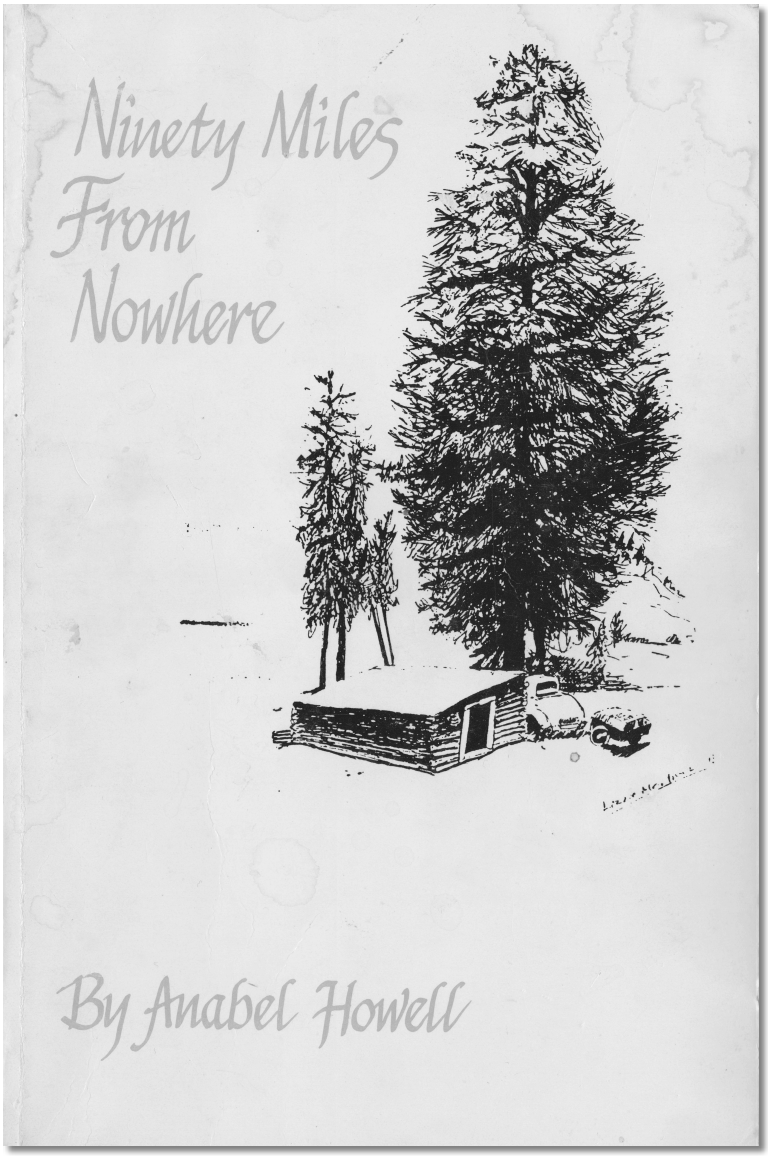
Ninety Miles From Nowhere

A MÉMOIRE BY ANABEL HOWELL



The Cover of her self–published book

Ninety Miles From Nowhere

is the true story of Anabel Howell's experiences on her homestead in southwestern New Mexico in 1931.

Anabel Howell, now 80 years old, has spent most of her adult life in the field of education. She holds two degrees in psychology and served as teacher, principal, and counselor.

She has traveled extensively, while adventures befell her everywhere she went. (From the back cover of her book, thought to be published in about 1988.)

