

[Hillard J. Hay]

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[?????] Interview [10?]

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Gauthier, Sheldon F.

Rangelore.

Tarrant Co., Dist., #7

Hillard J. Hay, 68 living at 2005 Granburt Rd., was born at Sweetwater, [Mclan?] co., Tenns, Jan 1, 1890. His mother died when he was six months old, and he was reared by friends. He lived with several different families until he was 15 years old. He then went to Culberson co., where he secured work with the Black Mountain Cattle co., which was owned by F.J. Hall. Later, he worked for the Malay Ranch and other until he was 20 years old. He then enrolled as a student with the Huckelby Acadamy.

He was graduated at the age of 24. He followed the teaching profession for several years. After he quit teaching, he engaged in farming for a livelihood.

His story of range life follows:

“Sweetwater, Nolan co., Texas, is where I was born and reared until a boy of 15 years old.

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“My mother died when I was six months old which resulted in my rearing being left to friends of the family. I was taken care of by several different families, until I was 15 years old, and then I started out to make my own livelihood.

“During the years of my childhood, I came in contact with cowhands and the range. In fact, I was reared by cattlemen. Nolan co., and the adjacent territory, contained many ranches. Cattle raising was the principal business of the country. Surrounded by a cattle ranch environment, it was natural sequence for me to want to and did become a cowboy.

“During my 15th, year, I went to Culberson co., Texas. F.J. Hall owned a cattle ranch located 20 miles N. of Van Horn. The ranch was known as the Black Mountain ranch. All its business was done under the name of the Black Mountain Cattle co, I learned, at Van Horn, that the Black Mountain ranch was in need of several cowhands. C - 12 2/11/41 - Texas 2 I rode my mount to the ranch and secured a job.

“Fate Seely was the foreman and he questioned me about my experience. I, at the time, was not a roper or [horseman?]. That is not as efficient a one was supposed to be in order to be classed as a cowboy. I was what the cowhands called a greener. I could ride a horse in the ordinary way and throw a lasso, but the real knowledge of roping a beast or handling a horse was not, as yet, learned by me.

“At about the end of my statement to Seely, Hall, the owner, came to where we were talking and Seely repeated my statement to Hall. The two men said they needed experienced cowhands, but if I was willing to learn, they would let me go to work and would try me out. My wages was set at 75¢ per day. Of course, in addition to my wages, I received my board.

“Seely and Hall were pleased by what I told them about being certain I could learn to do the work. I told Seely that I had an older brother who could ride 'em with the best of riders. If he could ride I could learn to, because I was sure I had the same amount of riding blood

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in me. The two men took a liking to me and for this reason I was given a chance to learn the work.

“Seely taught me to ride. His method was the tough system. He gave me one mount after another to ride which threw me. I guess I [w s?] thrown 40 times. The last spill injured me some and Hall reprimanded Sheely, because assigned me to horses which were hard pitchers. To use Sheely's words, he said,” Well I want to see how much sand 3 the kid has in his gizzard.” The time I was hurt, I lit on a rock and skinned my face, broke my nose and strained a shoulder, but I still was willing to try again. The method of teaching was changed and I was told what to do to prevent the spills. I was the object of some sport on the part of the cowhands and brought on most of my riding troubles.

“The boys told me I must be properly equipt to ride and ten gallon hat along with a heavy set of suprs were necessary. They told me the proper way to ride 'em was to put the spurs on the animals side and beat it over the head with my hat, and yell while doing so. They said such would convince the hoss / I was boss. I followed their suggestions, but each of the horses threw me before I could convince them I was boss.

“After I learned more about a horse, I discovered that I did the wrong thing with a broken horse and for a rider that was not, up on his riding. I was causing these horses to pitch a great deal more and harder, than they would have pitched if I had not yelled, clubed their ears with my hat and raked their sides with spurs. If one is a top rider, the spurs can be used to discourage a horse and compel it to become docile to one's commands.

“After I was injured, Sealy said: 'I am going to teach you how to ride I 'em.' He told me a simple and fundamental principle about riding a horse, which is to swing one's body with the movement of the horse, and to watch the horse. A horse will indicate its movements. Of course, one must learn the indications, which are muscular 4 movements. These movements precede the action and are a tell-tale of what is to follow.

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“A greener was always a source of amusement for the cowhands and I furnished plenty of amusement trying to ride the first few horses.

