

## [B. M. Halbert]

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Folkstuff - Rangelore

Range-lore

Elizabeth Doyle

San Angelo, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

B. M. Halbert of Sonora, Texas, is one of the oldest and most interesting characters of that section which is known as the "Ranchmen's Paradise."

"I've been here a long time," said Mr. Halbert, "but I've never learned to like cows yet, maybe because my father made me milk them when I was a boy. Talk about a goat a-stinkin', why I'd rather smell a dozen goats than one old wet cow. You know they always smell worse when they're wet and then is when I had to milk.

"I'm a great sheep and goat man but never liked cows and to this good day when I see one of the critters C12 - Texas - 2 I always want to join the five W's, an organization which the old boys used to have in Sonora. The five W's stood for: We Won't Work, Will We, which was a joke of course, but one which ran high and afforded lots of fun for the cowboys. All sorts of variations were given to the title and each one seemed more ridiculous than the other.

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“The new fellows were always in for it when they hit Sonora whether as cowboys, sheep herders, or dudes. One especially that I recall right now was a young fellow from Galveston who came here to live. He wore toothpick shoes and was the object of much scorn because of them. He worked in Major Deberry's store by day and stepped high and handsome by night. He was in his most imposing outfit one night, when ready for a dance, three cowboys made it up to get him. One attempt after another was made at the bar to start a fight with him. After several drinks, one cowboy proceeded to spit upon the highly polished toe of one of the “toothpicks”. Wham, went the toe of the “toothpick” right under the cowboy's chin and before the other two could realize what was happening a fist had punched each of their chins and they were of no further use. The fight was over to every one's surprise and the wearer of the “toothpicks” was never molested again.

“Speaking of Deberry recalls a joke on him. He came out of his store one morning with his shot gun loaded for birds and upon seeing a mass of blackbirds right in the middle of the street became so excited with the thought of blackbird pie that he fired right into that bunch of birds. No sooner done than regretted, for he realized his mistake as soon as the crowd began to gather in much excitement, thinking that a brawl was on and a murder had been committed. Silently the major picked up his birds, put away his gun and went to the courthouse to pay his fine. By the time he had done that and set 'em up to everybody, his pie had cost him \$25.00.

“Pranks and jokes have always been my hobby but I nearly lost the friendship of one of my best friends, Dave Woodard over at Coleman, Texas, with my two-faced nickel. I won \$18.00 off of him with this nickel which a Coleman jeweler fixed for me exactly alike on both sides. Two years after we had ironed out our differences the nickel got away from me but later showed up in a thousand dollars worth of change from a San Angelo bank. I used it and showed it to many after I got it back but finally it got away again and I am still looking in all my change for my two-faced nickel.” Range-lore

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

B. M. Halbert, Sonora, Texas, interviewed, November 15, 1937.