NINETY MILES FROM NOWHERE
BY
ANABEL HOWELL

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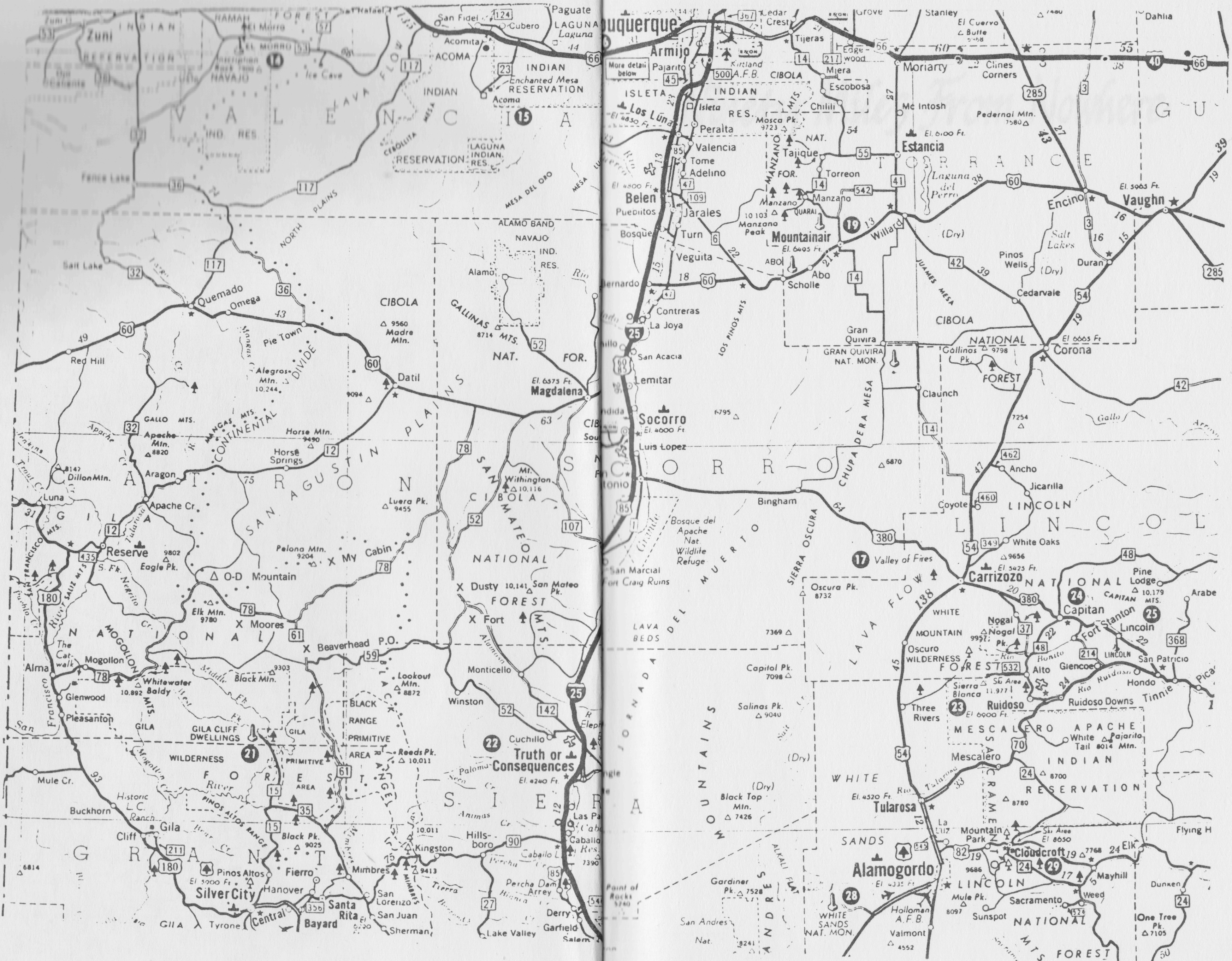
Zuni
INDIAN RESERVATION
RAMAH NAVAJO
El Morro
Ice Cave
VALENCIA
LAVA FLOW
San Fidel
Cubero
Paguate
LAGUNA
Laguna
Acomita
ACOMA
INDIAN
Enchanted Mesa
RESERVATION
Acoma
LAGUNA INDIAN RES.
Fence Lake
Salt Lake
Quemado
Omega
Pie Town
NORTH PLAINS
CIBOLA
Madre Mtn.
ALAMO BAND NAVAJO IND. RES.
Alamo
GALLINAS MTS.
NAT. FOR.
Red Hill
Datil
Magdalena
GALLO MTS.
Apache Mtn.
CONTINENTAL DIVIDE
Alegros Mtn.
Horse Mtn.
Horse Springs
SAN AGUSTIN PLAINS
Aragon
Dillon Mtn.
Luna
Apache Cr.
Reserve
Eagle Pk.
Luera Pk.
Mt. Withington
SAN MATEO
CIBOLA
NATIONAL
FOREST
MTS.
Pelona Mtn.
My Cabin
O-D Mountain
Dusty
San Mateo Pk.
Fort
Elk Mtn.
Moores
Beaverhead P.O.
NATIONAL
MOGOLLON
The Catwalk
Mogollon
Alma
Whitewater Baldy
Glenwood
Pleasanton
GILA
GILA CLIFF DWELLINGS
WILDERNESS
BLACK RANGE PRIMITIVE AREA
Black Mtn.
Lookout Mtn.
Reeds Pk.
Monticello
Winston
Cuchillo
Truth or Consequences
Mule Cr.
Historic L.C. Ranch
Buckhorn
Cliff
Gila
GRANT
Black Pk.
PINOS ALTOS RANGE
Pinos Altos
Fierro
Hanover
Silver City
Central
Bayard
Santa Rita
Tyrone
Mimbres
San Lorenzo
San Juan
Sherman
Kingston
Hillsboro
Percha Dam
Arrey
Derry
Garfield
Lake Valley
SIERRA
Albuquerque
Armijo
Pajarito
ISLETA INDIAN
Los Lunas
Isleta
Peralta
Valencia
Tome
Adelino
Belen
Jarales
Bosque
Turn
Veguita
Bernardo
Contreras
La Joya
San Acacia
Lemitar
Socorro
