

[E. J. Handley]

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Beliefs and customs - Occupational lore

Mrs. Annie McAulay

Maverick Texas

Runnels County

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COWBOY LORE

E. J. HANDLEY was born in Montecelli, Drew ounty County , Arkansa Arkansas , January 24, 1861. He came to Texas in 1872, with his parents in a / covered ox wagon. They crossed the ed Red river River at Dooleys Dooley's Ferry. The first [?] on the Trinity River in Ellis Co. The familiy lived near what was known thenas Telaco '(Old Telaco) They only lived there a short time and then moved on to Navvarro county and settled for a short time near Old Dresden. In the latter part of 1873 the Handley family moved to McClennan County and settled [?] Commanche Srings, twenty three miles west of Waco. They bought their homestead for fifty cents per acre. [?] was here that Mr. [?] grew to manhood. Here is Mr. Handleys story: Having lived in several Texas Counties but now a resident of Ballinger, Runnels County he relates the following story: "I remember [???] we had some very tough times after we moved to McClennan county County . "We must have had a pretty serious drouth in the late seventies. We had always depended on the streams (rivers and creek [?] for our water supply. We had to haul it some distance on a sled or wagon draw by oxen.

The water finnally finally got so scarce tht that my father decided to try his luck at digging for it , so we dug a well and struck plenty of water. I remember That was a happy day that

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was for all all of us. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 " We , as well as many others , lived mostly on jerked beef and corn ponies in earlier days. There were lots of Indians when we first came to Texas , too. You never could tell about a redskin then. But we got on with them alright. My father treated them well, and they in turn were friendly. They never molested us in any way a-tall. My mother [?] never learned to love them. She lived in constant fear that they would go on the warpath for many years. " I learned to ride when quite young. All boys learned to ride in them days. I worked for different ranch people in Central Texas for many years. I helped to make two or three cattle drives from central texas Central Texas ranches to Abilene , Kansas , before I was twenty one years old. There was usually from two to three thousand head in a drive and about twenty five men in the outfit, including the cook and horse wrangler.

I remamber [?] one trip I made with The Sealy outfit in the spring of eighty '80 . We were driving to the Kansas market about three thousand head of steers. We was were somewhere in Oklahoma when it turned cold and began raining and sleeting. We had to move very slowly. The cattle got very weak, many of them died. The men never lacked for food as there was plenty of wild game but we shore sure got cold. I'll be dadblamed if that wasn't mean weather.

We had two or three stampedes. The worst one we had was when some Indians were trying to swipe our horses one 3 night. Some of the boys discovered them snooping around and they didn't get any horses but the hallabaloo frightened the steers and started them to running. They got pretty weell scattered in spite of all we could do to stop them. We rode like thunder all that night. The Indians must have gotten a few of them. It took us all of next day to get them together and we never did find quite all of them. We shore had a pack of trouble that trip.

I joined The Texas Ranger force in 1832 and came west. I was stationed where Midland , Texas now is now . It was in Tom Green ounty County at that time. There were twenty five men in our camp. I belonged to Company B and 14th atallion Batallion . Sam McMurry was

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our Captain. John McAnnelly was First Lieut. and Sam Platte , 2nd Lieut. Gen . King was Adjutant General at the time. I voted my first year in camp for Willis Johnson for sheriff of Tom greem ounty County . He was the first sheriff.

I remember while I was at Midland, Pecos and Toya had quite a fight for the county [?] seat of Pecos County. I was with a squad of Rangers that was sent to Pecos ounty County to keep peace during the election. We had been informed there was likely to be some disturbance. Men were carrying guns for each other. There had been threats to burn things down and so on , but / The presence of the Rangers seemed to have a quieting effect , as there were no serious out - breaks. 4 Our business as rangers was not only to keep peace, but to protect the settlers from horse and cattle thieves or other molesters. We was were sent to the border of Old and New Mexico many times. In fact, that was where most of the trouble and our work was. I don't see how the country was as peaceable as it was then in those days , . [?] with thieves , desperadoes, gamblers and such. I never was in any rel serious fights like some of the boys but we was were all in more or less danger most of the time and liked it then. " Mr. Handley makes his home in Ballinger at the present time. He lived for many years at Morton where he still owns a little farm and ranch. His place together with his business of being city constable, He says, keeps him very busy." Bibliography E.J. Handley, Ballinger Texas. Early Texas Ranger and Cowboy. Interviewed Feb. 7, 1938 1 Range-lore

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RANGE-LORE

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B. J. Handley, Ballinger, Texas, interviewed February 7, 1938.