then he lay down on his back, as directed by the poison-bearer, who kept feeling of his feet and legs, growing cold higher and higher up. Socrates felt himself and said, "When it comes to my heart I shall be gone." A little later he spoke for the last time. "Crito," he said, "I owe a cock to Asclepius; do not forget to pay it."

To quote the words in Plato's "Phaedo," "Such was the end of our friend, a man, I think, who was the wisest and justest and the best man I have ever known."

He was the most independent because he had so much to be independent with.

Colorings Deplored

DEC 18 1960

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Yule Trees Should Be Plain, Country Green

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

"They are purple and pink and silver and gold, but who will find me a green Christmas tree—as green as was my valley that April it rained?"

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The speaker was evidently a man with the country still in him, though whether he was from the country directly could not have been ascertained from his shoes. The country was in his looks and in his speech, and echoes of poetry seemed to linger around both. Looking out over rows of Christmas trees offered for sale, he seemed to be speaking to the past and not to any person, but the tree-seller heard him and responded.

"These Christmas trees," he said, "are sold for the benefit of the Betterment Club, and their colors express the club's spirit."

"Spirit, all right, but what," asked the man of the country, the poetry lines in his countenance having faded away, "does the Betterment Club propose to better?"

Standing in place on cement, the vendor replied:

"It's part of a national movement, operating through chemical research and with funds deductible from income tax, to better the coloration of earth and vegetation along our highways and in other public places. The coloration that the Betterment Club seeks to improve in soil and in the growth out of the soil will be in harmony with these variegated trees. Look at them there, shining in pinkness and purpleness and silverness and goldness! Look at them! Imagine what a world we'll have when our trees and flowers and grasses in our parks and along the mighty highways are of such hues."

"Damn the hues and damn your betterment," said the man from the country, turning away.

* * *

NO TREES FOR SALE.

This was all the conversation I heard one December day in nineteen hundred and seventy, but it set me to remembering Christmas trees and gifts and Christmasy times of about nineteen hundred down on a ranch in Live Oak County, Texas.

There was no such thing as a Christmas tree for sale in those days, at least in little towns. If the only kind of tree about was a mesquite tree, then people used a little mesquite tree for Christmas. My people used comely live oaks and hackberries and "knock-a-way" (anacawa).

I suppose that there have always been toys for children at Christmas time. I can remember tin horns, cheap metal pistols that popped caps, toy trains, little wagons and balloons. I can remember dolls for my sisters. But I remember these things by an effort. The toys that bring joy in memory were the ones we made. I doubt if I could make a kite now, but making one was not very difficult when our only glue was paste of mixed flour and water. If the tail of rags was too heavy, the kite wouldn't rise, and if it was too light, the kite wobbled and then fell. Getting a tail of the right length an weight was a matter of not only judgment but trial and error. No colored balloon was as substantial as a hog bladder. One of the hog-killing times of the year usually came not long before Christmas, and the prize of the hog for us children was the bladder. We blew air into it through a quill inserted in the opening to the bladder. When the expanded bladder was held in warmth of a fire and was rubbed, the tissues would expand farther and the bladder would take more and more air until the walls were very thin, and it would have floated away had it not been restrained—until yielding to temptation, somebody gave it a pommel and it burst with a wonderful sound. No Christmas popgun was ever the equal of our homemade slingshoots.

* * *

WATER WHEELS.

Our ranchhouse overlooked Long Hollow. It ran water only after good rains, and there were years when it hardly ran at all for many months at a time, but my father taught us to make a water wheel. Those water wheels were reserved until Long Hollow got on a rise, and then the flow turned them. Such bluing as washer-women used in those days came in little cloth bags enclosed in cylindrical boxes of wood. The diameter of the box was about that of a dollar. We dig bullets out of trees where they had been shot for practice. We got lead wherever we could and melted the solder off tin cans. Tin cans had much more solder then than now. Sometimes we'd gouge babbiting from windmill parts. Lead and solder and babbiting we melted in iron spoons and poured in the bluing boxes, thus coining our dollars. I won't say that we didn't have fun pitching silver dollars sometimes, but our coinage was more personal and could hardly have been called counterfeiting.

I remember a doll made out of a corncob, but it couldn't come up to one off a Christmas tree. The most memorable gift, so far as I'm concerned, from a Christmas tree was not literally off it but from under it.

It was my first saddle—a brand new saddle made by P. Bauer of Oakville, Texas. I guess I wasn't more than 5 or 6 years old. I'd ridden bareback and had ridden old saddles, but here was one that had been ordered for me! In years that followed I would see "Gallup" and "Sonley" and "Victoria" and other names stamped on saddles, but P. Bauer's name led all the rest. I think his father was a saddler. Finally, Paul Bauer left Oakville and moved to Beeville, where for two more generations the Bauers have made saddles. I'd give a good deal at this late date to see a saddle stamped with the name of P. Bauer, Oakville, Texas. Oakville never had more than two or three hundred inhabitants. It had Ira Hinton's saloon, and it had Weimer's Screw Worm Medicine. It had the courthouse made of stone, and a jail. It had Sulphur Creek close by, beside which a saving rancher coming to court could camp and stake out his horses and boil his own coffee in an old tomato can. Oakville had a tree from which either three or seven men had been hanged, but it had nothing to compare with the saddle shop in which P. Bauer stamped his name on leather smelling as delicious as the spices of Arabia, and until it was broken in, screaking as loud as an ungreased wagon axle. "Christmas gift," I say.

* * *

PAPA WAS SANTA.

Papa had played Santa Claus for several Christmases before I caught on. He was jolly — just jolly enough—and he didn't scare anybody as some Santa Clauses do. I remember certain books that came off the Christmas tree. When we got our firecrackers and Roman candles we wanted the gift distribution to be over in a hurry so we could run out and start firecrackering. We always waited until dark to shoot off the Roman candles. I guess being so eager to try out a new knife or a new bugle and the firecrackers and to look into a new book kept us from being curious about where Santa Claus went.

I see that there are schools now in which to train Santa Clauses. I think about as much of those schools as I think of the School of Education spelled with a capital E. Well, here's a cheerio Christmas to all of you, whether you read this column or not!

Philosophies of Life Are Stressed By Lusty Calf of Charollaise Breed

MAR 11 1957 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I call him a pet bull calf though he refuses to be petted. Maxie Michaelis, rancher in Mexico and in Hays County, Texas, gave him to me when he was 4 months old. He's 7 now. He is of the Charollaise breed, in which Maxie Michaelis specializes, and I call him Maxie. The only time he shows any interest in pronouncement of of his name is when I rattle range cubes (partly cottonseed cake) in a bucket and, calling him, move toward a trough. The sounds tell him that he can eat something he especially likes and he comes to it.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Soon after a truck deposited him at the pens our place in the hills—which is still called Cherry Springs though the springs dried up last year and several of the wild cherry trees died—I roped him and rubbed his head and then let him loose in a four-acre trap around the house to exercise. The rope was still around his neck dragging. He found a place where the wire fence was low at a low bluff, jumped the wire and landed in a wash about three feet under the top of the bluff. Then he took out across a small pasture and found enough space at a water gap to go through into a neighbor's pasture. The neighbor, seeing the rope on him, deduced that I had suffered an accident and came over, bringing Maxie along.

PENNED UP FOR WEEKS.

After that I kept him penned up for weeks, allowing him plenty of room to exercise. He never has cared anything for hay of any kind but thrives on oats, a mixture designed for calves but called "horse and mule feed," with frequent baits of range cubes. He drinks as much water as any doctor ever recommended to any patient.

One day he came into the yard just to explore. His nose and mouth are his exploratory organs. One of the first things he smelled was a hose sprinkler lying on a bench. I suppose it was especially cold. When his nose touched it he jumped to one side as if he had been jabbed with an electric prodpole. He smelled every single shrub about the house, not finding any leaves he wanted to eat.

I was watching him the whole time. I tossed a heavy paper sack at him. He shied and then came up to smell it and began chewing on it. Every now and then he would pick up something on the ground and chew it a little before dropping it. If he had not been growing monstrously and had not been as fat as it is healthy for any animal to be, I should have thought he was hungry for something not in his diet.

Maxie is growing up, and before long most of his world will be commonplace to him. He wants company. All remembrance of his mother has passed away. He'd enjoy having other calves to play with. Several times I have tried, not very successfully, to make him feel that I was a calf, advancing toward him humped over and springing at him; he would retreat and then wheel and rush toward me until he reached a point beyond which his timidity barred further advance. One day while he was out and I was on horseback I started to pen him. He ran and I headed him off and then turned at an angle. He rushed toward my horse. He was taking the procedure as play. I desisted from trying to crowd him into the pen. Before long he came in voluntarily for feed. The pen is not a prison to him; it is his eating place.

VITALITY IS ADMIRABLE.

Outside he often sprints from sheer vitality, but not so often as a few weeks ago. He probably weighs over 900 pounds. It would depress me to see him as hog-like in form and as lethargic as stall-fed calves and yearlings in a stock show. Such hunks of devitalized flesh devitalize me in the same way as do young men and women without any spirit of rebellion abainst the stupidities of society.

My two horses are mares, a very old one and a young one. I have seen Maxie try to rear up on them. I expected the young one to whale loose at him with her hooves but neither mare pays much attention to him. They seem to feel less playful toward him than I do.

Like most young things, he spends a great deal of time lying down. He has a heavy coat of hair and it has not been cold enough this winter for him not to prefer standing or lying down in the north wind rather than in shelter. His hair was designed by nature for protection of a body that rustles for a living. Sustained by man, the body is too warm for the hair and gets itchy. Maxie spends a great deal of time rubbing his neck and shoulders against posts and leaning trees.

His voice is changing; most of the time it sounds like a calf's but occasionally it approaches that of a young bull. He seldom uses it except when two or three cows and a bull in an outside pasture come up to the pens. Then when they go off he stands by or walks up and down the fence voicing his desire to go with them.

Maxie's I. Q. seems to me unusually high for a bovine. After he had become accustomed to going out and in through a wide gate opening from the pens into the house trap, one day I let him out a narrow gate on the opposite side of the pens and left it open. When he wanted to go back to his feed though he did not go to the familiar wide gate but to the narrow one through which he had passed but one time. I have seen many a cow brute having difficulty in adjusting to a new entrance.

Maxie does not say much, but whatever he says he means, therein differing sharply from most human beings. Animals are not like people, but people are like animals, though they have great plusses in the mind and emotion beyond the basic animal level. Maxie still distrusts a lot of the world from ignorance; I distrust it from knowing too much. I would not say that he is either happy or unhappy. He epitomizes contentment itself when he is chewing his cud. The cud-chewers, goats excepted, always have had a benign effect on my sensibilities, even on my intellect, I believe. They are satisfying company to me. If Homo sapiens had a cud, it might prevent many wrecks, both moral and physical, and diminish many pretenses based on vain ambition.

No U.S. Monopoly

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM NOV 27 1960

Riding Bucking Horses, Roping Not New Idea

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

There's nothing like the provincial mind for imagining that begetting and dying started in his province; there's nothing like what's called the modern mind for fancying that life started not more than 30 years ago, and that World War I is coeval with the Civil War and that the Civil War is as remote as the campaigns of Caesar.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Not infrequently I have been asked by some purported student to supply facts on the beginnings of roping or ropetwirling in Texas, or at best in Mexico. Hundreds of years before Christ was born Herodotus wrote of the skill of Scythians in roping and dragging to death their enemies. The branding of cattle was pictured in Egypt while the pyramids were being built.

If I could read the Russian language and could search in the libraries of Leningrad and Moscow, I'm sure that I could prove that wild horses were being lassoed on the steppes of Russia before America was discovered. I've recently acquired a book entitled "Among Horses in Russia," by M. H. Hayes, published in London in 1900. An Englishman, in 1897 he went to Russia as a technician with horses. His host was a General Derfelden and on nationalities he has this to say, "Neither virtues nor vices are the monopoly of any nation."

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TWO CLASSES.

And now to quote Hayes: "In the early morning we arrived at Shandrovka on the desolate steppes of the Dnieper, far away from any town, consisting only of a few officers' houses, some huts for the men, stables and paddocks containing about five hundred freshly caught remounts. At General Derfelden's suggestion, I demonstrated how steppe horses could be caught and haltered without being lassoed. The horses of the steppes may be divided into two classes: (1) semi-wild animals like those on the Kirgis and Kalmouk steppes, and (2) horses at liberty, though under more or less supervision, like those of the Don and its affluents. On the Kirgis and Kalmouk steppes, each stallion has his kossiak or troop of 15 to 20 brood mares, which are generally chosen by the stallion and are protected by him. The young mares which have not had a foal and the geldings keep together without apparently any form of equine government. Several kossiaks form what is called in Russian a tabourne, which may consist of hundreds and sometimes thousands of animals that have to shift for themselves. These horses are brought up much in the same way as those on Montana ranches."

Anybody who knows the old-time Spanish-American way of having a stallion guard his manada (band) of mares will recognize the similarity of horse raising on the steppes. Now to continue from Hayes:

"The horses of the Don are provided to a greater or less extent with food, are often given shelter during bad weather, and attention is paid to their breeding. In their bringing up, we may compare them to horses that are raised in Australia for export to India. On all the steppes, the horses are caught by means of a lasso, which is carried in a coil on the left side of a rider's saddle. Roping as practiced in Russia often causes severe and not unfrequently fatal injuries, and has the further serious objection that in any case it hurts the part of the neck close to the head and consequently renders the animal difficult to bridle, and sometimes even to approach."

It used to be claimed that at least a third of the roped mustangs in Texas were killed or ruined. But to resume with Hayes: "Before going to Russia, my experience in catching wild horses was confined to the veldt horses of southern Africa. Those animals were as wild as hawks, but there was no trouble in driving them into a kraal, and once I had got them there, the slipping on of a halter attached to a pole was as easy as falling off a log.

* * *

IDEA RIDICULED.

"The head-shyness of the steppe horses that had been lassoed took a fair amount of getting over; but patience conquers all things. I need hardly say that horses intended to be captured in the way I advocate, would not have been spoiled by the lasso. Of course, every Russian to whom I proposed this innovation ridiculed its introduction to the steppes, where, I was gravely informed, there were no enclosures to drive horses into. The possibility that the construction of a kraal, which two men and a boy could accomplish in a few days, while not beyond the resources of Russian civilization, did not suggest itself to my critics.

"After I had taught some of the Cossacks to do the haltering trick with a long stick, at which they proved apt pupils, the General kindly gave me a show of breaking a la Kalmouk. On receiving the order, ten or a dozen of these bold horsemen, who for dare-deviltry are like unto the sowars of the Bengal Cavalry, brought forward by leading rope a horse that they had recently caught and haltered, and at a given signal rushed at him, seized him by the headstall, ears, forelock, mane and neck, so as to hold his head down and thus prevent him from playing up, while they saddled and bridled him by force. As soon as the gear was on, one of them was hoisted into the saddle, and then all let go. The horse bucked with such fury and skill that the man, though he was a good roughrider, got thrown, and the horse galloped as hard as he could across the plain. Some mounted men brought him back—with some of the fight left in him. He threw the second man who got on him. Another pursuit, another capture, and the now tired horse failed to get his third rider off. The Kalmouks enjoyed the sport immensely. I need hardly say that horses broken in this manner rarely if ever forget the fact that when they were fresh they had been able to throw their man."

In greener days I used to swallow the folk-lore that bucking horses belonged almost exclusively to the Western Hemisphere. Of course, there's nothing to it, and we may be sure that just as good riders of pitching horses rode on the other side of the world hundreds of years ago as have ever ridden in Texas or Montana or the Argentine. There isn't anything new—not even ignorance.

Homing Instinct Lingers On

3/25/57

Dobies Part With Home Ranch, but J. Frank Retains Title to Memories

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Sixty-two and a half years ago I was born in a rock room on a small ranch in Live Oak County, Texas. My father owned the ranch before he and my mother were married. After he died in 1920, she kept it until her death something over two years ago. Today, as one of six heirs I have signed a piece of paper that passes ownership of the land from my blood to strange hands. Unending time with its ceaseless changes may see another human being on that land with roots into it as deep as mine, but not soon I think. Now it is a piece of property. In a little while I shall be a clot of earth. Until then, no matter who the owner, my roots, invisible and not material, in that land will be irradicable.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

In a way I feel that I have betrayed that plot of land for a piece of money, though I am sure that the purchasers will do more to restore it than my family have done. For many years we have been absentee owners, and during the greater part of that time it has been leased to individuals interested—by circumstances and inherited attitudes—only in what profit they could wring out of it.

BEAUTIFUL, HARD LAND.

It is not a rich land. Poor soil and thorned brush make a portion of it forbidding. Sweep of hills and valleys, wooded Ramirenia Creek, and live oak trees—one of them the noblest in Live Oak County—make most of the land gracious. Certain sites, the old Spanish ranch-fort especially, tell tales. I began listening to this piece of earth talk while I was a child. When my father came to the land, Ramirenia Creek ran clear water the year round; when I was a youth, it had lasting waterholes, stocked with fish; for a third of a century now, it has been bone dry except after rains. Erosion. I will stick up for the old ranch as a ranch. I'd like to have cattle on it. Owing to game conservation in the area, it has more deer and turkeys than it had a generation ago. In a seasonable spring it is very beautiful. Drouths have brought anguish to its users, mainly because they over-used and were not fair to it.

I left it in 1906, when I went off to college and my family moved to the town of Beeville, 27 horse miles over a weary road to the east, where we used to trade. For years after I left, I spent summers on the ranch. I have never ceased returning to it with eagerness. It has been a place where I belonged and on which I have felt free in the way that one can be only in a house of serenity, on his own piece of earth. It has said more to me than any person I have ever known or any writer I have ever read, but only through associating with fine minds and spirits have I come to know what it was saying.

HOMING INSTINCT STRONG.

It is hardly seemly for me to talk on a subject so intimate, but as a writing man I want to say what is in me. My trouble is being clear, clear to myself as well as to others. There is no sentimentality about the feelings, not even sentiment. The subject is not for rationalization. What I have is instinct strengthened by a certain sensitivity. In the beginning of his career as a stockman my father raised horses, traded them, and drove a herd or two to Kansas. I used to hear talk about mares driven away from southern Texas to Arkansas and other far away places that in the spring came home to have their colts on the ground where they perhaps had been born and where they had had other colts. This was before there were fences. The instinct in me is the instinct that was in those homing mares. I can think and use words; they couldn't.

Our ranch house, the main part of which stands, is in an extensive grove of live oak trees on a little plateau of sandy land overlooking the valley of Long Hollow. Formerly little more than a gully, Long Hollow is now a deep and wide gulch. Erosion. The valley was a field, and then it was a grassed pasture. Now it is a dense thicket of mesquites and huisaches, the latter plant having come to our land within the last 20 years or so. Thousands of times I have looked across that valley, and something from those vistas is deep inside me. One spring the bluebonnets there were up to my stirrups. They are inside me too. In my study I cherish a little painting of Mexican primroses, made and given me by Eula Whitehouse, author of "Texas Flowers in Natural Colors." It speaks to me of the Mexican primroses I knew on Long Hollow as a child. In the mornings of spring and early summer I often awoke hearing the quick, bright, flying cry made by diving scissortails. Countless times since, a glimpse of the salmon-hued underpart of a flying scissortail has brought back to me those morning awakenings.

SMOKEHOUSE CRUMBLED.

The house had a yard fence around it and in the yard were more flowers than any other ranch in that part of Texas had. At the inside corner of a wide L-shaped gallery grew a cape jasmine. Its aroma has never left me. Back of the house was a rock smokehouse, now crumbled down, in which my father smoked bacon from a smoldering fire of corncobs. A corncob cast away on the ground often brings back to me that smoke. The sides of bacon were hung on poles by leaves of beargrass that had been held over a fire to make the fiber more pliable. That—not bears — is what beargrass means to me.

Back of the house were pomegranate bushes, the fruit of which was a rare treat. Near the pomegranates grew a large oak into which a hardy mustang grapevine twined. This oak was called the Coon Tree, and we children had a platform house in it, to which we ascended by means of the grapevine and on which we sat reading books, playing, and sometimes drinking (without ice of course) pomegranateade.

EARLY MORNING MEMORIES.

On back of the Coon Tree were pens for milk cows and horses, sheds and a large barn, in which were stalls for saddles, buggies and tools as well as for horses. In front of this barn the sandy ground had been paved with caliche. Red ants covered by the caliche had bored through it, and during warm months they worked day and night.

My father was always an early riser. When he was working cattle, or running cattle as the phrase went, he always had his men out and away from the ranch house before daylight. Even when we were not running cattle, I as the oldest boy, walked often before daylight into the little horse pasture to find a horse on which to ride after the remuda. Many a dark morning I have stooped over here and there in order to skylight the night horse. While we were saddling our horses on the caliche ground before daylight, they would stamp in order to knock off red ants crawling above their hoofs.

For several years after I went off to college, I half-awakened before daylight every morning to the sound of those horses stamping their feet on caliche. I could hear the low voices of Mexicans saying indistinguishable words, and I could hear the plopping down of saddles on horse backs and the metal clicks of stirrup rings and spurs. This matutinal experience gradually ceased. I never hear those sounds before daylight any more, but the memory of both the actuality and the half-dream is a part of me.

I think I could write a book detailing what the R. J. Dobie ranch has instilled into my nature. It will be there a thousand, ten thousand years hence. It will have other names, be divided. The time will come when people upon it will speak a tongue that no one living now could understand. No one living now could understand what the Saxons were saying a thousand years ago. The thought of times in which I shall not participate does not depress me in the least, but when I think of having made a break with that plot of land to which I am more closely kin than to any other substance on earth, I feel that the end of something has come, that an epoch important to me, though of no consequence to other people, has ended.

Attachment to a certain patch of the earth's surface is very different from attachment to a country or to a principle. With some people it has amounted to principles.

Also General Beale

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

JAN 15 1961

Camels and Kit Carson Come Into Limelight

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Gen. Edward Fitzgerald Beale should need no introduction to Texans. "He never traveled so light," says his biographer, Stephen Bonsal, "but that there was at least one good book in his pack." On one of his several trips across Western deserts with Kit Carson he read "Travels in China and Tartary" by Abbe Hue, and conceived the idea that camels would serve well in crossing Arizona deserts. In 1855 he conferred with Jefferson Davis, then secretary of war, on the subject and Jefferson Davis soon thereafter ordered a camel-purchasing expedition.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

In April 1856, 32 camels were landed at Indianola, Texas. They and a second consignment of the animals were located at Camp Verde, near Banderra. In 1857 Beale selected 25 for a trial trip to California. He found the camels altogether desirable as pack animals for barren, rough, waterless lands. The remainder of camel history does not belong here. Beale bought some at public auction and released them on his Tejon Rancho, about 200,000 acres, northeast of Los Angeles. He was a great friend to the friendless—to Indians and Negroes in particular. Hundreds of Indians found refuge on his ranch, where they learned to work. While he was in Texas in 1857 he bought a Negro slave for $1,500 and then immediately gave him his freedom, all in order to save him from a brutal white man.

* * *

MONSTROUS LIAR.

While he was living on El Rancho Tejon, he read in "Harper's Weekly" a long poem entitled "Kit Carson's Ride," by Joaquin Miller. This "Poet of the Sierras," as he was called, seems to have been the founding father of traducers of true Western men as later exemplified by Hollywood, pulp fiction and contemporary television. He was a pretender of meager abilities and monstrous lies. I love a man who admires right things and spurns the false. Beale had camped and campaigned with Carson time and again. He burst out in righteous indignation against Joaquin Miller's false picture of "dear Kit."

"As we recall the modest, earnest, refined simplicity of Carson, and compare it with the frenzied buffoon presented in the poem," he wrote, "we regret that the scalp of Joaquin had not been counted among savage 'coups.' What an abuse of all common sense is such stuff! That virtuous gentlewoman, Dame Quickly, says of the famous Pistol:

"'He a captain! Hang him rogue! He lives upon mouldy stewed prunes and dried cakes. A captain! These villains will make the word 'captain' as odious as the word 'occupy,' which was an excellent good word before it was ill-sorted.' The word poet is getting to be 'ill-sorted.'

"Carson was a man cleanly of mind, body and speech, and by no manner of means a border ruffian. He had no gift of swearing. The only oath I ever heard him use was that of William the Conqueror, which I had once read him out of a stray volume of 'Tristram Shandy.' On this occasion, he drew a long single-barrelled pistol (old Constable's make), which Fremont had given me, and I to Kit, for we had no 'gold mounted Colt's true companions for years' in those simple-minded days, and with slow, deadly speech, which carried the sense of imminent mischief in it, he said to one who was in the act of a cowardly wrong upon a sick man, 'Sergeant, drop that knife, or "by the Splendor of God," I'll blow your heart out.'

* * *

NOT ENOUGH . . .

"He had not the advantages of education, but was wise as the beaver, and of great dignity and simplicity of character, and not given to the least vulgarity of thought or expression, nor would he tolerate it in those about him.

"It is not enough that this poor 'metre balladmonger,' talks of scenes of which he knows nothing, and has misplaced and misnamed all mountain craft, and the chronology and geography, weapons, and ranges of tribes of Indians and the spirit of the times whereof he speaks. It is not enough that he puts into the mouth of a calm, dignified, sweet nature such bosh as would make a lovesick and idiotic ape quite ashamed of himself, but he slanders a character as chivalrous as any knight of romance, by making him escape on his lady love s horse from a danger in which she is left to perish . . .

"Kit Carson was a man pure, very pure, in his nature — not given to lustful ways, but calm, serious and sweet of temper; a man of very moderate stature, but broad fronted and elastic, yet by no means robust of frame though gifted with immense endurance and nerves of steel. A head quite remarkable for its full size and very noble forehead, quiet, thoughtful blue eyes, and yellow hair, a very strong jaw and a face dished like an Arab horse, that made a man first meeting him look at him again with the thought that he would 'do to tie to. 'Arms rather long, and thin strong flanks, with slightly bandy legs.

"This was the outward shape, which enclosed a spirit as high and daring and noble as ever tenanted the body of a man. No man to take a woman's horse because it was faster than his own and leave her to the prairie fire, while he galloped off to twaddle over her marvelous eyes. What an abuse of common sense is such stuff!"

Dobie on a Donkey 3-31-57

Distance in Sierras Is Measured by Time

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

In 1928 I made my first trip with a pack outfit across the Sierra Madre of Chihuahua and Sonora. Since then I have made various other trips into and across the vast chain of mountains extending the length of Mexico on the west side.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Sometimes I have ridden a horse, sometimes a mule, sometimes alone except for a mozo who was guide and servant, sometimes in company, including my wife on two trips, always with pack mules to carry bedding and supplies.

In all I have spent many weeks on these trips and have perhaps traversed between 1,500 and 2,000 miles, though distance in the Sierra Madre is measured not by miles but by the number of hours required to ride between one point and another.

Now I am just back from another trip and propose to tell about it and what I saw and heard on it.

It began late last year when John Stiteler of Rockwood, Pa., wrote me and then came to see me. He had read some of my books, wanted powerfully to make a pack trip across the Sierras, and asked me to be his guest. Another guest would be L. J. Maxwell of Houston. Stiteler knows horses and is a first rate horseman, but neither he nor Maxwell knows Spanish.

"Where do you suggest traveling?" Stiteler asked.

WANDERING AROUND.

Twenty-three years ago I spent about a month wandering around with pack mule and mozo in northern Durango, staying a few days at an ancient mining town named Guanacevi, and then riding two days south from there to Tepehuanes, here a branch railroad from Durango, about 150 miles on south, terminates.

At that time a mixed train (passenger and freight) ran only once every three days. The railroad station is a mile or more across a river from the little town and the train left for Durango before daylight. There were no automobile roads in the country and no automobiles. My mozo drank too much mescal after we got in about dark and was too late with the mules to convey me, my bedroll, saddle and a few "possibles" to the station next morning in time to catch the train.

As a result I spent three of the pleasantest days of my life in Tepehuanes, paying 75 cents (American money) for room and board at the hotel and meeting among other people an American miner who had been married for years to a Mexican woman without her having learned any English at all and with his having learned exceedingly little Mexican.

They seemed to be in happy harmony and she made the best "flan" (a caramel dessert) I have ever eaten.

A comely young woman, daughter of the landlady, kept my dirt-floored room more or less warm by bringing in now and then a copper brazier of burning charcoal. During the sojourn I heard a good deal of talk about the mule trail (the camino real) that went west to the mining town of Topia and on down to Culican in Sinoloa, out from the Gulf of California.

TRAIL SUGGESTED.

When Stiteler asked me to name the route we should take, I suggested the western trail from Tepehuanes to Culican. I did not know that a kind of truck road—about the equivalent of two parallel mule trails — had recently been opened from Tepehuanes to Topia. He flew to Durango immediately, went up to Tepehuanes, engaged a man to engage for him a guide, three assistants, four pack mules, and mounts for us three gringos and the four Mexicans.

The custom for strangers traveling in the Sierras is to rent mounts and pack animals, paying so much a day for the round trip, the owner often going along as a hired hand. Stiteler agreed to pay 10 pesos a day for the animals.

The peso is now worth eight cents of American money. Hereinafter I shall translate pesos into dollars. Some of the best mozos I have ever had went afoot with the mules, but in Durango they ride; they probably ride everywhere more than they used to. Like the mules, the men with them cost 80 cents a day—all except the guide and maestro, Don Miguel Montegro, 63 and full of philosophy, tales and experience dating back to times when all the freight to mines in the mountains and all refined metals were carried on pack mules or burros. Don Miguel drew $1.60 a day.

On March 7 I flew into Durango to meet my traveling companions, who had driven there by car with their wives. I prefer an American saddle beyond all others, but it is very heavy for little mountain horses or mules. During World War I, I learned to ride in comfort on the U. S. cavalry saddle. There used to be thousands of these saddles in northern Mexico left by the Pershing expedition. I rode one for 250 miles on my first trip across the Sierra Madre. Stiteler had shipped three light saddles of the English style from Houston to Durango by air freight, along with a lot of other stuff.

That freight was our first stumbling block. It had gone to the customs office in Mexico City and the customs office notified the air service in Durango it would not forward the packages until proof was made that the person to whom it was assigned "existed." The bureaucrats were playing the old game for a "mordido" (a "bite"—a bribe). We wirepulled and dallied in Durango for five days waiting for the air freight to come from Mexico City. The best book of travel in Mexico ever published is George G. Ruxton's "Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains" (1847). He habitually called such episodes "cosas Mexicanas"—the Mexican way. Next Sunday we'll get on the trail.

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

DEC 4 1960

True Sense of Time Is Rarely Found in Men

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

It is exhilarating, expanding to all the atoms and molecules in the human frame, wine in the blood, sunshine in the brain to feel that one is the master of time rather than slave to it. When one is accomplishing something and is free to paddle his own canoe where he wants to paddle it, he is more apt to feel that he is master of time than when he is merely passing it in order to make money, influence people, or escape from himself, from others, from boredom.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"No young man thinks he will ever die," Hazlitt quoted his brother as saying, but feeling utterly free of the inevitable end of all forms of life on earth is not what I mean by feeling oneself to be master of time. Charles Lamb was past the prime of life when he was superannuated from bookkeeping for the East India Company and wrote that essay in delirious joy at his inheritance of vast "estates in time." It is not very often nowadays that I experience the glow that comes from a feeling that I am master of time and not its slave.

That is not because of advancing years; it is because being reduced, for a time—and it would be tedious to explain—to a futile fulfilling of routine. In this state I realize that millions of human beings cook only to eat and eat only to wash dishes and wash dishes only to have them clean and have them clean only to eat out of again. If I had my choice, I'd rather be a buzzard and eat carrion on the ground. I consider myself a brother to the buzzard anyhow.

* * *

SENSE OF PROGRESS.

There can be no statistics to back up the following assertion: a sense of time in the human animal belongs only to the more mature, more enlightened and more advanced intellects. When I taught college freshmen, I often fretted over the glaring fact that to many of them—perhaps to a majority—the Civil War was as remote as the Punic Wars, and John Wesley was coeval with John the Baptist. Nobody at all can have a sense of history without a sense of the progress of time. That is what geology comes to and what the frenzy over the conquest of space will have to come to.

I don't know why this abysmal ignorance among the multitudes should fret anybody. It expresses a littleness in spirit far different from poorness in spirit. An individual without a sense of time tends to think that the modern world began about the time of his birth or perhaps as far back as the birth of the younger of his parents. The more anybody knows—and this excludes fundamentalists of all kinds—the less he can be sure about the beginning of anything. Most of the pipsqueaks who write and act for television's interpretation of the American West would have us believe that the cowboy and the badman instituted a certain code of conduct. I would hardly call it a code of ethics. One of the good books of travel, "Arabia Felix," by Bertram Thomas, published in 1932, recounts the following encounter with a Mohammedan wanderer of the desert. He wanted 50 pounds of ammunition, but Bertram Thomas knew the man's reputation for murdering and stealing.

"If you will not give me ammunition, then tell me how a man shall live," the Bedouin requested.

"You can farm or fish," Bertram Thomas replied.

"That is not a man's work," the worshipper of Allah responded.

"Then what is a man's work?"

"A rifle and dagger."

Scores of scribblers who get paid for scribblings on purported range work, trail driving, town shooting, etc., leave the impression that the cattle industry started in Texas and that roping and other kinds of cow work began if not in Mexico then north of the Rio Grande down close to Mexico. I've been reading a volume entitled "The Economic History of Live Stock in Ireland," by John O'Donovan, published by Cork University Press. Some facts in this book remind me of an observation I made a long while ago; namely, if one would understand the operations of cowboys and cattle lifting on the borders of Texas immediately after the Revolution against Mexico, one would do well to read Sir Walter Scott's "Rob Roy," especially the historical notes in the back of the novel.

* * *

IRISH TRADITION.

Anyhow, Ireland had its tradition of cattle and cattle-owners before America was discovered. Now I quote on the epic story of The Brown Bull of Cooley:

"The historical basis of the tale is that a queen of Connaught went to war with Ulster about a drove of cattle. The story goes that one night at the palace of Cruachan, in Connaught, Queen Medb and her consort, Ailill, had a dispute about the extent of their respective possessions. When all their chattels had been assembled, they first compared 'the least precious of their possessions' and then their 'flocks of sheep, studs of horses, droves of swine, and herds of cattle.' Each of them had a fine sire at the head of each of these kinds, and when the comparison was completed it was found that the respective collections of live stock were equal, except that Ailill had a bull called 'the White-horned,' which the Queen could not match. She heard, however, that an equally good animal was to be found in Cualgne in Ulster, and sent messengers to ask for the loan of him. This was refused because a quarrel arose between the messengers and the servants of the owner, and the Queen invaded Ulster and took possession of the animal by force. The story ends with a battle between the two animals and the deaths of both."

* * *

FORMS OF WEALTH.

Imagine having such humanity in any Teutonic-engendered Ph.D. thesis on any economic subject accepted by any university in the United States of America!

In the time of Queen Elizabeth, cattle and sheep composed the chief form of wealth of Ireland, just as horses composed the chief form of wealth of the Plains Indians. Around the year 1600, one could buy a fat beef in Ireland for 13 shillings. A shilling is now worth 14 cents. At this time, according to a diarymaker, "one hundred pounds ($280) will buy 60 milk cows, 300 ewes, 15 swine, and a good team of horses."

The superior breeds of cattle that supplanted the original breeds in Ireland have been English breeds, just as most of the superior breeds of cattle in the western hemisphere have come from England and Scotland. I won't say it's necessary to know the livestock history of Ireland in order to know the livestock history of the United States, but a knowledge of other wheres always enlarges the knowledge of any particular where. Only a sense of time gives perspective and value to any knowledge.

Austin American 4-7-57

J. Frank Dobie

It took us all day to go by train, pulled by an ancient steam engine, from Durango to Tepehuanes about 120 miles to the north. We had bought a lot of canned food in Durango, along with bacon and dried fruits procurable in Mexico only in city stores.

I had a heavy bedroll; John Stiteler and L. J. Maxwell had only sleeping bags and they would wish they had more. They had a sixshooter apiece and permits to carry them, though there is less danger of being held up on a mountain trail in Mexico than in the lobby of the newest hotel in Dallas. Maxwell had a rifle or two, though game is almost never seen on a travelled trail and is far scarcer all over nothern Mexico than on little farms in Pennsylvania. We had a light saddle apiece. Otherwise, we demonstrated the validity of the Latin term for baggage—"impedimenta." A seasoned prosoector I used to know in Mexico advised mountain travelers: "Make up a list of stuff you have to have and then cut it in two before loading up."

Cooking Not Favored

Our men in Tepehuanes were perfectly agreeable to doing anything we wanted done, but they discouraged the idea of cooking beans and bread on the way. They said we would have to stop at ranches to buy corn and fodder for the horses and mules and that at such places we could also buy eggs, tortillas and all the cooked frijoles (beans) anybody wanted. In buying oranges, sugar, crackers and other supplies in Tepehuanes, I was struck with some of the native purchases: (1) four soda crackers, (2) a tablespoonful of lard, (3) hardly more than a handful of corn, (4) one or two onions, etc. A village merchant can keep busy all day and not sell a wheelbarrow load of goods.