Luis Lopez
Bosque del Apache Nat. Wildlife Refuge
San Marcial
Fort Craig Ruins
LAVA BEDS
JORNADA DEL MUERTO
Cedar Crest
Tijeras
Kirtland A.F.B.
CIBOLA
Edgewood
Mjera
Escobosa
Chilili
MANZANO MTS.
Mosca Pk.
Tajique
Torreon
Manzano
Manzano Peak
Mountainair
Abo
Scholle
LOS PINOS MTS
Gran Quivira
GRAN QUIVIRA NAT. MON.
CHUPADERA MESA
SOCORRO
Bingham
SIERRA OSCURA
Valley of Fires
Oscura Pk.
Capitol Pk.
Salinas Pk.
Black Top Mtn.
MOUNTAINS
SAN ANDRES
ALKALI FLAT
Gardiner Pk.
WHITE SANDS
WHITE SANDS NAT. MON.
Moriarty
Clines Corners
Stanley
Mc Intosh
Pedernal Mtn.
Estancia
TORRANCE
Laguna del Perro
Willard
Encino
Vaughn
Pinos Wells
Salt Lakes
Duran
Cedarvale
JUAMES MESA
CIBOLA NATIONAL FOREST
Gallinas Pk.
Corona
Claunch
Ancho
Jicarilla
LINCOLN
Coyote
White Oaks
Carrizozo
NATIONAL
Capitan
CAPITAN MTS.
Pine Lodge
Arabe
Lincoln
Fort Stanton
San Patricio
Hondo
Tinnie
Nogal
Nogal Pk.
WHITE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS
Oscuro
FOREST
Alto
Glencoe
Ruidoso
Ruidoso Downs
Sierra Blanca
Three Rivers
MESCALERO APACHE INDIAN RESERVATION
White Tail
Pajarito Mtn.
Mescalero
Tularosa
Mountain Park
La Luz
Cloudcroft
Alamogordo
Holloman A.F.B.
Valmont
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Sunspot
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Weed
Mayhill
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Dunken
One Tree Pk.
LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST
SACRAMENTO MTS.
Dahlia
Flying H

