

[Charles D. Mayer]

Edith L. Crawford, Carrizozo, N. Mex. Charles D. Mayer, Carrizozo, N. Mex. Words 1152 JUL 19 1938 2nd PIONEER STORY. I have lived in Lincoln County New Mexico for fifty-four years. I was born in New York state and grew up in the state of Ohio. I left Ohio when I was twenty one years old and came by train to Las Vegas New Mexico in the latter part of 1883. Soon after arriving in Las Vegas I heard of the White Oaks gold mines so I left Las Vegas for White Oaks. I went by rail from Las Vegas to San Antonio New Mexico and from there to White Oaks by freight wagons as there was a train of wagons freighting into White Oaks at that time. These wagons were drawn by mules and horses and it took about a week to make the trip. I arrived in White Oaks in the early part of January 1884, and it was very cold weather. There were not very many buildings in the town at that time and what few there were were built of logs. I opened up a blacksmith shop and did work for the miners and also shod horses, mules and oxen for the freighters and for the farmers in the surrounding country. I ran my blacksmith shop for twelve years, sold out in 1896 and went into the general merchandise business there in White Oaks. After the mines closed down in White Oaks I moved to Carrizozo and put in a general merchandise and grocery store which I ran until my health failed and I retired from business in 1929.

When I first came to Lincoln County it was two hundred and fifty miles from east to west and one hundred and fifty miles from north to south, making it one of the largest counties in the state. First Eddy and Chaves counties were cut off from Lincoln County, then Otero and the last one cut off was Torrence, and still Lincoln is a fair sized county.

In the year 1886 I was appointed deputy sheriff for the White Oaks 2 district. My first man hunt as deputy was for a man named George Musgrave, who killed a fellow by the name of George Parker at a round up camp. Parker and Musgrave had been partners in the cattle business with headquarters about thirty miles east of Rockwell. They were caught with some cattle that did not belong to them and Parker went before the grand

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jury and had Musgrave indicted for illegally branding these cattle. In some way Musgrave was tipped off that the law was looking for him and he skipped out to Arizona. There he met a man called "Black Jack" and the two went into the cattle business in the Hachita mountains in Arizona. This man Black Jack would never tell where he was from or who his parents were. They told [?] him that he could offer up a prayer as long as his rifle, and a good prayer too, so he must have been brought up in a christian home as a boy. After these men had worked together for a while Musgrave told Black Jack that there was a man in New Mexico that he wanted to go back and kill and asked Black Jack if he wanted to go with him and help do the job. They set out for Lincoln County and came by the stage coach road. At the head of the Mal Pais they held up and robbed the White Oaks stage coach. They went on to Lincoln and inquired if there were any round ups going on in the county. They were informed there was one going on up on the Mesa above Picacho New Mexico. The two men left at once for the round up and arrived at the chuck wagon just before dinner. Musgrave knew all the cattlemen and the country real well. When they got to the chuck wagon Musgrave asked the cook if George Parker was with the outfit. The cook replied that he was and would be in for dinner in a short while. Musgrave, Black Jack and several cowboys were eating dinner when one of the cowboys 3 pointed to a rider coming in and said, "there comes Parker now". Musgrave turned to the cowboys and said, "Boys, I have traveled one tho'usand miles to kill that fellow and I guess I will do it now." Musgrave and Black Jack rose and picked up their rifles. Black Jack said to the cowboys, "Now this is our fight and I will kill the first man that interferes." Musgrave walked out to meet Parker and told him to get off of his horse. Just as Parker hit the ground Musgrave fired and Parker fell, mortally wounded. Parker was riding a brand new saddle and Musgrave took his old saddle off his horse and put Parker's new saddle on it and the two men, Musgrave and Black Jack, rode away toward the Diamond A ranch, near Roswell. Andy Neighbauer was foreman of the Diamond A outfit at that time and these two men stopped there at the ranch and exchanged their tired and worn out horses for two nice fat fresh horses and went on their way. They took the same route back to Arizona that they had traveled coming in to Lincoln county and again robbed the White

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Oaks stage coach at the head of the Mal Pais, at the very same place as before. I was in Roswell at the time and as I was the deputy sheriff I was asked by the sheriff, George Curry, to form a posse and follow these two men. I went to White Oaks and picked five good men, Sam Wells, Frank Crumb, Charlie White, Earnest Octen and a fellow by the name of Zutes. (He was from Kentucky and a brave man. I never knew his first name, we always just called him "Zutes.") We started to follow Musgraves and Black Jack. We crossed the San Andres mountains and came out on the Jordano Flats and on to the Rio Grande river. When we got to the river it was on a rampage and running bank full of muddy water. We stopped and debated as to how we could get across 4 witho'ut losing too much time. There were lots of whirl pools in the river and we were afraid of getting into one of these, but finally decided to take off our clothes and put them in a tow sack and tie them on our saddles. I jumped my horse off in the river and caught hold of his tail and swam across safely. I watched each man cross in the same way, then we all put on our clothes and headed due west. We traveled for two days and when we got to within about one mile of Fairview, New Mexico, we stopped to rest our horses and decide what to do next. We decided that I should go on into Fairview and see what I could find out. I went to the post office and met the postmaster and told him my mission. He said he was also a deputy sheriff and would do anything he could to help me. He pointed to a man leaning against the hitching post and said, "See that man there, he owns a ranch in the [Mogollon?] mountains and it is headquarters for all the cattle and horse thieves and you are going into a very dangerous and rough country for these men." He advised very strongly that we turn back. I went back and talked it over with my posse and it was decided that we would not go on any farther. We came back thro'ugh the Black Range by way of Magdalena, Socorro, and San Antonio New Mexico, where the Santa Fe Railroad had built a bridge across the Rio Grande river and we crossed safely on that. We arrived home tired and worn and had failed to got our man. Under the laws of New Mexico we were not entitled to any mileage or fees as we had made no arrests, but Sheriff George Curry went before the County Commissioners and asked them to allow me my actual expenses which was around \$80.00, which they did.

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On one of the first passenger trains run on the El Paso & Northeastern railroad, a cowboy got on the train at Corona New Mexico. 5 When the conductor came around and said, "Ticket, Please," the cowboy replied, "Hell, I have no ticket, but if you will stop this train I will go back to Corona and get one." The conductor told him that he could not do that but the next stop would be Carrizozo and he could get a ticket there and asked, "Where do you want to go?" The cowboy replied, "To Hell." The conductor smiled and said, "Well Carrizozo is as near as we can get you," so the cowboy stayed in Carrizozo.

NARRATOR: Charles D. Mayer, Carrizozo, New Mexico. Aged 79 years.