We stayed all night in the dirtiest, most slovenly-run hotel I have ever slept in anywhere. A man directing us was a friend to the hulking, blackguardly proprietor. The proprietress performed something of a feat in finding both eggs and butter (on toast) in such an advanced stage of rancidness. However, she had plenty of time in which to market before breakfast, for it was nine o'clock before we ate, all the time eager to get packed and get off. I wanted my eggs poached, but she was unfamiliar with the process; so I took them "estrellados" (literally "starred"; that is, fried—in rancid lard).

Dobie's Mule Balky

About noon the four pack mules were loaded, the three gringoes were mounted, the four attendants were mounted too, and Don Miguel Montenegro, guide and boss over the other help, said, "Vamanos." I had chosen a mule to ride but became so weary of spurring her at every step that the next morning I changed for a pretty good horse, which he generously insisted on my taking, but I would not. L. J. Maxwell rode a sorrel pony utterly lacking in sense—even the sense of direction. We Americans averaged 30 or 40 pounds heavier than the light-framed Mexicans. I propose devoting a whole column to sage Don Miguel Montenegro. Next in rank was Abel Garcia, who owned forty or fifty beasts we had rented; he had a family and owned forty or fifty head of cattle. His brother Atanasio, a bachelor 30 years old, wants to come to the United States to work and I wish I had a place for him, for he is highly intelligent, efficient, energetic, and honest. The fourth man, Julian by name, wore guarachas (sandals), was fully 99 per cent Indian, was outranked by all the shoewearers, and had the sharpest eyes in the outfit. He is a true mozo of the ancient type. A mozo is a personal servant who does any and everything required. Mexicans no longer like to be called mozos; they are trabajadores—laborers.

Our destination was Culiacan, in Sinaloa, eight or nine days ride west. Pack mules were carrying freight over this trail may be three centuries ago. Here distance is measured, not by miles or kilometers or Spanish leagues but by hours of travel in the saddle. Twenty miles on very steep grades with heavy loads is reckoned a day's journey. We probably traveled about twenty-five miles a day on the average.

Into Higher Ground

After an hour's ride on the first day we left the Tepehuanes River and settlements for higher ground, got up into nut-bearing pinons, and then into pines. A good part of the time we rode in lanes between poor pastures and poor fields on rocky, sloping ground. A drouth has been on this land for years, and the stock we saw, all of very common blood, were in very poor condition. The idea of cutting down on the number of grazing animals to allow acreage to recover its native grasses has permeated the minds of few Mexican countrymen, though the big ranchers may have learned. Before we had ridden far I realized what I already knew and what Don Miguel advised: That we would find no grazing anywhere for our beasts; that we would have to buy corn and fodder at little ranches and camp where we could buy.

Late in the afternoon we came to Los Sauces, a farm-ranch where a silver mine once throve and is no more. It would be a half day's ride from Los Sauces (The Willows) to the next supply ground. We could buy provender for our animals here. The spinster daughter of the old ranchero, who seemed to be in command, was willing to furnish us a room and to prepare meals. She and her sister, who had several small children, took an iron bed, various bags and boxes out of an earthern-floored room in which there was space for us to make down our beds.

The mules and horses were shut up in a corral in front of the house and there we could both see and hear them eat. A table was set outside for us, and here, as elsewhere, I preferred frijoles to any form of canned protein in our boxes. The onions we carried always came in handy, along with limes and canned tomatoes. We had brought along some French bread, capable of remaining eatable for a month, but usually ate fresh tortillas in preference. The senora fried our bacon—mostly salt and fat—and her eggs for breakfast. Her price for the room, the cooking, the eggs, tortillas, and frijoles was about a dollar and a quarter. We saw that she had a good portion of our surplus Crisco—all of it was surplus—and one or two other things.

The man of this house told us that wildcats had been catching their chickens. About dusk a girl not more than seven years old caught, one by one, the chickens left and shut them up in boxes. Not long after dark a coyote raised a melody, and then a wildcat meowed out. Our laborers (nee mozos) slept on the ground in front of our room. Two of them were so joyous at having each other for company that they were still chattering at midnight, when I got up and announced to them that they were preventing us from sleeping. They at once quited down.

All the water for this establishment and for every other country habitation in the Sierra Madre is carried by women in earthern jars, usually on their heads. Los Sauces had two kerosene lamps. Lots of houses have only pine flares. There is no likelihood of creeping socialism in the form of rural electrification blighting very soon free enterprise in the Sierra Madre of Mexico.

Generals Didn't Rough It Much

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM
NOV 20 1960

Canadian River Hunt Beautiful and Readable

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I love a beautifully made book — if it is readable; you can't make the inherent ugliness of a Teutonic thesis into anything beautiful. I love the producer of a beautiful book that is readable. Therefore, I love Savoie Lottinville, director of the University of Oklahoma Press at Norman. I love him specifically, right now, for bringing into existence a beautifully printed, beautifully illustrated, beautifully bound and cased book of only about 60 pages entitled Canadian River Hunt. It was written in longhand by Gen. Wm. E. Strong in 1878 while on a turkey hunt with Gen. Phil Sheridan and others. General Strong had a seeing eye and a civilized taste.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The Sheridan party, including three generals, was joined in Kansas by Gen. George Crook, the one admirable Indian fighter of the West. The party outfitted at Fort Reno on the Canadian River in the Indian Territory, and on Feb. 3 began its march westward. General Sheridan, as might be deduced from his conduct during and after the Civil War, was a great admirer of Bismarck. He never dropped the military way. On this hunt, he had reveille, retreat, and tatoo played regularly; every tent must be aligned as if combat were eminent. Sheridan was an exponent of the Army back in the days of democracy when the military didn't dictate much on legislative expenditures but also when the imperial inclinations of generals were not inhibited by Congress. Take this description of the hunting outfit:

"It consists of two six-mule Army wagons containing 20 days' forage, and supplies for the command, and the tents, camp equipage, cooking utensils, mess outfit, guns, ammunition and private baggage of the party. A detail of 40 men from the 4th Cavalry, under the command of Lts. Henry Sweeney and Wilder, is to accompany General Sheridan as an escort. We have fine riding horses, and each member of the party has an orderly assigned to him for duty during the trip. There are also two four-mule ambulances, so that when tired of horseback riding we can change to them. A large hospital tent has been provided for a dining room and general headquarters. Generals Sheridan and Crook have a wall tent, and there are several wedge tents for other members of the party. Each tent has a stove, and there are mattresses and fine blankets in abundance, a dining table which goes together in sections, camp chairs, a cook stove with a tent for the cook and, to complete the outfit, the private mess chest of General Sheridan, containing the finest of tableware, crockery, napkins, etc."

* * *

Ben Clark, a noted guide, woodsman and plainsman, in company with two Indians, had the honor and the duty of leading the generals to wild turkeys. A populous roost was located in a heavy forest of cottonwood trees stretching for two miles or more along the Canadian River under bluffs from 50 to 75 feet high. Wild turkeys like to fly down to roost. The hunters rode to within a mile or so of the cottonwoods, dismounted, let their orderlies lead their horses into a thicket, and then lay down in the tall grass in silence, waiting for darkness.

The new moon was down before they got into the cottonwoods. I quote the chronicler: "What a deathlike stillness! Not a sound could be heard; not a breath of air was stirring in the forest — even the leaves were motionless. 'There!' said the sergeant, 'look there! That's a turkey!' I cast my eye in the direction indicated, upward, and squarely to the front. On the highest limb of a tall cottonwood I saw the dark outline of an object, but I could not have said with certainty that it was a wild turkey, or even a living thing. Had I been alone I should hardly have seen it. An instant only it remained and then took wing, crossing an open space and coming straight over me in its flight. Intuitively I threw up my gun, pressing the trigger as the heel plate struck my shoulder, and a bouncing great gobbler came crashing through the branches, striking the ground within four feet of where I stood, nearly hitting the sergeant in its fall. A lucky shot, I called it, and a good beginning.

"The forest was fairly alive with fluttering wings. It was deafening — startling — overpowering! It unsteadied one's nerves, — it almost took away one's breath. It was a sound altogether indescribable. In volume and intensity I have never heard anything like it. It came in waves, and was not unlike the roar of heavy breakers on a rocky coast, or the rush of a mighty wind through forest trees."

* * *

TURKEY EVERYWHERE.

Here General Strong confesses that although he had hunted from earliest boyhood, he'd never hunted wild turkeys at night and now with a fluttering gobbler at his feet and the sound of what seemed to be 10,000 more wild turkeys above and around him, he took the buck ague. "The roost, I should judge, was a quarter of a mile in width, by a mile or more in length. From the number of turkeys I saw and the noise and rush of fluttering wings in the forest below us, I should estimate there were thousands. We struck the extreme upper edge of the roost, and did not penetrate it beyond 50 or 100 rods. There were turkeys everywhere. The air was filled with them. At every discharge they came fluttering to the trees above and about us in countless numbers, alighting, in many instances, on the limbs directly over our heads, not 50 feet away. The firing began in earnest immediately after my first shot, and grew into a cannonade such as I never before or since heard on a hunting field.

"I had come with every pocket of my shooting coat and vest filled with shells. Possibly I had less than 100. Within 10 seconds of the killing of the first turkey, on the wing as described, I fired again, fully a half dozen having alighted on the cottonwood under which I was standing. The moon was now fairly down behind the bluff, and the faint starlight seemed but to make more marked the shadows of the forest. I could, however, distinguish the dark outlines of the birds against the sky. Easy enough, I thought, to kill them at that distance, and I must have one for every shot. I congratulated myself on my forethought in bringing along such a goodly stock of ammunition, and in my imagination pictured the enormous bag of turkeys likely to fall to my share. Seventy dead birds out of 75 shots — or at least 60 . . .

* * *

COULDN'T SEE GUN.

"I threw up my gun. I could see the bird indistinctly, but no part of the gun, except the hammers. I raised and lowered the piece several times, and perceived at once that if I hit the mark it would be purely accidental. At length I pulled the trigger. The turkey at which I fired never stirred. At the report several birds flew from the tree, alighting on an adjoining one. Taking all possible care with my aim, I fired the other barrel, but with no better success. I quickly reloaded, and fired again with the right barrel; the turkey still sat there in unruffled composure. I was by this time completely disgusted with my marksmanship, but tried again with the other barrel, and this time the turkey came to the ground quite dead. I had now fired five shots, and had bagged two birds. I continued to fire as rapidly as I could load, but with unsatisfactory results. Occasionally I killed or wounded a bird, but not one in four at which I shot came to the ground. The barrels of my gun became so heated that I could not touch them, and finally I took out my handkerchief, and folding it into a pad of several thicknesses, held it in my left hand, and rested the barrels upon it.

"We continued to shoot until our ammunition was about exhausted. Had there been sufficient light or had our supply of shells held out we might have continued firing until morning, as the turkeys would not leave the roost. By the general's direction the Indian built a large fire for a rendezvous, and at 9 o'clock we gave up the hunt and came to where the Indian had 19 turkeys placed in a circle around the fire. I should judge as many more were brought down from the trees, badly wounded or killed outright, but which we failed to find, owing to the darkness."

During the 15 days that the party was out, several too rainy for hunting, 79 turkeys were killed, along with plenty of prairie chickens, quail, rabbits and one deer.

The American-Statesman
Page B-2—Austin, Texas Sunday, April 14, 1957

J. FRANK DOBIE

There are two Mexican skills I never tire of watching: the process of tortilla-making and the process of packing mules. After the aparejo (a covering of stuffed leather) is girted onto a mule, he or she, no matter how old, will not stand for having the load fixed unless the eyes are covered with a broad band of leather called tapaojos ("it covers the eyes"). The animal does not mind the weight so much as having ropes that hold the load in place laced very tight under the belly — not forward like a saddle girth or back into the flanks.

The load, sometimes made of several packages of unequal sizes, must be exactly balanced, one on top, the others on the sides. If they are not balanced as to weight, the whole thing will before long tilt to one side or the other. After mules have traveled a short distance, packs usually have to be readjusted and retightened, but this is quickly done in comparison with the primary loading.

Away Early

On the morning of March 15, 1957, we got packed and away from Los Sauces — in the state of Durango — fairly early. At first the trail was in a crooked lane made by pine logs to fence stock out of little mountain-side fields and pastures. Before noon we were high up in big pines away from all settlement. Any little patch of half-valley land, however, was occupied by a field, plowed with a heavy wooden plow pulled by oxen.

About noon we came to Los Charcos (The Waterholes) where three or four families live and where we turned out beasts into a field to pick on sparse, dry grass while we made coffee and ate a snack. About 4 p. m. we stopped at a village to buy corn and fodder, loading the stuff on the already loaded mules to use at a night camp farther on. There are people in this village who have never been over the mountain.

We were now in a part of the broad Sierra Madre where one never goes down without having to go up, generations and generations of shod mule hoofs having worn a kind of ladder of holes in some of the rocky slopes. A big-footed horse could not travel it. The trail used to be kept in some kind of repair, but big trees that have fallen across it have necessitated further winds in the cork-screw route. In some places a slice has been cut out of the log; often only half a slice, leaving a high step-over. At the cumbre (summit) between one canyon and another a person can see the tail-end of the world — more mountains, cliffs, crags, pillars of rocks, and pines, pines, pines.

It was close to sundown when we reached a few abandoned shacks and a half-ruined corral at a place called Chinicates (Bat Caves) beside a mountain stream with a very narrow valley. I would have preferred sleeping out, but the wind was high and bitter, and any protection from it was sought. The best floor to sleep on was that of a barn, made of plank, but John Stitler and I decided to try our luck on the dirt floor, very uneven, of a cabin provided with a mud oven. We did not build a fire in the oven, partly for the reason that we did not want to be smoked out. Our supper fire was on the ground between the two buildings, and after supper Don Miguel Montenegro got to telling stories about kings and other people existing a thousand years before Columbus sailed.

Nobody Sleeps

A fire beside which people tell stories is the best fire on earth and it should be the prelude to a good night, but nobody slept much this night. We were all too cold. I had enough cover but it was not properly arranged to start with and the space on which I lay was too narrow for rearrangement. About 2:30 Stiteler arose and built up the fire and spent the remainder of the night sitting by it wrapped in a blanket. In the corral, repaired so that the mules could not get out and head for their home, our beasts fared better than we did. At daylight one could see thin ice edging inlets of the stream. The wind was still piercing. Riding did not seem a pleasure jaunt to me this morning but we jaunted on. Four pack mules and seven mounted men do not make a very long file, but at some turns of the trail the lead man could look down upon or up to the tail man coming around a bend.

At noon we came to the Santo Nino (Holy Child) ranch, the owner of which sold us some last year's oat straw, which he delivered on a mountainside a few hundred yards away from the house. There wasn't any spot of ground level enough to rest on out of the wind's sweep.

Two things Don Miguel Montenegro kept telling me. First, he assured me over and over until the very end, that he would not take us to any ranch where the people were not honest, though he knew of some places to which he would not take us. Secondly, he kept promising to show us the continental divide, from which the water ran to the Atlantic on one side and to the Pacific on the other. This day we crossed the continental divide, a crest of earth not so high or rough as some other crests we crossed. We were up about 10,000 feet above sea level.

To a Clearing

Late in the day we got to a clearing and three or four houses called Las Joyas. (In Spain that means The Jewels; in Mexico, the word has the additional meaning of "sink," or something like that. The owner was old and of landlordly dignity. He had a room next to the kitchen vacated for us. Nobody could get into or out of the kitchen without passing through this room.

The only fire of the house was in the kitchen, where the earthen floor about the oven was raised. We ate at a table in the kitchen, chewing in rhythm to the patting of tortillas, which were put hot on the table every few minutes, far faster than we could eat them. They would be eaten all right, however.

People were still talking, eating tortillas and frijoles and walking in and out of the kitchen when I lay down on my readjusted bedroll and fell into a warm sleep that was not broken until 10 hours later. Until a person has been cold and sleepless all night, he never knows the blessing of a warm bed.

As in Scot's Book

Kinship Between Men, Animals Is Fascinating

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The rapport, the understanding, a kind of kinship between certain individuals and certain animals has long fascinated me. The claims of horse charmers have been much discredited, but I know that some men, perhaps some women, can exercise bare-handed control, without whip or rope or other confinements, over wild horses that other horse trainers and breakers can not exercise. To read how certain Plains Indians used to lead herds of buffalo into slaughter places makes my hair stand on end with wonder.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Now I've been reading a new book, mostly on wild life and pet otters on the weather-hostile west coast of Scotland—"Ring of Bright Water," by Gavin Maxwell. Mr. Maxwell's almost inhuman devotion to his pets does not entertain me, but when he stays with the wild land in which he has a cottage that can't be reached by any machine except over water, he's fascinating. His neighbor, Murdo MacKinnon, living up and over mountain crags, is a road-mender. He and his family have lived for years in isolation. Like many another Scot, he has developed his mind. He can quote the greater part of "The Golden Treasury," that fine anthology of poetry. He's read most of the classics, has "voluble and well-informed views on politics, national and international, and is a subscriber to the New Statesman."

* * *

ANIMALS RESPOND.

His wife, Morag, "a woman of fine-drawn iron beauty softened by humor," frankly finds more to like and to love in animals than in human beings, and they respond to her immediately as if she were one of themselves with a trust and a respect that few of us receive from our own kind. I am convinced that there exists between her and them some rapport that is not for the achievement, even by long perseverance, of the bulk of those human beings, who would wish it.

"A single instance will illustrate. Across the road from the MacKinnon's door is a reedy hillside lochan (small lake) some 100 yards long by 50 wide, and every winter the wild swans, the whoopers, would come to it as they were driven south by Arctic weather, to stay often for days and sometimes weeks. Morag loved the swans, and from the green door of her house she would call a greeting to them several times a day, so that they came to know her voice, and never edged away from her to the other side of the lochan as they did when other human figures appeared on the road.

"One night she heard them restless and calling, the clear bugle voices muffled and buffeted by the wind, and when she opened the door in the morning she saw that there was something very much amiss. The two parent birds were at the near edge of the lochan, fussing, if anything so graceful and dignified as a wild swan can be said to fuss, found a cygnet that seemed in some way to be captive at the margin of the reeds. Morag began to walk toward the lochan, calling to the swans all the while as she was wont to call. The cygnet flapped and struggled and beat the water with his wings, but he was held fast below the peaty surface, and all the while the parents, instead of retreating before Morag, remained calling at his side. Morag waded out, but the loch bottom is soft and black, and she was sinking thigh deep before she realized that she could not reach the cygnet.

* * *

PARENTS SWAM IN.

"Then suddenly he turned and struggled toward her, stopped the thrashing of his wings, and was still. Groping in the water beneath him, Morag's hand came upon a wire, on which she pulled until she was able to feel a rusty steel trap clumped to the cygnet's leg, a trap set for a fox, and fastened to a long wire so that he might drown himself and die the more quickly. Morag lifted the cygnet from the water; he lay passive in her arms while she eased the jaws open, and as she did this the two parents swam right in and remained one on either side of her, as tame, as she put it, as domestic ducks; neither did they swim away when she put the cygnet undamaged on to the water and began to retrace her steps.

"The swans stayed for a week or more after that, and now they would not wait for her to call to them before greeting her; every time she opened her door their silver-sweet, bell-like voices chimed to her from the lochan across the road. If Yeats had possessed the same strange powers as Morag, his nine and fifty swans would perhaps not have suddenly mounted, and his poem would not have been written.

"It was not through childlessness that Morag had turned to animals, as do so many spinsters, for she had three sons."

J. Frank Dobie

Saw a flight 2-3-57

City Living A Pretty Living

By J. FRANK DOBIE

Most people, I suppose, fancy the kind of paradise they'd like to live in here on earth. I would not want to stay perpetually in any place I can idealize, but have an idea of two Utopias, one the very antipodes of the other. One is plenty of land—with soil—where it rains and where there is a beautiful combination of grass, trees, shrubs, hills, slopes, meadows, water, and a variety of wildlife. Here a proper house could easily be built around a fireplace. The house would have a wide gallery on the east side overlooking a lake.

The other Utopia is a suitable situation in a civilized city. Here the situation is as important as the city. I won't go into full specifications. The city would naturally be a world port and have vast commerce and variety in every form of ilfe. It would be rich in theaters, art galleries, museums, bookstores along with all other kinds of stores. It would have a morning newspaper that a civilized individual could look through and read without feeling contempt for the producer of it.

Two Cities

Two cities I know satisfy me pretty well. They are London and New York. One time a cosmopolitan gentleman and jurist living in London said to me: "One reason why I like being here is that nothing can happen anywhere in the world without also happening in London." That probably isn't as true of London now as it was before World War II, but it is increasingly true of New York. Financial center of the world, it is also many other centers. Nothing can happen anywhere in the world that it does not happen also in New York. I am opposed to superlatives and have many reservations on the adjective "great," but agree that the New York Times is the greatest newspaper in the world. Starting the day with it puts me in a good humor.

When I lived in New York many years ago, attending Columbia university, I was sometimes oppressed by the subway crowding and smells and wishful for ranch solitude. One time while walking past a street market on the east side, I came upon piles of prickly pear apples for sale. They were larger than the prickly pear apples native to Texas, but they carried me home to rat nests, blue quail eating tunas (pear apples) and other associations with my native heath. If one knows where to hunt, he could probably find in New York every kind of fruit known to man.

From Uvalde

On a trip to New York several years ago I read in the morning paper of a store uptown that claimed to carry honeys from all over the world — from Persia, from Hybia, a legend for honey, from the stingless bees of Brazil, from wherever John Baptist lived on locusts and wild honey, from the alfalfa fields of California and the sourwood of the Appalachians, and so on. I am a strong honey-eater and proposed finding out if this emporium of the honeys of the world had any huajilla honey from south Texas. That afternoon I went into the place—a long room lined with a great variety of jars, jugs, tins, kegs, barrels and other containers of honey. It was stocked with nothing but honey. A man offered to serve me. "I didn't come to buy anything," I answered. "I read about you this morning, and I came to see if you have honey from the huajilla bush." "Oh, yes," he replied, "from Uvalde, Texas."

Only one place is left in the western hemisphere now where you can have much choice in the theater. That, of course, is New York. While I was there the other day the city was crowded with buyers for goods. Many of them go to the theaters; thousands of people go to New York every year from the far ends of the earth just to see the plays. I have never read a book, beheld a picture, contemplated an ocean or a Grand canyon, listened to music that so catches me up, holds me in thrall, elates me, like a fine play well acted in a crowded theater, where people and atmosphere add to dramatic effect. After experiencing "Inherit the Wind" and "The Diary of Ann Frank" I came to the conclusion that all good plays plead the cause of humanity—often not directly at all, but in effect. The best film is a shadow compared to a live theater.

Every Winter

I'd like to go to New York for a month every winter, while rain and snow transmute the world, talk to some people who know, hear one cab driver express his opinion to another, gaze into shop windows, be one with and yet apart from the midnight throngs on Broadway, above all, "sit in crowded theaters and see life itself mocked."

What took me to New York this time was Texas. The day this column is published the National Broadcasting co.'s "Wide Wide World" television show will "do" Texas. After weeks of planning, arranging and script-writing, the producers—for a price—engaged me as a purported "authority" on Texas to act as consultant. Everything has its center. The "Wide Wide World" center seems to have as many telephone connections and subsidiaries as the sun has rays when it is "drinking water." How he'll sit today in New York and co-ordinate at least four camera crews depicting Texas from a shrimp boat in Galveston to a ranch on the plains in another instance of modern science and technology. It does not move me one-tenth as much as Paul Muni acting the part of Clarence Darrow (in "Inherit the Wind") and elating multitudes of minds with a feeling of liberation.

Change in Nature More Easily Noted Than in Past

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM FEB 24 1957

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

One Benjamin M. Cole of North Andover, Mass., otherwise unknown to me, has written me a letter in part as follows:

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"As a water locator of many years, I have been reading about the terrible drouth conditions in Texas. By remote control I have successfully located water in both South and North Carolina and in Ireland. If I could procure some rough sketches of ranch lands short of water, I'd like to try my ability on locating underground supplies. I do not ask a fee. I want to find out for my own satisfaction if there is or is not water in the earth."

My reply was that we need operators on the clouds worse than we need locators "by remote control" of underground water.

According to my limited observation, people of Indian blood do not forsake nature and take pleasure in destroying what Charlie Russell sentimentally called "Nature's Children" as do a great many Anglo-Americans. W. W. Hampton, who came from the Choctaw Nation to San Antonio, writes: "I saw a coyote on the highway last week. It gave me more of a thrill than anything I saw in any town on a 600 mile trip."

DESERT MOVING EAST.

It would be a safe bet, I think, that more men and boys in those towns would derive more of a sensation from shooting at a coyote and putting an end to its life than from looking at it and enjoying its freedom and perhaps remembering its voice. On the tradition of guns and violence, Howard Finley of Delray Beach, Fla., writes:

"Sixty years or so ago I met Capt. Bill McDonald of the Texas Rangers. After Oklahoma became a state he was employed to police the Osage Hills, where the Starrs and other outlaws had established themselves. As a traveling salesman I 'worked' Dewey, Okla., about every four months, and here I came to have a passing acquaintance with Captain McDonald, who made the town his headquarters. Once he stopped me long enough to advise that I get rid of a pistol carried conspicuously in a hip pocket. I thought he had a right to an opinion on guns. About two weeks after receiving the advice I pulled the pistol out of my pocket while I was on a passenger train crossing the Cimarron River and tossed it out the window into the swollen waters below. Then I had to explain this act to the town marshal of Perry, Okla."

My friend D. D. Heinen of San Antonio began planting pecans of improved variety in 1913. More than a quarter of a century ago he set trees out along a creek that remain "easy to look at and give me much pleasure." He has been an observer of pecan growth over much territory and estimates that fully 70 per cent of the native pecans along the Nueces River between Cotulla and Uvalde have died of drouth. "I hope I am mistaken," he says, "but my observations over the last 40 years warrant my thinking that the desert areas of Arizona, New Mexico and western Texas are slowly reaching eastward."

CHANGE NOW RAPID.

It used to be that observations on change were confined mostly to oldish people. Now all sorts of changes are racing so rapidly that young people, even under 20, notice them. Urban and suburban developments and industrialization make changes in living conditions for millions of people more immediately realized than cycles in climate. I know of no contemplator of change more serene than Hobart Huson in his home named Dawgwood, at Refugio.

He is a lawyer and a competent one. Last year he published Volume II of his scholarly history of Refugio County, composed with a perspective seldom found in county histories. For above 30 years he has been laboring "with love" on the life and philosophy of the great Greek philosopher Pythagoras. Ten years ago, he gathered into a handy volume all identifiable sayings and teachings of "the Sage of Samos," as Pythagoras is called, who died about 500 years before Christ was born. His researches have taken Hobart Huson to Greece and to learning both ancient and modern in various languages. He is a leader in the World Congress of Pythagorean Organizations. Being a lawyer in a world of oil and oil corporations has not blurred his power to "look at life steadily and see it whole." To reflect upon a good man pursuing a great subject the better part of a lifetime elevates my mind. I wish to salute him.

We are still talking about change. Last Christmas, Hobart Huson sent out a card quoting Pythagoras:

"That which ceases to move ceases to live . . .

All things are in a state of flux

And everything is brought into being with a changing nature.

The heavens and whatever is beneath the heavens

Change their forms, the earth and all that is within it."

About Texas and Texans

'30 Years Ago' Means Difference in Cattle

JAN 8 1961
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Longhorn cattle had virtually completed their history before the 20th Century dawned, but I notice as I live along that "30 years ago" gets to be old times for cattle and people alike. I don't ask for any better illustration than the following narrative from my friend Harold Graves, brand inspector for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, living in Brazoria County.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"Lee Vanderpool and his daddy were cattle traders on Galveston Island for years and did quite a bit of exporting of cattle. Lee was lean, lithe and strong, with red hair and pale freckles. He said that in buying cattle they would just naturally get some old slab-sided, 16-hands-high, narrow-headed maniac Brahman steers. They couldn't help getting them and then they couldn't sell them. This was back in the Thirties before cattle were as well bred up as they are now.

"One day, Lee said, a cocky, well-dressed man showed up wanting to buy a shipload of large, aged steers to send to San Juan, Puerto Rico, for work oxen in the cane fields. Lee was overjoyed, but told the man that though he had a full shipload of such steers they were wilder than March hares. The man said wild didn't mean anything to him, that he had ox-drivers who would tame them. Lee took the man around their pastures and showed the steers, asking a higher price than he expected to get. 'Just what I want,' the buyer said.

* * *

WANTED ONE THING.

"During the gathering of the big steers, some were killed, some crippled and some got away, but the ship for San Juan sailed loaded with plenty of others. As there were no unloading docks where the steers were to land, the cattle ship anchored in a bay against a beach on which men held a herd of work oxen to hold up the Texians when they swam ashore. Men in small boats on either side steered the wild ones to the work oxen. Some of the Texians fought off the boatmen and swam to sea, never to be seen again; some ignored the reception committee and went around to a bluff and plunged over it to death. The ones that escaped to the jungle were eventually hunted down by natives and eaten.

"Some time after this episode a friend of Lee's in San Juan told the steer-buyer he was going to the States and asked him if there was anything he wanted him to bring back. The steer-buyer said, 'Yes, there's a long, tall, red-headed man on Galveston Island named Lee Vanderpool. Bring him to me alive, and I'll give you $1,000!'"

A paper-bound booklet entitled "Early Days in Cook County," by C. N. Jones, published a quarter of a century ago, gives this account of an old-timer on the Texas side of the Red River who went into the Indian Territory soon after the Civil War ended to hunt down wild cattle. A half-breed Choctaw woman who had been to school in Boston and had married another half-breed Choctaw named Dibrell controlled a lot of country and wanted to get rid of wild cattle that were leading her tame cattle into wildness. She offered a dollar for every pair of unmarked cattle ears brought to her.

* * *

50 PAIRS OF EARS.

The hunting party consisted of six riders and a chuck wagon. They didn't try to rope the outlaw cattle—just made a rough round-up of them, then shot them down with carbines and pistols. The only meat they took was the hind quarters, leaving the rest of the carcasses for wolves and vultures. After collecting 50 pairs of slick ears, the cowhunters broke up. All but the narrator were horse thieves, gamblers, murderers and whisky peddlers.

All of the maverick and other wild cattle-hunting I've heard of in Texas was for the purpose of catching something, though now and then an outlaw animal was shot as something to be got rid of. A few years ago, Harvey Carr of Burnet gave me this account as related to him by an old-timer named Shelby.

Shelby was pretty green when he went to working for a cow outfit moonlighting wild cattle. The hands would wait hidden for the wild ones to come into open spaces to graze. Then they would rush forth to rope and tie down as many as they could, and leave them a while to cool off before necking them to gentle cattle that would lead them to ranch headquarters. One moonlight night Shelby thought he was roping a yearling but after he got the loop around the animal discovered it was a 3-year-old heifer. He wasn't fast enough tying her down. She got up with Shelby astraddle of her back, her tail over his shoulder. While he held on to it, his cow horse kept the rope fairly tight, but she pitched all around him in circles. After the other riders had tied their stuff they came up to where Shelby was performing.

"What are you doing?" the boss asked.

"Oh, I'm just a-riding this cow," Shelby called back. "I thought I'd ride her to the ranch and save having to neck her to an ox."

Finally Deserted Him

JAN 27 1937

Famous Champion of Buckers, Midnight, Was a One-Man Horse

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Maybe there has been a horse that could outpitch the original Midnight of Canadian "stampedes" and American "rodeos," but no other bucker has achieved his fame.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

He has had numerous name sakes. Many old fans and riders still talk of him. I never knew anything of his history until the other day when I found it in an out-of-print book entitled "Johnny Chinook," by Robert Gard, made up of stories and characters of western Canada.

He was foaled on Jim McNab's Cottonwood ranch in the Fort Macleod country of southern Alberta about 1915. His mother was a Thoroughbred, his sire a Morgan-Percheron cross. His color was coal black. World War I was on and Jim McNab was across the ocean. All ranches were very short-handed, but men left in the Cottonwood country noted this colt.

When they gelded him they named him Midnight. As he grew they remarked on his speed, spirit, size and other qualities. They guessed that endurance was one of them and that he would make a superb ranch horse—if anybody ever broke him. The horse-breakers were all gone to war.

When Jim McNab got back, Midnight stood 15½ hands high, magnificent in looks and spirit. McNab had been a horse-breaker. The neighborhood wondered if he would try to ride Midnight. He began breaking the young horses that had grown up during his absence, saving Midnight for the climax.

If a boy or young man is really at home in the saddle, he will never get too old for it to be as natural to him as a rocking chair, though he may have more trouble getting into it.

Every year of stiffening joints makes bronc-riding more difficult and dangerous, however. Jim McNab showed that he was still limber in horse-breaking, but he saved the most difficult for the end.

SADDLED UP.

One morning Midnight was driven into the corral with several gentle horses. After he was roped and saddled, the gate was opened and the other horses trotted out into a small pasture. McNab mounted and the blind was jerked off.

For a minute maybe, Midnight stood motionless as if perplexed by the saddle, cinch and weight on his back. Then he dashed for the open gate a-pitching. McNab stayed on for five jumps before he hit the ground hard. There were plenty of spectators that morning, and at McNab's word they drove Midnight back into the corral.

On the second trial McNab stayed through seven jumps. Then he was thrown with such terrific force that all hands thought he must be badly injured.

He got up by himself and said: "Boys, that Midnight black is going to make the greatest horse in Canada. Bring him back in."

Before mounting again, he and other horsemen analyzed Midnight's technique. It was straight, powerful bucking—no sunfishing or fence-rowing.

On the third round McNab lasted a few jumps longer. When he got up he said, "Boys, that horse is fair. I'm going to keep riding him fair." He did. He finally stayed on till Midnight quit pitching. By then both man and horse were exhausted, but the horse's spirit had not been broken.

ONE TIME EACH.

After that Midnight learned fast. McNab rode him on cow work and then went to cutting cattle on him. He had the combination of intelligence, instinct, quickness and bottom required for a cutting horse. But nobody but McNab could ride him. Several cowboys tried — one time each.

Despite a developing friendship between himself and the horse, McNab had to be careful constantly. If Midnight's instinct for freedom was throttled in such a way as to arouse rebellion, he pitched with his owner out on the range and threw him. To test his bottom he rode him to a ranch 90 miles away and back. He never had to touch a spur and Midnight never lowered his head.

The town of Macleod was putting on a big celebration, the climax of which was a "stampede." Many people urged McNab to enter Midnight. He was reluctant, for he feared that brutal riding would make the horse an outlaw, but he led him into the arena and then saw him throw every man who tried to ride him.

Midnight was the highlight of the show. McNab entered him again in the big Calgary Stampede of 1924. During three days not a rider stayed on his back. He did not try to kick or jump on a single fallen rider. Once or twice he even turned and nosed him before trotting back to the chute.

FINE PRICE.

During the Calgary Stampede, McNab received high offers for what was now called the champion bucking horse of Canada. He turned them all down and took Midnight back to the quietness of the Cottonwood ranch. A distinct change had come in the relationship between the two.

Midnight would still come to the call or whistle of his master and eat oats from his hand, but every time McNab got on him Midnight would throw him. He quit trying to ride him. He blamed himself for having consented to mistreatment of his friend. Then he sold his friend for a fine price and Midnight became the chief attraction in bucking horse contests all over North America.

In 1926 Bobby Ismay of Montana, regarded by many as the champion rider of America, tried to ride him in Toronto. After throwing him, Midnight went on bucking so hard that clashing of the stirrups above the saddle smashed one of them.

At Montreal, two weeks later, Pete Knight stayed on him until the whistle blew—but it was a good thing for Pete, he admitted, that there was a whistle.

This was one of very few times that Midnight was ridden during 13 years of rodeo competitions.

A certain twist he gave at the fifth or sixth jump would generally catapult the rider out of the saddle. He seemed to like to travel and was as familiar in Fort Worth and Madison Square Garden as in Calgary.

After a European tour he was given his freedom on the Eliot and McCarty ranch out from Johnstown, Colo. There he died in 1936 and was buried. His owners put up a stone bearing these jingles:

Under this sod lies a great
bucking hoss,
There never lived a cowboy he
could not toss.
His name was Midnight.
His coat was black as coal.
If there is a hoss heaven,
please God, rest his soul.