Ninety Miles From Nowhere

by
Anabel Howell

Illustrations by
Lizzie Martinez and Barry Easter

Pine Tree Press

Peralta, New Mexico

Forward

In the 1940's I began writing a book about homesteading in New Mexico in 1931. I was unsuccessful in getting it published, but kept adding to it as I remembered things – always in the hope that some day...! Through the years no publisher would read

it. "Don't send it to us," they'd say. "We have an excess of material of this type." So, gradually I lost heart – and hope – and gave up, sold my typewriter, and forgot about it.

Almost fifty years passed by, and I felt toward my homestead life as if it had happened on another planet and in a different life. I lived in Magdalena, at the C Bar N Ranch and at Socorro, and it never once occurred to me that I could go back, even to explore.

A few years ago I had been ill with shingles for several months and my doctor suggested that I get a massage to make me feel better as he could do nothing for me. A young massage therapist from Albuquerque came to my home. During the course of the treatment, and in response to questions she asked me about myself, I revealed the fact that I had once homesteaded, back in 1931, in the southwestern part of New Mexico. She became very excited at the stories I told her about life on the homestead, and this caused me to remember more events. Later we made two camping trips to the Beaverhead/Dusty area – really roughing it since we didn't even have a tent.

We traveled the Railroad Canyon road all the way to Beaverhead and Wall Lake. We visited the site of Dad's cabin, but not a stick was left. We couldn't make it up to my beautiful Peonas, for modern cars are built so much lower to the ground than older ones that we were never able to negotiate the rocky high-centered road. We visited the Dusty schoolhouse, the old fort, and the warm springs for a quick dip. The only thing left there is the old schoolhouse and ruins of the fort.

Kate's enthusiasm encouraged me to return to my writing and to exert more effort to get it published. This book is the result of that association.

Finally, Jacky Barrington, editor of the Magdalena Mountain Mail, a monthly newspaper from Magdalena, New Mexico offered to publish the story in the newspaper. It ran for fifteen consecutive issues, and the serialization has been invaluable to me in reorganizing and finalizing my manuscript.

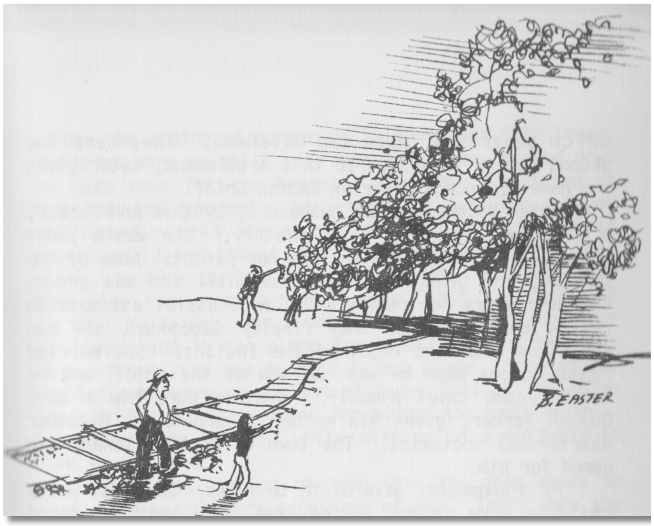
My deepest gratitude goes to all the people who helped in many ways and encouraged me.

Anabel Howell
Bosque Farms, NM
July, 1986

DEDICATION

To my young friend, Kate Brown, I wish to dedicate this book. My renewed interest in writing it was a direct result of the fact that she really listened – or, since she was my massage therapist, could it have been that she was just a captive audience!

The Wrong Century -Chapter 1



The Wild Persimmon Grove

I have always thought of myself as having been born in the wrong century. Unlike the old cartoons entitled "Born Thirty Years Too Soon", I thought of myself as having been born thirty years too late.

The time in our history which appeals to me most is the pioneer period. Then one had to rely solely on one's own ingenuity and resourcefulness in order to stay alive, and attributes such as courage, fortitude, and strength of character were at a premium.

I think I must have come by this adventurous spirit honestly – from a long line of pioneering forbears. My ancestors migrated to North America from England in the 1700's, and several generations had moved as far wet as Missouri by the 1800's. My grandfather Howell was born in St. Louis in 1846 and my father was born in Nevada, Missouri, in 1880. When my father was four years old, my grandfather moved his family of wife and five children to north central Texas, just south of Red River which separates Texas and Oklahoma. They were the second family to arrive in this settlement, later given the name of Nocona after an Indian Chief.