“I must tell of another greener stunt I pulled which gave the boys some fun. Four of us were riding near a creek bottom and I heard suddenly, coming from the creek bottom, the scream of a woman. It sounded as though the person was in great danger and distress. I said to the boys, 'some woman is in trouble. Let's go to her aid.' But, no one seemed interested in assisting the woman. The apathy of the boys riled me, and I cursed them for their lack of chivalry. They accepted my triade gracefully and said: 'If you want to get messed up with some female, go on ahead. We are staying clear of the deal.'

“Thinking that the boys were a hard hearted lot of fellows, I left the party and rode in quest of the distressed woman. The screaming stopped as I approached the bottom. Naturally, I thought the poor woman was dying or dead. About the time I was entering the bottom and its timber, I heard the other cowboys yelling. I turned to look and ascertain what was the cause of their warning, and saw them riding towards me. I then waited till they rode up to where I was at. The lot of them were laughing. I asked them what was so funny. They told me I was riding to a she-cat alright, but one with four legs. That if I was not careful the cat would get me.

“The scream I heard was the cry of a panther. If I had been 5 alone, I would have ridden into the timber, and by chance would have rode beneath the tree's limb on which the panther was sitting. The party of cowhands circled the tract where the sound came from and located the panther. One of the boys shot it. So we got the animal instead of it getting me.

“There were an average of 30 waddies employed on the Black Mountain ranch. In addition there were eight men which worked with the chuck wagons. We had two chuck wagons and with each were a cook and second cook, to general helpers and for wranglers. The cooks and their assistance did the cooking. The two general helpers, with each wagon,

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washed dishes, gathered wood, totted water and assisted the wranglers or any other job which was necessary to be done.

“The horse wranglers looked after the [remuda?]. It was their duty to keep the remuda supplied with saddle broken horses, and to care for the animals. There was an average of [six?] horses kept in shape for each range [?] worker. The horses not being used were tethered on grazing ground. With each chuck wagon was a remuda containing about 100 horses, which had to be tethered and watered.

“In addition, the wranglers had to break the wild range horses to the saddle and rain the animals for cow work. A part of each day the wranglers devoted to breaking and training horses.

Horses were used up fast on the range. To be fit for range work, a horse must be in tip-top shape. There is lot of hard and [f?] 6 fast riding to do over rough ground. Therefore, the moment a horse shows some defect it is no long [?] for range work.

“It the time I went to work Hall, the range in the Culberson co., section was still open. In the vicinity were several ranches which ranged from 5,000 to 10,000 head of cattle. Among the most prominent ranches were the Black Mountain, Duncan, Stevens Cattle co, Maly and Ad Camey's ranch.

“The ranchers held a general roundup once each year, which was in the Spring. About every three months the Black Mountain ranch held a roundup of their carrle cattle. This local ranch roundup was for the purpose of cutting out sale stock, which generally were [?].

“The Black Mountain ranged about 4,000 breeding cows and the calf crop averaged about 3,600 head.

“Hall shipped around 60 car loads of stock every three months. The cars were loaded with about 30 head to a car. As a rule the other ranchers shipped at the same time and

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generally about 300 car loads of would move out of the Van Horn district during the course of a month, every three months.

“Our own roundup generally required about six weeks time to complet. The general roundup required about three months time. Therefore we were occupied with the general roundup and our local roundup most of the year.

“During the intervals between roundups we relaxed, having just the range riding to do watching the herd. We were always ready for herd drifting, which took place during storms. The 7 extent of any drift depended on the severity of the storm. The country W. of our range was mountainous and the cattle would drif to the hills. The only objection to the drift, in the Van Horn district, was the danger of the herds mixing, which caused a great amount of work when cutting out cattle for shipment.

“The cowhands of the Black Mountains ranch were divided into two crews, using a chuck wagon for each crew. The chuck wagon was our home most of the time, but we lived well.

“The chuck wagon was always packed with a varity of canned goods, and a plentiful supply of bacon. Being that there were thousands of yearlings on the range, there never was a shortage of prime yearling beef meat on hand. Hall was very particular about having a large varity and supply of food on hand, and insisted that the cooks do a good job with their cooking. If a cook was not able to meet Hall's standard set for cooks, the fellow did not stay long on the job.

“We slept in the open and on the ground. We rolled up in our blankets during cool weather. In the Southwest section of the country, the atmosphere is dry and there is no discomforture about sleeping in the open. In fact it is more preferable than sleeping in the house.

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During my days on the range in the Southwest part of Texas, the country was not wild and tough, as it was during the '70s and '80s. However, the six-gun was the constant companion of the citizens, and occasionally an affary would take place.

“The professional rustler did not give the ranchers much trouble with rustlers. The greater part of the trouble over cattle was between the ranchers themselves. The trouble came about [through?] branding doggies.