WRITER IS JUST FOND OF VENISON

NOV 13 1960

First Deer Hunt (Successful, Too) As a Ranch Youth Is Recalled

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

To speak of my shooting career is to laugh. Sometimes I can hit a barn door and sometimes I can't. This episode was a long time ago. I suppose there were laws protecting game, but not many people paid much attention to them. Like many other ranchmen, my father virtually never hunted. I don't recall his ever scabbarding his rifle when he rode out. It was kept at home for rattlesnakes and varmints that bothered the chickens. My mother killed a coyote with it once. The only wild meat I recollect my father's bringing in was a wild turkey that he had run down on horseback.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The rifle was an old .44 Winchester, copper lined. I suppose I must have practiced with it a little, but have no recollection of shooting it until one winter day when I was around 12. I got permission to go deer hunting. It was a late, misty afternoon, the fine mist cutting down visibility but hardly wetting the ground. There wasn't much wind. I had a sharp pocket knife in my pocket and that ancient copper bellied saddle gun in my hand. I walked across the calf pasture to the north and got into what we called the Big Pasture. Before long I struck a little hollow lined with brush and oak trees; in places its bed was sandy. I crisscrossed it, hunting east and hunting west while bearing northward. I saw some fresh tracks.

* * *

DOE DIDN'T RUN.

The sun was about down as I knew by the diminishing light when at a bend in the creek, while I was stepping softly along in the middle of it, I saw a doe stretching out her neck and looking toward me. I'm sure she hadn't smelled me, for what breeze there was off her to me; in thick, foggy, misty weather smell does not carry far anyhow. The doe didn't run. I had ceased to move by the time she got a good look at me, and I must have been somewhat indistinct against the background of brush and in the foggy mist. Does, it has always seemed to me, are more curious than bucks, excepting yearling bucks. I'll never forget the way this one had her neck out. She was at the edge of a little motte of smallish live oak trees. I aimed at her neck and broke it. She fell forward into the shallow hollow.

This was the first deer I'd ever shot at. The fact that the deer was a doe instead of a buck made no impression on me. If there was a law against shooting does, I didn't know it. When my half-uncle Ed DuBose came to the ranch every December to hunt, he never killed anything but bucks. I had been seeing bucks all my life, but I was hunting for meat. Maybe I was partly imitating Andrew Pollan. Mrs. Pollan and her daughter Hannah and her two sons Tom and Andrew lived on an overgrazed half section of land next to our ranch. I've often wondered how they ate. They had a milk cow or two. I think they raised corn, and I heard Andrew say that in one year he killed 20 deer on our ranch. I think he hunted on two other ranches also. I guess the Pollans had venison fresh and dried during most months of the year. Occasionally Andrew brought a ham by for us. Papa didn't like venison nearly so well as he liked beef.

* * *

TOOK LIVER HOME.

I was not excited when I walked up to the doe and saw her already quiet. I stuck her, she bled well, and then I gutted her. The smell and feel of blood made me brave, I guess. I decided I would carry the liver home to show as proof of my accomplishment. I left the carcass on the ground and struck out for the house, less than a mile and a half away. It was dark when I got there. I made quite a sensation when, all bloody and liver-carrying, I walked into the room where the fire in the fireplace was always going and my sister Fannie and two or three very young brothers were assembled. Papa asked me where the deer was. I told him. He said we'd saddle up and go bring it in. We rode directly to the slaughter grounds. Papa tied the doe on back of my saddle.

I don't remember whether we ate the liver or not. Probably not. People didn't used to eat much of anything but the backstraps and hams of deer. I've learned only very recently that the heart and kidneys are the very choicest part of a deer and that the liver is better than high-priced beef liver. As I compose this recollection I'm looking forward to baked deer ribs and either boiled or broiled or baked kidneys and heart, along with fried liver from an acorn-fat buck.

* * *

USING INSTINCT.

This initiation into deer hunting did not make me an avid or proficient deer slayer, but I never went up that little hollow, whether hunting or riding after cattle, without looking for a deer to show up exactly where I had killed the doe. I was like a horse we had that one day while I was riding him shied away from a rattlesnake down the road about 300 yards from the house. After that he always, invariably, upon passing that particular spot, shied. Neither he in looking for a rattlesnake at the place where he'd seen one, nor I in looking for a deer in the place where I had seen and killed one, was using intellect; we were merly using instinct.

Headlighters went to operating in that part of the country and elsewhere. Before World War I, deer and turkey were very scarce through most of the brush country of Texas and through many other areas. They are probably more plentiful now over tens of millions of acres than they have been at any other time in this century. For me the finest feature of a hunt remains the sense of expectation, of hoping and waiting—and I confess that if I didn't like venison I wouldn't ever hunt at all. I really take more pleasure in seeing wild things remain alert and alive than in seeing them fall.

J. Frank Dobie

San A. Light 1-6-57

Horse Who Tamed Self

By J. FRANK DOBIE

Along about 1912, as Mrs. Barbara Fogel of Austin gives me the story, her Uncle Harmon bought a small ranch in Oregon. He was a youngish dare-devil with eastern education and manners, urbane wit and a dashing red-headed wife. If she had been along, there might not have been any story. Harmon knew how to ride and knew horses before he went west, and horses seemed to know him.

The jubilation of his outdoor life was a polo horse that he brought with him named Polka Dot. Nobody but Harmon ever rode him; nobody else who tried could ride him. The older Polka Dot grew—and he was plenty old at this time—the more unset in his way of being mounted he became. The moment he felt pressure on stirrup or saddlehorn he would break into a dead run; it took agility and familiarity with his ways to get into the saddle. Once mounted and checked, he would not walk; his pokiest gait was a walking prance that he kept straining to make a full run. He would never stand with reins "hitched to the ground," like a western cowpony. He had to be tied. He and his owner both inclined to show off; they suited each other fine.

The ranch Harmon bought joined one owned by a surly, greedy individual who had wanted to buy it, but would not pay a decent price. He raised prize pheasants, and during the first hunting season following the advent of Harmon he missed three of his birds. He accused Harmon of having shot them. When Harmon, a regular Martinet in his sportsmanship code, denied the charge, the pheasant man mumbled some kind of threat about a beating another day.

Party Invite

Not long after this Harmon and his wife were invited to a party about eight miles away. Something prevented her from accepting, but he wanted to celebrate. He could play almost any instrument, loved to act comic parts, was a fine soft-shoe dancer, and kept people lively with his gay wit. He enjoyed being in demand. For this party he dressed correctly in white tie, tails, and top hat, leaped like an acrobat into the saddle on Polka Dot and was off.

The party was not a dry one. About 3 o'clock in the morning Harmon unhitched the restless Polka Dot, and at the sound of cheering voices sailed into the saddle for the homeward race. In command of all his senses, he was just feeling good. Riding along alone in the clear moonlight made him want to sing, and he sang the gayest songs of his sophisticated repertoire. With his coattails flying and his top hat cocked jauntily, he did not look in that rangeland like some dying cowboy wailing out "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie."

When he was something over half way home, he heard a rustle in the brush off to one side, then a moan and a cry as if for help. He turned Polka Dot toward the sounds, but Polka Dot became so skittish that he dismounted and led him.

Jumped by Three

He found trouble all right. Three men with handkerchiefs over their faces jumped him all at once. He never got a square look at a single one of them, but the threat of the pheasant man flashed into his mind. The waylayers did not rob him. While one held him after he was down, another clubbed him over the head, and a third rubbed ground red pepper into his blue eyes. He became unconscious while he was still being clubbed.

He did not know how long he lay there. When he came to, he thought someone was washing his face. Some one was. Polka Dot, who always ran away when not tied or reined in, was lipping and tonguing his bruised face, making it moist. When Harmon stirred, the horse nickered down to him and then stood calmly over him.

Harmon was touched by the horse's unusual behavior, but had no hope of being able to mount on the run. He began to move a little and take stock of his body. He could barely see. His head was a mass of bruises; one arm was fractured, several ribs seemed broken. Even if he were in the saddle he could not stand the jolting of Polka Dot's dash or hold him steady. He could feel warm breath on his face and neck from the horse still standing patiently and quietly over him.

Certainly nothing was to be gained by staying where he was hidden out in the brush beside a seldom-traveled road. He made an effort to rise. Instead of jumping, Polka Dot allowed his foreleg to be used as a prop while Harmon inched to his own knees. Harmon tried, but he could not make it to his feet without continued help. He pulled up slightly on the stirrup, expecting the usual dash away and dreading the jerk and fall. Polka Dot remained as still as a graven image. Finally on his feet, Harmon began the slow and painful process of pulling himself up by the saddle horn until at last he got a leg over the cantle and was in the saddle. But he could not sit upright. He felt nauseated and faint. He had to lean over and hold to the horse's neck with his one good arm.

Not until Harmon spoke to him and pressed him with a heel did Polka Dot take a step. Then he moved, keeping his back as straight as possible, as if he were stepping on eggshells. The sun had been up a good while when Polka Dot stopped in front of the ranch house and nickered. The red-headed woman came out to find her battered husband unconscious. She got him down and into the house.

Months passed before Harmon was fit enough to ride again. He was set on making his first ride on Polka Dot. Did Polka Dot stand still to be mounted? He dashed off as if celebrating with an extra dash, and the slowest gait he would agree to was a combination of prance and running walk.

It Can Be Overdone

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Writer Has Mellowed on Hunting Comfort

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

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In those days I heard of sheltered stands at which hunters, waiting in comfort, had only to sit on a cushion to be sure of a shot. Feed, so I heard, was put out near the stands. As a matter of fact, while camping on one big ranch, I killed two or three bucks that came to the grounds where steers were fed cracked cottonseed cake and left small pellets of it on the ground. But there was no prepared hiding place at these feeding grounds. If in the brush country you don't learn where deer come out into the open, you don't have much chance of a good shot.

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ELECTRIC ELEVATOR.

In the days when I snorted at anything but an open camp, I felt patronizing towards hunters who hunt only from stands and then in the evening come to a house with electric lights, warm water and other comforts. Hundreds lodge in motels and hotels. But my ideas have been modified for some time now on the subject of housing and of stands. There wouldn't be much fun in living unless a man could change his mind. I still don't approve of the ultimate in luxury of stands. I know of one up in the Pedernales River country made near a highline from a very tall tower once used as a light tower in Austin.

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No ivory tower ever protected a professor more securely against the harsh world than this luxurious belvedere protects a hunter from the inconveniences of walking in sunshine or rain, in cold or heat. There he can be as luxuriously at unmuscled ease as Roman banqueters were on their couches or as contemporary sybarites can be in penthouses on top of the tallest buildings in the world. Look out the window.

Yonder's a little buck nibbling cottonseed cubes not more than 70 feet down to the ground and about 40 feet off to one side. He can't smell or hear a thing. Take good aim through the scope on your rifle and bore a hole right through the top of his skull. You've done it! A mighty hunter! Just leave him there; a servant will be around presently to carry him off and dress him. Let's stay here a while, take another drink or two. The next shot belongs to Old Bill over there. He's getting too heavy to waddle, but there's a broad-bottomed seat by the window that he's going to shoot out of.

Of course this is not a representative stand. Generations ago before anybody thought of putting out feed for game, hunters in brushy or timbered country used to climb up into trees to get a good outlook. It's no luxury on a cold day to third-stand, third-sit, and third-cling to a limb way up in a tree. I suppose that man hunters have been camouflaging themselves as long panthers have been camouflaging themselves. Plenty of modern blinds are mere elevations, little platforms, climbed to by ladders. I don't think such a stand is any more unsportsmanlike than crouching in tall grass and crawling through tall grass to where deer are grazing.

I remember a series of pictures by George Catlin or some other pioneer artist showing Plains Indians dressed in wolf skins creeping thus disguised up to buffalo for a shot. One of the early Texian hunters I've read about used to have a well-trained old horse who would half-graze toward deer or antelope while the hunter kept snug against him on the side away from the animals hunted. He could shoot under or over or anywhere around this old horse, and the horse wouldn't flinch. His horse was a kind of mobile stand for the cunning hunter.

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I like that kind of talk, and I like talk from a human being who belongs to the land and who'll teach me something about the creatures of the land. I've come to think that a warm, cheery house, a blazing fireplace, cups that cheer and companions who contribute to knowledge, wit and geniality while somebody else prepares supper are a golden feature of any hunt.

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J. FRANK DOBIE

San G. Light 7-1-5

Ways of an Ancient

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Old Grandma is actually not old. According to her teeth, she is not yet four, but all her ways are those of an ancient. When the meek finally inherit the earth, she should be foremost among the inheritors. Her ears droop in a listless way, though she is exceptionally thrifty. In these hard, drouthy times of only parched grass, where there is any grass at all, she works her head through eight strands of barbed wire to snatch a few sprigs of green growing around a small pecan, a mountain laurel, and a redbud irrigated against the fence.

She ate the pecan foliage so ravenously that we had to wall her off from it with a slab of tin wired to the fence.

Gentle Enough

She is as gentle as a pet milk calf. She is large-framed and of a smoky color, being part Charolaise. About six weeks ago I sent her calf, big and fat, to market. Maybe I was not around at the hour of emotional behaviour, but so far as I noticed, not a ripple disturbed Old Grandma's placidity after losing her calf. Two weeks later I was riding horseback in a long-abandoned field where Grandma and four or five other cows, all but her with calves, were finding some half-green silvertop grass along terraces. It happened to be calf-sucking time just as I rode up to the cows, and I halted to watch one of the most satisfying processes in the animal world—man being just one of the animals.

To see a healthy calf suck is, in Sir Toby Belch's phrase, "as good a deed as drink." No hostess could get more satisfaction out of seeing her guests enjoy her food than I get out of watching calves suck their mammies. A lithograph that I have looked at hundreds of times with tonic effect is Alexandre Hogue's "Madonna and Child." The "madonna" stands placidly in a stall while her child bolts milk from her bounteous udder. You can see the milk coursing down its throat and filling out its belly. The lift of its tail is pure animal joy; the stance of its planted legs is beatific; the slobber at its mouth and the roll of its eye indicate innocent greed, wonderful gusto, and complete satisfaction.

Age Helps

It takes a little age to consciously appreciate any good thing, and a calf of three months or up evidences more satisfaction than a novice at sucking. Among the cows with Old Grandma out in the field was a young insane-eyed red thing absolutely crazy over her steer calf. I had privately named him "Belly Full, Heart Easy." He inherited nothing of his mother's scatter-brained nervousness.

Now I watched Belly Full, Heart Easy give his mammy's udder the last punch and drain the last drop out of it. When he did, he struck a fast trot for Old Grandma, grazing 40 feet away. Then he went to sucking her. She paid no more attention to him than a sensible cowhorse pays to the play of two green-striped lizards on bare ground out in front of him. I had supposed that Old Grandma's big calf was about weaned when we shipped it away and that by now she was dry. But here she was manifestly adding to the joy and prosperity of Belly Full, Heart Easy.

Lately, with the drouth getting more terrible every day, a truck took Belly Full, Heart Easy, his mother and some other animals to market. After dark I heard a distressful lowing coming from the direction of a watering trough not far from the house. I walked down and in the dim light saw Old Grandma there alone, the nearest she could get to the pens where she last saw and smelled the young bullock who had adopted her for what he could get and whom she had adopted for what she could give. Hours afterward I heard her mournful, hopeless lowing repeated. Next morning early she was still lowing. However, after she came up with the other cows and got a full drink of water, she went away in silence.

Mother Love

One of these other cows, a 3-year-old bluish, half Charolaise muley, has a young cream-colored calf. If you approach her calf in a pen she won't exactly charge you, but will charge by you with what is supposed to be a bellow of rage. It is so opposite to rage in sound that it makes me laugh. If a person roped her calf, however, she'd be right on him, even if she had to tear down a fence getting to him. If her calf were taken away, at its present age, and she were taken miles away in the opposite direction and released in a pasture, she would tear over and through fences to get back to the parting place and then she would bawl for days and nights.

Generally, young cows, like young women, are more foolish over their first calves than over later ones. As a rule, the old cows make the wiser mothers for not wasting their energies on fancied-up dangers. A cowman will take any kind of rain and any kind of calf at any time he can get either, but slow rains and slow mother cows, like Old Grandma, are the more comforting.

It Can Be Overdone

DEC 11 1960

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

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Wary of Man

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

DEC 25 1960

Wild Turkeys Demand More Patience on Hunt

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

To tell you the truth, I haven't hunted wild turkeys much. The most satisfactory shot I ever had at a turkey was with a rifle, shooting his head off right after he flew from the roost in the early morning and lit in tall grass near where I was waiting. Another time I shot at what I thought was a gobbler, but not much was left of a hen after a rifle bullet went through her body. Not long ago I spotted gobblers—gobblers for sure—approaching a blind. I had shotgun ready and got only feathers from the leader. They were out of range. Patience is a virtue, they say. The gobblers flew, scattering, and three of them struck their heads up close together away off. I aimed at the neck of the middle one with my .30-30. I saw him go down. Then maybe two minutes later he went to flopping up pretty high, maybe three feet. A friend who brought in the carcasses stepped the distance off. It was 160 yards. I'm positive that I hit the turkey either to the right or the left of the one I aimed at. Another turkey I killed waited a minute before he flopped. He was shot in the head with a shotgun. Another one shot in the head with a shotgun didn't flop at all.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

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FILM THEORY ADVANCED.

Roy Howard of New York, of the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers, shot a young gobbler and when it went to flopping three or four other young ones of the flock ran up to the flopper and pecked at him as if they were in a fight. I've seen gobblers show interest in a turkey shot down and flopping around but never waiting long to examine him much less to fight him.

Anybody who's hunted much, whether stalking along on the ground, riding a horse, or waiting in a blind or in brush, all the time peering intently, watching, waiting, knows how a kind of film of moisture comes over the eyes—especially in damp, misty weather. Ralph Johnston — of Houston—takes far more pleasure in seeing his friends hunt on his ranch to the west than in hunting himself, but he knows a lot about the hunted. He tells me there is a theory wild turkeys in misty weather get a film over their eyes so that they are not clear sighted at all. I can believe it. In such weather many times they don't stride about as they do in clear weather. They huddle around cover in the brush under trees. I'm not saying this is constant practice, but turkey wariness is almost constant.

An ancient folk observation may be so ancient that it's new to some. An Indian hunter says when a deer sees a man frozen, still, not moving at all, not flickering an eye, the deer says maybe, "hump, just a stump," pays no more attention, goes on eating, and gets shot. A wild turkey says, "Looks like stump, but maybe so man, maybe so shoot, better go," and he goes as fast as he can go—and that's fast.

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SMELL SENSE DEBATED.

Turkeys are like people. They see very often what they are looking for. There's a blind, we'll say, near which grain has been put out. Turkeys have been coming along eating grain, not necessarily at the same hour every day. I've stood in a blind and listened to them gobble and talk around for hours, not more than a quarter of a mile off, before some of them came to eat. Then again, they might not come that day at all. This is especially true when natural food is abundant. I don't know anything prettier than seeing a wild turkey reach way up, having to lift itself a little off the ground, to pick berries off a high-growing sumach bush — the kinnikinnick that Indians used to smoke. The craws of several turkeys recently killed in Medina County contained leaves of a certain weed and kinnikinnick berries far more abundantly than anything else.

If nobody has shot at turkeys from a blind, they have no fear of it, but after they've been shot at a time or two, they get very wary and may scare without man's making a motion, without his eyes being visible to them. I've been such a man.

The best part of shooting wild turkeys or not shooting them is waiting for them. The cream of the hunt is the sense of expectation, the alertness a hunter experiences through eyes, ears, skin. An alert hunter is aware of changes in temperature, changes in the wind. Turkeys won't smell him, but deer will, if the wind is right for them. That is, turkeys won't smell him very far. Debate over sense of smell in turkeys and buzzards goes on.

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NORTHERS PREDICTED.

Whether turkeys can smell or not, they seem to be very sensitive to impending change of weather. Ralph Johnston told me about the Miller Spring on land adjoining him. Here trees grow over water, under a bluff, and ahead of a stiff norther, whether wet or dry, wild turkeys will make for those trees to roost. Ralph Johnston said that he used to get news of a coming norther from the Miller people, who kept watch on this turkey roost.

I've spent more time crawling up on does just to watch them than I have on bucks. The fact is, you can get a lot closer to a doe, usually, than you can to an experienced buck. In blinds I see turkeys coming a long way off—a quarter of a mile. I'm not good enough to judge at that distance whether they are gobblers or hens, but plenty of people are good enough to judge just by the stances and motions of the birds. For the sake of suspense it's nice not to be able to judge far away. One flock I'm recalling was of 49 hens. In the winter young gobblers may run with hens but mostly the sexes keep separate except for chance meetings, at which time old gobblers are likely to strut. Being males, they'll strut any time that they realize females are watching. They'll strut in the dead of winter when mating would be superfluous, despite the fact that an awful lot of mating among certain other animals is superfluous. Nature sees to it that wild turkeys don't hatch off until there is something for the young ones to eat in the spring.

These 49 hens fooled around my blind for fully 40 minutes. I couldn't make the least noise. They were on all sides of me. If I looked out the blind on one side I had to be sure that the lid was down on the other so that I couldn't be caught in the cross-light.

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THOUGHTS COME EASY.

I like to sit in a blind waiting and letting things run through my mind—pleasant things. In November out on Ralph Johnson's Rancho Seco I kept thinking of an old Mexican named Pablo whom I saw prop a screen door open with a forked stick of wood, addressing it thus, "Please, sir, as a favor hold this open until I bring in the cot." After he brought in the cot, he took the forked stick of wood away from the screen saying, "Muchas gracias, senor, many thanks, sir, for your favor."

The gods are known by their long memories. Walker Stone was in a class of mine at Oklahoma A&M College in 1925. He brought me to the Rancho Seco. He and its owner, Ralph Johnston, were friends in their youths; another longtime friend of his on the hunt is John Joseph Mathews of Oklahoma, author of that beautiful book, "Talking to the Moon" and other books. In the blind I got to thinking of an anecdote told by John Joseph Mathews. He has Osage blood in him, maybe an eighth. One hot summer day he went fishing in a hot, muddy river with a full-blood Osage. They left a big thermos bottle full of ice water in the car. When they got back to the car it wasn't there. Mathews expressed himself according to Christian theology. The Indian didn't say anything—for a long while, maybe five minutes. Then he said, "I guess he didn't have one."

I like having time to remember and reflect. You can have it while waiting for Brother Deer or Brother Turkey to come along. Why hurry?

J. Frank Dobie San A. Light 12-23-32

Generous Deed In Spirit of Yuletide

Thirty-five years ago a woman in El Paso we'll call Mrs. Hurden received the most Christmasy deed of her life experience. After being a school teacher in New Mexico she had for 20 years been crippled with what was then called rheumatism and was almost blind. She was approaching 60 and was living in a low-priced apartment house. She could not read even a big advertisement, but could see forms and could go up and down stairs on crutches.

Now enters Miss Ruth Dodson, of Nueces county, Texas, then 45 years old, always hearty and energetic, laugher and lover of humanity. She had engaged an apartment in El Paso for what was expected to be a brief stay.

On the first evening there after supper she was sitting on the front porch with a few other dwellers in the house when a chair near her was occupied by a woman who came out on crutches, her head enveloped in a scarf pulled down entirely over one eye and leaving the other only partly exposed. Her questioning of the new tenant suggested that this was not the first she had investigated. "What are the newspapers saying?" was one question revealing her cruiosity to know what might be going on in the world from which she was barred. Miss Ruth Dodson can tell better than I can.

Clippings

"The next morning when I read the newspapers, I clipped a few items that I thought might interest Mrs. Hurden and went upstairs to read them to her. At this first call and later ones, she told me something of herself, and I learned that the eyes hidden under her scarf were bandaged. She had relatives in El Paso—an old mother, who brought food to her, and at least two sisters, one a teacher; the other was the wife of a prominent official, expected to return immediately with a young daughter from a trip to Europe. They brought her perfume. When I went to her room the next day to read to her, she asked me to read out every word on the bottle. It had been manufacturerd in New York. That was all that her sister brought to her. 'Picked up in New York,' was Mrs. Hurden's comment. The gift without the giver is bare.

"While I had no idea how long I would be detained in El Paso, I could at least read the papers to this blind, lonely woman until I left. She said that in all the years she had been unable to read, only one person had ever really read to her, and that only for a brief time. This person, an old lady, would read everything on the front page of the newspaper, column by column, turn the page and read everything on that side, through column one, column two, and so on, without regard to how the items fitted what preceded or followed.

Library Book

"One day when I came from a trip to the library, I went directly to Mrs. Hurden's room with a book in my hand. I spoke of the book and she wanted to know who wrote it. I told her the author was G. K. Chesterton. She had never heard of Chesterton.

"So I sat down and began reading to her as well as to myself, since I was going to read the book anyhow. She was delighted with it. That was the beginning.

"A few days later, Mrs. Hurden told me there was one book she should like to be able to read above all other books she knew of. What book, I asked. Romain Rolland's 'Jean Christophe,' the story of the development of a character. The French version, she said, was published in nine volumes, but the English translation, she knew, would be in fewer. Romain Rolland, she added, was exiled from France during World War I on account of his German sympathies.

"I knew I wasn't going to read nine volumes, but investigated. I had a great sympathy for this lovely, brilliant, neglected, perhaps warped, personality. Who wouldn't be warped in her place?

3 Volumes

"At the library I found 'Jean Cristophe' in three volumes, each of 500-odd pages. I deliberated as to whether I should begin something I might not be able to finish. I decided in favor of giving this soul as much of the story of Jean Cristophe as I had time for. So I went back to my apartment with the first volume in my hand. I had dedicated myself.

"Mrs. Hurden dragged herself out of her bed, and on the two crutches groped her way across the room and made coffee for us. I didn't belittle her gesture by offering to relieve her of it. We drank coffee together, and she got back in bed. I placed a chair by the window and sat down. We were ready now for Jean Cristophe.

"I began to read at the beginning of the first chapter. Mrs. Hurden stopped me and asked if there were not something, some quotation, heading the chapter. I told her yes, but that it was written in French and I couldn't read French. She told me to try to read the words and that she would be able to make out the meaning. She begged: 'Don't miss a thing.'

"That day I read until I had to turn on the light, then until late bedtime. During the readings, sometimes Mrs. Hurden would interrupt to explain something or to have me read over some passage that she didn't quite understand or that was particularly pleasing to her. Then when I was ready to quit reading, she seemed to enjoy discussing what we had gone over. The book contains much of politics, art, music, etc., but her interest never lagged.

Thrice Daily

"When I went to her room as early as I could in the morning, she was always ready for me. I read three times a day: In the morning; in the afternoon; and again at night. One Sunday I read nine hours. Of course, I was getting the benefit of the book, too. It was interesting to me, and I was glad of the opportunity to be reading it with such an enlightened critic. I remember that when I pronounced a certain name that I was not familiar with, she asked, 'Do you know what that is?' 'No.' 'It is an opera that was composed 40 years before Christ was born.'

"It took me just a week to read the first volume, and I still didn't know when I was going to leave El Paso. Mrs. Hurden was bewailing the fact that I was not going to stay permanently. She said, 'You would be a beautiful reader among beautiful readers.' Upon finishing the first volume, I went at once to the library and came back with the second volume and finished reading that in exactly a week. The same for the third.

"When I told Mrs. Hurden that I must leave El Paso in two more days, she closed her room, including the transom above the door. What she had to tell was of no great importance, except to her. Of course, she was very grateful. She said that no present could have equaled hearing that book read. As well as I can remember she lived several years to enjoy the memory of Jean Christophe. When she died, on a Christmas day, I heard of it through a friend of her sister."

If Christmas isn't kindness, it can't be rich. If it's gifts, the richest gift of all is the kind part of the giver that goes with it. And now, my friends, a warm-hearted Christmas to you all!

YARNS TO RE-SPIN

Tumble Off Housetop Saves Time

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
MAY 10 1960

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

A man mending the roof on his house fell off. He was a little shaken up and went inside, where his wife sat reading a magazine — nothing heavier than "Think." He seemed to want sympathy. "Did you know I fell off the roof of this house?" he asked.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"Well, you were coming down anyway, weren't you?" she asked and went on reading.

This makes me think of the little boy who fell head down out of a tree so far away from the house that by the time he got there the skinned places on his nose had stopped bleeding.

"And how you must have cried and nobody to hear you!" his mother sympathized. "That's just it," Johnnie explained. "I knew there wasn't anybody to listen and so I didn't cry at all."

• • •

THE TWO FABLES that follow were told by Mody C. Boatright while he, Henry Nash Smith, Roy Bedichek and I were eating hot tamales and drinking Mexican beer at a restaurant in Austin the night of Dec. 6, 1958.

A horse walked into a saloon and up to the bar. He ordered bourbon with plenty of catsup in it. The barkeeper mixed a drink and put it in a bowl so the horse could drink it better. The horse ordered a second of the same thing—whisky and catsup. After he had drunk it, he went out the door he'd come through.

As he was disappearing, a man standing at the bar a little way down from where the horse had stood remarked as he sipped his Scotch and soda, "That's mighty peculiar."

"Oh, I don't know," the barkeeper said, "a good many take catsup in their whisky."

"Maybe so," the remarker agreed. "It couldn't spoil good whisky worse than some soft drinks."

After a brief silence, a man who was sipping beside the Scotch and soda individual said, "Talking about pecular things—I saw Hitler get off the bus the other day at Twelfth and Guadalupe."

The Scotch and soda drinker said, "That's impossible."

"I just told you I saw him," said the second man.

"I tell you it's impossible," repeated the Scotch and soda man.

"Why do you say impossible?" asked the other.

"Because Twelfth and Guadalupe is not on a bus line and therefore the bus couldn't have stopped there."

• • •

IT'S WONDERFUL how much more credible the impossible is than the patriotic platitudes of the stupid are. The next unreality is taken from a bulletin published by the Arkansas Folklore Society.

A man driving along one night saw a girl standing beside the road. He stopped and gave her a ride. During the trip she asked for a cigaret and borrowed his lighter. He took her to where she said she lived and walked her to the door. He made a date with her for the next night and left.

After traveling down the road a piece he remembered that she had his cigaret lighter and turned back to get it. An old woman answered his knock at the door. He told her that her daughter had kept his lighter and asked her to get it for him. The old woman said he must be mistaken, that her daughter had been dead for five years. Since he didn't believe her, she took him across the road to a cemetery and showed him her daughter's grave. When he shone his flashlight on the tombstone to read the name and date, he saw his lighter lying on top of the stone.

Drouth Driving Deer to Nibble Leaves of Rose Bushes at Ranch

10-28-56

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Over the hill country of Texas, and other country too, the acorn crop this year is sparse on account of the drouth. I have not seen any acorns at all on the Spanish oaks, which are dead and dying in great numbers; many live oaks have no fruit. Before September ended, those oaks lacking strength to mature their fruit began dropping green acorns.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Deer that in normal times do not get really acorn-hungry until the acorns are ripe were ravenous this fall for the first green ones dropped. Two mornings handrunning I saw from our back yard, in the country, an eight-point buck hunting every inch of ground under a clump of live oaks. He had several chances to see me in motion, but seemed dull to everything else but satisfying his hunger. A buck gets unobservant in rutting season when nothing but doe is in his consciousness, but famine will change the nature of any animal, including man.

DEER EAT ROSE LEAVES.

Deer have been coming into this country yard at night eating all the leaves off a rose bush, a little apricot, two small jujube bushes, a crepe myrtle. They have not allowed three or four redbuds to leaf out this year. I don't know but have the impression that deer sometimes prefer acorns from Spanish oaks to those from live oaks. When acorns are plentiful and goats are not competitors, deer will sometimes disdain inferior acorns, eating only the choicest, for among oaks as among other trees, some produce superior fruit. Some acorns were ripe on our place about the 10th of October. Within a few days after ripe ones began falling, I noticed that green acorns were being left on the ground by the deer.

Last Saturday about half an hour before dark I walked over a hill for the purpose of watching deer come to feed at a fine oak now producing ripe acorns. Three deer were already there, and I was not cautious enough in topping the hill. They ran off not more than 200 yards and stopped. I walked to where they could not see me and got down in some rocks to watch. Darkness came without those deer having returned to the big tree of ripe acorns. Maybe they had already picked up all on the ground. Certainly they are getting much more to eat now than they were getting before the acorns began to fall. They can be more patient.

PATIENCE PREFERRED.

All wild things on the ground must be patient, the hunters to catch their prey and the preyed upon to escape the predators. I have never seen a deer lunge for food. A lizard spends hours every day on our front gallery, which is bordered by greenery. I have not seen this lizard catch an insect, but it lives on insects and every time I look it seems to be just waiting for one to come along.

I grew up among men who had spent their lives on the ground, often sleeping upon it, eating upon it, riding horseback over it, gazing beyond it. They could sit upon it comfortably. They read comparatively little and many of them talked sparingly. The women were busy from the time they got up until they went to bed, but the men usually had an hour of spare time after supper.

Typical of them, my father would, except in cold weather, go out on the front gallery and sit in a chair and look out. I suppose he meditated—a word he frequently used. He looked at the sky; he looked out into the darkness—at trees, at stars, and now and then at a blessed cloud. He was not bored with himself or with life. He enjoyed conversation but he manifestly enjoyed silence also. Having to liston to some machine - voice parrot out over the radio moronic advertisements would have driven him to distraction.

HARMONY WITH SILENCE.

Probably no change on human ways through inventions developed in the 20th Century has been more marked than the loss of harmony with silence. I can see a Mexican vaquero looking gravely but not sadly into a campfire at night, listening politely when another said something, but utterly comfortable listening to no more than the lapping of the flames or the popping of a coal. I will not assert that he was getting more out of life than a person who can not sit comfortably without having a radio or a television turned on. Yet he was certainly more self - contained, less dependent upon commercial noise. I belong so essentially to the listeners of silence that I feel more at home with the deer, the quail, the cattle and jackrabbits than I do with people in a fever for any kind of sounds to kill silence. Yet evolution never works backward, no matter what the myths about primitive perfection. It may be that the murder of silence is a temporary means toward a higher form of human existence.

It would be an interesting experience for readers of newspapers after such rains as we have been receiving to have the headlines written by farmers or ranchers. As a result of a few scattered and generally weak showers over the country, the grass greening up is mostly under trees. The Soil Conservation Service—one of the best services government ever gave this country—allows a subsidy on clearing land only on condition that not more than four trees be left to the acre. This is a mistake on oaks and elms especially. In this sun-baked land, those trees help the grass and grass helps them. I grieve at my own folly in having had some trees thinned out. I destroyed the beautiful and subtracted from the useful.

DOBIE UNDERSTANDS ESAU

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM JAN 22 1961

Real Hunger, Good Food Superb Combination

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Of animal satisfactions in this life, nothing else, despite climaxes and other considerations, leaves a human being feeling so benign, heart-easy, reposeful, tolerant of all ills, uncritically satisfied with life, as superb food allaying extreme hunger. For the maximum of benefit, the maximum of hunger is necessary — a state that millions of the well-fed have never experienced. No kind of work will make a man as hungry as being cold and wet for hours and hours as he moves on until his movements become as heavy as the looks of Teutonic architecture designed for Adenauer-kind of prosperity.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Gourmets eat through the palate and are mostly of the indoors. Hombres de campo mountain men of the old style, woodsmen, hunters who sleep on the ground, sailors who pit themselves against North Sea storms, range men who fight blizzards of snow and ice to save their own lives and the lives of drifting cattle—this breed eats from a hunger far deeper down than the palate. They enjoy taste to a high degree, but their deeper joy is in feeding a hale body.

* * *

WEATHER JUST RIGHT.

I often enjoy remembering certain gargantuan meals following gargantuan hunger. The two that stand out strongest in memory are associated with hunts. The one I'm going to tell about now was on the Olmos Ranch, owned by my uncle Jim Dobie, down in the brush country of Texas, between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. At the time I made it, no man-made blind over millions of acres of the brush country softened hunting and hunters.

The weather was as I've always liked it for riding out horseback after deer with rifle in scabbard for for stalking along ridges, down brushy draws, or anywhere else in the big pasture country of spotted openings, prickly pear flats, dense thickets, and sacahuista (a kind of salt grass) valleys. It's no use, ever, to hunt in a dense thicket, but in cold, misty weather, the kind of weather we were having on this hunt, deer are apt to be out at any time. Even if the moon is full on a misty night, deer seem not to fill up as they do during clear moonlight nights.

I was up long before daylight drinking coffee, eating fried eggs and bacon, listening to the coyotes sing. Coyote concerts before and along about daylight are one of the pleasures of hunting in the brush country. I saddled my horse — a chunky, free brown named Pancho Villa, Uncle Jim Dobie's personal mount loaned for the day; he didn't mind smelling blood and carrying a carcass. I had a good coat but didn't bother with a slicker. My 30-30 in a handy scabbard, I'd ridden across sacahuista flats drained by the Nueces River (which runs only in rainy seasons in that part of the country) and was four or five miles away from the Olmos ranch house before it got light enough to see to shoot. What wind there was was from the west. It shifted several times during the day. Pancho Villa was well fed, and as I expected to be back to him before long, I tied him saddled against a windbreak of brush. Then I set out afoot. I'm no Graves Peeler, who can break a buck's back from saddle shooting while his horse and the deer are both running and leaping through a black brush thicket.