Petah Nocona was the husband of Cynthia Ann Parker, a name well known in Texas history. She was a young white child who was stolen from her parents' home by the Indians, and brought up by them until she was grown. For many years her family made unsuccessful attempts to rescue her, but when they finally succeeded, she ran away from home and rejoined the Indians. She married Petah Nocona when he was the son of the chief, and later became chief himself. Cynthia bore him a son, Quanah Parker, given his mother's surname as in other matriarchal societies. The town of Quanah, Texas was named for him.

My grandmother gave birth to twins, the first white children born in the entire area. My aunt was named Nocona, but was always called Cona, and my uncle was named Macona, called Coe, and later Jack.

The name Nocona may be familiar to people in the West on account of the boots manufactured there – H.J. Justin and Nocona. H.J. Justin had come to Nocona in the early days "with two bits in his pockets" and had succeeded in building up an empire in the hand made boot business. His youngest daughter, Myrl, was just my age and we were best chums all through grade school and into high school until my family moved to Oklahoma in 1921 when I was

fourteen. After Mr. Justin's death when Myrl and I were twelve years old, the Justin Boot factory was moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where it is still flourishing. One of the older Justin girls, Enid, because she felt Nocona should always have a boot company, opened a new factory there and called hers Nocona Boots.

The small settlement of Nocona was located in the midst of the broad timber belt which ran from Missouri across the southeast corner of Oklahoma and into Texas. The trees were so thick that many had to be chopped down to make room for the houses. The trees consisted of many rare and wonderful varieties, so good for a happy childhood – oaks for swings and for climbing, wild pecans, wild persimmons, hackberry, chinaberry and Bois d'Arc, to name just a few. There were more huge oaks than I've ever seen anywhere else, tall and broad of girth. My father always put up a swing for us wherever we lived, and in one place the lowest limb of the tree in our front yard was as high as our house. Some of the gnarled oaks were of ancient vintage, full of toe holds for climbing and large holes for hiding the books which I stashed away to read while sitting in a comfortable fork in the tree.

The excursions out of town into the deep woods to pick wild pecans were occasions of joy. There were the tall straight pecan trees with the many wild grape vines climbing over them. We cut off small sections of the dead vines and smoked them. It was so difficult to suck the smoke through them that we would blister our tongues. Someone told us we needed a mustard plaster on the back of our necks to help us draw.

In the late fall we children all looked forward with great anticipation to the first heavy frost. On the first Sunday afternoon following, practically the whole town turned out to walk about two miles down the railroad tracks to the large grove of wild persimmon trees. There we'd feast like a group of noisy magpies, then take sacks of the succulent fruit home with us.

Once we took some guests along on the trip with us – friends who were not familiar with the characteristics of wild persimmons. Instead of selecting the softest squishiest fruit, they chose the hardest, most solid they could find. Imagine their surprise when they experienced the peculiarly astringent quality of green persimmons that causes the mouth to pucker. A man once said that green persimmons could really help you learn to whistle.

In later years I have seen nothing except the domestic variety of persimmon from California, but I always refused them because in flavor they fall far short of the wild variety.

The hackberry trees had small twigs filled with berry-like seeds which we children enjoyed. These were very hard seeds about an eighth of an inch in diameter, covered with a hull the thickness of butcher paper. The only thing we could eat was the hull, and the only way we could enjoy it was to put the whole seed in our mouths and gnaw the skin off the seeds. It had a wonderful nutty flavor – pleasurable, at least to a child's taste.

The chinaberry trees provided us with no taste treats but with lots of entertainment. First the delicate lavender and purple

blossoms were beautiful for decorating our "play houses". Then the seeds were round and about half an inch in diameter. We invented many games for playing with them at that stage, but the real fun began after they were dried and had shed their outer husk. The seed inside was made with corrugations like a tiny, tiny pumpkin, with a ready-made hole down the center. We dyed them with our water colors and strung them for beads.

Once when I was about thirteen, my uncle Van, my brother George, my sister Christine, some friends of each one, and Myrl Justin and I walked to Dripping Springs, several miles outside Nocona and in deep woods for an all day picnic. When it was time to return home Myrl and I refused to go back with the others. After they left, we tried to become lost in the woods, but we kept checking so diligently to see if we were lost that we never were successful in doing so. We reached home after dark and oh, what a scolding I received.