During the general roundup it was proper for a branding crew to brand the doggies which they came in contact with or if found on the range with [?] cattle. But, if the opportunity was [present?] most of the ranchers would not object about their crew being unable to see a yearlings mother cow. The fact that the larger the calf crop the better it was for the boss, was constantly told to the cowboys, and this fact cause most of the waddies to be over zealous with their doggie [?].

“The Black Mountain ranches' brand was the double H [?] over, made thus: . Occasionally we would find yearling running with a cow carrying our brand with the double [?] under brand [?] thus: ,, and there were times when other ranchers found the double H bar over brand on a yearling running with a mother cow of their brand. These matters were generally adjusted, but at times caused disputes and there were sereral shootings caused by arguments over doggie branding.

“The owner of the Black Mountain ranch, F. J. Hall, was killed by his foreman, Fate [?], over a dispute about branding doggies.

“Hall knew by his count that he was losing yearlings. One night we were seated at the supper table, in the cook house at headquarters, when Hall came in and accused Fate of putting his own brand on some of Hall's cattle. Fate was running a few cattle of his own on the range, besides acting as foreman. 9 “It was the custom those days for the waddies to place their guns on the table at the side of their plate, while eating. This particular evening

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when Hall came, of courses the guns were at their usual place. When Hall came in he said:

"Fate, you have been getting some of my yearlings."

"You have got me wrong," Fate answered.

"I have not." Hall replied. "I found some of my cattle with your brand on them."

"I admit I have branded some doggies, but they were not your critters any more than mine or any other person. The yearlings were not with a mother cow." Fate informed Hall.

"Each man was watching the other closely, and as Fate finished his statement, Hall started to reach for his gun. Fate picked up his gun quickly and beat Hall to the draw. Fate's shot hit Hall in the chest and the bullet entered his heart. Hall dropped and died instantly.

"After the shooting Fate went to the corral and saddle his mount. I went out to him and asked what he was going to do. He said: "The law will be after me. I want to stay out of their custody till I can think out my situation. Also, to wait a bit to see what, if any, charge [?] will be filed against me."

There [?] a canyon near that vicinity known as the Devil's Canyon. At the bottom of the canyon there are many caves, and one can see anyone approaching, from any direction, to enter the canyon. Fate went into the canyon, where many men had gone in past years to hide. He carried with him a rifle and his six-gun and a large 10 supply of ammunition.

"We cowhands carried food to Fate, and kept him posted on what was taking place relating to his affairs. He had signals, which was the whirpoorwell's whistle, to indicate who we were when approaching the canyon.

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“Officers knew where Fate was, but no one attempted to get Fate, until Frank Friend, Hall's son-in-law, offered \$3,500 as a reward for the capture of Sealy. Then Sheriff Smith announced that he was going to get Fate Sealy.

When we informed Seely about the reward and the Sheriff's announcement, he said no law would take him for the reward, [?] money belonged to Hall's widow, he was going to do his best to save it for her. Fate told us he would go with any of us waddies and surrender.

“Sheriff Smith then had a posse organized and starting for the Canyon. One of our crew told the sheriff that Fate would report to the jail with a party of waddies, but would not allow a law to take him in for the reward. But, the sheriff desired the reward and proceeded to the canyon. Seely was a fellow which every body liked,, especially the cowhands. Because of the feeling the cowhand had for Fate, and knowing how the shooting took place, the boys decided to protect Fate Seely.

“The cowhands made up a party and went into the canyon to fight the posse in defense of the cowboy. The sheriff was informed about the cowhand's action, and that they were in the canyon to prevent the posse from taking Seely. The sheriff and his men never 11 went farther than to the edge of the canyon. The posse lost all their courage when it came to where they would have to enter the canyon, and meet the cowhands. In fact, it would have taken an army to capture the crowd.

“When the posse refused to go into the canyon after Seely, the officials then sent word to the waddies that they would expect Seely to come in with some of his cowboy friends.

“Friends of Seely made arrangements for a bond which was acceptable to the State's attorney. Seely, with some of his friends, went to the sheriff's office and surrendered. Seely was exonerated when he was tried.

“The killing of Hall caused a change at the Black Mountain ranch. I had worked there 12 months when the trouble took place, and was then able to do my share of the work at any

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of the jobs, but I quit because I did not want to work under the new management, which was Friend, son-in-law of Hall.

“I was not afraid to ask for tip hand wages, which were \$35. per month. Seely had taught me to ride and I was able to ride the toughest of critters. A Mexican waddie named Garcia, had taught me the art of roping.