* * *

CAN'T SEE FAR.

Before long my feet were wet. In crossing a neck of a sacahuista, I got wet waist high. Meantime, the mist was turning into a drizzle. Raindrops formed on my hat brim and dripped down so as to sometimes obscure my vision. I heard two or three deer snort. The wind laid. When there's no wind and visibility is limited to a few yards, deer can't hear or smell much better than they see.

Also a hunter can't see far. If he watches too intently, a film forms over his eyes. Old-time hunters say that the same kind of film forms over the eyes of wild turkeys and that, therefore, they will not be out stirring in such weather. They instinctively want to see and not be seen. It may be that deer are likewise affected. I could have circled around to my horse, but I thought the hunting better in another direction.

By noon I had tramped, though slowly, a long way. I got a fire going in a rat's nest against brush and while I munched an apple, all the food I had brought, I partly dried out. The smoke attracted two yearling deer. (It's odd how we call a fawn born in April or May a "yearling" by November or December.) These inquisitive innocents got right up to me before they discovered that I was human and took off. The Olmos and adjoining ranches are among the best hunting grounds in North America. The bucks there will average twice the weight that they attain to in hill country to the northeast. Minerals in the soil—not drained out by constant rainfall—make the grass and browse very nutritious. I went to stalking again and was soon soaking wet all over. Late afternoon came, and I hadn't sighted a buck, although I had spotted several stock deer, does and yearlings.

I walked too much, too far, too fast. This has been a failing due to my body, though my mind knows better. The drizzle got heavier. My coat got heavier. All my clothes were heavy; my knees began to get heavy. But I was going to knock over a buck that day. I don't know what time it was by the clock, but the light was dimming when I shot him—a good 10-pointer. After I gutted him I guessed his weight at 130 or 140 pounds.

The compass inside my body is very unreliable, and I walked some unnecessary distances before I found Pancho Villa. His nicker as I neared him helped on the precise location. He was as glad for me to come as I was glad to rest in the saddle. I realized how tired I was and hungry. It took about half an hour to ride to the gutted buck. With a rope around his horns, Pancho Villa dragged him to a mesquite tree less than 100 yards away. There I put the rope over a limb and hoisted him. Then I led Pancho Villa up close and tied the carcass behind the saddle.

* * *

JUST TWO WAYS.

As we headed for home in utter darkness, I could hear the coyotes making merry over the insides I'd left on the ground. On the way I fancied at one place that two or three coyotes were following me, attracted by the smell of the deer carcass. The idea gave me pleasure. The coyotes are my brothers.

When I got to the ranch, my old amigo Santos Cortez unloaded the buck and hung him up and unsaddled Pancho Villa and fed him. As, stiff and utterly spent, I dragged into the warm kitchen, Onie Sheeran, who was Uncle Jim Dobie's boss, asked if I'd care for a bite. Everybody else had eaten. He knew I was coming, and he knew I'd eat.

He had a pot of frijoles on the stove—a wood cook stove—and a pan of biscuits keeping warm in the oven with the door partly open, but my predecessors had cleaned up the meat, and Onie was waiting for me, before frying more venison steaks. In winter time the Olmos kept a supply of venison on hand. The deer down in the brush country are generally fat if they are killed before the running season depletes them. This was a good year for fat deer.

I don't want to be categorical, but for me there are just two ways of cooking venison. One is to bake with slices of bacon to add moisture to ribs and shoulders; the other is to fry steaks out of hams and backstraps. Lots of people don't know how good the ribs and the shoulders are when properly baked.

* * *

LIKE ESAU.

Uncle Jim Dobie said to Onie Sheeran, "Of course, he's hungry, belly sticking to backbone, hasn't had a thing all day and been as wet as a drowned rat since daylight. There won't be anything left of those lomas (backstraps) when he gets through." I was honing for dry clothes as well as for meat. By the time I got into them, Onie Sheeran had the venison about done in sizzling grease. I was trembling with hunger. I felt as a horse seems to feel when, after he has been cold and wet and working a long time, he nickers at the corn being carried to his box. First, I took a plateful of frijoles with plenty of juice and ham hock and a half dozen chilipetin peppers mashed up into them, while Onie finished with the gravy. I ate ravenously, but I ate deliberately. Onie said I didn't eat more than four pounds of fried venison, but he didn't weigh it. I was as hollow as a crane when I started and as weak as a sick kitten. When I got through, I was full and had already assimilated enough protein to make me ready to ride out again, though I naturally waited until next morning to ride.

There's something about wild meat and about range beef that's semi-wild that a hungry man can't get in a city. To go hunting away out and not to get as hungry as a bitch wolf with 17 sucking whelps and then have hunger assauged with wonderfully-cooked strong meat, the dishes as bountifully heaped as the banquet tables of the gods, is to miss a big part of the hunt.

Moralists will continue to moralize over Esau's selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, but when I remember how cold and hungry and weak he was when he came in at night from that hunt, and sold out for a hot meaty meal, I can imagine his enormous satisfaction — for a while at least.

Early Texas Practice

ST T 10-8-56

Doctor Wrote Whisky Best Snake Bite Cure

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The old idea, now discredited, that whisky is a sovereign antidote to rattlesnake venom had at one time scientific backing. In his book, "A Manual of Practice for the Diseases of Texas," published at Chapel Hill, Texas, 1866, F. C. Wilkes, M. D., wrote: "The general treatment for rattle snake bite consists in immediate and powerful stimulation. Whisky, brandy, rum, or any spirituous liquor, should be freely given, so as to produce intoxication, if possible."

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The most extraordinary yarn connected with whisky and rattlesnakes that I have ever come across is in a book written by a surgeon with General Taylor's army during the Mexican War. His name was S. Compton Smith, M. D., and his salty book is entitled "Chile Con Carne." I consider it advisable to cut out some — not all — of his lofty verbosity; otherwise I have made no change in the narrative.

"My intercourse with the Texians," Dr. S. Compton Smith wrote, "brought me in frequent contact with many 'odd sticks' and other men of the most eccentric ideas and habits. One of them was old Billy Anderson.

"He belonged to Capt. Jack Hays' company of rangers and had been at the storming of Monterey. Years before this he had come from some backwoods frontier to Texas while it was occupied by roving tribes of hostile Indians. Indian-fighting had been his business and pastime, and he could boast of the number of Comanche scalps he had taken with the same coolness and gratification that the trapper would count over the number of his peltries.

ANTIDOTE CARRIED.

"Like most men of his class, Billy was at times excessively intemperate. When occasion presented and he was off duty, he would go on a glorious spree and stay on it till the supply of liquor was stopped. Perhaps for weeks, and sometimes for months afterwards, he would live as soberly as an anchorite.

"While I was riding through the camp of the Rangers one morning, my attention was directed towards a group of Texians collected under the shade of a large tree. They seemed to be much amused at something going on there. Curiosity prompted me to turn my horse's head in that direction, and, on approaching nearer, I observed an oldish man seated on a log and holding in his hand a kind of cage, made of twigs. Within this cage was coiled a large angry rattlesnake.

"This man was Billy Anderson. When on one of his sprees, he was fond of showing off his snake performance. For a fee of a drink of whisky, he would grasp the venomous reptile by the neck, just back of the jaws, and, drawing him forth from the cage, present to him the back of his left hand, or the muscular portion of his arm, for the creature to fasten his poison fangs into.

"Billy Anderson said he always carried about him an antidote, which immediately neutralized the poison. At my request, he drew from his pocket a handful of small roots, about the size of my little finger, having somewhat the appearance of ginseng: this he called the 'rattlesnake's master.'

"I knew that the Indians, and also the Texians, were in the habit of carrying about their persons the root of a certain plant (called Aristolochia Serpentaria though some use the Polygala, or Seneca root) as a remedy for the bites of this and other serpents. They chew the root, swallowing the juice and applying the masticated pulp upon the bite.

HOW DID SNAKE SURVIVE?

"There was no mistake in Billy's snake's being a very venomous one. He buried his fangs deeply into Billy's arm. In fact, both his arm and hand were covered with the cicatrices of former bites received in similar foolish exhibitions. On this occasion the snake had just been caught and presented to Billy for the amusement of his comrades.

"He had been some days on a bender, and his skin was pretty well filled with whisky, — or rather with mescal or aguardiente, — and the wonder to me was not that Billy experienced so little inconvenience from the fangs of the snake but that the reptile survived the bite.

"I afterwards learned from Billy that he never allowed the snake to bite him when sober. 'For,' said he, 'the rattlesnake's master is not always sure without the whisky.'"

Disguised As a Man

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Belle Starr Met Some Strange Bedfellows

JAN 1 1961

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I don't want to start the New Year off by thinking. I'm not sure I can think. The philosopher Descartes is remembered for one aphorism: "Cogito. Ergo, sum." ("I think. Therefore, I am.") I'm not sure at all that I can think, but I'm fairly sure that I am. Generally I'd rather tell a story than think. Ergo, I'm going to tell a story.

J. FRANK DOBIE

Along time ago, some old trail driver, I don't remember who, whom I encountered in San Antonio told me this story. He said that back in the days of badmen in Texas and Belle Starr in the Indian Territory a reward of $1,000 was offered for her capture. As everybody knew, she was a bold rider; also, a lot of people knew that she rode disguised as a man. In those days it was not uncommon for a crowded hotel to put two people of the same sex not only in the same room but in the same bed. I deduce from all evidence that Bell Starr's sex was not revealed so patently as that of Brigitte Bardot or Marilyn Monroe.

* * *

DOUBLE BUNKING.

One night at the Maverick Hotel in San Antonio a voluble kind of fellow got to talking at the supper table. Meals were served in what was called family style. This fellow said that he'd be satisfied if he could sleep with Belle Starr but that he'd much prefer to take the $1,000 reward. If he ever laid eyes on her, he'd sure get it. Most of the individuals who heard him were unknown to him and unknown to each other. That night he found himself roomed with one of them, a slender rather secretive person. One of them blew out the light and they went to bed. In those days pajamas were unknown and few men used nightshirts.

The next morning when the voluble-mouthed fellow woke up, he was alone. He ate breakfast and then went out on the front gallery (the ramada) of the Maverick Hotel to sit in one of the chairs, take his ease, and pick his teeth. While he was sitting there his roommate of the preceding night rode up on a lively horse fresh out of the livery stable. The rider paused in front of the voluble individual and said, "You are ambitious to sleep with Belle Starr and then collect the reward on her, I heard you say."

"Yes," he bellowed out.

"Well, you slept with her last night, but you are going to have to ride to collect that reward." Then the stranger was gone.

Every Caristmas the Steck Company of Austin, whose middle name is printing and publishing, puts out a reprint of some rare book of Texas and the Southwest—not for sale. The 1960 reprint was a facsimile reproduction of "Bella Starr, The Bandit Queen, or The Female Jesse James," published in New York in 1889. Bella is a nice fancicality for Belle. A live anecdote always travels. Now with some of the superflous words chopped out, comes a tale out of this reprinted book.

* * *

DECIDE TO SEPARATE.

After one of numerous robberies, Bella Starr and a husband named Read rode from the Indian Territory for Texas. At the ferry on Red River, they read a poster tacked to a tree: "$1,700 Reward for the Capture of Jim Read, Dead or Alive."

They decided that it would be wise to separate. Bella rode for Dallas County and Read for Jefferson. That afternoon she arrived in the town of Paris. She carried $7,000, over $1,000 in gold. Dressed in cowboy clothes, she walked to a store where she bought a suit of black clothes, and appeared a few minutes later looking like a smart young lawyer. Her hair was cut close. The hotel clerk was astonished at the metamorphosis, and at first insisted that the horse that Bella had put in the stable an hour before was the property of another man.

But Bella rode on, reaching Bonham after dark, in a heavy rain. As she entered the Rigg's House (or hotel), she heard men talking about the Grayson robbery and "the Bandit Queen." Among those present Bella recognized Judge Thurman of Dallas, whom she had met on several occasions. When the hotel proprietor said that "Bella can assume any disguise with such success that not one of you could recognize her," the judge countered, "I'd know her if those fiery eyes of hers were set in the head of a cabbage. She's a wild one, but she can not fool me."

* * *

BUNKED TOGETHER.

While the conversation was going on, a hack drove up to the door, and five or six men jumped out and asked for accommodation. The rooms were all taken, but the proprietor said that if some of the guests would agree to "double up" he could give the newcomers a "shake down" of some kind. Turning to Judge Thurman he asked.

"Judge, would you object to sharing your bed with that young gentleman in the corner?"

"Not in the least," was the answer. "I guess I can hold my own share of the cover with any man."

The same question was put to Bella, who agreed to "double up" with the fat criminal lawyer. She wanted the judge to be asleep before she got to the room. She stepped outside, went to the stable where her horse was hitched, and hid her $7,000 under the saddle blanket. On her way back to the house she heard two men planning to kill her husband in order to collect the $1,700 reward.

The judge was not asleep, but in a most sociable mood, ready to talk upon any subject, especially Myra, or as he called her, "his own dear Myra," (Bella Starr). A bachelor, he enjoyed the reputation of being a lady-killer.

As she timidly crept in beside him, he said, "It's all gammon about Myra being equal to men in craft and courage. As for me, I consider myself superior to any woman living. Just think of her going round in man's clothes and fooling people! Why, it's all utter bosh. I'll bet that right now she's waltzing with some Dallas chap. I tell you, young man, she's got animation enough to light a dark room with her presence."

* * *

JUDGE AWAKENED.

At last the judge went to snoring. Not for a minute all night long did Bella lose consciousness. At the first streak of dawn she was up and in the stable attending to her horse and replacing the money belts around her waist. Breakfast was ready. After a hurried meal, Bella saddled her horse and hitched him to the gate in front of the house, after which she ascended the stairway to the judge's room and awoke him.

"Judge," said she, "Mrs. Read, of whom you were speaking last night, is downstairs waiting to see you. Get up at once. She hasn't a moment to spare."

"Dear me," said he, "I wonder what she wants at this hour of the morning?" As he got out of bed, Bella left the room. When the judge looked out the front porch and saw only his bedmate of the preceding night, he said:

"Young man, it ill becomes you to play practical jokes on your elders. I was particularly anxious for sleep this morning."

"Wait a moment, judge," the "young man" interrupted. "Just step as far as the gate and you'll see the Bandit Queen."

Bella opened the gate and vaulted into the saddle.

"Where? Where is she?" asked the judge.

"Look right into my face—look well. I am Bella Read, and you—well you are an old fool. Go home now and tell your friends that you have had the glory of sleeping with the Bandit Queen."

With these words Bella put spurs to her horse and struck westward like a blue streak.

Some New Thing' Enriches

Episode Does Not Need To End to Be Memorable

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Lots of people call me up or write letters to tell some interesting incident or observation. If ever I get to where "some new thing" does not make me feel richer, I'll know I am an irredeemable pauper so far as living on earth goes.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

An episode does not have to come to an end to be memorable. I don't understand the popular demand that love stories end happily; it is not necessary that they or any other kind of stories end at all. During World War II, I read that a GI upon reaching a cable office somewhere in the Pacific asked the operator how much it would cost to send a three-word message to a person in Manhattan, Kan. The rate, as I remember, was about $2.35.

The GI wrote out the name and address of a girl, wrote the three words, "I love you," signed his name, which was Bill. Then giving the operator $35, he said, "Just repeat the words in that message over and over until you have used up $35."

James Michener of "Tales of the South Pacific" could no doubt tell a good story about the woman experiences of Bill after he sent that cablegram. Bill appeals to and satisfies my imagination as he stands there at a certain hour of his life, prodigal of dollars, rich in heart, and saving of words. Any word added from any unabridged dictionary of the world would have been idle, useless, redundant.

BUZZARDS OR HAWKS?

Norman F. Heslep, a friend I have never met, now living in Houston after having spent many years on pipe lines, writes me this picture: "One morning while we were working on a pipe line west of Beeville I had to go to town for something necessary for the job. Soon after turning onto the Beeville-George West highway, I saw, a little off to one side, two hawks and two buzzards standing on the ground, facing each other. As I put on the brakes to take a closer look, I saw a dead jackrabbit, no doubt killed by a car, midway between the two pairs of birds. The two hawks with wings spread out just stood there motionless glaring at the two buzzards, and the buzzards with their wings spread out just glared at the hawks. Not one of the four seemed to notice me. I remained watching them as long as my time permitted, but not a motion was made by the silent contenders. I have always wondered which got the rabbit, the buzzards or the hawks."

Tom Harp of Mer Rouge, La., is a farmer with very active mind and eyes. He used to write me reams about the doings and sayings of that odd character and mighty hunter named Ben Lilly. After he had read something of mine about coyotes and dry land terrapins, he responded:

"Many, many times I have seen an Airedale I used to own kill a terrapin. Until she developed a method she had trouble getting a grip on the shell. Her efforts reminded me of bobbing apples in a tub of water or trying to bite into an apple suspended on a string. Then the Airedale learned to push the terrapin until it lodged against a root or a rough place in the ground. She would riddle the shell with her teeth. For several years after she died I found in out-of-the-way places terrapin shells that looked as if they had been perforated by buckshot. I never knew this dog to eat a terrapin after she killed it, but she could have got to the flesh had she wanted to. She just had a passion for killing terrapins"—the way some men with no higher instinct than a dog's make targets out of beautiful, interesting, and harmless birds and snakes.

ROADRUNNERS ALERT.

A gentlewoman from down towards the Rio Grande who wishes to remain anonymous writes: "Men grinding feed in a field every afternoon got to noticing that as soon as they started the engine, paisanos—roadrunners to some people—came up and stood around. The running of the engine meant that maize was being fed into the grinder. The maize came from shocks on the ground. Many mice and an occasional rat had lodged under the shocks. When the shocks were moved, the mice and rats would run out, and then the waiting paisanos would dart and pounce on them.

"The paisanos became so tame that once Guadalupe threw his hat over one and caught it. After holding it in his hand for a few minutes he put it down. It ran off only a short way and then went to catching mice and rats again."

That is the kind of rural picture that Thomas Bewick of the 18th Century would have put into an everlastingly delightful woodcut. Some day some artist of the Southwest will do justice to the paisano in association with his human paisanos. Paisano, you know, means "fellow-countryman."

This pleasant letter-writer from the paisano fields goes on: "I think I rattled up a rattlesnake (by accident). We had killed a huge one the week before and hung it on a fence. One day I poked the skeleton back and forth where it hung, making the rattles rattle, until it fell to the ground. Then while I counted the rattles, I made them sound some more. As I turned to walk away, I saw a huge rattler coming to where the dead one was. No one can be sure, but it appeared to have been drawn by the sound."

Finally, she suggests, if there were in each county a designated place or officer for the disposal of cats, many people who now turn house cats loose to prey on birds and other creatures might deliver them for speedy dispatch. This seems a sensible idea to me. Wild house cats do more damage to desirable wild life than all the other denizens of the woods put together. I think the sheriff's office would be a proper place for delivering unwanted cats. There's generally some man in the sheriff's office who is not too chicken-hearted to kill, and by killing unwanted house cats he could do society a larger benefit than displaying his six-shooter has ever done it.

Nature Wood Engravings Bring Illustrator Note

APR 24 19
60 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Looking through a slight collection of wood engravings by Thomas Bewick I find written on the flyleaf in my hand these words: "What charm Bewick has! He makes me happy." Some high art brings pain to the beholder, but any true art that makes anybody happy is good. Bewick illustrated "Aesop's Fables" and wrote his memoirs, which he did not illustrate, but he's never been well known among the non-book-reading public. I'm inclined to dwell upon him.

J. FRANK. DOBIE.

The son of a Northumberland farmer, he was born in 1753 not far from the Scottish border. He liked the Scotch and disliked cities in general, though he was fond of Einburgh; he remained country - minded all his life, which ended in 1828. His working home was in Newcastle, where he achieved eminence as an artist in woodcuts. His fame rests considerably on two natural history works: "A General History of Quadropeds" (1790) and "History of British Birds" (1797-1804). Yet Bewick was not a distinguished naturalist. An associate named Beilby wrote sketches for most of the quadrupeds and for many birds of the first volume of that work; Bewick made all the illustrations and authored the descriptions for the second volume of birds.

It is not his drawings of birds and quadrupeds, however, that make me happy, and "piping songs of pleasant glee," come as fresh as a rain-cooled breeze out of a summer cloud; it is his tailpieces or vignettes—little drawing of earthy creatures, rocks, brooks, trees, episodes, scenes remembered out of experience—mostly in the country. Words can hardly even suggest them: a bumblebee, Emerson's "yellow-breeched philosopher"; four boys playing cavalryman as they ride the tumbling-down gravestones of a country churchyard; a fierce bull meeting an humble woman at a fence stile; a man drinking water out of his hat; a child pulling at the tail of a horse who with ears laid back is looking around; a dog retreating from a duck protecting her ducklings; a roadmender (not a bulldozing machine). Many times I have reflected with pleasure that one of the most delightful forms of animation in the whole world is named after Thomas Bewick — Bewick's Wren, common over a large part of the United States, the Texas variety being provincially called Texas Wren. It was Audubon who gave the great artist's name to the lively wren.

It has been said that Bewick could "draw a pig, but not a Venus." His schooling in art was limited but he was a close observer and he disciplined his own mind and craftsmanship. "The sole stimulant with me," he wrote, "was the pleasure I derived from imitating natural objects." As a small boy he killed a bullfinch with a stone but picked it up before it died and saw the "piteous" look it gave him. That was the last bird he killed. It has to be added that he did not balk at specimens killed for him by others so that he could draw them accurately. He was so healthy and natural that some of his drawings were emasculated by the Victorians under the name of purity. He grew roses in his garden, liked good beer, was greedy for eels. When he began writing his memoirs at the age of 70 his hair was still thick and black. He enjoyed chewing tobacco, singing Scotch songs, and exchanging anecdotes with cronies in the pub.

* * *

PROUD OF HARDINESS.

He took a pride in his hardihood, which lasted until late in life. Take this account of walking. "On setting out upon my weekly pedestrian 'flights' up the Tyne, I never looked out to see whether it was a good day or a bad one; the worst that ever fell from the skies never deterred me from undertaking my journey. On setting out, I always waded through the first pool I met with, and had sometimes the river to wade at the far end. I never changed my clothes, however they might be soaked with wet, or stiffened by the frost, on my returning home at night, till I went to bed. I had inured myself to this hardship, by always sleeping with my windows open, by which a thorough air, as well as the snow, blew through my room. In this way, I lay down, rolled in a blanket, upon a mattress as hard as I could make it. Notwithstanding this mode of treating myself, I never had any ailment, even in the shape of a cold, while I continued to live in this way; nor did I experience any difference until, when I married, I was obliged to alter my plans, and to live and behave like other folks."

He was for the American Revolution and considered that a great majority of the people in Britain sided with him against the war. His common sense shows in this remark—ironic in our age of loyalty oaths: "An honest man's word is as good as his oath—and so is a rogue's, too." Another proverb of his is: "If there be a plurality of devils, ignorance must be their king." Living long before the age of objective or non-objective art—whichever it is—he advised artists each to keep a garden for exercise and amusement and to visit the city or smoky town only occasionally (for the purpose of meeting with brother artists). "Had I been a painter," he wrote, "I never would have copied the works of old masters. I would have gone to nature for all my patterns; for she exhibits an endless variety not possible to be surpassed and scarcely ever to be truly imitated." As might be expected of a man of such good sense, he adds that he would have studied the techniques of the great artists.

* * *

SAGACITY OF DOG CITED.

Bewick's memoirs are concerned more with opinions than with anecdotes, but I imagine that the following was characteristic of his talk: "The character for sagacity of the Shepherd's Dog was well known to me, but this instance of it was exemplified before my own eyes. Mr. Smith, a breeder of Cheviot sheep, wished to have a particular ram brought out from amongst the flock, for the purpose of my seeing it. Before we set out, he observed to the shepherd that he thought the old dog (he was grey-headed and almost blind) would do well enough for what he wanted with him. Before we reached the down, where the flock was feeding, I observed that Mr. Smith was talking to the dog before he ordered him off on his errand. While we were conversing on some indifferent subject, the dog brought a ram before us. Mr. Smith found a deal of fault with the dog, saying, 'Did I not order you so and so?' and scolded him for bringing a wrong sheep. Then, after fresh directions, he set him off again to bring the one he wished me to see. We then returned home, and shortly after our arrival there, the dog brought the very ram wanted, along with a few other sheep, into the fold, where I took a drawing of him."

J. Frank Dobie

San A.

Be Ready for Break, When It Comes

Light 11-10-57

By J. FRANK DOBIE

Suppose there were seven female geese sitting on the ground in a pen, all exactly alike in appearance and all with eggs inside their bodies ready to be laid, but one of them carried a golden egg, whereas the other six carried only the kind of eggs that people and snakes eat. Suppose you knew all this and were given your choice of the geese, provided you did not touch or otherwise examine them beyond looking at them with the naked eye as they rested motionless there on the ground—and you had precisely 90 seconds in which to make your choice. A lump of gold the size of a goose egg would be worth towards $1000 maybe.

Dobie

You can't get around the cold mathematical fact that you have just one chance in seven. "O-U-T spells out. You dirty dish rag get out." Say that, pointing at goose by goose as the letters and words are uttered, and the last goose you point at is "it." If she has the golden egg, you are lucky.

In the long run, the luck of life is not like that. Yet, as I have experienced it, a vast amount of life depends on chance. My definition of luck—not in a game of dice but in the game of life—is being ready for the chance. I'll give one concrete example out of many examples that I could give backing up this definition.

Early Writer

During 1923-25 I was head of the English department of Oklahoma A. & M. college at Stillwater, Okla. I had written for several magazines that didn't pay anything, had worked on newspapers, and had brought out a book for the Texas Folklore society, but I really hadn't gotten into the writing game. At Oklahoma A. & M. college in the fall of 1924 a daring young man privately printed Mark Twain's "1603." Mark Twain's conversations in "1603" make a very small book that's never been included in his authorized works. There's no doubt that he wrote it. There's no doubt also that the majority of people who can read, enjoy it, but that editors have been afraid to publish it along with respectable literature. It's been printed many times but always privately. This daring young man gave me a copy of it.

One day late in September I met Ed Hadley on the campus. Hadley was in charge of public relations and taught a course or two in journalism. He said to me something like this:

"My old newspaper friend, E. H. Taylor of the Country Gentleman is in town. I've been telling him about Mark Twain's Sixteen Hundred and Three and he wants to see a copy. I understand you have one. Would you let him look at it?"

"Why, certainly," I said. "I'd be glad for him to look at it. You all come over to the house along about 5 o'clock and we'll examine it."

Back a Piece

Now I have to go back to three or four years before this. At that time I was managing a 50,000-acre ranch owned by my Uncle Jim Dobie and about 200,000 acres he had leased down the Nueces river from Cotulla. It was during prohibition days, and smuggling of tequila and other liquids from south of the Rio Grande was common. The tequileros would bring mule loads of tequila over until they got within reach of trucks—somewhere out in the brush. Then the trucks would come and load up and, in the night usually, go to San Antonio. A transfer point was right below the Olmos ranch, Uncle Jim Dobie's ranch. I didn't care how much tequila was passed, but the rangers and the river guards and customs men were strong against the traffic.

One night not long after supper a Mexican knocked at my door in the big house and told me frankly that he was in trouble. He said he'd been to the camp of our workers a couple of hundred yards away from the house and they'd told him they couldn't help him unless I gave permission. He said that he had a truck load of tequila bogged down. It had rained in that country and the road he was traveling wasn't graded or graveled either. I told him to go down and get Santos and some of the other men to pull him out on horseback. They did, and he sent me half a dozen bottles of tequila.

Couple Left

I'd been saving of it and had one or two bottles left there in Stillwater, Okla., in September, 1924. When Ed Hadley and E. H. Taylor of the Country Gentleman arrived, we drank some tequila mixed with water and lemon and a pinch of sugar. It's a very wholesome drink. I showed E. H. Taylor my surreptitiously printed copy of Mark Twain's "1603." Now I never heard of the Country Gentleman, although it was a well known farm magazine put out by the Curtis Publishing co., which publishes the Saturday Evening Post and other magazines.

Before long Taylor was asking me to write an article of about 2500 words on cowboy songs for his magazine. I told him I never had heard any cowboys sing except the Mexican vaqueros down in the brush country where I was born and raised on a ranch.

"Oh," he said, "you know a good deal about cowboy songs, I guess."

"No," I said, "what I know about is old-time cowmen and trail drivers and stories of them, horses, cattle, coyotes, and such, and what I want to write is those stories."

"Well," he said, "try us out first on cowboy songs."

"All right," I said, "I'll try myself out. What'll I do with it after I write it?"

"Why," he said, "send it to me in care of the Country Gentleman."

"Where is the Country Gentleman published," I asked.

"Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa."

Song Opus

He and Hadley left. Right away I pitched in to write this article on cowboy songs. A person who wants to write can get interested in nearly anything, and I became intensely interested in cowboy songs. Of course, I had John A. Lomax's collection of cowboy songs and some recollections of the quavering voice of Grandpa Dubose singing the old trail songs. It didn't take me long to finish the article and send it to Taylor. In sending it I told him that the trail drivers of Texas were meeting in San Antonio on a certain date in October, and that I'd like to go down and write a piece about them for the Country Gentleman. He was going to pay me $200 for the article on cowboy songs if he liked it. The trail drivers were to meet within a week or two. Almost immediately I received a telegram from Taylor that went something like this:

"Article on cowboy songs received with much enthusiasm. Please go to San Antonio and write two pieces on trail drivers."

I got an official leave of absence, went to San Antonio, milled around with the trail drivers for three days or so and came back to Stillwater with a tablet full of notes and wrote an article in two parts. As soon as this article was polished off, I sent it to Taylor, telling him that my wife and I were to be in Houston to spend the Christmas holidays and would be at the Rice hotel. Upon our arrival there I received another telegram saying, "Articles on trail drivers very interesting. Want more from you!"

It wasn't any time before the Country Gentleman raised its rates for my articles. At this time it was a weekly. I kept on writing for it after it became a monthly. We moved back to Austin in the fall of 1925. In 1926 or 1927 we bought the house we are living in now. We had to buy it mostly on credit, but it was the Country Gentleman that paid for it. I guess if I'd been dependent upon the salary that I was at that time getting from the University of Texas I'd still be paying for it on the installment plan.

I'm sure that I would have written magazine articles and books if I'd never known Ed Hadley or E. H. Taylor of the Country Gentleman but they put me on a certain track, and for me it was about the best track I could take. It was a track that wanted the kind of horse I rode at that time and kept on riding for a very long while, and am still riding sometimes. As I said in the beginning, my definition of luck is being ready for the chance. I was waiting without knowing it for the chance that came my way quite casually, and I took it. Here's to life!

J. Frank Dobie

San Antonio MAR 23

Pet Bobcat That Made a Duster

1958

Flow Oil

By J. FRANK DOBIE

It's a lot of fun to me not only to hear another person tell stories but to share the hearing with my readers. The fact that this procedure saves work does not lessen the fun. On last Jan. 26, E. J. Raisch, of Austin, an old-time oil scout and also a skilled writer,

DOBIE

supplied this column with a story about a coyote and the Pete who tells what is about to follow:

Pete drove a butcher wagon supplying meat to various camps up and down San Joaquin valley in California. One morning when I was making up my oil scout report he wandered into the shack where I batched. He looked in the coffee pot, threw in another handful of coffee on top of what already was there and waited for it to brew. He liked his coffee so you could either drink it or use it for a paint remover.

While he rolled a cigaret from my Bull Durham he asked me about Charley Rodmaker's well up the road 20 miles or so. I told him Charley had quit and pulled up stakes. The well was dry. Pete wanted to know how come an old hand like Charley fooled himself into drilling on a section of land already as full of dry holes as a Swiss cheese. I reminded Pete that several of those old wells had reported shows of oil and said that Charley's well in the southwest corner of the section — section 32 — was a fair gamble.

Bobcat

Maybe so, Pete replied, but Charley ought to have got himself a little bobcat for luck. I looked at Pete kind of sideways waiting for him to explain his queer remark but he let me wait till he had settled down over a cup of coffee with a saucerful poured for cooling. Then he reeled off this yarn which I retell just as he gave it to me.

"Along in the 1890's while I was still mighty young, I dressed tools for Andy Proskell. He was a tall string-bean-built boy with a red head and a gambler's heart, one of the wildest wildcatters that ever stepped on a derrick floor. When he took a notion that some spot was an oil prospect he just tore his britches getting his money down on it and before you knew it a load of 2x12s were dumped on the ground, a crew was cutting a derrick pattern and erecting it, and next time you turned your head for another look Andy had spudded in and was making hole.

Near L. A.

"One summer Andy was digging a hole in the Brea canyon country southeast of the town of Los Angeles. I was his tool-dresser and worked on the derrick floor; his 18-year-old kid brother, Spud, tended the boiler supplying steam for the rig. We just worked daytime because Andy wasn't fixed to pay a night shift.

"Four dry ones in a row had just about run him plum out of luck and his cash and credit weren't far behind. On this Brea canyon prospect he had bet his shirt because that was all he had left to bet. Everybody else who came to size up the location shook their head at it like you do when you go into a funeral parlor for a last look at the dear departed.

"Such disrespect for his judgment didn't set well on Andy's stomach; so he drilled the well tight as a drum and wouldn't give out with the dope to anybody. If he was asked how far down he was he would look deadpan and growl, 'Three trees deep.' He was so sure of this hole that he had a sump (a pit) all ready for the oil when it came.

Readied Test

"When Andy got to the bottom of his three trees, which was 1200 feet, we found a sand that looked pretty good and we prepared to test it. Everybody was hopped up and talked about putting on a champagne party that would last a week with no time off for going to bed. Some of those wire birds who had abandoned the well before it even got started came to watch with 'show me' grins. Well, we tested and tested and tested some more and all the oil brought up by the bailer might have greased the four axles of a Conestoga wagon but not the fifth wheel. To make it short, you wouldn't be lying much if you said the well was as dry as a fry-pan full of fresh popped popcorn.

"Feeling blue enough to shoot himself, Andy went to the tent he and Phelia, his wife, used for a home while waiting to hit the jackpot and sat down to figure his next move—if any. He was, as the saying goes, in one hell of a jam. Phelia had lots of woman savvy of this gambler she married and with comforting words and a fresh pot of coffee she got him to see the bright side of things, though it wasn't easy, things being in the shape they were.

Saddled Up

"Not being the kind to sit in one place very long, Andy saddled up and took off for nowhere in particular. Walking through the brush his horse all of a sudden shied and with little snorts pricked its ears toward a spot in front of him. Cocking his ear, Andy heard what sounded like the weak mewing of a lost kitten. He dismounted and parted the brush and found a little old baby bobcat just about ready to die from hunger. There was no telling how it got there or why its mamma wasn't around; anyhow, he picked it up and brought it back to camp. Phelia fed it on canned milk till it was like to bust, then fixed a bed for it in a box where it went to sleep.

"Before they turned in for the night Phelia took another look at the baby bobcat and said, in a joking way, that she had a hunch it had brought them luck. Andy said, in a joking way, horsefeathers.

More Milk

"Next morning, it was maybe a couple of hours after sunrise, Phelia was waked by the crying of the little bobcat; she got up and fed it some more canned milk till it fell asleep again. Before she climbed back into bed, Phelia poked her head outside to see what the new day was going to look like. But what she saw made her let go a screech that flipped everybody out of bed standing flatfooted. Andy grabbed his gun and hopped outside to see what had frightened Phelia. Spud and me also had jumped out of our tent but none of us could do anything but stand in our underdrawers and look bug-eyed at what we saw. When we did get around to it we yelled loud enough to be heard in the next county.

"That hole Andy had abandoned yesterday was now a flowing oil well. It was no gusher, but the oil rose to the top of the casing and slopped over slow and steady. Phelia grabbed Andy around the neck and asked him whether her hunch about the little old baby bobcat bringing them luck was right or was it horsefeathers like he said. He said he didn't know how else to explain a dry hole turning into a flowing oil well overnight.

"From now on that little old baby bobcat was going to be their mascot and Phelia right away christened it Lucky. And right up to the time he lost that bobcat a couple years later Andy and Phelia marched high, wide and handsome with luck right along with them."

Pete stopped at this point to finish the rest of his coffee and I asked him how come Andy lost his mascot.

"Somebody shot it," said Pete.

"Tell me about it," I said.

"That's another yarn," said Pete.

And absentmindedly putting my bag of Bull Durham in his pocket, Pete climbed back in his butcher wagon, said kiddyap to the two old fat mares that pulled him around, and when they got good and ready they woke up, eased into their collars and ambled on down the road.