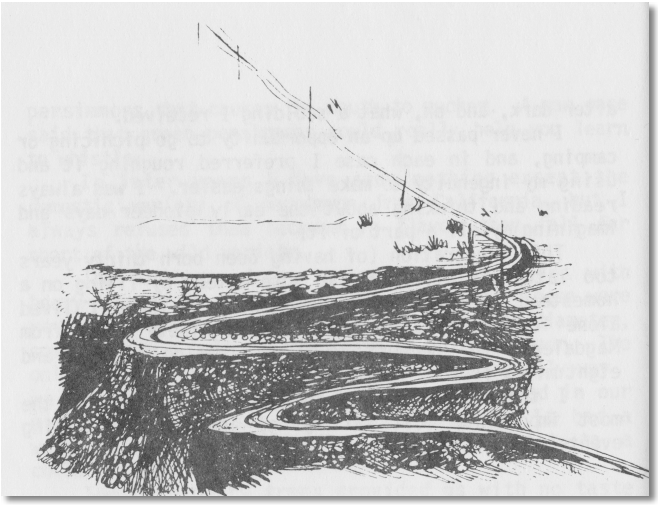
I never passed up an opportunity to go picnicking or camping, and in each case I preferred roughing it and using my ingenuity to make things easier. I was always reading and thinking about the early pioneer days and imagining myself a part of it.

This frustration (of having been born thirty years too late) was alleviated to some extent by filing on a homestead in southwestern New Mexico. There I lived alone for months at a time, almost ninety miles from Magdalena, the nearest town and trading center, and eight miles from my nearest neighbor.

I think of my coming to New Mexico as one of the most important, most satisfying, and most fulfilling events of my entire life.

Our family: (from left) George, Anabel, Dad holding Van, Red behind Dad, Mother, Christine (sister)

Hooked on New Mexico - Chapter 2



La Bajada Hill

I first glimpsed this part of the country on a trip with our next-door neighbors in Oklahoma. Hazel and Tyner Perkins and Hazel's father planned the trip so the two men could look at homestead land. I'm so grateful they asked me to share this trip with them in 1931, for it changed my life completely and affected the life of every member of my family.

I'm glad I saw Albuquerque when it was a small city of 27,000 population instead of 320,000 as it is now, and had the thrill of driving on the original La Bajada Hill with its series of hairpin turns too sharp for a truck or a bus to negotiate without backing up first.

Since it was summertime, we camped out to my joy, cooking our meals over the campfire and sleeping on the ground under the stars.

New Mexico was a totally new experience for me, since I'd grown up in Texas and Oklahoma and had never ventured beyond their borders.

From southwestern Oklahoma we traveled across the Texas Panhandle and entered New Mexico near Clayton. Hazel and Tyner had some friends south of there on ranch near the small village of Bueyeros, and we went down to visit them for a few days. All our travel was on dirt roads, for at that time there was not a single paved road in the entire state of New Mexico.

While we were there, we were taken to see a few points of interest in the vicinity. The dry ice well was amazing, with its formation of frost on the pipes as the carbon dioxide came to the surface.

Another sight that appealed to my sense of history was an old burial ground on top of a mesa. It could be reached only by way of a path which passed through a narrow opening in the rock – like the eye of a huge needle.

The structure of our host's house was unusual, and interesting to me. I had never seen a house quite like it since the Spanish influence in architecture was unknown in Oklahoma. The house was built of adobe bricks, in the shape of a square-cornered U with a patio in the center. The entire structure was only one room wide, and each room contained a door leading onto the patio. The amazing thing to me was that there were no hallways or connecting doors. In order to go from one room to another it was necessary to go outside.

When we left the ranch, we continued by the way of the inevitable dirt road through Roy to Wagon Mound where we joined U.S. Highway 85, where we camped for the night. This was in July, but it was very cold that night at an elevation of 6200 feet. I had my first taste of the deceptive New Mexico climate, and realized for the first time the differences between temperatures in New Mexico and Oklahoma. In the summertime in Oklahoma the temperature soared, accompanied by the high humidity, and usually stayed hot all night. The wind was as hot as if it came out of an oven. In New Mexico in the summertime, the temperature was very pleasant as long as one stayed in the shade, and when the sun went down it became very chilly. In the wintertime in Oklahoma, the cold went deep and one experienced shivering and chattering teeth. In New Mexico the temperature went much, much lower, but the cold did not seem to penetrate or to make us so uncomfortable. As Hazel described it, "In Oklahoma your bones get cold, but in New Mexico only your skin gets cold."