Garcia was an artist with the lasso, and while Seely was teaching me to ride, Garcia was teaching me how to throw the lasso. Also, how to take care of myself while handling the rope and mounted on a horse.

“I have mentioned that a greener provides amusement for the 12 old rawhides. Well, when Garcia first took me in charge, I furnished some 'op're' for the boys.

Garcia taught me how to place the loop and I practiced to perfect placing the loop in the position and at the proper time. I caught on to the swing, and had perfected my throw so I could lay the loop where I wanted it to land. Garcia then said, 'you are ready to show varguro how to put loop on cow.'

“We rode out to the range where cattle were grazing. He pointed out a steer and told me to rope the animal. He gave me no instructions, but I considered it an easy job. I rode up to a steer which started to run, soon as it realized I was after him. I swung the loop and it landed on the steer's head. I was intent at watching the steer [?] oblivious of all else. About the time the loop landed the steer turned and also the horse. I had not thought about watching my mount or making a hitch of the rope on the nub of my saddle. So, when the horse turned suddenly, I was thrown out of the saddle. The steer had the rope and was free. I was on the ground with my mount about 30 feet away.

“The steer was not pleased with the way I had treated him. Therefore, when it saw me on the ground he made for me. I started to my mount, but the steer came between my horse and me. There I was cut off from my mount and a ferious animal after me. The only

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thing I could do then was to run and yell for help. This I did with full speed. 13 "I ran in a zigzag course, forcing the animal to stop and change its courses enabling me to keep out of its way. But, I was getting tired and the steer seemed to be holding up well. When I had ran for some time I became exhausted. I then began to think that the next minute I would have to let the steer toss me on its horns. However, at this time the animal flopped on the ground.

"The waddies by all the while the steer and I were playing tag, and getting a lot of fun out of the game. When they thought I had went far enough, one of the boys roped the animal.

"After the affair was terminated, Garcia said, ' Varquero, you now remember to watch the mount and forget the steer.'

"By failing to watch my mount, I was not set for the sudden turn made by my mount, consiquently I was thrown. I never forgot to watch the horse's movement thereafter, and soon was handling the roping job.

"After I quit the Black Mountain ranch job, I secured work with the Double M Bar ranch owned by Malay. The ranch was called the Double M Bar due to its brand which was made thus:

The Double M bar was one of the small ranches. It operated one chuck wagon and ranged about 4000 head of cattle. I worked for the Double M Bar about nine months. I then was offered an opportunity to work for Ed Mc Camey, which I accepted. His brand was mad thus: , and was a mixed ranch. [?] ranged about 2000 heads of cattle and 1500 head of horses.

The horses raised on McCamey's range were a mixed breed. The 14 animals were a mixture of steeldust, wild spanish and some racing stock [imported?] from Ky. Mc Camey had tried to improve the wild horse with other blood. He succeeded in producing a beautiful horse. On his range I have seen some of the most beautiful horses that I have

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ever looked at. But, the blood of the wild spanish horse caused the animals to be fighters. They did not make dependable saddle horses for general use, but were the best of cow horses. Because of this fighting characteristic, their sale price was low. At the range the horses sold for about \$5.

“Most of the horses were shipped to La., and other Eastern markets. Those which were shipped sold for around \$25.

“Now, I must tell of some more 'op'ra' performance which I did at McCamey's ranch. It was the costume to have each new hand demonstrate his riding ability. The first morning I went to work McCamey pointed out a horse and said, there is the [?], saddle him. I saddled the horse Professor and mounted. The horse seemed gentle as a family cow. It moved off at my command taking an easy gait. Suddenly, I herd a shrill whistle, and at the same instant the Professor went into the air. The animal seemed to be contorting its body and when it landed, the horse was standing on its front feet with its haunches about it head. I was put out of balance completely, and it is useless to say I was able to stay in the saddle.

“My attempt to ride the horse taught me why it was called the Professor. The horse was trained to put on its act at the sound of a whistle, and do it quickly. The boys told many men had tried to 15 stay with Professor when the animal put on its act, but none had [?] succeeded. The ranch kept the horse for the purpose of teaching waddies how to ride.

“I worked for various ranches in the Culberson district for a period of five years. I had saved about \$500. during the time and decided to take a rest from ranch work.

“I went to Erath Co., and worked on a farm. A short time after I went to work, a representative of the [Huckleby?] Academy called and talked to me about an education. I had, up to this time, only three months schooling. I thought seriously about what the representative discussed with me, and accepted his proposition.

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I was a matured man and realized I would have to start in the sophomore class with class mates that were children, but I went and was graduated in four years time.

I received a teachers certificate and followed the teaching profession for several years. My late years have been devoted to farming.