Silence Being Silenced AUG 4 1957

Bullbats and Panthers Arouse Old Memories

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The rise in speed of human transportation made in this century does not affect my inner life—the reality of my existence — so much as does the rise of ugly noises, the silencing of silence, the murder of natural harmonies. I was born before the Horse Age died and, indeed, learned to ride a horse while I was learning to walk; Yet I can now come across a continent or an ocean in an airplane with as much feeling of being at ease as I can sit on the grass in the evening and watch the last racing chimney swifts fade into the darkened sky. I am not a resenter of changes in themselves, but thousands of times my nerves have been shredded and my serenity ruined by the intrusion of machine-made noises, ranging from the rude slam of an automobile door to the amplified whine of some moron's voice in calf-slobber self-pity coming out of a neighborhood radio.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

BULLBAT SOUNDS.

Considering the meaning that harmony has on life, I should think that the wholesale displacement of silence by machine-caused disharmonies would have a profound influence on a people's moral and aesthetic values.

These thoughts have come to me in realizing that certain sounds that stirred generations and generations of human beings could not stir at all except out of a background of silence. In late evening all through my childhood and boyhood I listened to bullbats (more properly called night hawks) zooming through the air in pursuit of insects. The wonderful, sometimes wild, the beautiful sounds they made became more a part of me—and as good a part of me, I must believe—than the now-I-lay-me-down-to-sleep prayer learned in down-to-sleep prayer learned in infancy. The other night about a block away from 6th St. in downtown Austin, I stopped my car and got out with a visitor from New York to hear the bullbats. They are always feeding there on summer nights, attracted by insects that are attracted by lights. I can easily pick their sounds out above the traffic, unless the traffic is too near. The New York man could not hear the bullbats at all. Silences have never entered into him.

Knowing my prediliction for panther screams—out of silence—Mrs. John T. Anderson of College Station, where her husband teaches English and where both of them pursue folklore, has sent me the following reminiscences from a friend in Mississippi:

"When I was a child, my father told me two bloodcurdling episodes involving a panther which for a time lingered in his part of the country, the area of Southwestern Arkansas in Little River County.

LATE EVENING CALL.

The first knowledge that the community had of the panther was through the terrible, human-like screams of the beast, heard late at night by several people. One night a Negro man was returning home after dark with a hind quarter of a freshly killed beef strapped back of his saddle. As he passed through a dark wooded area, the big cat suddenly sprang from an over-hanging branch onto the haunches of the horse. Before the Negro knew what was happening, the horse wheeled and reared, throwing the beast and the quarter of beef free. As the horse bolted, the man managed to hang on. The next day the cleaned bones of the hind-quarter were found near the scene of the attack.

"A few nights later my father, a young man of 19, returning by the same route from a late call on a girl friend, became uncomfortably aware that he was being followed. With the story of the panther fresh on his mind, he could imagine he heard over the soft clop of the horse's hoofs the pad of another animal. Reasoning that a panther would make a silent step, he tried to brush the feeling away, but he felt that he was being followed and watched. When he spurred his horse up, the thing ran with him; when he slowed to a walk, the thing slowed a few feet behind him. Finally, coming out into an opening in the thick woods where a piece of the old moon gave a little light, he caught an unmistakable glimpse of the shadow of a huge cat melting into the darkness of a tree a few feet away.

"Unarmed, he gave his jittery horse its head; but as they raced away, he knew the panther was racing with him. They ran for over a mile. When they came out at last into the clearing near my grandfather's home, my father pulled up his horse and looked back. The panther had paused at the edge of the clearing as though uncertain of his next move. Then it screamed—a painful, agonizing scream, like that of a woman in great suffering. For a little while it seemed to be feeling in silence the earthrobs made by its own terrifying voice. Then it wheeled back into the shadows and disappeared, screaming again. My father sat listening until the cries faded away into the darkness. He was very cold."

School Readers Held Full of Dulling Pap

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM APR 3 0 1961

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I believe that the stiflers, the paralyzers, the deadeners, the druggers, the constrictors of the human mind are in the long run more vicious in effect on society than all the so-called subversive forces that could be rounded up by the FBI in this nation.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"Tyranny over the human mind" is Thomas Jefferson's summary of the viciousness. Anybody who fancies that "brain-washing" is something new, alien to American society, is too ignorant to have an opinion. What arouses me on the subject is a recent encounter with the editor for a publisher of school readers. Excerpts from my books and magazine writings have been appearing in school readers for 25 or 30 years now, and so I know a little bit about the school reader business.

Two years ago or so an extra venal publisher of school books—and of nothing else—sneaked a bowdlerized story of mine into a cheap collection he hoped to sell the Texas education authorities. I wrote him that if the story remained in the form he had used it and the book was adopted, I would sue him. I don't know what happened. The editor was a professor of education.

* * *

DISTRUST CITED.

About a month ago the textbook editor of a booming publishing house in New York wrote that he wished to "adapt" a story of mine out of "Coronado's Children" for a school reader and would "pay." The pay for any piece to go in a school reader is usually inconsequential.

I wrote him that I distrusted adaptations made by products of the education departments of what are called "higher institutions of learning" over the United States. I told him that the products of these schools of education had done little during this century but dull the minds of pupils rather than stimulate them. Dullness and stupidity can provoke nothing beyond dullness and curses. The editor replied with a copy of the adapted story. This is my reply:

"I've just read your version of the Lafitte story taken from "Coronado's Children." It is so banalized, so journalesed, so pollyannaized, so damnably debilitated from the original that under no circumstances will I allow my name to be printed as that of the author. Can't you find any rewrite flunkies capable of being honest with the English language and with life? Children are not morons to swallow your hyrocritical implications that everybody not a conformist is evil. I seem to remember Mark Twain's saying that when he was a boy he promised God to be good if allowed to grow up to be a pilot.

"The only conditions under which I will allow reprinting of any of my writing by you is to take it as I published it.

* * *

LITERATURE CREAM.

"I realize that the main stockholder of your company must cut corners in order to make a second billion and therefore has to pinch down on writers, but I'll see him in hell before I will take less than half of what reputable publishers of school readers have been paying me a long time for extracts much shorter than this. In other words, I consider $25 an insult to any self-respecting writer."

The readers—not state adopted—we had in that one-teacher schoolhouse on our ranch in Live Oak County, patronized at first by only three families and then by three or four more, were made up of the cream of English and American literature. They were stronger on English literature than on American. Nobody but a jingoistic ignoramus would ever claim that American literature can call into the deep of a human being anything comparable to the call in English literature, but the stuff in contemporary readers becomes more and more American. I memorised some of the selections. One that stirred me, gave me patriotic feelings, filled me with a passion for liberty was "Marco Bozzaris." How the opening lines plunge into rama, promising more!

At midnight in his guarded tent
The Turk lay dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,
Should tremble at his power.

Then there was "Bingen on the Rhine." Only a few weeks ago I was delighted at finding a copy of this once very popular narrative, printed separately and illustrated.

A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers;
There was lack of woman's nursing; there was dearth of woman's tears,
But a comrade stood beside him while his life blood ebbed away,
And bent an ear to listen to whate'er he might say.

I shall not repeat what the dying soldier of the Legion said, but with all that years and sophistication have brought me, the words flood pristine feelings of pity and sympathy now as they did so long ago. "What solace," George Sand said, "is literature." Yes, what solace! What comfort! What quickening to the spirit! What a spur to the mind! Laying up beautiful and noble memories through literature is but to claim the inheritance of every human being who can read.

* * *

CULTIVATE VALUES.

Hardly any other place is so fitted to provide the riches of memories and to cultivate right values as school readers stocked with fine literature. Until the education slaughterers of imagination took over, the school readers were delightful and interesting, but these slaughterers decided that there must not be any words in a reader that would be unfamiliar to a pupil, that the contents must never risk leading a pupil out of everyday "adjustment."

I've been delighting in the ironies of Paul Crume's new book, "A Texan at Bay." Here are snatches of his civilized style. "In commencement season, some must talk and others listen, and you run into such things as a perfectly good credit manager telling a high school class solemnly that money isn't important . . .

"Somebody is always popping off on the theme that the government ought to handle its finances the way a private citizen handles his. Actually the private citizen runs his finances about like the government does. He buys a house on credit. He buys a car on credit. He borrows to pay back what he borrowed before, gradually increasing his loan totals as he goes through life and the banks lift his credit ceiling for him. He is in hock until he dies, when the insurance company pays off his debts and clears the property for his wife. Meanwhile, he has had the use of a house and also the use of a car—when his teen-age son didn't have a date."

Paul Crume deflates departments of education: "Behind the decline of the West is the decline of the school reader. If you've looked at one lately you'll find it filled with Jane and Bill, ordinary, uninteresting grade school youngsters, who are shown adjusting in the right way to their community, their pets, their families and fellows.

"In my second grade year, the readers were given over to Norse mythology. None of the Norse gods was well adjusted to anything. Thor was actually a meathead and a common drunk, but a second grader got nothing of that part of his character except his ability to drink an ocean out of his horn. Loki was a cheat and a swindler. The second reader skipped over their love life entirely. Still, nearly any boy or girl out of that second grade could give you today a pretty good character sketch of any god from the icy Pantheon.

"Jane and Bill just aren't Thor. They make small lightning and thunder. And how compare their paitry adventures in the land of togetherness with the gilded enchantment of journeys to imaginary realms?"

J. FRANK DOBIE

Austin Amer.
JUN 5 1957

Reading in the eight volumes of "The Writings of Sam Houston," edited by Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker, published by the University of Texas Press, and reading through Llerena Friend's authorative biography, "Sam Houston the Great Designer," published also by the University of Texas Press, has determined me to write two pieces about this extradordinary character: a sketch outlining his career and consideration of him as dramatist.

Sam Houston was born—and named Samuel—in Rockbridge County, Virginia, March 2, 1793. Nine years later his father died. The next year Sam's mother took him and her other eight children to Tennessee. He had gone to school a year or more and had lived for three years with the Cherokee Indians, who called him The Raven, when at nineteen he opened a pay school. At sixty he wrote, "I am as little fond of books as anybody." That may have been true at the time, but his education had certainly been advanced by reading literature, Shakespeare especially, and history.

After teaching only a year, he joined the army (1813), the United States then being at war with Great Britain, and at the price of three severe wounds he distinguished himself in the Horseshoe Bend battle against Creek Indians, allies of the British. More important to history, he entered into a powerful friendship with his commanding general, Andrew Jackson. He was first lieutenant when he resigned after five years of army life. During a part of this time he had served as subagent to the Cherokee Indians, antagonizing white predators upon them and drawing a rebuke from Secretary of War John C. Calhoun for appearing before him in Washington in Indian dress.

In the last six months of 1818 he mastered a course in law usually requiring eighteen months and the next year was elected attorney general of his state. Before the term was out he resigned to enter private practice. In 1823 he was elected to Congress, served two terms and then was elected governor.

On January 22, 1829 he married Eliza Allen. Less than three months later they were separated. In a silence on the subject that—so far as is known—he never broke, Houston resigned the governorship, and while Tennessee seethed with feelings for and against him, left for the Arkansas Territory to resume life with the Cherokees, who had been moved west of the Mississippi. In time he settled down near Fort Gibson, in what is now Oklahoma, with Tiana Rogers, a magnificent specimen of Indian womanhood, also a collateral ancestor of Will Rogers. With or without ceremony, they were united according to Cherokee custom. Houston had too much energy to vegetate, too much ambition to remain confined to the store he opened, and too burning an indignation against injustice not to combat the leeches who were cheating his adopted people out of benefits promised by the United States government for relinquishing their native lands. On a trip to Washington he cudgelled Congressman William Stanbery of Ohio. Thereupon the House tried him for "contempt" and, after weeks of publicity for Houston, voted that he be reprimanded. The reprimand administered by the Speaker, a Jackson man, sounded more like commendation than condemnation.

Late in 1832 Houston rode away from Tiana for Texas. She died six years later—probably not of a broken heart. He was interested in Texas land and in the revolt against Mexico that he saw looming. While Stephen F. Austin, the colonizer and "father" of Texas, was sticking to his policy of moderation, Houston spurred on the "war party." He was made commander-in-chief of Texas armed forces, first by the provisional government and then by the body of representatives who on March 2 (Houston's birthday), 1836, declared Texas an independent republic. The Alamo, two hundred miles west of Washington-on-the-Brazos, where independence was declared, fell to Santa Anna's Mexican army about dawn of March 6, and as soon as word of the total annihilation of the Texas fighters reached the settlers, they began fleeing east with their families in what is called the Runaway Scrape.

Houston managed to keep a small force of fighting men not only together but growing in numbers while he retreated eastward, forcing Santa Anna's columns to extend their lines. On April 21 his 900 men surprised Santa Anna's army of not over 1500 camped on the San Jacinto River (near what is now Houston) and with the loss of nine men, killed 630 of the enemy and captured 730. In the election that followed Houston was overwhelmingly elected president of the republic. He was for annexation to the United States, but the United States was not ready to take in another slave state. He did not succeed himself as president but was reelected in 1841. When Texas joined the Union in 1945, he and Rusk were the first senators sent to Washington.

There for thirteen years he fought unwaveringly and without straddling for the Union and against secession. In his own words, he "stood on the old Jackson platform, composed of only two planks—the Constitution and the Union." He fought the Kansas-Nebraska bill as a repeal of the Missouri Compromise. He made many speeches in behalf of Indian rights. He seemed to want as eagerly as Henry Clay to be president and had many backers, but never received the nomination.

In 1840 he had married Margaret Lea of Alabama. All during his Washington years she remained at home in Texas with their steadily increasing family—eight among Southern senators in opposing secession. One part of him was ready to retire to farm and family. Instead, he ran for governor, and, despite charges of treason and cowardice shouted against him by agitators of secession, was elected (1859). While Lincoln was being elected President, Houston made a Union speech at Austin declaring secession to be "treason." He could not whip the tides back. In children in all. At the close of his senatorial career he was alone March, 1861, he refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederate government and a convention of duly elected secessionists put him out of office. People always knew where he stood, and he was still standing when he died at Huntsville, July 26, 1863, having lived long enough to see his prophecies on secession come true.

About Texas and Texans FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM JUN 14 1956

Writer Would Rather Hear Coyote Than Any Professor of Education

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

My good friend Glen Evans, now living in Midland, told me of watching a coyote come down to the Rio Grande, step into the edge of the water and grab a piece of willow four or five feet long that had been cut and peeled by beavers, and trot away with it until the animal was out of sight. Why? I don't know. If I were walking along the edge of water in the Rio Grande and saw a piece of barked willow all light and white, I'd pick it up and carry it along with me. Why? I don't know. The conduct of both coyote and man in this instance would be primordial—instinctive.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

When I consider how unsmart man is on the average, I never consider it a compliment to a horse or a dog or some other animal to say that he's smart as a human being. People are the highest form of animal life, of course, but they are still animals. A great deal of healthy pleasure can come to a human being by being natural in an animal way. Up in the hill country I used to follow a skunk at evening, somewhat curious as to what it might be eating, but just following it, as I've had a coyote follow me on horseback. In an autobiography entitled "High, Wide, and Lonesome," about homesteading in Colorado early in this century, Hal Bourland illustrates the pleasure a coyote seemed to get out of dogging a wagon. I quote Bourland's words:

* * *

NOT FRIGHTENED.

"Now it was almost full daylight, with the sun not yet up. Father tapped my leg and pointed off to the west. I looked, and there, not 100 yards away, was a coyote, trotting along parallel to us almost like a dog. Now and then he would turn his head and look at us. He was neither frightened nor weary. How long he had been there, traveling with us, I don't know; but he trotted there, always the same distance away, for at least a mile. Then he stopped and watched for several minutes and turned west, away from us, and vanished down a hollow.

"That was the first time we had seen him. After that we saw him almost every time we went to town in the early morning. Always he was in the same place, on that particular part of the ridge, and always he trotted there about 100 yards from the wagon, until we came to that little hollow, where he turned back. But—and this is a strange thing I never did understand—if we had the 25-20 with us, the rifle with which we might have shot him, he never appeared. If there was no gun along, he was almost always there. Whether a coyote can smell a gun, do not know; all I know is that that coyote never showed himself, even out of gun range, if we had the rifle in the wagon."

Often the coyote is not so smart. He's just natural — even as you and I like to be. J. B. Blackwell of San Antonio, who made the prickly pear burner known to the world, has given me the following account as told to him by his nephew, Curtis Blackwell.

* * *

COYOTE TEASED.

Last winter while Curtis was deer hunting down in the brush of McMullen County he got up in a big mesquite tree a short distance away from the Nueces River to rattle for a buck. All sorts of creatures are at times attracted by the horn-knocking of bucks, and also by man's imitation of that knocking. Presently a covey of blue quail (scaled quail) appeared not far away from Curtis Blackwell's mesquite, stringing out down a cow trail between heavy prickly pear growth. Then a coyote walked into view. At a high-pitched warning signal from one of the quail the whole covey melted away, becoming one with the ground, the grass, and the prickly pear. The coyote had seen these fine morsels of meat and at once began peeping about the pear growth as if he expected to find one to pounce upon. A blue quail came into sight, all right, behind him, fluttering about as a dove flutters when you approach the nest and making a kind of gasping sound. The coyote whirled to grab but then there was no bird to be seen. Now he heard the same kind of noise behind him. Again he whirled and again a blue streak blended with the earth under a pear bush. After being teased three or four more times, the coyote raised his head high and without appearing to take any interest in anything near at hand, walked away. Soon afterward the commander in chief of the blue quail gave a high-toned command and the whole covey came into the trail marching along in single file.

* * *

POISONERS BANNED.

People who know tell me there are more quail, both blue and bobwhite, in the brush country than there have been in many years. Coyotes seem to be thriving also. They are no longer thriving in most areas of the west. Harold Cook of the Agate Springs Ranch in Nebraska writes me that "government poisoners have all but exterminated the coyote in this area. We rarely hear one now, and how we miss them! There may be an individual calf - killer now and then, but coyotes do much more good than harm over the whole plains area. We do not permit government poisoning on our ranch."

Government poisoners — that includes a lot of state government poisoners — are keeping the public fooled on how much other wildlife they kill while using deadly poisons on the coyote. They are keeping the public fooled on the valuable nature of the coyote, too. They are protecting their jobs just as professors of education protect their jobs when any reasonable move is made to curtail the uselessness of their courses. I had a sight rather hear a coyote sing than hear any professor of education I've ever met air his paunch.

What a joy it is to see "the sly coyote trot here and there," and to hear the concert that one by himself can make, arousing other coyotes all around. Making the coyote noise is what I call being useful.

STAR-TELEGRAM AUG 31 1958

About Texas and Texans

Bragging Is Archaic And Fading From State

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Have you heard of the Texan who decided he should consult a psychiatrist because he didn't think he was any better than anyone else? Mrs. Mouton Hannah of Waco enlightened me on him.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

If a person survives long enough he feels relieved of quite a few annoyances and insults to intelligence. Of course, as soon as one demogogue is silenced, another takes his place. Government by assassination is not the answer. With the increase in population, more fools are born every minute than used to be born; but let us not surrender to gloom. Certain imbecilities go out of style and otherwise become obsolete. One of the imbecilities is Texas bragging, along with California bragging.

It would be hard to say which state has produced more characters of an interesting nature, but I believe that up to now California is ahead in characters with a social consciousness and civilized tastes. I've just come across one of them in a brief and interesting book titled "The Newhall Ranch" by Ruth Waldo Newhall. James Lick, as she tells, arrived in San Francisco from South America in 1847 and proceeded to buy up the sand dunes and mud holes already being converted into downtown business property. He lived like a pauper and "aroused suspicion by rummaging in the garbage cans of hotels and eating places for bones ,which he used to fertilize the trees that he imported to plant in San Francisco and San Jose." In 1874 he set up a trust fund of $700,000 "for the purpose of constructing a powerful telescope, superior to and more powerful than any telescope ever yet made, and also a suitable conservatory connected therewith." The Lick Observatory is known to all the world. James Lick's contribution to educational causes totaled close to $2,000,000. This was back in days, remember, when $1,000,000 was worth more than $5,000,000 or more now.

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PETRIFACTION.

Talking about education, the United States Postoffice Department has ordered that the phrase "book rate" on all book shipments be changed to read "educational material." However, labels on which the word "books" or "book rate" are already printed may be used until the supply is at an end. If you have these labels already made and your supply runs out and you go to ship by parcel post one of Mickey Spillane's novels or "Tobacco Road" or any of the comics, you must not write "book" on the package but write "educational matter." This is in harmony with American religiosity.

Some people devote their lives to petrifaction. They seem to derive satisfaction from having a kind of epileptic fit over change. They don't know, as the old saying went, referring to the Civil War, that the war's over yet. I mention one change that all people who cook dried beans must be pleased with. In a diary that Capt. John G. Bourke kept in Arizona in 1872 he made this entry for Dec. 21:

"The beans issued today and yesterday as rations to the Indians and soldiers were found to be over 2/3 dirt. The officer who received such stuff should be cashiered." I'm sure that even 10 years ago a pound of frijoles had more dirt and pebbles in it than a pound has now. I guess that frijoles got so high that it didn't pay to put rocks in them any more. That reasoning doesn't sound very logical to me, however.

Nobody ever knows what lies down in a human being or what may come out of a human being in words or in conduct. W. M. Morrison is a book dealer who used to live in Houston, then moved out to New Mexico and now has set up a shop dealing in out-of-print books in Waco. The other day he ended a note to me with these words: "I keep thinking about the coon tree in your essay on childhood on a ranch. The only clear memory of childhood I have is loneliness—I did have a mule named Gyp whose eyes I see sometime."

A dear friend wrote me recently that she was reminded of me upon hearing of two little boys who loved their horse so dearly that they brushed his teeth each day with a real toothbrush and toothpaste. Again, she wrote: "When I hear about a man whose watermelon patch was so plagued with coyotes that he put turtles in tin cans to scare the thieves away at night, I smile and think of you."

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LIZARD SPECIALTY.

Helena Huntington Smith, author of that bully book "We Pointed Them North," writes that her daughter at the University of Montana this summer has been listening to a professor of art asserting over and over in a lecture that to have real art in that part of the country it will be necessary "to lay the ghost of Charlie Russell." I don't care how sophisticated we get or how much space traveling the world comes to, artists who speak to human beings are not going to say anything worth listening to or looking at by laying the ghost of nature.

Mr. Harry G. Jander of Austin is a man of art, and he's not about to try to lay the ghost of nature. One of his specialties is lizards. He tells me that he has one pet lizard—the gray variety somewhat striped on the back—that he's had for seven summers. He doesn't feed it, but it likes to crawl up on the screen on the outside and have him scratch its belly from the inside. It sleeps between a block of wood and the screen in order to keep safe from cats.

When Jander moved to his home on Sabine St. several years ago he found three ant hills on the grounds. He used highlife to destroy the ants in two of the hills and was going to put it in the third when a neighbor interceded. His neighbor told him that if he left the ant hills he would never be bothered with little black ants in the house. These ant hills are of the common red stinging ants. He left the third hill, and he's never been bothered with little black ants. His red ants have spread. Doves light around the ant hills in the early morning — perhaps only to pick up small particles of sand and gravel; the site is a favorite for mockingbirds about sunset. Horned lizards and other lizards appear to eat the ants.

I seem to have heard that lizards can run away from their tails. Certainly if a roadrunner or some other bird catches a lizard by the tail that's all he gets. The tail will part from the main body of the lizard. Not long ago Jander found a small gray lizard on his back porch inside the screen. It didn't want to go out the opened door. Jander got a broom to herd it along and it became frightened apparently and dropped its tail. It seemed handicapped in moving without its tail, but went out the door all right. It doesn't take a lizard long to grow a new tail. I'd like to hear another lizard tale.

In Wild, Unfenced Days

OCT 4 1959 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Old and Rare Book Depicts Life On the Pampas of Argentina

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

By now hundreds of millions of people in the Northern Hemisphere have had their summer travel and have settled down to await 1960 vacation trips. Like many people, I prefer to travel when the crowds are thin. I won't try to define what constitutes a traveler beyond observing that he has something interesting to report after his travels are over; in brief, he sees, he comprehends relationships, and he does not drag so much of himself and his accustomed habitat around that he is prevented from entering into a new world.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

For me, the greatest travel book in the English language is Charles M. Doughty's "Travels in Arabia Deserta." I may write an essay on it some day. The latest excellent book of travels that I've read is "Two Thousand Miles' Ride Through the Argentine Provinces," by William MacCann, published in London in two volumes in 1853. Although old and rare, this book takes one into a new world. At the end of World War I, I had half an idea —not more than half — of going to the pampas of the Argentine and growing up with the country as a rancher.

All I've done since in that line is to read books about the pampas of long ago when the life there was as free and as wild as it ever was on the plains of western North America. For the best of old-time gaucho life, go to W. H. Hudson and R. B. Cunninghame Graham. When William MacCann made his long ride about 1850, the pampas were unfenced, and wild horses, wild cattle and wild riders moved freely where wheels had never rolled—as free as the crying curlews above.

* * *

WILD CATTLE.

On the treeless plains of North America the trail drivers and the 49ers made their campfires out of buffalo chips. On the pampas the fires were made of gones, stalks of weeds, and tallow. When I was a boy on a ranch in the border country and we butchered an animal, the head with the hide on, wrapped in a tow sack perhaps, was usually cooked in a hole in the ground that had been heated by fire; covered with dirt, the head was left there over night. MacCann describes again and again eating beef roasted in the way termed "carne con cuero," that is, with the skin on; which mode retains the juice and gravy, making the food delicious. Of course, hides cost too much now to use as a wrapping for beef, but the natural juices of good meat make all man-made sauces taste tawdry.

The primitive wild cattle that the Spaniards introduced to Texas and California and let go feral are a tradition. I've treated of them rather extensively elsewhere. Now I quote a passage from MacCann illustrating the same proclivities in the wild Spanish cattle of the pampas.

"As we rode along conversing upon the pleasures and pains of a pastoral life, Don Pepe narrated the following incident: 'I was one day,' said he, 'taking the hide off a cow that had died near a laguna, when hearing a noise behind me, I turned round, and saw a bull quickly approaching us; he first ran at the horse of the man who was with me, but, fortunately, his horns struck against the leather of the saddle, and saved the animal, which otherwise must have been killed; the bull then immediately attacked the carcass of the old cow, which he gored with his horns. To escape his fury, I ran to mount my horse; but he was so wild that he would not suffer me to reach the saddle. I then went behind the bull, intending to cut his hamstrings with my knife; but, when I put my hand to lay hold of it, I discovered that it was missing. Nothing remained for me but to run away and hide myself in the long grass; the bull went to tossing up the carcass of the old cow. The man with me also hid in the grass. We remained quiet until the bull, tired of tossing up the cow, went away.'"

* * *

HOW THEY LIVED.

MacCann gives several descriptions of the estancieros—the owners of lands and herds. Following is representative:

"I once visited a rich man who, to use his own phrase, 'lived in a natural state;' and truly natural it was. His costume was that of the gaucho. The bedroom had not been cleaned for perhaps half a year; under my bed a favorite game-cock was tied by the leg, that he might be at hand to amuse his master; spurs, stirrups, and other equestrian equipments, of silver, hung round the walls; our food consisted of beef, and beef only, without either salt, bread, biscuit or vegetable of any sort; water was our drink, and the floor was our table. Not far from this man's residence, I visited another native who was not wealthier than the other, but was desirous of being civilized; and we were refreshed by the appearance of a clean, well-furnished house, dinners nicely served, good wines, fruits, and other luxuries. This man adopted European industry, with liberal outlay, and became rich; the other retained primitive habits of idleness, confined his wants to those of nature, and lived in a state of comparative barbarism."

* * *

OWN JUICES ENOUGH.

On the pampas at that time, a sheep was cheaper than an egg. A sack of salt would buy 15 or 20 mares. To season meat, a little salt was dissolved in water in a cow horn and then the horn was passed around so that each eater could pour a little on his meat. I'll say here that meat of animals raised on well-mineralized land needs very little salt. It doesn't need anything but its own juices. Grazing land was worth two or three cents an acre. At one well where MacCann stopped, the water was hauled up by a rope attached to two big ox horns, but he didn't have to drink out of an ox horn. Water was poured from it into a silver tankard and offered to him.

Of course, everything on the pampas has changed, just as everything on the grasslands and ranges of the United States has changed, but certain pictures of the beautiful and free never fade. The world is not likely to have another symbol of wild freedom equal to the wild horse. Here is a picture of his wildness and freedom:

"We crossed an uninhabited district of 40 or 50 miles in extent, which afforded pasture to immense herds of cattle and wild horses. A herd of wild horses in flight exhibiting their fine forms, free action, and fiery speed, full flowing manes and tails waving in the breeze bring grace and beauty to a climax. As they rushed past in a body, at a bounding gallop, tossing their crests in the moonlight, the tramp of their hoofs shaking the ground, the impression produced on my mind approached sublimity."

San Antonio Light August 31, 58

J. FRANK DOBIE

West's Code Was Strong

At a gathering of the old-time trail drivers of Texas in San Antonio in 1926, I heard one of them from Colorado County, named Folts tell this incident.

While he was working for the Continental Cattle Company on the Plains, along the Texas-New Mexico line one fall in the '80's, gathering beef cattle, they ran out of a cook. The cook had run off or somebody had killed him or something else had happened to him. Anyway, the outfit didn't have a cook. First one cowboy and then another was cooking, each one cooking the worst he could in hope of being relieved, but nobody complaining, for whoever complained would have to do the cooking.

COMES A STRANGER

One day while the outfit was camped on the prairie near a lake, a stranger rode up at dinner time. Somebody told him to get down. He wanted to speak to the boss. "There he is over there," one of the men pointed.

He walked up to the boss and said, "I'm looking for a job."

"Can you cook?" the boss asked.

"Yes. My middle name is Cook."

"Well, you're hired," the boss said. "What'll we call you?"

Evidently appreciating the nicety implied in the question, the stranger said, "You can call me Bill."

His worldly goods were in a flour sack tied behind his saddle. He untied it, unsaddled his horse, and turned him loose with the remuda, which was out not far from the camp. Then he tied a fairly fresh flour sack around his waist for an apron and flew into his new job.

The men all left. When they got in for supper they found well-cooked meat, well-cooked sourdough bread, beans just right, some dried apples for dessert, and all the plates, cups, knives and forks in order. Of course, nobody bragged on the cook; that would have been unethical.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

The next day at noon while most of the men were eating, only two or three holding the beef herd, the new cook called Bill said out loud to the boss: "Who's in charge of this chuck wagon?"

"Why, you are, of course," the boss replied.

"I'm glad to hear it," said the cook. "I thought I was but wanted to be sure. And now," he went on, turning to the cowboys, "you fellows have heard. When I came here nobody was in charge of this wagon, and everything in it was a mess. The horseshoes were mixed up with the rice, the axle grease with the lard, and the epsom salts with the salt. I'm getting things in order and propose to keep them in order. If anybody from now on wants anything out of this chuck wagon, let him ask me and I'll get it, but I don't want anybody at all going into the chuck wagon for anything at any time."

The cook didn't talk grouchily; he just laid down the law cold and plain. Nobody said anything, at least right then. All the men roped out fresh mounts and left, most of them to hunt steers, leaving three or four men to hold the herd. The steers were loggy with plenty of grass and water and sunshine, and so the men on herd, as the saying goes, went to riding one horse. That is, they all got together on one side for a little sociable talk.

One of them was very young and green. He hadn't been out in the cowboy country long. He was dressed up according to Sears, Roebuck & Company catalogue specifications. He said to the others, "I don't much like that bullying talk from the new cook."

One of the others said to him, "Aw, that's not bullying talk. All good cooks are cranky and, after all, a cook's got a right to run his own chuck wagon."

"No," the young squirt said, "I'm not going to let him run any rannicky business over me. I'm going down there and call his hand."

One of the older men advised, "You could get into trouble, you know, butting into his business."

A DEADLY LESSON

But the young squirt socked the spurs into his horse and galloped away right up to the chuck wagon, raising a dust that wasn't calculated to make him welcome. He threw the bridle reins to the ground, jumped up on a rear wagon wheel, and reached over into the wagon as if to pull out his duffle bag. He hadn't more than reached till the cook reached too. He reached for a six-shooter, shot it, and when he did, this young cowboy fell back on the ground in a permanent position—that is, it would have been permanent unless somebody had moved his body. He was past moving himself any more.

The horse wrangler wasn't very far off with the remuda. The cook took off his hat and waved to him. The horse wrangler had heard the shot. When the cook waved, he began driving the remuda nearer. The cook roped out the horse he'd ridden up on just the day before. He saddled him, tied his flour sack of possibles behind the saddle, and rode off into the west.

Folts stopped the story at this point. I asked him, "What did you all do?"

"Why," he said, "we didn't do nothing. We figured that young fellow had made a mistake in not tending to his own business and needed a lesson."

"He got it a little late to make use of it," I said.

"Somebody else could make use of it," Folts said, "and maybe so still could."

In 1925, Joe Burdette, who was then nightwatchman for Oklahoma A&M College at Stillwater, where I was head of the English Department, told me something that adds to the lesson. He said that along in the '70's while he was driving up the trail for the Wiley Brothers from North Texas, one of their hands quit and the boss hired a Mexican vaquero in his place. The other hands didn't like this vaquero but he was needed with the herd, and no special trouble came up until the herd got intotheWichita until the herd got into the Wichita country.

JOE'S OWN TALE

From here on is Joe Burdette's own relation:

"We made camp on Cow Creek, six or seven miles to the south, and there we had to hold our cattle for quite a spell. One day when we rode in for dinner, we found the Mexican already eating. He'd left his horse loose and the horse had grazed off a little way. When the Mexican got done, he walked up to the horse that belonged to one of the boys who was eating and said, 'I believe I'll just ride out and get my horse.'

"'You stay off my horse,' the white boy told him.

"The Mexican says, 'Oh, I guess I'll ride him,' and went on. He pulled up on one side but fell off on the other. We moved camp three or four hundred yards away, and the cattle grazed all about him for a month there. . . . Hell, no, we didn't put him under ground. We didn't have time for any such thing as that. And you know, the buzzards never did bother him, and nary a wolf ever touched him. Buzzards and coyotes won't touch a damned Mexican or an Indian. I've seen where they'd et up a white man many a time, though.

"In those days, if a man tended strictly to his own business, he was bully Ike. Sometimes he had just one chance to tend to a piece of business and failed to take it."

It was possible to tend strictly to one's own business and still be a long way from tolerant, as Joe Burdette unconsciously illustrated.

Harry Hartley

LOSING THE COOK WAS A COW CAMP'S HORROR
But you had to leave him alone when you had one.

About Texas and Texans

Paisanos (Road Runners) Make Interesting Household Pets

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM AUG 19 1939

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Old Jim Bridger of the mountains used to tell the other trappers that he was going to turn into an elk when he died. I have no such soaring ambitions. If I can't be myself, all I want to be is a road runner, better known in all the border country and clear to the Pacific Ocean as paisano. On June 20 of this year, my friend Mrs. Isabel Gaddis of Cotulla began reporting to me on this extraordinary and delightful bird. Her report follows:

J. FRANK DOBIE.

"On a trip to Corpus in early June I saw only one paisano, this one near the McMullen County line. On my return trip I didn't see one until I reached Los Angeles in La Salle County, which is not in California. Has something happened to our favorite bird in McMullen and Live Oak counties? On a ride to Crystal City I counted eight paisanos. The weather and the hours of traveling were about the same.

"Here in Cotulla, Walter Manly is raising two paisanos, and we are raising two. At last we have discovered how to take care of them; rather, Walter found a successful diet for them, and our birds now are almost full grown.

• • •

WHOLE MOUSE.

"Walter saw a paisano hen feed a good-sized rat to her babies in the nest (to one baby, actually). After that we saw this same bird or her mate catch two rats on two different occasions. We don't know whether she dropped them or not; each time she ran out of sight. Our dog had stirred out the rats.

"We took our birds just before they were ready to leave the nest, and about two days later I fed each of mine a whole mouse with hide and hair and bone and tail and everything intact. We watched in complete amazement while the paisanos gulped down the mice, leaving only for a while the tail sticking out. The next day I caught another mouse and determined to take pictures, but the pictures didn't turn out.

"I've kept a hen egg in the paisano coop for several days, and they will have none of it. They like fresh meat — great hunks of it—and scorn the old dry meat scraps that the butcher has been saving for me. Yesterday the boys brought in a rabbit —tripas and all. I had to laugh when I asked Walter Manly what he was feeding his birds. He said, 'Now Isabel, there's no use for me to tell you what I'm feeding mine. You wouldn't do it.'

"With this kind of comment, I was more curious than ever and demanded the diet, because I certainly don't want to be the owner of underprivileged paisanos. Well,' Walter began slowly, 'mine have had the tip end of a garden snake, the shoulder of a wood rat, the ham of a ground squirrel, assorted parts of a rabbit . . .'

"The only thing he had left out, it seemed to me, was 'eye of newt!'

• • •

NO QUAIL EGGS.

"You would not believe how hard it is to come by these choice bits. Walter says he is going to turn his paisanos loose because if he doesn't, he's going to have to kill a calf for them.

"Isn't it a shame that people don't protect these birds? And don't we deserve the rat infestations we're suffering from now?"

On June 23, Isabel Gaddis added: "I have been unable to find quail eggs to offer the paisanos, which never have touched the hen egg. They eat snails without cracking the shells." Two days later she reported: "We have tried to turn out our paisanos, but I don't think we could run them off with a stick. They jump up on our chairs and follow us around. They evidently plan to live here.

"I hope our paisanos stay here until you come down in the fall. They are the most comical, the most engaging guests we've ever had in our back yard. Actually, they come to the back and call until somebody answers. When we open the screen door, one of them will step in and trot towards the ice box. Naturally, the more sanitary members of the family don't encourage this. I don't belong to this group.

"The birds range all over town now and have become very well known. Often people call to let us know where they are. One of them, Pi, has his legs painted with fingernail polish. The other, Si, is still in his natural state, but nobody has trouble recognizing him as an extraordinary bird."

Now this friend of the paisanos thinks we should organize a society for their protection. I myself would be delighted to shoot anybody caught shooting one of the birds at any time, anywhere.

August 17, 1958 San Antonio Light

J. Frank Dobie

Galveston Cabbies Singing the Blues

When I entered the taxicab I placed a carton weighing a few pounds on the seat. The driver was grizzled, and his skin looked to be preserved by salt winds. When I got out I paid him, saying, "Wait a minute, please, until I get my package."

DOBIE

"Ain't nobody in no hurry around here," he said. "Take your time."

The setting is Galveston, where I was a cub reporter on the Tribune, an afternoon paper, in the summer of 1914, the year World War I broke out. There were not many taxicabs to ride then. On the second day of my recent visit I got into a cab driven by another ancient-looking driver. I asked him where the old Galveston News building was.

"I don't know," he replied. "I haven't been here but four days."

"I supposed," I said, "that the business and working people in Galveston stay put."

The driver gave me something of his history. He's peg-legged and began driving a taxicab in 1929. He had spent the last 20 years in Houston, he said, but the traffic there has gotten too fast and fierce for him. "That's a young man's fight in a big city now," he said. He was finding traffic a little too fast in Galveston to suit him but much more accommodated to his own tempo than the Houston traffic. I gave him my several-times-repeated definition of progress: "Progress is a state of society in which nobody in particular wants to run but everybody has to run in order to keep from being run over."

Dry Freight

The flow of money in Galveston depends largely on the shipping of dry freight—a business going back to times long before the Houston ship channel and port were made, on sick people who come to the University of Texas medical center for expert analysis and treatment, on tourists, and, until lately, on a big sporting element. All the taxicab drivers I talked to, and some other people also, said that the city is unprosperous because gambling and other forms of vice have been suppressed. One youngish taxi driver said that if people want to go to church and then want to go to a gambling house, they ought to be allowed to. He said also that prostitutes are more decent and more worthy of respect than the sheriffs and policemen who take toll from them and the politicians who make a showing of piety in dealing with them. I agreed with him.

Another taxi driver said he came down from Dallas about four months ago just to see what was going on, and he's all for Atty. Gen. Will Wilson in closing up the town and is all against the mayor of Galveston in trying to keep the town open. He concluded that Galveston is not only dead but buried. He said he was going back to Dallas before long.

When I reported on the Galveston Tribune 44 years ago, it was an independent afternoon daily, owned largely by the Rabbi Cohen family. Rabbi Cohen wrote a book entitled "The Man Who Stayed in Texas." He was civilized and enlightened and wanted a newspaper of that character. The city editor, A. L. Perkins, was of that character and so was the managing editor, Mr. McMasters. Years ago now, the Moody interests bought not only the Tribune but the morning paper, the News. The "House of Moody" as it calls itself, owns a big printing firm unconnected with the newspapers. It owns the main hotels and I don't know how many motels in Galveston. It owns two of the three main banks. It owns cotton presses and ranches. It has its hand in various businesses, and I judge, from reading the Galveston Tribune and also the Galveston News, that the owners consider newspapers in the same category with other investments. When W. L. Moody jr. died in 1954 he left the main part of his fortune in the form of a foundation, but the will has been in litigation. To me, the decay of the newspapers is more pronounced than the decay of income that I hear about. However, this running of newspapers purely for materialistic benefit and propagandistic purposes is not unique to Galveston.

Balinese

A newspaperman friend and his wife from Houston took me to the noted Balinese room. Only members of the club and their guests are allowed to enter the guarded precincts. In a vestibule on land the men wanting to enter give their names for entry in a ledger. Then doors are opened and the priviliged walk through a long, crooked lane over the water and go into another little room where there's a smell of funeral flowers and exotic fishes swim in glass-contained water. Hence one proceeds to the dining room away out over gulf water. It is said that there are rooms behind the dining room much more interesting. They were quite interesting to Texas rangers some time ago. The dining room is interesting enough to a greenhorn like me. An orchestra plays the kind of music that Joseph Conrad described as "murdering silence." It is difficult to hold a conversation while the music is at its most raucous. The menu includes a steak that costs $14. We didn't order this steak but took something cheap—$4 or $5. Lights are dim, and flaming sword steaks seemed to be popular. A functionary brings in a steak on a spit that looks like a sword. At the tip of the sword a candle burns. When the sword bearer arrives at a table the master of ceremonies, or the chief waiter, whatever his proper title may be, puts out the candle, takes the meat off the sword and puts it on a plate, and then I guess it's just a good steak.

I incline more and more to judge the civilization of a town by its book stores and libraries. The excellent Rosenberg public library in Galveston is one of the oldest of all public libraries—maybe the oldest of consequence. It was established and endowed by a man named Rosenberg, who had civilized taste and knew what he wanted to do with his money and did with it before he died.

Book Stores

I looked in the yellow pages of the telephone book for book stores and found two listed. One of them, I found upon inspection, specializes in selling luggage and camera supplies. The other specializes in selling camera supplies and all sorts of knick-knacks. The one that has the most books seems to concentrate on cancer, heart, sex, childbirth, and such other troubles. Here I saw four copies of a book that I reviewed 15 years ago and that was not selling then. The proprietor evidently doesn't believe in cut-rate sales. He doesn't believe much in buying many modern books. In the hand luggage store listed as a book store I saw Lon Tinkle's "Thirteen Days to Glory," the only modern good book I did see. It was on a counter along with a biography of some pope and that sloppy example of sentimentality and commercialized piety entitled "The Day That Christ Died."

There are first-class minds and first-rate people in Galveston, but I guess they have to go somewhere else to buy books and also for their ideas. Still, I like the place, and its tempo suits me.

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM
OCT 11 1959

Book-Talk Background for Old Friend

Chance Continues to Determine Many Facets of Various Careers

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I have spoken a few times and thought hundreds of times on the way chance determines the careers of human beings. I used to puzzle over what Napoleon meant when he called himself a "man of destiny." Now I rather imagine that he regarded himself as a master in being ready for the chances that come to everybody. However that may be, one character who has figured in my career without hardly knowing anything about it was Charles P. Everitt of New York, a dealer in rare books. I shall have to go into a bit of book talk concerning myself in order to explain Charlie.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

I began knowing him in March 1931, while I was in New York as an incident in the Literary Guild's promotion of a book of mine entitled "Coronado's Children." Charlie Everitt was in charge of the Americana division of Dauber and Pine's Bookshop, which was located downtown. Perhaps I met him while I was browsing around. Anyhow, he had me to lunch with Frederick W. Hodge, one of the great scholars of the world, whose two-volume work "Handbook of North American Indians" will be a lasting memorial and with whom I maintained a friendship that ended only with his death about two years ago. Then there was Dellenbaugh, who had written various books about the West, including an account of Powell's history-making voyage down the Grand Canyon. Another guest was Vilhjalmur Stefansson, a great explorer and authority on the arctic regions. I can remember only snatches of what was said. I can't remember what we ate or what we drank, but everything was exhilarating to me. This was a new world in which Charlie Everitt was king.

* * *

ENTERTAINING CATALOGS.

He and I took a keep liking for each other. I never bought many books from him and no very high-priced ones at all. His catalogs were generally entertaining because of the knowledge and prejudices he injected into them. Until he died in 1951, I never went to New York without seeing him, not only in his book store but at places where good food and good drink were served over good talk. The first three books I wrote were published in Texas. I was ignorant and patriotic and thought that books should be published in Texas. Later I learned that ignorance and various forms of patriotism are closely related. I grew less ignorant and less ignorantly patriotic. In 1935 a New York publisher brought out one of my books. I liked the editor fine but didn't like his firm. Houghton-Mifflin Company of Boston, a great publishing house, invited me to come to Boston to talk over my writings and their publishings. I went, was put up at the oldest club in Boston where the ghosts of Longfellow and Emerson and other prominents still walk. I liked the editor who entertained me fine, but just before I took the train from New York to Boston I had had a talk with Charlie Everitt.

"Go on," he said, "and learn what you can learn, but I think you belong with Little, Brown & Company of Boston. My son Raymond is their editor-in-chief and they'll like you and help build you up and take care of your books." I left Boston without committing myself, and back in New York met Raymond, Charlie Everitt's son. I liked him. A lot of people didn't. He was peculiar. I'm kind of partial to peculiar people. In the end I signed up with him, and I've been with Little, Brown & Company ever since. They have not only kept in print every book of mine they've published but have taken over two or three books first brought out by other publishers. Charlie Everitt determined my career with a publisher, and a publisher is as important to a writer as a wife is to a politician.

* * *

ANOTHER FAVOR.

About the time I got back from Germany after World War II, the History Book Club was established in New York and through Charlie Everitt I was for a time on the editorial board at $200 a month—a sinecure, for all I had to do was glance through a few books a month and write a letter or two to Bernard DeVoto, chairman of the board. It wasn't a great while after this that Charlie became virtually broke financially. I've regretted a thousand times that I didn't turn over to him a good part of the $200 a month I was drawing from his recommendation.

Another of his favors was to introduce me to Phillip Ashton Rollins, a story in himself. Rollins wrote several books, the best known being "The Cowboy," an excellent exposition. He claimed to have been a range man in the Montana-Wyoming country. His father was wealthy and he married a welathy woman. He made a great collection of literature pertaining to the range and the West in general. I used to look at it in his old brownstone-front residence in New York. He was very sentimental, and after about three drinks before dinner he would tell how his life had been saved on three occasions by cowboys and how he was going to bequeath his fine collection of Western literature to Princeton University, where entrance to it would bear this legend: "The Gift Of Three Cowboys." He did give that collection to Princeton but I don't think that the portals to it bear the legend.

* * *

CHECK ON BROWN PAPER.

Charlie Everitt used to tell this story about his first meeting with Rollins. Rollins dashed into his book shop one day and said, "I want every book that's ever been printed that has the word cowboy in it." "That's a big order," Charlie said. "I can pay for it," Rollins said. "If you've got any books with anything at all in them about cow boys, pull them down." Charlie said he pulled down books until he nearly went blind. After gapping the shelves, he had several boxes of books on the floor. "How much?" Rollins asked. I don't remember the figure, but it was between $1,200 and $1,500. At that, Rollins tore off a piece of brown wrapping paper and wrote out a check to Charles P. Everitt for the amount. This was during banking hours. Charlie got in touch with the bank on which the check was drawn and found that it would be honored even if a couple more digits were added to it.

His posthumously-published book, "The Adventures Of a Treasure Hunter," is out of print. Like all good story-tellers, he played variations on his stories. It is full of the-devil-be-damned kind of remarks and anecdotes that he was full of. Here are three excerpts from the book, which was dictated rather than written, that are exact samples of Charlie's talk.

"In the course of years I got increasingly fed up with horse-collared gentry who would ask sanctimoniously for a clerical discount. Finally, when a clergyman asked for a clerical discount on three volumes off the three-for-a-quarter table, my patience gave way, and I told him I would not even take his check."

* * *

PHOTOSTAT CHEAPER?

"One of my favorite customers and friends for many years was Rev. Thomas R. Slicer, the pastor of the Unitarian Church at 20th St. and 4th Ave. Its red-and-black brick gave it the name of the Beefsteak Church. I have never forgotten the time when Mr. Slicer announced a sermon on the Virgin Birth. The congregation, naturally, were all agog. He had a splended pulpit presence, and he rose and calmly gave a text, not from the Bible, but from Browning. Then he leaned confidentially toward his flock. 'What difference does it make? That's all I have to say about the Virgin Birth.'"

J. Frank Dobie San Antonio Light 9-7-58

Circumstantial Evidence Items

By J. FRANK DOBIE

The skill with which an artful lawyer marshals and arranges the particles of evidence is admirable. The craft of a master story-teller in using details and in unfolding movement to achieve vividness is sometimes as interesting as the story itself. The patterns made by nature without thought become more and more interesting to me. Thereby hangs a tale.

In a book of mine published years ago on Longhorns, there's a chapter about rawhide. In this chapter is a very brief account of how Col. Norwick Gussett founded Gussettville east of the Nueces river in Live Oak county by stretching a steer hide across four mesquite posts and notifying the citizens that a barrel of whisky was for sale thereunder. Gussettville never was as much of a town as it was a place, but it's only a name now—a dying name at that. The railroad missed it and then the highway missed it.

Now comes a step in the pattern of nature. Last year Mr. M. Bernard Gussett, president of the Iowa Power & Light co. at Des Moines, Ia., wrote me that he had been rereading "The Longhorns" and wanted me to know that the account of how his grandfather, Norwick Gussett, founded Gussettville is true. From here on I quote his letter:

"In 1931 my father and I decided to pay Gussettville a visit. We found nothing but a deserted church, a weed-grown graveyard, and lots of sand and dense mesquite. As we were browsing around, a character came out of the brush and introduced himself. I have forgotten his name. He was happy, he said, to see some Gussetts back on the old site. He had known my grandfather, and he offered to point out the exact spot where the old store stood. As we stood amid the ragweeds on the site, he told this story:

Raiders

"Cattle thieving was common in the time of Norwick Gussett, and sometimes raiders below the Rio Grande even crossed the Nueces, which was supposed to be the northern boundary of country to be raided over. One day four Mexicans were caught red-handed and, after a fair trial, were hung to a convenient and often-used live oak tree, a mile or so away from my grandfather's store. The stranger offered to show us the tree, but as it was about 100 degrees in the shade and no shade was handy, we declined.

"Anyway, four or five days after the hanging the sheriff happened to be passing by and stopped at the store—under the cowhide. He remarked that he'd heard that four Mexicans had been strung up on the hanging tree. My grandfather said it was news to him, but why didn't the sheriff go down and take a look?

"Between the store and the tree was a well-defined trail crossed by a single fence. It was a picket fence, for this was before barbed wire. As the sheriff went over the fence, he noticed something glittering in the sunlight and stopped to pick it up. It was a large gold medallion.

"Now, my grandfather was a very large man, and it was his custom to wear across his ample front a heavy gold medallion attached to a watch chain. Having satisfied himself that the Mexicans had actually been disposed of at the hanging tree, the sheriff returned to the store, and after again passing the time of day, casually threw the medallion on the counter, saying, 'I found this on the trail at the fence crossing. Is it yours?'

Coincidence

"My grandfather picked it up, looked it over, reattached it to his watch chain, and glancing at a heavy-framed Colt .45 at hand on a shelf behind the counter, said 'That was quite a coincidence, wasn't it, sheriff?'

"The sheriff answered, 'Yes, Mr. Gussett, it was quite a coincidence,' mounted his horse and rode away."

In this story the circumstantial evidence is apparent to all parties concerned. In some stories and in some cases that might be called criminal, no evidence at all appears to the most vitally concerned party. Here is an illustration from a not-at-all-important book, entitled "Pioneer Years in the Black Hills," by Richard B. Hughes, edited by Agnes Wright Spring, state historian of Colorado.

"He was a splendid camp dog and I believe he would have tackled a lion in defense of any of our property. In camp he would not touch food, however hungry he might be, unless it was given him; but away from home, shame to say, he was an inveterate thief. On one occasion he brought to camp a fine dressed turkey and on another, a 5-pound roll of butter neatly wrapped in muslin cloth; in neither had he left the mark of a tooth.

"One day I was on my way from Gayville to Deadwood, accompanied by Snoozer. On the east side of the gulch the trail led over a bar about 100 feet wide; the ascent and descent were quite abrupt. On this bar was the tent of a solitary camper. As I ascended the bar from the south I saw the occupant of the tent come out with a steak in his hand. In front of the tent was a bright campfire evidently kindled for the purpose of preparing dinner; a frying pan was on the ground beside the fire. In this pan the man placed the steak and turned back into the tent, undoubtedly for salt, as when he emerged again he had a salt shaker in his hand.

Smooth Job

"As the man entered the tent, the dog passed me on the ascent, trotted over to the fire, lifted the steak from the pan and trotted down the trail to the north. In an instant he had reached the level of the gulch and was as completely out of sight as though the earth had opened and swallowed him. This he did without exhibiting any of the demeanor of a thief. He simply noted as if he was picking up a piece of meat that belonged to him. When the man came out with the salt in his hand he started to pick up the frying pan, gave a perceptible start, turned and looked at the stub limb of a bush beside the fire, where, it was apparent, he had been accustomed to hang his meat. He looked again into the pan, and then all around in every direction, shaking his head and muttering something which I could not hear, but which could readily be translated into, 'I'll be darned if that don't beat me.'"

Even the Wine Bottles Were Broken

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM OCT 25 1959

Treasure-Hunting Doughboys Saw, Too Late, Where Prize Was Hidden

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

When he was young and in his prime, Fred Curry was a cowboy in Kansas and New Mexico. After World War I he was a carpenter for a long time. Now he raises calves — not milk calves — near Rose Hill, out from Wichita, Kan. I feel that I know him pretty well, though we've never met. He's a natural man. He writes letters in the way a natural man talks. From here on the talk is his.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The 806th Pioneer Infantry (colored) was a big outfit. It had companies of 250 men. All the non-commissioned officers were colored, but most of the captains and lieutenants were white. The enlisted men were mostly from Texas and Louisiana; most of the officers were from Texas and Oklahoma; I was from Kansas; a few officers were from Harvard and Princeton; we all got along pretty well together. I was in the First Battalion, Co. C, commanded by Captain Croy, of Kansas City. He had been a civil service man and was a decent human being, but I didn't consider him much of a soldier.

* * *

SHELLS OVERHEAD.

We had been prowling up and down the road from Commercy to Metz for a couple of months, sometimes marching four or five days at a time, and when the armistice came, we were in a little French town named Vieville, with the six-inch naval guns shooting over our heads from Hottonchottel back of us and the German guns shooting over our heads from Metz. I don't know where the shells lit, but they didn't light on us. They sounded like freight trains going through the sky.

I slept in the town hall. It had a little piece of roof standing, and I had one blanket and my overcoat. The day following the armistice we marched back to a village called Vignuelles, on the north slope of Mont Sec. It was pretty well shot up, but I found a little hut that Captain Croy and I moved into and a dugout big enough to hold my platoon. We felt good. Everybody said the war was over; the boys quit praying and went to shooting craps, and we thought maybe we would get home sometime.

We were working for the 23rd Engineers. Those colored troops wouldn't work well for strangers, and we would have a sergeant from the Engineers to tell the lieutenant what to do and he would tell the men, and thus we got along fine. We went sort of exploring Mont Sec, around which 70,000 dead Frenchmen lay. It was cut by trenches furnished with pianos, ladies corsets, fine furniture, and hundreds of empty beer bottles, but we never found any full ones. We found bushels of what were called "dime novels" when I was a boy—"Young Wild West," "Buffalo Bill," etc., all in German. We found a big mirror about four feet high and carried it back to camp; that was the only thing we found that we could use—and we didn't have any need for it. Our main job was filling up holes in the road that the Germans had mined when they retreated so that the artillery and trucks could come back from the front.

* * *

LOOKS LIKE ARKANSAS.

The first Sunday in Vignuelles we didn't work. George Love and my special friend Clyde Lyman and Roley McIntosh and I took a walk. We took along my dog robber Sam Kirk and a colored boy from B Company that his compatriots called White Chile. He was as black as a stove. That country looks a lot like Arkansas down in the Boston Mountains. We walked in south of Mont Sec. It sticks up pretty high, and you can see it a long way off. The French people were starting to come back into the country. It was desolate.

We came to a little village on the south slope, deserted except for a horse and a cart and a man and a boy working frantically at something. White Chile came from Louisiana and could talk a little Cajun French, and the French boy could talk a little English. He and his father had been "civil prisoners" in Germany for four years; the man had owned the village cafe. When the Germans came through, he had buried his money under the slab in front of the fireplace. They had found it and he felt pretty good. The Americans had shelled the town and it was in ruins. He said he had buried all his best wine in the well, and he showed us where it was. He said we could have it. He was going back to wherever he came from. We started Sam Kirk and White Chile at the job of uncovering the well, but we saw it could not be finished that day. Back to camp, I told Captain Croy about the wine-filled well and asked him to let me take a detail and dig it out. He said, "Why, Curry, I ought to know better than to let you do a thing like that." He didn't surprise me by his refusal.

* * *

DETAIL TO WELL.

The next morning we went out to work on the road, and I detailed Sam Kirk, White Chile, and a yellow boy from Louisiana who had been a panther hunter in the canebrakes and a couple of other boys I could trust to dig the well out. I had to tell the engineer but he was satisfied with a promise to be cut in on the loot. I had borrowed George Love's field glasses, and I climbed up on the side of the hill and watched the boys. They kept the dirt flying out of that hole. After a while they bunched up as if they were talking and started back to the road. I met them for a private report. Sam said there were lots of bottles in the well, dozens and dozens of bottles, but every one of them was busted. There must have been a direct hit right over it. We were all disappointed. Sam sort of scraped his toe on the ground and said, "You know, Lieutenant, we was going to tell you we just found a few bottles of wine and give you two bottles, but we didn't find nothing." I said, "Well, Sam, I was laying up on that hillside with these field glasses. I just figured that was what you would do." Sam said, "I just reckoned you would be doing something like that, Lieutenant." Sam was a good man.

* * *

COMFORTS IN HUT.

French farmhouses sort of reminded me of a livery barn. They were in a walled square with a gate at the front and a long shed at the back for wagons and tools, the house and the barn where the cows and horses stayed at the front. They all had clay tile roofs, mostly shot off, and the Germans had built a lot of bomb-proof dugouts everywhere. They had been there four years and had their own comforts. The stone hut that Captain Croy and I occupied wasn't part of the original French architecture. It had been built later. We had a carbide lamp and except that Captain Croy had fleas, we lived comfortably enough. The big German dugout occupied by my platoon was just outside the original French farmyard. We generally had our meals brought over from the company mess. After we ate, I used to go over to the kitchen, where the boys would feed me extras, but Captain Croy never knew about this.

One day we had just finished our noon meal and had gone outside when we saw a man drive up in one of those French high-wheeled carts pulled by a big bay horse. He had a lady with him, maybe about 35 or 40 years old. He couldn't talk English, but she could. She said they had been civil prisoners in Germany, working in the potato fields and that the place we occupied was their home. He went over to the wall about 30 feet from our hut and pulled out a couple of stones and brought out a big glass jar, two liters, I suppose. It was full of gold pieces. That's all there is to the story. They shook hands with us and wished us adieu, but Captain Croy felt pretty bad about having missed such a chance. The French lady told me it was about $8,000 in our money and invited me to come and see them if I ever got to Paris. But I never got to Paris.

OCT 26 1958
FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM
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Mrs. Cabbage Helped

Lonesome Pony Sought Company, Men Obliged

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

The idea, the picture, of a wild thing cut off from its kind and seeking company has a powerful effect upon the imagination. "The Lost Phoebe" is one of Whitman's most poignant poems. This account of a cutoff, company - seeking wild stallion of the plains I owe to R. R. Stolley, of Austin, who has lent me a history of Hall County, Neb., first published by his great-uncle William Stolley in 1907. The account is from that work.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

In October 1859, at the very time of a great prairie fire that displaced and killed many animals, William Stolley, Christian Andresen and two other friends named Peter Kuhl and Charles Klenze drove an ox wagon and a mule wagon to the Loup River in Nebraska on a hunt for buffalo meat. They had along, also, an old mare named Cabbage. Now to quote:

"We made camp at the mouth of a small creek emptying into the Loup River under a large, lone cottonwood tree. This was upstream from the burned region, the prairie here untouched by the fire. About the time our coffee came to a boil, a fine brown Indian pony, a stallion, galloped up, mane and tail flying, and came to a stop on the bank opposite us. He whinnied and seemed inclined to come over to us.

* * *

MULE SINKS.

"Peter Kuhl became so excited that he put a bridle on one of his mules, jumped on his back and, willy-nilly, tried to cross the Loup. When he was about three steps from the bank his mule sank in quicksand up to his belly and Peter had difficulty in reaching dry land himself. After all of us by working strenuously finally succeeded in saving the mule's life, the wild visitor galloped back into the hills, out of sight.

"It was still early in the day when a lone buffalo walked into view. We found a place near our camp where we could cross the river with the team without trouble, but we naturally crossed on foot. In the meantime the buffalo again disappeared among the hills, where, as we later discovered, he followed a ravine. Here we slaughtered him. As soon as the carcass was skinned and disemboweled, we hurried back to the camp for a wagon to haul the meat in. The ox team was hitched up and Andresen drove them, while Kuhl and I rode the mules. Klenze remained in camp. Upon returning to our buffalo, we found all sorts of visitors already there. Two white-headed eagles were sitting peacefully on the carcass, having a good meal. A number of buzzards (Carthartes aura) sat around singly or in groups, waiting for the eagles to finish their meal. From all directions, both prairie wolves (coyotes) and large gray wolves appeared. The whole hill seemed to be alive.

"Soon we had the meat carved up and loaded into the wagon. When we were within a half mile of the river, the Indian pony again appeared, snorting and neighing. He went along ahead of the muleback riders, following the ox wagon. He did not appear at all wild. Kuhl and I held our mules back a little and drew apart so as to have the stallion between us. Thus our little caravan made a smooth crossing of the river. In camp Andresen got some ears of corn which he cautiously threw to the splendid animal. But after a smell he ignored the corn completely and began sporting with one of the mules and Mrs. Cabbage."

* * *

STALLION LEAVES.

During the night or early next morning the wild stallion left—alone, but he was back in view across the river not long after breakfast. To resume the Stolley narrative:

"This time we set out with our whole army, namely: Andresen with the ox team as advance column; Klenze on Cabbage, and Kuhl and I riding mules. So we went, heavily armed as we were; only Andresen had that all in one —an ox whip. The expedition had not gone very far on the other side of the South Loup when our Indian pony, proud as a peacock, with flying mane and tail raised high, came galloping up to us. At once the column was reversed. With Andresen and the ox team leading, our stallion (already knowing our procedure) willingly resumed his place behind Cabbage, which followed the wagon, we guarding the flanks. Our column moved in slow tempo.

"We crossed the river without mishap and the stallion was once more in our camp. But we had made dark plans to rob this beautiful horse of the American steppes of his freedom. Peter Kuhl, a fairly good lasso-thrower, soon had his malicious noose dangling in his hands, while Andersen, Klenze and I had cast the other end of the rope once around the cottonwood tree in order to be able to pull the rope tight at the proper moment. It was then only necessary to get the stallion into the right position. This was not at all difficult, for he was so bent on sporting with the musical Cabbage that we simply led her wherever we wished him to come.

* * *

ANIMAL TAMED.

"Kuhl threw the noose over his head, and the next moment he lay strangled on the ground. Cabbage left the scene with notes of alarm, and we were all busily engaged in giving the beloved prisoner enough air to keep him alive. The animal soon became tame and leadable, and Andresen rode him for many years. Andresen of his own accord offered to pay each of his three associates $20, which fixed the animal's value at $80.

"The creek at the mouth of which we were camping was, in a manner of speaking, alive with beavers, and we often heard the whistling of the otter, though we caught neither beaver nor otter. But I made a good profit on large gray wolf hides. On the last day of our hunt about 15 buffaloes came into view. The carcasses of three of them, together with the one already butchered, gave us all the meat we wanted to freight home."

On National Guardsmen

Artillery Officer's Memories of First War

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM OCT 18 1939

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

According to the papers the National Guard is again in a "controversial" position. A Regular Army General has bluntly characterized it as useless for war; the National Guardsmen have called on the Army to expel the general. I was with a National Guard outfit in World War I, and wish to testify.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

In the first place, I wanted the United States to get into the war a long time before it did, just as I wanted it to get into World War II before it did. I could not in those times, just as I can not now, name anything that I particularly cherish deriving from Germany. There's Heine the poet; he was a Jew. There's great Goethe; he was more severe on the Teutonic temperament than on any other subject. In both World War I and World War II the Germans were trying to destroy the civilizations of France and England. Through the Teutonic Ph.D. system, they long ago dehumanized the humanities in American colleges and universities. I haven't lost any sleep over the fact that Russia keeps the Prussians separated from other Teutonic admirers of Bismarck.

* * *

VEINS CUT OUT.

When the United States finally declared war on Germany in 1917 —after we had grown richer selling to England and she and France were almost bled to death —I hastened to try to join the Army. The Army wouldn't take me on account of varicose veins. I had them cut out and got into the second officers' training camp at Leon Springs. The captain who passed on my application asked what branch of the Army I wanted to join.

"The cavalry," I answered. "Why?" "Because I want to ride," I said. "The cavalry is already afoot," he said. "If you want to ride, join the field artillery." I joined it. I didn't know it, but it was on the verge of being mechanized.

I'll skip much, including a Swede captain, who'd been for years a sergeant in the Regular Army and had got promoted on account of the dearth of experienced men for officers. He was as ignorant and as crude as a boar hog in a peach orchard and through him I was nearly busted, but a gentleman who outranked him saw me through. I was given a first lieutenant commission.

This was late in the year, and I left Leon Springs with orders to report to the 116th Field Artillery, stationed at Camp Wheeler near Macon, Ga. It was a part of the 56th Brigade of the 31st Division—National Guard, made up mostly of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida men. Another lieutenant named Dunning, who was to be a chaplain, got orders to go to the same place. We rode the trains together. Lieutenant-Colonel Groeber of the Regular Army was in temporary command of the 116th Field Artillery. When we reported to him in his office he kept us standing at attention for well over an hour. I never forgot one thing he said: "A soldier without pride is not worth a damn." Maybe I had a little pride before; after that my pride in being a soldier never wavered. Lieutenant-Colonel Groeber minced no words in characterizing a lot of the National Guard officers as political-minded, ignorant, sloppy and worthless for service. He had been instrumental in benzening more than 50 per cent of the officers from the 116th regiment, and I understood that the other two regiments in the 56th brigade had suffered equal casualties. The benzening was still going on; virtually all National Guard officers left were as scared as a cottontail rabbit dodging a coyote. Lieutenant-Colonel Groeber was the hardest, the fairest, and the most admirable soldier I knew during my whole term in the Army. He had been educated at West Point, and he knew; moreover, he had an active mind and character.

* * *

PLACED IN COMMAND.

Learning that I liked horses, he put me in charge of horses in Battery A. Before long the captain (my good friend Walter McDonald of Tennessee, a reserve officer like myself) was ordered to Fort Sill, Okla., for special training in field artillery, and I was placed in command of the company. I was terribly ignorant. I made lots of mistakes, two or three of which I'm ashamed of, but I never was scared. We officers never quit studying and at Leon Springs and on with my regiment I gained more brain power in studying firing data than I have gained in any other one year of my life except while I was teaching American history at Cambridge University during World War II.

I had a fine horse, a bay, part Spanish, that I called Buck after the horse I loved most on the ranch where I was born and reared. I never did have a better time than while I was riding this horse Buck alongside our horse-drawn three-inch cannons and ammunition chests over the red lands and wooded hills of Georgia. I don't believe a man on a horse can get a more exhilarating sense of motion than in full gallop with a whole regiment of well-managed horses hitched to rattling caissons.

Oh the infantry, the cavalry
And the blank-blank engineers,
They couldn't whip the artillery
In a hundred thousand years.

Our major, a national guardsman, was as common as pigtracks, but he was persistent and had occasional streaks of intelligence. He was afraid of his job, though, and was a bully. On one maneuver when we were going into camp formation a little before sundown, he rode up to me and snarlingly asked how I was going to place my "pieces." I had the disposition of them all figured out. I told him. "You can't do that," he said. "I can do it," I said. "I know exactly what I'm doing." "I don't want any more of your lip," he said. "Then, by gosh," I said, "if you want to command this battery, command it." I rode off a short distance. He muddled things getting the pieces in order. I came back after he'd got through muddling. He never said another word to me on the subject, although he could have charged me with insubordination. That would have entailed some examination of his own qualities.

* * *

SCARED OF JOB.

Lieutenant - Colonel Groeber, unhappily for good soldiers, left and a National Guard colonel from Florida took command. We could not understand how he had escaped being busted at an artillery school—probably through political pull. His mouth looked like that of a catfish; he was bench-legged like a bulldog pup; his forehead went back like a monkey's. He was scared to death of his job — national guardsman, understand. He constantly licked the general's boots. The general was an antiquated regular army man who had been retired but called back into service. He was pot-gutted and when he walked he waddled like a fat gander. When our "riding and shooting outfit" went out to practice firing in the field, the colonel never accompanied us. He always stayed around the barracks inspecting kitchens. It might be after dark when we got back. After a hasty supper, we'd have to go to an officers' meeting. There our colonel would report on spots of grease he had found on a stove in A Battery, dough in the cracks of a table in B Battery, and so on. He was afraid to go out with the cannon. He didn't know an "over" from a "short." He couldn't have computed the range; he couldn't have computed anything in ballistics. He was in his element on making us stay in camp on Sunday and singing "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," "Some Day I'm Going to Murder the Bugler," "Good Morning, Mr. Zip," etc.

I heard more than one man say if we ever got into battle in France, this colonel would for dead certain be reported as dead or mortally wounded. I believe that would have happened. When we got to France he transferred me to his staff. He knew very well I didn't want to belong to his staff, and I showed myself so dissatisfied, even surly, that he transferred me back to my battery. Of course, he had his flunkies, but not a single man who could ride and shoot had any respect for him. It was a good thing for him that he didn't get into battle.

* * *

DEPENDABLE SERGEANT.

National Guard private soldiers and sergeants were as good as any recruits we got through civilian boards, but if the 56th brigade had a single first-rate officer from second lieutenant up who was a national guardsman, I didn't meet him.

A short time before we were to go overseas, a psychiatrist passed on the enlisted men. McMurtry, the first sergeant of Battery A, as hard as nails and as dependable as the tides, who said he did not want any friends, had told me that a certain yellow-haired, gangling private was an idiot. I took to noticing him and agreed. The psychiatrist passed him. I asked the psychiatrist to please test him again. I think he had hookworm as well as a congenital lack of brains.

The psychiatrist tapped him on the knee a few more times with a rubber hammer and pronounced him unfit to go overseas. I didn't think any more of psychiatrist than I thought of National Guard colonels. The last time I saw Sergeant McMurtry he had lost his chevrons and was picking up garbage in Camp Coetgruidan in Brittany. He was a sight better man and soldier than any psychiatrist, chaplain, or National Guard field officer I met on either side of the ocean.

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BOOKS AND HOBBIES Sunday, November 30, 1958

Cowboy's Comfort

Camp, Though Moved Daily, Home to Many

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

"I borrowed a horse and went with McHall and we hunted all around through mesquite over the hills and in the valleys but still no trace of the runaway horses. Come home determined to go hunting again next day. (Home is at camps.)"

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Thus reads part of the diary entry for April 8, 1862, by Thomas C. Smith, a recruit in the Confederate Army. With other recruits he was camped in mesquite country just outside the town of San Antonio. His diary entitled "Here's Yer Mule" has just been published by W. M. Morrison, book dealer at Waco. Thomas Smith's estrayed horse was valued—in 1862—at $85; his saddle and other horse gear at $25; his six-shooter had cost $70; meat was free, the men killing any eatable bovine needed as they found it on the open range. And with them, as with thousands of other men ranging over the frontiers, "home was at camps."

It's true that a detachment of soldiers has a ganglion of campfires that might be properly denominated as camps. But the name for a single campfire was by many of the old-timers used in the plural. A cow outfit had one campfire, one camp, but a long time ago now I remember hearing Sid Grover, who was cow boss for my Uncle Jim Dobie, ask papa, "Richard, where is camps going to be?" In an old trail song sung by cowboys to keep the dogies quiet and to give themselves company the refrain is For camps is far away. Nobody any longer uses "camps" for "camp," I guess, but mere consciousness of the word takes me to many a campsite.

* * *

CAMPING SEASON.

It's camping time now, though the American people are far more nomadic in the summertime than in the wintertime and have their picnic campfires more in hot weather than in cold. The center of any real camp is the fire, and a fire belongs to cold weather. When a man's cold and his horse is leg-weary and both are hungry, there is nothing like a campfire with hot coffee, hot frijoles, a skillet of hot bread, a hank of hot ribs roasted over the coals and a morral of corn for the horse to make that campfire—to make "camps"—home.

When, in the 1930, I was making long horse and muleback trips into and across the Sierra Madre of western Mexico with pack mules and a mozo who sometimes wore sandals and did not ride at all, I often thought how camps is home. Man and beast alike come to regard a camping place, changed every day, as something as settled as the sacred hearthstone of a cabin fixed in the wilderness.

Wood, water and grass are the three essentials for a horseman's camp. Not a one of the three essentials need be thought of for campers who take their water and fuel with them in an automobile. It's no fun on a cold night to camp, as I camped two or three times, with plenty of grass for the horses and plenty of water for all of us but no fuel bigger or more lasting than a bear grass stalk.

It's fun for an hombre del campo (which means not only a man of the camps but a man of the country) to pick a campsite protected by nature from northers and other wintry winds. I remember one such camp that Dub Evans of New Mexico and I picked in the Gila River country in late December, after a snow storm. We were hunting panthers and didn't take enough food along for an extra day of scouting that we made. We had our campfire in a wide crevice between rock walls.

We had no blankets beyond saddle blankets and they were not enough for a pallet. All we could do was keep a big fire up and doze a little while sitting by it. Our location was so good against cold wind that the fire began to crack sandstone and the sandstone to shoot like anvils. We had to have a big fire to keep from freezing, and so we moved out from that niche between high rocks.

* * *

CAMP PAINTING.

When I was in the city of Durango last year I asked about Don Federico Damm, a German long resident of that place. I guess I had remembered him a thousand times during the preceding 24 years. I was told that he had killed himself. I wasn't wanting to see him so much as I was wanting to see an amateur painting of his. That's what I had been remembering so many times.

He showed it to me in his home after I had come in from a month of riding in the mountains. It was a picture of a hunter's camp—a lone hunter by a lone campfire in a canyon, a buck deer hanging up from a tree nearby, the light from the fire illuminating the tree and the buck. The hunter, with a grave but contented look on his face, looked into the silent fire. When I think of the last line of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Requiem"—

This be the verse you grave for me;
"Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill—

I think of Don Federico Damm's picture of the hunter's camp.

Most individuals in a civilized society are born to a certain religion just as they are born to certain parents, to a certain country, to a certain code of ethics. The Zoroasterian religion, established by Zoroaster in Persia about 1000 B. C., included the worship of fire. It was supplanted by the Mohammedan religion. Fire whorship went out.

I've often thought that if I were a kind of wandering spirit over the face of the earth requiring a religion and wanting to pick one out I would by instinct be drawn to the fire-worshipers. The fire I would worship at would be a hunter's camp beside water and wood and grass, and while I camped there in the night looking into the fire and hearing that philosopher talk, I would be listening to my horse crunch grass.

Many people raise families, are pillars of society and live their lives out without ever feeling in place, at home. Despite jet planes and other machines of this machined age, camps is still home to some individuals.

Refugio Historian Commended

Revenge Taken in Full by Brothers For Murder of Father by Bandidos

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

If I were asked to name five or 10 of the most interesting men in Texas known to me, I should place among them Hobart Huson, lawyer, scholar and writer, of richly seasoned mind, at home in Greece but living at Refugio.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

He is engaged in completing a biography of that great and good philosopher, Pythagoras, born about 589 B. C. His "Pythagoron," a collection of sayings and thoughts attributed to Pythagoras, appeared several years ago.

Closer home, is Huson's two-volume history of Refugio County, probably the most ample, interesting and knowledgeable county history yet produced in Texas. It treats of life pertaining to that area from aboriginal times to 1953.

A long time ago the weekly newspaper of Refugio carried a column of personals in which visitors from adjoining counties and from San Antonio and other far away places were characterized as "foreigners." No good county history was ever written by a county-minded historian.

Having the perspective that comes from association with noble thinkers and having a sense of relationships, Hobart Huson compasses more Texas history in his "Refugio" than several purported histories of the state contain. In some ways "Refugio" is a gallery of characters. Now for samples.

* * *

MISSED JUGULAR.

"Lieuen Morgan Rogers came to Texas in 1836 to join the army; he gave a good account of himself. He remained in Texas, and in 1845 his father, Patterson Rogers, and brothers, Anderson and William Long Rogers, joined him. Patterson Rogers had a large family and became a trader with the Mexicans.

"On May 1, 1846, while he, his sons Anderson and William, and several other people, including some women were with a pack train between Corpus and Matamoros, they were attacked by a band of Mexican robbers. Every person in the Patterson party had his throat cut and was thrown into a stream. After rifling the pack train, the bandits returned to Mexico. It happened that the jugular vein of William Rogers had not been severed. He revived, reached shore unseen by the bandits, and wandered over the prairie for 25 miles before coming to a habitation. Here a Mexican ranchero family received him kindly and nursed him back to health. He subsequently married Julia Corons, daughter of his benefactor.

"During this period young Lieuen Rogers was serving as a lieutenant in Taylor's army in Mexico. He learned of the fate of his father and brothers, and after the war rejoined William. Together they went to the border, discovered the identity of their father's murderers, hunted them out, wherever they were to be found, and did not desist until they had slain each and every one of the them. The story of some of these hand-to-hand death grapples pales the ordinary western thriller.

* * *

KING OF THE MARSH.

"In 1849 Lieuen Rogers joined Lopez' first filibustering expedition against Cuba. After he had served with the revolutionists for about 18 months, he was captured by the Spaniards. He was sent to Spain to spend the rest of his life working in the quick-silver mines there. He was, however, released through the intercession of the American and British governments. He had not been back in his own country long when he came to Refugio County in 1851."

Here's another character who could not possibly be now what he was in his time.

"J. W. Duncan Sr., once called 'King of the Marsh,' came to Refugio County in 1833. His home was on Duncan's Point below the mouth of the Guadalupe River. For a while he was manager of the Tivoli ranch, and he served as county commissioner. He had scores of Mexican tenants on his farm, and over them was both alcalde and padre. He declared that he did not need the law on his land. Whenever his tenants volated the law or rules of the farm or got into disputes among themselves, he tried them himself, delivering judgments and fixing penalties. He awarded damages and levied fines and saw that they were collected. Every year he paid his Mexicans' doctor's bills. Duncan never went anywhere without his sixhooter; he said that it was 'part of his dress.' He never killed anyone and was easy to get along with but 'stood for no foolishness.'"

Dobie Is 'Interviewed' DEC 29 1957 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

'Free Minds' Getting Poor Break From Educators and Newspapers

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

In "Alarms and Diversions," by James Thurber, he has an imaginary interview between a newspaper reporter and a novelist. The novelist is so honest intentionally and his wife so revealing unintentionally that the reporter realizes he can get nothing he has found out past his editor. Not many editors are seeking realities. After driving a few hundred yards the reporter throws his copy paper, on which very little has been written, out the window, then his pencil. I suppose he got some more paper and pencils the next morning.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

I can't write the interview I'd like to write about some of the headliner people of 1957; the stuff would not pass. I'll hold myself down and be as deferential as possible to official conformity.

Reporter: Mr. Dobie, looking back over the year 1957, have you at any time felt outraged by a lack of honesty and common sense decency over the turn of events?

Dobie: I feel outraged almost as often as I go through a newspaper.

Reporter: Specify.

Dobie: No use specifying too much, but I'll give you an illustration. The other day I read that two or three gypsies had been arrested for telling fortunes without a license, or something like that, in east Austin. East Austin is metaphorically across the railroad tracks from annointed respectability.

Now gypsies are to me far more interesting people than most presidents of American Chambers of Commerce. One of my favorite writers, though he has never been a best seller, is George Borrow. He lived with the gypsies in England and was at home with them in Spain. His "Lavengro" and "Romany Rye" are classics. Of course, fortune-telling is pretty much bunk, but on Sundays if you fish around on a radio you can hear all sorts of montebank ignoramuses prophesying about the human soul, about God, etc. Nobody ever arrests them. Why discriminate against some poor, but picturesque, palm-reading gypsy?

* * *

MINOR SUBJECT.

Reporter: Mr. Dobie, if you will allow me to say so, you are on a very minor subject.

Dobie: I know it. I'm minor myself. If you want somebody to talk as if he were the last elevation in importance, go to Washington and interview Mr. Dullness.

Reporter: We're here now, and history-laden 1957 is our subject.

Dobie: Governor Price Daniel and his special session of the poor old history-laden 1957, didn't Legislature nearly over-loaded poor old history-laden 1957, didn't they?

Reporter: Mr. Dobie, since you take so much pride in being outspoken, I hope you won't mind my remarking that sneers are also cheap. Here we are half way through our interview and we don't seem to have touched anything essential yet.

Dobie: If you are bound to have essentials, it's hard to beat good meat, good drink and love.

* * *

TEACHING A HABIT.

Reporter: You used to teach in the University of Texas.

Dobie: I can't get over the habit of teaching. It is often a form of pontificating.

Reporter: Suppose you pontificate on the effect that recent advances in science by Russia may have on education in this country.

Dobie: About everything worth saying on the subject has already been said. For a long generation now the professional educators in America have been holding school without much respect for "cultivated mind." All the public school superintendents and a great many college presidents hold degrees in Education spelled with a capital E. They are johnny-on-the-spot with Rotary Club optimism, football teamwork, Dedication - to-America Week, and such as that, but many of them don't know A from Adam's off ox when it comes to a real teacher of English, history, geology or any other branch of knowledge. Despite their degrees and positions, they are puerile-minded. Nearly all of them are stuffed with religiosity —which is not religion.

* * *

CAPITAL E SICKENS.

Reporter: Somebody told me you are against Education spelled with a capital E.

Dobie: If the universities and colleges that are always crying for more money, cut out 85 per cent of their education courses and 98 per cent of their journalism courses, they would save an enormous amount of money and at the same time advance knowledge. Of course howls going up would make the mountain tops rock. The superfluous always howl when their milk is cut off.

For the academic year of 1957-1958 the education department of the University of Texas lists 351 —three hundred and fifty-one— courses. They are all to make teachers more banal - minded. God pity our pupils! Don't blame them for not being educated.

Reporter: It is generally supposed that education and journalism are branches of knowledge.

Dobie: They are the chief practicioners in the unctuous elaboration of the obvious. Some high schools now allow pupils to choose between English and journalism. They choose journalism in order to avoid the mental work that all genuine education entails. Imagine being a writer in the English language without knowing basic English.

What a journalist needs is intelligence, an educated mind, and mastery of the craft of writing. He can't get any of these from courses in journalism. What a teacher needs, aside from having sense and character, is basic knowledge in history, science, languages, literature, the fundamentals! All a would-be teacher gets out of education is palaver —not basic knowledge.

* * *

ENLIGHTEN PRESS.

It is no wonder that a pupil can't get a book in a high school library, though he can ride to a circus in a big school bus that costs more than all the books put together in the school library.

A lot of the books adopted by the state for school readers can't be read by people with civilized tastes. They are adopted because their publishers know how to get around among the official adopters of texts. Most of these official adopters are no more concerned with cultivated minds, stimulated imaginations and civilized tastes than the average governor's appointee to some board dealing with education is.

Reporter: Mr. Dobie, if you were dictator of Texas for a two-year term, what would you do?

Dobie: I'd start in appointing men and women with disciplined and cultivated minds to positions of responsibility so far as education is concerned.

I'd do what I could to restore democracy — especially through an enlightened press.

Reporter: Of course you know you'll never be dictator.

Dobie: Nor have influence otherwise. Anyhow, we can drink to free minds—and the only minds that are free are those that know. Here's to life!

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM NOV 1 1959

Full Bookshelves Top Prettiest Paintings, Dobie Believes

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I've never seen a painting existing only for design that gave me as much satisfaction, even elation, as the flagstone on the Brazos Street entrance to the Driskill Hotel in Austin. I look at those flagstones and wonder why anybody who can afford them would choose concrete. Concrete was not readily available at the time they were placed there. I saw a Navajo blanket in Tucson once with a design as pleasing. Sometimes in memory it still makes me feel free and serene. For me, no mere design in paint is as beautiful as a wall of books, some old, some new, some with the paper jackets still on, some without jackets. The colors in a whole wall of books are multitudinous; the arrangements, infinite. A house without books is as undecorated as a Hollywood decorator could make it.

About the winter of 1939-1940 the late Sid Richardson invited me to spend some weeks at his new house on St. Joseph's Island, across the bay from Rockport. O'Neil Ford and his brother, architects of the indigenous, were finishing work on the house. A high-paid interior decorator from Los Angeles was putting up the shades and a few pictures to match the wall colors. The pictures had no significance whatsoever. I wrote Sid Richardson that there wasn't provision in the big house for a single book unless he put a Gideon's Bible on a table. He wrote back that if I would pick out a lot of books and order them through a dealer, he would pay for them. I selected several hundred titles. Bookshelves were made for them, and they certainly made one room in the house look more civilized. About the same time, I got Sid Richardson to collecting paintings of the West. He bought many by Charles M. Russell and other artists. He got pleasure out of looking at them whether he read the books or not.

* * *

FURNITURE BOOKS.

A London dealer in rare books named Bertram Rota, with whose book store and catalogs I have been acquainted a long time, visited Austin a few weeks ago. While we were making medicine, he said that one time a wealthy American woman who walked into a Charing Cross book shop was overwhelmed by a long row of French novels bound with gilt effect on the mantelpiece over a fireplace. She became absolutely ecstatic. "I've been wondering," she exclaimed, "what to do with a room. Now I know! Oh, bright beauty! I shall have the long-inside wall of this room solid with books that look like those on the mantelpiece." She'd been hunting wallpapers and draperies and had with her the dimensions of the room. The book dealer didn't have nearly enough books of the kind she wanted, but every dealer around Charing Cross had some. In the parlance of the trade, such are called "furniture" books. As Bertram Rota put it, "It was a great day in Charing Cross."

Another woman he told about wanted bindings stamped plainly with the names and titles of classical authors. It didn't make any difference to her what was inside the books or in what condition the insides were. Neither mistress of these rooms decorated with "furniture" books would ever look into one, and neither could logically expect a guest who would look into one. That wouldn't keep the books from being decorative in the best manner. Books, of course, are to be read, but a beautiful book is its own excuse for being. Happily, in general, the most beautiful books are good to read.

One of the beautiful books published this fall is George Catlin's "Episodes From Life Among the Indians and Last Rambles," edited by Marvin C. Ross. Half of this noble printing reproduces 152 scenes and portraits by Catlin. It is published by the University of Oklahoma Press at Norman. Catlin was among the first of American artists to picture the Indians of the West and remains the most famous. He died in 1872. He spent years abroad lecturing on Indians and showing his portraits and other paintings. In 1849 a bill was about to pass Congress giving him $65,000 for the pictures, but Jefferson Davis defeated it. Daniel Webster was one of the civilized proponents for it.

* * *

LOST GOLD MINES.

While reading in the national library in Paris, Catlin met a stranger who told him a story of lost gold mines in the Crystal Mountains of South America. Something of this story was in a book 300 years old. According to the story, Spanish miners, after accumulating great riches, were attacked by the Indians and either killed or driven out of the country. Anyhow, they had to leave their gold behind them. Catlin set out to find it. Of course, it was a wild goose chase, but he saw a lot of country and a lot of aborigines and always he was making pictures. These pictures make this new book golden.

I don't have to wait for Thanksgiving to be thankful. I often thank whatever gods there be for the University of Oklahoma Press and for the University of Texas Press. One of the new books published by the University of Texas Press is "The Spanish Element in Texas Water Law," by Betty Eakle Dobkins. It's a factual book and certain free enterprisers who enjoy paying tribute to the American Telephone and Telegraph Company could be outraged at ancient Spanish laws making municipal and pueblo water rights superior to those of riparian owners of land. As Mrs. Dobkins observes, "Spanish laws and institutions were products of a society that stressed the place of the Crown, the community, the Church." According to Spanish law governing land and water, no individual could take water for use upon his private property without permission of the government. Rights for the communal use of water overrode private rights. After all these years, the laws of Texas respecting rights to underground water remain chaotic. The next seven year drouth we have may clarify them somewhat.

* * *

WRITERS ROUNDUP.

Annually the Austin Chapter of Theta Sigma Phi, national fraternity for women in journalism, has a Writers' Roundup in Austin. At this Roundup selected writers of Texas and their books published during the last year are recognized. Among writers at the Roundup on Oct. 16 was Mr. Charles Gallenkamp, presently of Houston, significant for his book "Maya." It is a readable telling of what is known of

Sunday Light 1-5-58

J. Frank Dobie

Wade Hampton, Knifer of Bears

Wade Hampton, the third of that name in South Carolina, (1818-1902), may have been more widely known as a bear-knifer than any other southerner because he was even better known for other reasons. Under his leadership, the Hampton family owned more slaves than any other plantation family—around 3000 big and little, on vast holdings in Louisiana and Mississippi as well as in South Carolina. He was against secession but fought through the Civil war as colonel, brigadier general, major general. Then he came out for allowing citizenship to the negroes, according to law. He served his state as governor and then, as U. S. senator. At the very end of his long career his words were: "God bless all my people, black and white."

It was before the Civil war broke him physically as well as financially that he was the great hunter. He hunted bear chiefly on and out from the great Wild Woods plantation in Mississippi. His ablest biographer gives this picture of him:

"At first sight, this man was almost too big to be reassuring. His height was an even 6 feet, and he was broadly built even for such stature. Physically he was more powerful than his biggest field hand, with great muscles of arm and leg, the sort of body that is the despair of fashionable tailors. Perhaps that is why he never seemed to be dressed elegantly or even very carefully. He had wide, square shoulders and a large head carried high on a sinewy neck, and features of a rather leonine handsomeness. His nose was straight and long, his jaw and brow wide, and his steady eyes were brilliant and gray-blue. His wavy dark hair, beginning to grow thin at the temples, bushed out above the ears, and he flanked his jowls with long side whiskers, into which merged a thick, curly moustache."

Negro Butler

When a guest arrived at Millwood, the chief South Carolina plantation, the biographer continues, "he was met by Henry, the consequential negro butler who ranked at the head of the squads of house servants and the battalions of field hands. This dignified brown man assigned a body servant to attend particularly upon such a guest for the duration of his stay. If the guest desired, a saddle horse was chosen at the stable, also to be his for the entire visit. The house and grounds were open to him, with no demands or restrictions. If he wished to roam the groves, gardens and brooksides, he was free to do so. If he liked to read, there was the Hampton library—not one roomful of books but two. Ten thousand volumes were there, many of them works on American history, some bearing the autograph of George III of England. For men and women of social turn there were the drawing rooms, hung with family portraits. On the wall gleamed the big carved sword of Wade Hampton's grandfather, hero of two wars. In the evenings there was brilliant, mannered conversation, and music and dancing."

Considering Wade Hampton's great fame as a killer of bears in hand to hand conflict—a fame approaching that of Jim Bowie as knife wielder—comparatively little on the subject is available in print. The best account is from Manly Wade Wellman, the biographer already quoted. He writes:

"From childhood almost to his grave, he loved and used horses, guns and fishing tackle supremely well. An English guest, who had ridden to hounds with the best men of his native island, swore almost frantically that Wade Hampton could back a horse better than anyone in the whole world. It took a strongly made beast to carry properly that stalwart mass of bone and muscle, but Hampton had a light touch on the reins and never overtaxed his mounts unless they chose to rebel. Then, says one who later followed him to the wars, Hampton's brawny legs would clamp like iron tongs, foiling every effort to unseat him. He may have been thrown on occasion—the best of constant riders are, now and then—but there exists no record of it. He was proud, almost vain, of his horsemanship. Few men who ever lived and rode had better reason to be.

Best Sport

"His best loved sport was strange and perilous. The wooded portions of his Wild Woods property were roamed by black bears, killers of game and sometimes robbers of sty and henroost. Hampton habitually wintered at Wild Woods. in his huge house that was built on the order of a big hunting lodge and gathered there friends who loved the chase. Again and again he would pursue bears with a pack of hounds.

"The leaping, bulging pack was well trained in scenting and chasing this particularly perilous quarry. The hunter followed it at a gallop to where, its back against a trunk or thicket, the bear reared on its hind legs and lashed out with its front paws, boxer fashion, at the clamoring ring of hounds just out of reach.

Then Wade Hampton swung out of his saddle. With one hand he drew from its sheath a long, keen and heavy knife, almost a sword in size and design. Commanding the dogs to get out of the way, he charged in.

"It was always over in a moment—a darting swing of the huge talon-armed paw, a quick dodge by Hampton to avoid it, a deadly counter-stroke with the steel. Bewhiskered, indomitable, sure of foot and blade, Hampton must have looked like the Assyrian kings, pictured in ancient bas-reliefs as they slew lions in hand-to-hand grapple. Not only once did he thus kill a bear at close quarters, but fully 80 times, twice the number that Jules Verne imaginatively credited to Michael Strogoff. Sometimes he failed to dodge quite clear of the raking claws, and bore the scars on his body throughout his life, but no bear ever escaped him once he and his dogs caught up with it. And on one occasion at least he displayed the derrick-like strength of his arms, legs and back, by stooping, lifting unaided a big furry carcass that weighed full 400 pounds and with a sudden surging effort throwing it across the saddle of a horse."

J. Frank Dobie

NOV 3 1957

Charlie—a Most Unusual News Vendor

San Antonio Light

By J. FRANK DOBIE

The first newspaper boy I heard cry, "Pai-per! Pai-per!" captured my heart and fired my imagination. That was in San Antonio in front of the long-ago demolished Maverick hotel; as a collegian I was stopping overnight on my way home for Christmas. In those days, except perhaps in very large hotels in the largest cities, newspapers were not for sale at hotel desks or cigar counters in the early morning.

Dobie

I was an early riser, and as I stepped out of the Maverick hotel onto Houston st.—the main street of the city—two bright-voiced and, as I soon saw, bright-eyed newsboys spotted me simultaneously from two directions at equi-distant spots. Here they came a-tearing and a-yelling, arriving at the target exactly at the same instant. Now, at this time, 1906 or 1907, a nickel was an appreciable amount of money to me, as it was to a majority of people over the nation. I had not asked for a morning paper but decided right there that I needed two nickel's worth of the paper. I made up for the extravagance by not having bacon with eggs for breakfast.

From that day to this I have not bought a newspaper inside a hotel where it was possible to buy one from a newsboy outside. Nowadays the outside vendor is likely to be oldish man who merely stands near the entrance without running or crying his wares. Around many big hotels in cities there is no newsboy at all.

Lamb Essay

Not long after I became acquainted with newsboys I read Charles Lamb's essay on "Chimney Sweepers." In it he describes a great-hearted feast that a man named Jem White used to give the chimney sweepers of London every Christmas. That feast is as warming to human spirits as Bob Cratchitt's Christmas dinner in "A Christmas Carol." Since reading Charles Lamb on the chimney sweepers of London I have associated newsboys everywhere with them. As I seem to recollect, some fine gentleman used to give the newsboys of a Texas city—maybe it's Houston but I can't be sure—a Christmas feast.

I doubt if any city anywhere has a higher percentage of characters among the newspaper vendors on its streets than Austin. Some of them left boyhood decades ago; one is a woman; one went to England to see Queen Elizabeth crowned. Some that I have known by sight and voice for years I don't know by name but often wish I knew the history of.

Until something over a month ago I knew Charlie only by sight as now and then I encountered him selling the noon edition of the afternoon newspaper. Then he became a part of my life.

Born in Austin

His full name is Carlos Gonzales. He is 42 years old; he and his wife have two boys and one girl, all in school, two of them to graduate soon. He was born in Austin. He is low-set and slightly crippled. His whole countenance exudes benevolence, good will, gladness for life; his greeting is beams of sunshine going from a good heart into whomsoever he greets. He is one of those people who bless the world by merely walking around on its surface among Adam's descendants. And a long time ago I got the ineradicable impression that Adam was terribly dreary company, always droop-mouthed over Eve's sins and never glad at all over what a jolly time he had had with Eve before the apples turned rotten.

Charlie's main business is supplying the patients of the three main hospitals in Austin —Brackenridge, Seton, and St. David's—with newspapers, morning and afternoon. He seems to have a kind of monopoly on this business, most benevolent of all monopolists, knocking at every door on all the floors (a part of Brackenridge excepted) offering in a not at all money-grabbing manner the chief literary pablum of thousands of worthy citizens. He has a car to carry the papers to the hospitals.

Real Purpose

It was while I was still in an oxygen tent in this delightful retreat from worldly cares called St. David's hospital that Charlie became a part of my life. I kind of wanted the morning paper to see what kind of stupidity Dulles was announcing, or what new example of ignorance of reality the president was exhibiting, or how fast the stock market was going to hell, etc.; but what I really wanted was a little visit with Charlie. I named my morning nurse Morning-Bringer and Charlie Las Mananitas, which cannot be translated literally but which means the dawnings or the dawn-songs.

Almost from the first the greetings between me and Charlie were in Spanish. They carried me back to the horses and ridings and vaqueros of my youth. "How did you dawn?" I would ask, which is perfectly idiomatic Spanish, used more among us country people than among the country-clubbers. "With health, thanks to God, and how did you dawn?" Charlie would respond. "Getting health, gracias a Dios."

Charlie would be smiling. He might touch my foot or leg with a hand. He would pass on and my heart and lungs would be a lot lighter.

One Sunday morning he came by with a very heavy load of Sunday papers so freighted with advertisements. He looked almost exhausted. I thought of his poor feet. I told him that when I got out I was going to find a gentle pack burro for him to lead up and down the halls carrying his load on a pack saddle. He said that might not be allowed. I wanted him to take home one of my beautiful roses. He said no, that it would wilt, but that with him it was the same as though he had taken the gift.

Rolling Table

On Monday I requested an interview with the hospital manager, Mr. Lloyd. He came and I asked if it would be all right if Charlie used one of the rolling tables on days of heavy newspapers. "Surely," he said. "We all know and appreciate Charlie." On Tuesday I told Charlie what was going to happen. Something like tears were in his eyes. Wednesday morning he said that he had dreamed about me the night before. Thursday Mr. Lloyd came by and said he had notified Charlie how and where to get a table with rollers every Sunday.

On Sunday morning there was a knock at the door and Charlie pushed in his roller-coasting table loaded with a few hundred pounds of papers. His face was like the rising sun. "Here is my little burro," he gleamed, petting the machine.

One time, one blessed nurse told me, a man in agony (who soon thereafter died) told Charlie when he appeared at the door with newspapers that he needed prayers worse than he needed any newspaper. "I pray for you," Charlie said, whereupon he put his papers down on the floor, knelt at the foot of the man's bed, and offered up a prayer out of his sympathy and faith.

Some people believe as simply as they feel. Charlie is one of them. Some keep on feeling simply after they have become intellectually liberated from all religious creeds. Both have their rights and their uses. I suppose I'm one of the nonbelievers. But it seems to me that in this world we are all children wandering on a darkling plain. I'm very thankful that Charlie exists, that he took my hand for a while, and that I could take his.

J. Frank Dobie

San Antonio Light 2-9-58

Now It's Time for More Centipede Lore

I grew up, you might say, along with centipedes and other creatures natural to the country. Occasionally I saw an old centipede, purple or blue or red in color, maybe six inches or more long. I don't recall ever seeing one 12 inches long, the size attributed to centipedes in the tropics. One of those old blue-black fellows six inches long is plenty wicked looking. We heard stories of how the flesh would rot away after a centipede had crawled across it. After I arrived at the years of accountability I took such stories to be folklore. I find, however, in "Field Book of Natural History," by E. Lawrence Palmer, published by the McGraw Hill Book co., New York, that some species of centipedes kill cockroaches and other insects for food by forcing poison through openings in their claws. This encyclopedia says that certain centipedes will kill many small animals but are not dangerously harmful to man though sometimes painful.

On Jan. 12 my Sunday column took centipedes very seriously. Now I have a letter on the subject from Plumtree Joe — that's the way he signs his name—of Brownfield, Texas, one of the gayest and most satiric letters I've ever received. I'm aware of the fact that some people have to have satire explained to them as minutely as Einstein's theory on relativity. Here is Plumtree Joe on centipedes.

"There is an old gyp rock house on the home farm where I grew up. The walls are nearly three feet thick and the scars of arrows and bullets are both inside and out. The roof is held together with square nails and the clay floor is stained with human blood. Centipedes, spiders, and scorpions live in the cracks between the big gyp stones. They crawl out in the open when the north wind blows down the wide chimney of the fireplace and smokes them out. Nevertheless, every fall the cotton pickers used to vie for the shelter of the old rock house. Some of them were bitten, but none of them died.

Good Year

"Nineteen hundred and twenty-seven was a good year and cotton opened early. A man and his wife with three husky boys moved into the old house that fall and when they had been there nearly a month the man inquired about a doctor. Dad asked him the trouble and wished to know if he could help.

"'You sure can help if you just get the doctor here early in the morning,' the man said. 'Tomorrow is the twelfth and I'm going to have a mighty sick boy by then. You see, he was bit by a big centipede three years ago tomorrow, and every month on the twelfth day the arms swells and the foot bites of that old crawling devil open up on his arm. The boy nearly dies. We got to have that doctor to take care of him.'

"Dad got the doctor there early next morning. Sure enough, the boy's fever was already high and his arm was swelled and red as a beet. The 3-year-old foot bites of that centipede were black and rotten looking. The doctor stayed until afternoon and I hung around to see what he would do. He bathed the arm with ammonia and nearly everything else I ever heard of, but it did no good. Finally he began to mumble over the boy, then made something out of corn shuck and silks that looked a good deal like a centipede. He drew this across the boy's arm several times and then flung it in the fire. The boy began to improve right away. The family stayed on in the old rock house until spring, but the bite never reappeared.

Flu Rampant

"The next fall was wet and cold and the flu was rampant. Everyone had it in the town and country both, except on our farm. There were three hand houses besides the rock house. They were all fairly near our back yard. I played dominoes with the gray-bearded grandpa who lived with his son and family in the rock house, and I listened to his ghost stories while the rain and snow pelted the roof. I liked the queer old man very much.

"One evening late I saw him go up to the cistern and shake something out of a tomato can into the water. I saw him do this again in about a week. Then I told dad about it. We took a flashlight and looked down in the water. There were several large centipedes floating in the water. We cleaned the cistern out good and hauled fresh water into it. The old man was warned never to put centipedes or anything else into the cistern again. He said that centipedes was all he ever put there, and that they were good to keep off flu and colds. He said that from then on he would put centipedes in a gallon jug with a corncob stopper that nobody but him drank water out of. After that we all had our spell of the flu like the other people around us —that is, all except the old graybeard, who was still getting his centipede tonic!"

Commotion

But there is always something left that you can't laugh away. Mr. W. M. Reed of DeLeon, Texas, writes: "Your piece about centipedes made me recall an incident at an old soldiers' reunion on Caney creek in Madison county, Texas, about 1894. The ground had been used for picnics for several years. The people had built a brush arbor and a grandstand and had public speaking in the afternoon. The reunion usually ran about three days. Men had cut post oak logs and laid them along in front of and on each side of the grandstand. Each summer they would borrow planks and lay them across these old logs for people to sit upon. The seats on one side were used by colored people. One afternoon during the speaking a young negro woman jumped up screaming and a crowd soon gathered about her.

"A centipede had crawled from under one of those old logs and fastened on one of her legs just above the knee on the inside. It was 6 or 7 inches long and as large as a man's forefinger and as purple as an Irishman's nose. As there was no doctor on the ground some men put her in a buggy and started to take her to a doctor at Madisonville, two miles away. She began having convulsions and died before they reached the doctor."

Some people at certain times in certain places of the body are exceedingly susceptible to insect poisons usually not serious.

About Widow's Cow

SEP 6 1958

Anecdotes Build Bloody Legend of Pancho Villa

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Everything passes, and the time may come when some New Mexican name will be better known to the public than Billy the Kid. As it is, collectors who worship violence and can't read have run the price of certain scarce Billy the Kid pamphlets up as high as a first folio of Shakespeare might bring. Pancho Villa's name is very much faded in the United States, but it is still green in northern Mexico. The street and saloon musicians of towns in Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango still sing, with strong gritos (yells), ballads about "poor Pancho Villa." Folk ballads tend to outlive the folk narratives on which they are based, but many an anecdote and tale about Pancho Villa lives on.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Wilson Hudson of the University of Texas, who has lived in Mexico and who is editor of the publications of the Texas Folklore Society, told me this story.

About dusk one evening Pancho Villa and a detachment of his men rode up to a rancheria in which a poor widow lived. She had a shallow well that furnished the only water in the vicinity. Villa told her that he wanted his men to camp there that night.

"But, my general," she said, "I am poor. The only thing I have to support me is a milk cow. Some of your men are desperate. They will take the cow."

"No," General Villa said, "my men respect orders and they respect the property of the poor. My orders are that they molest nothing." A major was with him, and Villa looked straight at him as he spoke.

"Very well, then, my general," the poor woman said. "I trust you."

• • •

The next morning while the men were saddling their horses, the poor widow came to General Villa crying. "My cow is gone," she said. "My cow is gone. As I feared, your men have taken her."

The major, his aide, was beside Villa. Villa looked at him. "Did I not give the order?" Villa spoke, his eyes blazing in the way they always blazed when anger mounted in him.

Very timid, the major replied, "Yes, my general, you gave the order, but there was nothing for the men to eat. What could they do?"

"Then you knew they killed the cow?" Villa rumbled.

"There was no remedy," the major faltered.

"There is the remedy." And with one movement Villa put a sixshooter bullet through the major's heart.

"You will find your pay in his pocket," Villa said to the poor widow. He mounted and rode away with his men.

On Oct. 14, 1940, Carl Chelf, a geologist then with the Texas Memorial Museum in Austin, brought a man named McKee who had spent much time in Mexico and New Mexico to see me. He gave me what follows.

In the beginning of the Mexican revolution Villa had about 300 men and was committing depredations up and down the Sierra Madre country. General Francisco I. Madero, father of the revolution, posted a reward of 10,000 pesos for his head. One night Villa surprised the guards of Madero's camp and before any alarm could be given was waking up Gen. Francisco I. Madero himself.

In rawhide and steel the burly bandit stood before the little mystic who was about to overthrow the Diaz government. "You have offered 10,000 pesos for the head of Pancho Villa?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Here it is," and Villa slapped his own head.

"You, Pancho Villa?"

"Yes, and I offer 50,000 pesos for your head. I have outbid you, but listen. It is true that I have robbed many a rich man and given to many a poor one. That is why Pancho Villa has friends in every mountain and valley and village of the Sierra Madre. Long ago an officer of the Diaz army attacked my sister. I trailed him, roped him, and dragged him to death. Then I became an outlaw. I am against what you are against. I am for what you say you are for. Perhaps instead of cutting off each other's heads we might use them together."

Madero agreed, and thus the two leaders united.

Madero was murdered and Villa came to high power. How his head was for another price cut off his buried corpse and delivered north of the Rio Grande is a story for another day.

And—There's a Check Now and Then

Mails Yield Rich Reward of Fact And Philosophy From Near and Far

FEB 23 1958 FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

If there's anything more romantic to a writing man than the daily mail, I don't know what it is. He may hope for a check every day and receive one once in a month. In addition to letters from friends, he is likely to receive letters from people who are friendly to him but whom he has never met and who write because of something of his they have read. Often they tell stories or sketch characters. Many people write to get something; many to give something. With a constant potentiality of the unknown the postman helps keep the world from growing flat and stale.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Several months ago I wrote a Sunday column on natural milk in contrast to the stuff we now get after it's been boiled, pasteurized, homogenized, vitaminized and otherwise transmuted from its natural state. This article was picked up by a magazine called Natural Foods. It brought me more than one invitation to come to a farm and drink natural milk. I quote a paragraph from a New York woman's letter:

"Could you please tell me if the raw milk I get has Strontium 90 in it—I mean is apt to have it? I am assured by the Walker-Gordon people it has no DDT in it—that they guard their herd against that."

* * *

BEEF, PINT WAITING.

Naturally, I don't know whether raw milk has Strontium 90 in it or not. If the fall-outs keep on, raw tomatoes and everything else we eat will be tinctured with Strontium 90. But, like the fellow who won a bet that he would not outlive his next Christmas drunk, we are winning in what is called the defense race.

I shall not quote all of a fan letter from Ed S. Curry of Rose Hill, Kan., a man of whom I had not heard until this letter arrived. Some of it is so human and generous that I can quote it as if it didn't pertain to me at all.

"My grandsons," he says, "borrow your Vaquero of the Brush Country from me to read. I hate to have them think old-timers in this country were all like TV shows them. I was raised in Ellsworth, Kan., a real cowtown. My father was a druggist, but when I was young I drove cattle for old Captain Larkin. I hope you get this and I wish you well.

"I've had the flu and am shaky, but I still keep a few cows and a pony, and if you ever come to Wichita, Kan., find out where Rose Hill is. Anybody there can tell you where I live. I've always got a little beef and a pint of Old Crow in the cyclone cave for company, and I'd be proud to have you come and see me."

* * *

FELT BETTER SINGING.

I call the following a profound human document:

"As I grow older living in a city I think more often of happier days on the farm. One thing in particular that I enjoyed in plowing season was the opportunity to sing to my team—usually mules. In those long hours moving slowly up and down the rows of blackland cotton in Hunt County, I could sing ballads as much as I liked.

"My brothers told me my voice was poor, but the mules never complained. In those hours of work and being alone, I felt much better when I sang. Perhaps it was the singing that made me feel happier.

"Today, I have no place to sing by myself. I work in a private office, but it is so close to other workers that my singing would interrupt their work. Furthermore, the work of an accountant keeps me from being able to sing as I work. At home my wife and daughter do not appreciate my choice of ballads or my voice either. Therefore, I sing only in group singing at church, where the voices of others drown out my efforts.

"Am I different from other people or is there an inner urge to sing and to be happy by doing so?"

* * *

FATHER SANG TO HORSES.

Machinery, gadgets, urbanization have all added to the conveniences of life, but who can say they have added to the freedom and happiness of the inner man? Among the changes I've seen from the horse and buggy days to the days of the Sputniks no change has come closer to humanity than the change from privacy to crowded conditions wherein a man can't sing to himself aloud as he once sang to his mules. People go to hear Elvis Presley, and I suppose make some sort of tune inside themselves, but they act as a mob, not as individuals.

My father was one of the most cheerful men I've ever known. He was a great singer. He sang to the cattle as he drove them along. He sang to the horses pulling his buggy. He sang to himself. I knew contemporaries of his who made music in the same way. One was a vaquero who always used to whistle as he rode along.

It's been my observation that the singers and whistlers do better and are happier apparently while in motion. I remember a long time ago I was at the home of a musician in Marshall. At that time I was rather interested in collecting folk songs for the Texas Folklore Society. My host and I were sitting on the front gallery when I noticed a Negro man limping down the street singing. As he came opposite us I asked the host if he would call him in so that I could get the song. He knew the man and called to him. As he approached us he quit singing. When I asked him if he would give me the words to the song he said yes, but he couldn't give them without singing and he couldn't sing without walking. He was being truthful. Who would want to sing to an automobile, even a 1958 model? But who doesn't feel like singing to a team of horses, especially in motion with them?

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REAPING AND SINGING.

Perhaps some reader knows "The Solitary Reaper," by William Wordsworth. I quote the first and last stanzas of it:

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

'Hypocrites Can't Stay Heroes'

APR 26 1959

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Hypocrisy Held More Evil Than Any Sincere, Open Dedication to Sin

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

Like most other subjects, Western history and Western tradition are now studied and promoted by organized squads. Whether "two heads are better than one" depends upon the heads. What a first-class head needs is freedom, solitude and room to work in, maybe some clerical help; mediocrity wants to organize. Various cities—Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, New York, Washington, London — now have organizations known as The Westerners. Each puts out a publication.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The latest issue of "The English Westerners' Brand Book" contains an article ballasted by numerous footnotes on "Mysterious Dave" Mather. Several of the authorities cited in this article took their stuff from Robert M. Wright's "Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital of the Great Southwest," published in 1913. Wright was a better story-teller than any of them; he was on the ground, and what follows about the bad man named "Mysterious Dave" Mather comes mostly from him.

After speculating a long time on the age-old public liking for bad men, I've decided that it is primarily due to a sympathy for rebels, to an admiration for breakers of the rules that the admirers live by but wish they were devilish enough to defy. Furthermore, the public has an admiration for a sinner who does not pretend to be anything else, for an outlaw who exults in his contempt for thugs armed by law. A great many men prefer the morals of prostitutes to the holier-than-thou morals of gossiping dames who would like to be dowagers. There's nothing commoner in life than hyprocisy, and yet no hypocrite is ever a hero to people because of his hypocrisy. He may be a hero for a while until the public sees through his hypocrisy. If Hollywood would take him up, Tom Paine in his rebellion against conformity in thought might be as popular as Billy the Kid. They had in common fine contempt for pretense.

* * *

TOUGHEST SINNER.

Now "Mysterious Dave" Mather had made a name for himself by killing several men in New Mexico. I suppose he had done several other things to win the reputation of being not only a deadly gunman but a terrible sinner. He had come back from troubles in New Mexico to Dodge City, Kan., cowboy capital of the world, when an "itinerant preacher," a soul-saver, started a series of services in the little one-horse church of the town. This itinerant preacher had a gift, as he called it. He had a voice and whatever else it takes—none of it pertaining to brains—to stir up the nerves and emotions of human beings. His name was Johnson, and he began drawing toughs as well as church people to his services.

Having learned that "Mysterious Dave" Mather was the toughest sinner in town, he set his heart upon converting him. He moved his services from the little church to a larger building, but it wasn't big enough for the crowd, and then he moved into the largest room in town, known as the Lady Gay Dance Hall. It was fitted up with boards laid across empty boxes for seats. On a small stage at the back of the building a tall dry-goods box stood as a pulpit.

Various people had been prodding Mysterious Dave to go to one of the services, and the itinerant preacher had been pleading with him to come. One day he promised to attend that night. He wasn't a man to break his word. He had never been known to promise a man he'd kill him and not carry out his promise. All of the pillars of piety in town and a lot of other people leanred of the promise. When the hour came, the Lady Gay Dance Hall had standing room only and not much of that. Mysterious Dave was escorted to a front bench. Soon after the preacher opened up, it was apparent that his sermon was for the special benefit of the special sinner. He said that if this notorious sinner were saved, shouts would go out from the balconies of heaven that would shake its very foundations. He said that he himself would be so happy that he'd rejoice in going to heaven at once. He called on certain articulate members of the faithful to express their jubilation at the conversion of their sinful fellow citizen.

* * *

LIGHTS SHOT OUT.

Finally he called on Mysterious Dave to testify. Mysterious Dave later said he'd rather have had a dozen men there shooting at him than to have to stand up and say something. There was not anything voluntary about his action when he finally rose to his feet. He said he'd been hard hit by a bullet that had struck a vital spot in his soul, that now he felt religion pouring into him. He could feel it tingling from his toes clear up to the top of his scalp-lock. He felt that anybody who was sure of going to heaven should be helped there at the instant. He thought it would be a fine idea to start with the preacher and for all of the other testifiers to follow him in a body to heaven. By the time he pulled both sixshooters the passengers for heaven were making themselves scarce, but he shot out the lights anyhow.

Then as he proceeded to walk toward the door he yelled, "You are a set of liars and frauds. You don't want to go to heaven at all."

Not only was the meeting broken up, the power of the revivalist was broken for good in Dodge City.

A Mohammedan saying going back thousands of years has it: "Whoever has renounced appetites for the sake of approbation by men has fallen from licit into illicit appetities." The renunciation of naturalness and the pretension of piety in order to get votes has been common among politicians since the mind of man runneth not to the contrary. Probably it was never more common than in our own time, for certainly religiosity was never more rampant.

* * *

VERY ODD.

When I consider certain pretenders to piety who have been elected to high office in this country, I look with relief upon Mysterious Dave and other outlaws so favored by Hollywood and Madison Avenue. I've known two governors who taught Sunday School classes until their political careers ended — and no longer. I've known another governor who didn't join the church until he became a candidate, and who as soon as he was inaugurated advertised over the radio every Sunday where he was going to attend church. Have you noticed how it pays for any "public servant" to have his picture made at church?

It's very odd that great segments of the American public, while admiring killers and the impersonation of coarse violence, should at the same time vote for pretenders to piety. The end of education, as William James said, is to help you to size up a man. An awful lot of people are not educated.

J. FRANK DOBIE

American Statesman 2-23-58 Dup.

A Writer's Mail: Romantic Reading

If there's anything more romantic to a writing man than the daily mail I don't know what it is. He may hope for a check every day and receive one once in a month. In addition to letters from friends, he is likely to receive letters from people who are friendly to him but whom he has never met and who write because of something of his they have read. Often they tell stories or sketch characters. Many people write to get something; many to give something. With a constant potentiality of the unknown the postman helps keep the world from growing flat and stale.

Some months ago I wrote a Sunday column on natural milk in contrast to the stuff we now get after it's been boiled, pasturized, homogenized, vitaminized and otherwise transmuted from its natural state. This article was picked up by a magazine called Natural Foods. It brought me more than one invitation to come to a farm and drink natural milk. I quote a paragraph from a New York woman's letter:

"Could you please tell me if the raw milk I get has Strontium 90 in it—I mean is apt to have it? I am assured by the Walker-Gordon people it has no DDT in it—that they guard their herd against that."

Naturally, I don't know whether raw milk has Strontium 90 in it or not. If the fall-outs keep on, raw tomatoes and everything else we eat will be tinctured with Strontium 90. But, like the fellow who won a bet that he would not outlive his next Christmas drunk, we are winning in what is called the defense race.

I shall not quote all of a fan letter from Ed S. Curry of Rose Hill, Kansas, a man of whom I had not heard until this letter arrived. Some of it is so human and generous that I can quote it as if it didn't pertain to me at all.

"My grandsons," he says, "borrow your Vaquero of the Brush Country from me to read. I hate to have them think old-timers in this country were all like TV shows them. I was raised in Ellsworth, Kan., a real cow town. My father was a druggist, but when I was young I drove cattle for old Captain Larkin. I hope you get this and I wish you well.

"I've had the flu and am shaky, but I still keep a few cows and a pony, and if you ever come to Wichita, Kan., find out where Rose Hill is. Anybody there can tell you where I live. I've always got a little beef and a pint of Old Crow in the cyclone cave for company, and I'd be proud to have you come and see me."

I call the following a profound human document:

"As I grow older living in a city I think more often of happier days on the farm. One thing in particular that I enjoyed in plowing season was the opportunity to sing to my team—usually mules. In those long hours moving slowly up and down the rows of blackland cotton in Hunt County, I could sing ballads as much as I liked.

"My brothers told me my voice was poor, but the mules never complained. In those hours of work and being alone, I felt much better when I sang. Perhaps it was the singing that made me feel happier.

"Today, I have no place to sing by myself. I work in a private office, but it is so close to other workers that my singing would interrupt their work. Furthermore, the work of an accountant keeps me from being able to sing as I work. At home my wife and daughter do not appreciate my choice of ballads or my voice either. Therefore, I sing only in group singing at church, where the voices of others drown out my efforts.

"Am I different from other people or is there an inner urge to sing and to be happy by doing so?"

Machinery, gadgets, urbanization have all added to the convenience of life, but who can say they have added to the freedom and happiness of the inner man? Among the changes I've seen from the horse and buggy days to the days of the sputniks no change has come closer to humanity than the change from privacy to crowded conditions wherein a man can't sing to himself aloud as he once sang to his mules. People go to hear Elvis Presley, and I suppose make some sort of tune inside themselves, but they act as a mob, not as individuals.

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FROM 'A-BIRDING ON A BRONCO'

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM
JUN 4 1961

The Charm of Two Spanish Horses

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

I have no idea what title or headline my weekly essay will bear in a newspaper. It's seldom that any editor fiddles with my language, but I have never been able to satisfy some headline writers with my own title, though it is often manifest that they make titles without having read what they entitle. My own title this morning is "The Charm of Two Spanish Horses." It is borrowed from that delightful book "The Charm of Birds," by Grey of Fallodon, who was foreign secretary of Great Britain during World War I.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

The charm about to be offered you now is from a book just acquired entitled "A-Birding on a Bronco," by Florence A. Merriam, Boston, 1896. Florence Merriam was sister to C. Hart Merriam, at one time chief of the U. S. Biological Survey, which is now the Wildlife Bureau. I didn't meet Florence Merriam until 1929 when somebody in El Paso gave me a copy of her book "Birds of New Mexico." By then she had married Vernon Bailey, the renowned biologist. I'm told that her "Birds of New Mexico" is the best of all state bird books, but it is scientific and not personal, and so can not have the charm of "A-Birding on a Bronco."

* * *

Some birds are charming in themselves, scissortails, for example; and some horses are charming in themselves, just as some old ladies are, but no writer without charm in his style can bring out the charm of birds, horses, Rosalinds or anybody else.

In the spring of 1889 Miss Florence Merriam—and she must have been a very charming young lady—went to a ranch north of San Diego, Cal., to ride a horse and look at birds. Five years later she went again, taking her own horse this time. The first horse, she tells, was named Canelo, which means cinnamon, or cinnamon-colored, but the cinnamon had faded out of his skin and he was now white. He had been a bronco, but a Mexican vaquero of old-time cruel ways "had tamed the wild blood in his veins and left him with a fear of all swarthy skins." From here on the ways of a bird-watcher's horse are in Florence Merriam's own words.

"Now he could be ridden bareback by the little girls, with only a rope noose around his nose, and was warranted to stand still before a flock of birds so long as there was grass to eat. He was to be relied on as a horse of ripe experience and mature judgment in matters of local danger. No power of bit or spur could induce him to set foot upon a piece of 'boggy land,' and to give me confidence one of the ranchman's sons said, 'Wherever I've killed a rattlesnake from him he'll shy for years.' If the old horse had had any wayward impulses left, his Mexican bit would have subdued them . . .

* * *

"Canelo and I soon became the best of friends. I found in him a valuable second—for, as I had anticipated, the birds were used to grazing horses, and were much less suspicious of an equestrian than of a foot passenger—and Canelo found in me a movable stake, constantly leading him to new grazing ground; for when there was a nest to watch I simply hung the bridle over the pommel and let him eat, thus getting free hands for opera-glass and note-book. To be sure, there were slight causes of difference between us. He liked to watch birds in the high alfalfa under the sycamores, but when it came to standing still where the hot sun beat down through the brush and there was nothing to eat, his interest in ornithology flagged perceptibly. Then he sometimes carried the role of grazing horse too far, marching off to a fresh clump of grass out of sight of my nest at the most interesting moment.

"Once while we were standing still near a shrike's nest in a willow, we heard what sounded like a rattlesnake springing its rattle. The nervous horse pricked up his ears, raised his head, and looked in the grass as if he saw snakes, and though I succeeded in quieting him, when we went home he started at every stick and was ready to shy at every shadow. Another morning he saw a Mexican riding along by the vineyard, a man with a very dark face and a red shirt. Canelo acted much as he had when hearing the rattlesnake, and did not quiet down till horse and rider were out of sight. The ranchman told me he had been cruelly treated by the Mexican who broke him — another case of association of ideas."

Miss Florence Merriam took more pleasure in Mountain Billy than she had taken in Canelo, for though in his prime he'd been a bucking mustang, he became her petted companion. To quote her words,

"Out alone together, we were a great deal of company for each other. As soon as I dismounted he would put his head down to have me slip the reins off over his ears, so that he could graze by himself. Sometimes, when he stood behind me he rested his bridle on my sunhat, and once went so far as to take a bite out of the brim — in consideration of its being straw. If I were sitting on the ground and he was grazing near, he would at times walk up and gravely raise his face to look into mine. When he got tired, he would rub up against my arm and yawn, looking down at me with a friendly smile in his eyes.

"Birding was rather dull for Billy — when there was neither grass nor poison ivy at hand, but he had one never-failing source of enjoyment — rolling. He tried it in the sand under the oak one day, with the saddle on. Before I knew what he was about he was down on his knees, sitting still, with a comical, helpless look in his eyes, as if quite at a loss to know what to do next, having become conscious of the saddle. When I had gotten him on his feet and finished lecturing him I uncinched the saddle, laid it to one side on the ground, took hold of the end of the long bridle, and told him to roll. A droll abstracted look came into his eyes, he dropped on his knees and, with a sudden convulsion, threw his heels into the air and rolled back and forth, rubbing his backbone vigorously on the sand. After that, the first thing every morning when we got to the lake, I unsaddled him and let him roll, and then he would stand with bare back keeping cool in the shade of the trees.

"When a neighboring family were at home, their puppy would bark at us furiously, and follow us about suspiciously, but when he had been left on the ranch alone he was glad of our society. Then when I watched the bluebirds, he came and curled down by my side, becoming so friendly that he actually grew jealous of Billy, and turned to have me caress him each time that the little horse walked up to have the flies brushed off his nose, or having pulled up a bunch of grass by the roots, brought it for me to hold so that he could eat it without getting the dirt in his mouth."

J. Frank Dobie San A. Light

Traditions—On Texas

3-2-58

Independence Day

When on March 2, 1836, 122 years ago, representatives of the colonists declared Texas a free and independent republic, this parcel of land had only a brief history, few traditions and no literature. The history, made up of official papers, was unformed. The traditions of the Indians were purely oral and were unknown to the English-speakers and the Spanish-speakers whose own traditions alike were mostly of lands they had left behind.

DOBIE

Nature was here, but nature alone never has been civilization. The North Pole is nature undefiled. Life was here but life without art, literature and other creations of cultivated minds is as bare as a buffalo bed ground. Tradition, literature, art are as much what man adds to nature as architecture itself is.

One of the beginning traditions in 1836 was that of the Mexican vaquero (the cow-worker, soon to be called cowboy in English). Born and reared on a ranch in southwestern Texas, I grew up hearing all cow hands called either that or vaqueros. Until I was about grown I supposed "cowboy" to be a literary term—a term as foreign to cow people as the journalese "cowpoke" now is. Of course "cowboy" was a true cow country word farther north.

Vaquero First

The cowboy was an outgrowth of the vaquero, who was here long before Stephen F. Austin began planting colonies, some of them ranchers, in Texas. Travelers in early day Texas wrote of the Mexican vaqueros as ropers and breakers of mustangs as far east as the Brazos river. The tradition of their skills and handicrafts—particularly in weaving horsehair and plaiting rawhide—grew and spread through cowboys.

The first book in which anything of substance is to be found about vaquero work on the range is "Fifty Years on the Old Frontier," by James H. Cook, published in 1923 and now republished by the University of Oklahoma Press. Cook came to San Antonio in the early 1870s, got a job with a rancher on the Frio river and rode down there with a crew of vaqueros singing "Mi San Antonio Querido" ("My Beloved San Antonio.") Nobody has told better of hunting wild cattle in the brush by the vaqueros.

King Ranch

In 1951 Frank Goodwyn published "Life on the King Ranch." It is a book of information. His father was a division foreman on the King ranch, and Frank Goodwyn grew up riding with the vaqueros. (All the cow hands on the King ranch are Mexican vaqueros.) Frank Goodwyn dreams and sings in "cowpen Mexican." He is professor of Spanish at the University of Maryland now, but his imagination will never get away from his native stomping grounds down in the brush country towards the Rio Grande.

His novel, "The Black Bull," is the truest, the finest, the most galloping treatment that vaqueros, both inside and out, have ever had. This story takes me away to another world, a created world, a world that I also was born to and reared in. But a true work of art, of imagination, always transcends actuality, and, so, "The Black Bull" has in it more of truth and life than all the documents and reels of photography could ever show. It has carried me again to W. H. Hudson's pictures and stories of gaucho (South American vaquero) life in his "Tales of the Pampas." It has a story and it has characters. It is flavored and seasoned as only time and perspective and mastery of the art of writing can flavor and season a book.

Getting On

Take this picture of a vaquero getting up in years: "He had accumulated a delightful fund of pleasing recollections on which he drew at his leaisure. In camp his best hours for silent reminiscence came at night, when he could sit unmolested as long as he wished on a log or a bench or a stump, gazing into the embers, blending the smoke of his cigaret with that of the campfire. These delicious meditations were not entirely unmixed with a mute religious feeling of gratitude for all the blessings that had come his way * * * His wife, Cristina, was his principal source of pleasant memories. She had a beautiful body built for copious enjoyment and the production of numerous babies. In addition to much delight she had given Timoteo six children of whom Josefa, now 16, was the eldest. And now Josefa herself was ripening fast."

The ripest character in the novel is Don Augustin, a lone-living pasture man who is a composer of ballads, a singer, a troubadour. He makes verses up about the maverick black bull. The chief hunter of this bull, lover of freedom and lover of Josefa, and therefore, a divided man, is Robelin.

Loved Land

He loved the country of live oak mottes, mesquite thickets and grass "so much that when he rode through it he wanted no human company. He wanted no human talk to interrupt his enjoyment of the softly rolling mounds of sand, the tall, flowing prairie grasses, the low, crawling groves of oak." This day in expectation of roping the bull he rode the most beautiful animal of his mount, La Gallarda (The Beauty) "The grace of her movements made him feel graceful himself as he rode her, and he would have been ashamed to let the black bull see him on a less spirited steed. Perfect creatures should have contact only with other perfect creatures."

I shall not summarize the story. It is of the land as well as of men. It has good talk and humor. It is infused with the mysteries of earth and earth-dwellers. It has the right tempo—the hardest achievement perhaps of any interpreter of a country.

HOUSTON AND GREEN SAW 'EYE-TO-EYE'

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM MAY 17 1959

By J. FRANK DOBIE.

Thomas Jefferson Green was a fire-eater. "God be praised, he was a North Carolinian," his biographic son wrote. From the hour he arrived in Texas, shortly after the battle of San Jacinto, he rabidly opposed the Houston policy of dealing diplomatically with Santa Anna and Mexico.

J. FRANK DOBIE

While Houston was serving his second term as president of the Republic, Mexican armies twice took San Antonio. Houston was seemingly indifferent to retribution. He could not, however, restrain a mongrel army, with Green in the forefront, from gathering to march to the Mexican border. Before it marched he gave its commanding officer, General Somerville, orders to turn around and come back home as soon as his men had had a good look at the muddy Rio Grande.

At Laredo Somerville obeyed the order. About 300 of the Texans, whom Houston later designated as 'brigands," refused to turn back, elected Col. William S. Fisher and Thomas Jefferson Green as their commanders, and rode down the river. On Christmas Day, 1842, they crossed and lay siege to the town of Mier. How they killed their enemies, surrendered, were marched south afoot, overcame their guards at Salado, wandered for days in the desert mountains, were while dying of thirst recaptured by Mexicans, taken back to Salado, decimated by the drawing of black beans, driven on to the dungeons of Perote prison and, at last — those that had survived — were released is one of the dramatic stories of the world.

SCATTERED IN BOOKS

It is scattered through many books, but nowhere in such concentrated form as in fiery Thomas Jefferson Green's "Journal of the Texan Expedition Against Mier (1845). He begins it and ends it with vitriol directed against Sam Houston. During the imprisonment, Houston did little for the cause of the prisoners. He probably felt relieved at having some of them shut up.

After Green got back home, as a story handed down by oldtimers in Austin tells, he started one day from the capital to go by stage to Houston. The coach was ready to set out when he opened the door to enter it and there saw Sam Houston comfortably seated. He drew back, slammed the door, and bolted up to the outside seat. The dominating driver besides him cracked his whip and pulled out.

At Manor the stage stopped and Sam Houston as well as other passengers got out and stepped into the tavern. Like Chaucer's Friar, Sam "knew the tavernes well in every toun." In a few minutes, a little behind the other passengers, he came back wiping his lips with a handkerchief and looking refreshed. The driver was waiting for him. He opened the door and saw there, already comfortably seated, Thomas Jefferson Green. He drew back, banged the door with all his might, and scrambled up to the driver's seat.

The driver cracked his whip, the team lunged forward, and while Sam thumped his cane on the floor board, he fumed out, "Driver, do you know that you have with you, today, in this coach the blankety blankiest, quadruply blanked son of a blankety blank scoundrel that ever put foot on the soil of Texas?"

"Well, I'll declare, General," the driver calmly replied, "you know that gentleman up here just before you came was telling me the same thing."

READY WITH FABLES

Like Aesop, Houston anticipated Lincoln in readiness with fables. During the Texas-Mexican War his policy of retreating was under severe attack. During one camp council he said to his critics:

"You fellers make me think of a ram my father used to have back in Tennessee. This ram was strong on butting everything and everybody. He was hell on the offensive. One day when he was shut up in a pen my father tied a piece of iron to a rope and let it down from a limb overhanging the pen. The ram wore himself out butting that piece of iron, but he didn't hurt it. My father said to him, 'Old Ram, you've got plenty of grit but no sense.' That's what I think of the idea of attacking Sana Anna right now."

Along in the 1890's, as the late Fisher Alsup of Temple used to tell the story, he and another youth camped one evening at the farm of an old Texian in Guadalupe County. They were in a wagon, traveling back home from a visit to the coast. After they had cooked and eaten their supper beside a spring of water, the old Texian came down to talk. He turned out to be a great admirer of Sam Houston. He had known him well, had — he claimed — been of Houston's side when a messenger came with news of the fall of the Alamo and of the annihilation of the Texan forces there under Travis.

According to the old Texian, Houston was silent a little while after receivin gthe news and then said: "Well, I told Travis that Sana Anna was coming with 5,000 Mexicans. and ordered him to retreat. Buck Travis was a good man and a brave man. He was a school teacher and he understood figgers — but he didn't understand numbers."

Now, somebody tell me a Sam Houston anecdote — even one of the unprintable kind.

Wagon Driver's Story

MAR 2 3 1958

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM

Bobcat Kitten Brings Good Luck, Duster Oil Well Begins to Flow

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

It's a lot of fun to me not only to hear another person tell stories but to share the hearing with my readers. The fact that this procedure saves work does not lessen the fun. On last Jan. 26, Mr. E. J. Raisch, of Austin, an oldtime oil scout and also a skilled writer, supplied this column with a story about a coyote and the Pete who tells what is about to follow.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Pete drove a butcher wagon supplying meat to various camps up and down San Joaquin Valley in California. One morning when I was making up my oil scout report he wandered into the shack where I batched. He looked in the coffee pot, threw in another handful of coffee on top of what already was there and waited for it to brew. He liked his coffee so you could either drink it or use it for a paint remover.

While he rolled a cigaret from my Bull Durham he asked me about Charley Rodmaker's well up the road 20 miles or so. I told him Charley had quit and pulled upstakes. The well was dry. Pete wanted to know how come an old hand like Charley fooled himself into drilling on a section of land already as full of dry holes as a Swiss cheese. I reminded Pete that several of those old wells had reported shows of oil and said that Charley's well in the southwest corner of the section — section 32 — was a fair gamble.

* * *

WILDEST WILDCATTER.

Maybe so, Pete replied, but Charley ought to have got himself a little bobcat for luck. I looked at Pete kind of sideways waiting for him to explain his queer remark but he let me wait till he had settled down over a cup of coffee with a saucerful poured for cooling. Then he reeled off this yarn which I retell just as he gave it to me.

"Along in the 1890's while I was still mighty young, I dressed tools for Andy Proskell. He was a tall stringbean-built boy with a red head and a gambler's heart, one of the wildest wildcatters that ever stepped on a derrick floor. When he took a notion that some spot was an oil prospect he just tore his britches getting his money down on it and before you knew it a load of 2 by 12s was dumped on the bround, a crew was cutting a derrick pattern and erecting it, and next time you turned your head for another look Andy had spudded in and was making hole.

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DRILLED WELL TIGHT.

"One summer Andy was digging a hole in the Brea Canyon country southeast of the town of Los Angeles. I was his tool-dresser and worked on the derrick floor; his 18-year-old kid brother, Spud, tended the boiler supplying steam for the rig. We just worked daytime because Andy wasn't fixed to pay a night shift. Four dry ones in a row had just about run him plum out of luck and his cash and credit weren't far behind. On this Brea Canyon prospect he had bet his shirt because that was all he had left to bet. Everybody else who came to size up the location shook their head at it like you do when you go into a funeral parlor for a last look at the dear departed. Such disrespect for his judgment didn't set well on Andy's stomach; so he drilled the well tight as a drum and wouldn't give out with the dope to anybody. If he was asked how far he was he would look deadpan and growl, 'Three trees deep.' He was so sure of this hole that he had a sump (a pit) all ready for the oil when it came.

"When Andy got to the bottom of his three trees, which was 1,200 feet, we found a sand that looked pretty good and we prepared to test it. Everybody was hopped up and talked about putting on a champagne party that would last a week with no time off for going to bed. Some of those wise birds who had abandoned the well before it even got started came to watch with 'show me' grins. Well, we tested and tested and tested some more and all the oil brought up by the bailer might have greased the four axles of a Conestoga wagon but not the fifth wheel. To make it short, you wouldn't be lying much if you said the well was as dry as a fry-pan full of fresh popped popcorn.

"Feeling blue enough to shoot himself, Andy went to the tent he and Phelia, his wife, used for a home while waiting to hit the jackpot and sat down to figure his next move—if any. He was, as the saying goes, in one hell of a jam. Phelia had lots of woman saavy of this gambler she married and with comforting words and a fresh pot of coffee she got him to see the bright side of things, though it wasn't easy, things being in the shape they were.

* * *

BOBCAT KITTEN FOUND.

"Not being the kind to sit in one place very long, Andy saddled up and took off for nowhere in particular. Walking through the brush his horse all of a sudden shied and with little snorts pricked its ears toward a spot in front of them. Cocking his ear, Andy heard what sounded like the weak mewing of a lost kitten. He dismounted and parted the brush and found a little old baby bobcat just about ready to die from hunger. There was no telling how it got there or why its mamma wasn't around; anyhow, he picked it up and brought it back to camp. Phelia fed it on canned milk till it was like to bust, then fixed a bed for it in a box where it went to sleep.

"Before they turned in for the night Phelia took another look at the baby bocat and said, in a joking way, that she had a hunch it had brought them luck. Andy said, in a joking way, horse-feathers.

"Next morning, it was maybe a couple of hours after sunrise, Phelia was waked by the crying of the little bobcat; she got up and fed it some more canned milk till it fell asleep again. Before she climbed back into bed, Phelia poked her head outside to see what the new day was going to look like. But what she saw made her let go with a screech that flipped everybody out of bed standing flatfooted. Andy grabbed his gun and hopped outside to see what had frightened Phelia. Spud and me also had jumped out of our tent but none of us could do anything but stand in our underdrawers and look bug-eyed at what we saw. When we did get around to it we yelled loud enough to be heard in the next county.

* * *

DRY HOLE COMES TO LIVE.

"That hole Andy had abandoned yesterday was now a flowing oil well. It was no gusher, but the oil rose to the top of the casing and slopped over slow and steady. Phelia grabbed Andy around the neck and asked him whether her hunch about the little old baby bobcat bringing them luck was right or was it horse-feathers like he said. He said he didn't know how else to expalin a dry hold turning into a flowing oil well overnight.

"From now on that little old baby bobcat was going to be their mascot and Phelia right away christened it Lucky. And right up to the time he lost that bobcat a couple years later Andy and Phelia marched high, wide and handsome with luck right along with them."

Pete stopped at this point to finish the rest of his coffee and I asked him how come Andy lost his masoct.

"Somebody shot it," said Pete.

"Tell me about it," I said.

"That's another yarn," said Pete.

And absentmindedly putting my bag of Bull Durham in his pocket, Pete climbed back in his butcher wagon, said giddyap to the two old fat mares that pulled him around, and when they got good and ready they woke up, eased into their collars and ambled on down the road.

About Texas and Texans

JUNE

Eagle Pass Man Tells Of Coral Snake Bite

FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM JUN 21 1959

BY J. FRANK DOBIE.

"I have kept quiet all through your coyote yarns, panther yarns, javelina yarns, centipede yarns, and other yarns, but those snake stories out of Julius Caesar's time that you regaled us with on June 7 simply forces me to relate some of my own snake stories — even if they are true." Thus begins a letter from John C. Myers of Eagle Pass. If readers of this column hear Mr. Myers as gladly as I've been hearing him, we'll all be pleased. Here he goes.

J. FRANK DOBIE.

Everything from now on is in his words:

Thirty-eight years ago or so my people were farming in the western part of Wilson County. One year we had an especial amount of land planted in cotton, and it was up to my two brothers and me to keep it clean. Two neighbor boys were helping us chop a big block of cotton when papa said that if we finished it by Saturday noon, he'd take us fishing down on the San Antonio River. All that Saturday morning we five boys flashed our long-handled hoes up and down the long cotton rows. It was a race to see who would reach the end of the last set of rows first and race on free.

I was out in front, leading the next boy by about 30 feet, beating a perfect rhythm, eye on the row, and never watching where "me barefoot trod." Suddenly I stepped squarely on something squshy and yielding. My instant thought was a fresh cow chip. As I raised my hoe for another cut, the thought hit me, "There hasn't been a cow in this field since the last frost two months ago. It's a rattler." All this went through my head swifter than time can tell, while my foot was still set squarely over that old rattler. I let out a yell and left the ground with what my brothers still swear was a good 10-foot jump.

* * *

CORN FOR FODDER.

I never did see that snake, but I'd had an eyefull of snake during the long and terrible drouth just preceding the twenties. In that drouth some of the mesquites died and many wells went dry. Papa quit going to church because one Sunday the preacher in the course of a long prayer gave special thanks to the Supreme Being for sending us "that wonderful sunshine." Corn came up, got about three feet tall, tasseled out and dried without forming an ear. Papa decided to cut runty corn for fodder. We boys would cut the corn stalks in the afternoons, using machetes, and pile the stalks in small bundles. Then early in the mornings, while the night dampness was still on and before the dry fragile leaves shattered, we would gather the stalks into bundles and tie them securely with binder twine.

We knew that there were lots of rattlesnakes in the corn field, but armed as we were, we felt safe. In fact, we made quite a game of throwing machetes at rattlers and seeing who could cut the heads off closest to the neck.

One morning we were in the corn patch a little earlier than usual, before sunup, each with a bundle of twine cut into 30-inch lengths, fastened to his belt so that a string at a time could that a string at a time could easily be pulled out. Holding a piece of twine in the mouth like a calf-tying cowboy holding a piggin string, the boy gathered the cut corn stalks up until an armful was obtained; then, while compressing the bundle, he grabbed one end of the twine in one hand and, coming back around with the other end in the other hand, flung the bundle to the ground, where, with one knee on it, he tied it as tightly as possible so that it could stand when ended up in a shock with other bundles.

* * *

RIGHT ON THE NOSE.

I had tied a few bundles loosely—still half asleep, and half wet with the morning dew, when I saw the sun coming up square against me, between two rows of corn stubble. I gathered corn stalks slowly, looking at the newly risen sun, wondering how hot he would get by noon. I was lifting the bundle in my arms, when the ugly flat head and about 11 inches of a big diamond-back rattler poked up through the stalks and looked me squarely in the eye — his black forked tongue a-flicking my nose! Well . . . I scattered that bundle of fodder worse than a whirl wind scattering dry corn leaves as it meanders through a corn field. My excited yelping and swift exit from the patch caused my brothers to light out after me, but they never caught me until I was safe on the front gallery at home. After I had been sick, and had gotten my breath back, I got sick all over again, and it was some time before I got over the shakes. Our old mules had to get their sustenance from something else besides corn fodder that fall. We never tied another bundle of corn stalks that summer. Mama saw to that!

In any country abounding with poisonous snakes, there is always a certain amount of common knowledge about how to identify them. We learned early that poisonous snakes have flat heads and pits beneath their eyes.

One spring morning after a rain, when it was too wet for field work, Mama sent me to follow an old turkey hen that had stolen her nest down in the creek bottom. I was doing my best to keep unseen while keeping her in sight; she wouldn't go to her nest if aware that she was being followed. Sneaking through the brush and weeds, trying not to make any noise at all, imagining I was hot on the trail of a bunch of Mexican bandits, who were then making forays into Texas, I emerged from a thorny thicket into a natural clearing crossed by a cow trail. As I lay beside the trail picking out thorns and getting my breath back, I saw crawling across it a strange, beautiful, multi-colored snake. It stopped about two feet from me, seemingly gentle. After making sure that its head was not flat, but round and pointed, I reached over and picked it up so as to study it better. It had to be a milk snake (commonly called garter snake, also king snake) since it had several colored bands.

* * *

PASSED OUT.

While I was holding it in one hand and admiring it, it suddenly bent over and down and, on the back of my other hand, fanged two scratches about two inches in length, evenly spaced. They looked like scratches made from barbed wire. I flung that snake down quickly and stomped him, then licked the scratches. Considering the event ended, I began looking for our old turkey hen. Suddenly the poison hit me, and I found myself almost unable to breathe. In a few minutes I felt better, and then I lit out for home. In about five minutes I had another spell, only it was worse, and my heart almost quit. Mama treated my hand with home remedies while Papa cranked the old Ford up. Then we headed for town and the family doctor. On the two-hour trip I passed out several times. I had the utmost difficulty breathing, and I could feel my heart almost come to a standstill; then the spasm would end, and I could breathe normally. I found out later that I had been bitten by a coral snake, the most deadly of our native poisonous snakes; I still have two latent scars that glow under a phosphorescent light.

After our kind-hearted family doctor finished treating and dressing my hand, he said, "Son, why did you pick up that snake? Didn't you know that he might bite you?" "Yes, Sir," I replied, "but I didn't think he was poison. He did not have a flat head." "Well," said Dr. Oxford, "I think you are the one that has the flat head."

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