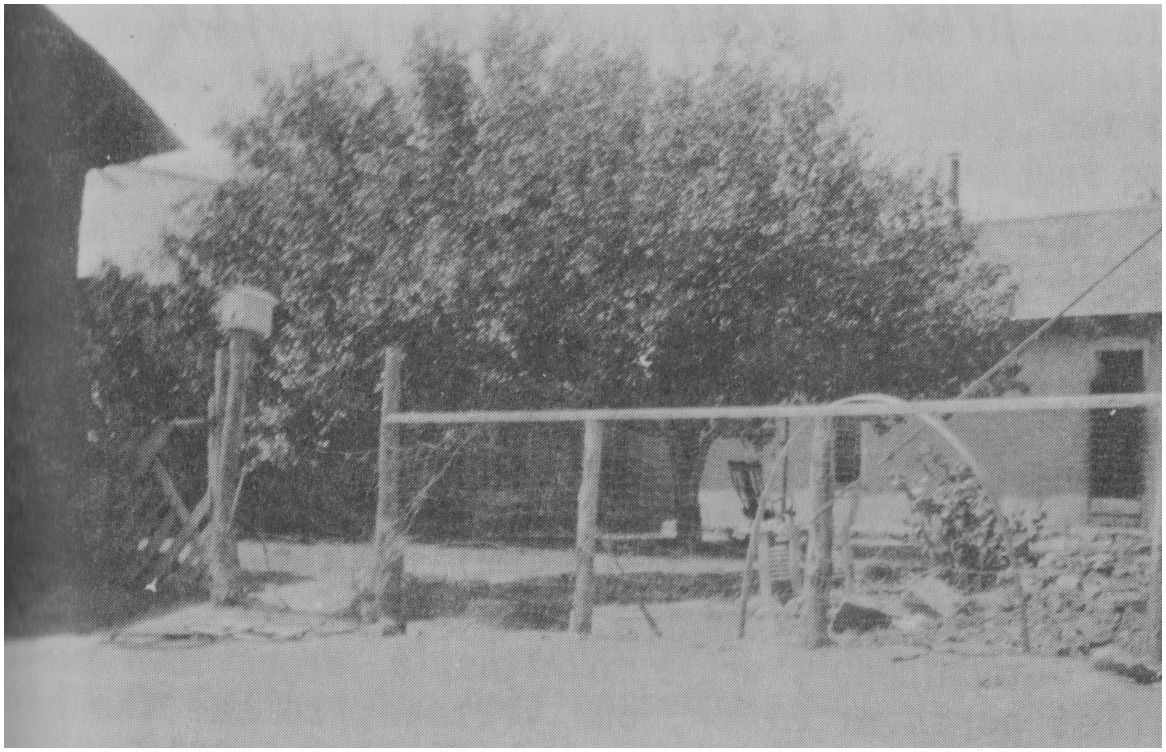
As we drove on to Santa Fe, I had my first glimpse of the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains (Blood of Christ) which were the first real mountains I'd ever seen. The men headed for the State Land Office when we arrived in Santa Fe, while Hazel and I explored the fascinating sleepy Spanish village. Wood laden burros were being driven down the narrow streets while we gazed in wonder.

Tyner was directed to the southwestern part of the state and given directions to someone who would show him available land.

It was as we left Santa Fe on our way south that we descended to memorable La Bajada Hill and saw Albuquerque. We traveled on southward to Socorro where we turned west through Magdalena and about twenty miles beyond. At that point we turned left off U.S. Highway 60 and headed for Beaverhead. After driving for about sixty miles, we came to a fork in the road, the left fork continuing on to Beaverhead and the right fork going to the O-Bar-O Mountain. We took the right fork until we came to the ranch of Dad Moore (just across the road from O-Bar-O) whose son Jeff showed Tyner around over the countryside while Hazel and I visited with the Moore women.

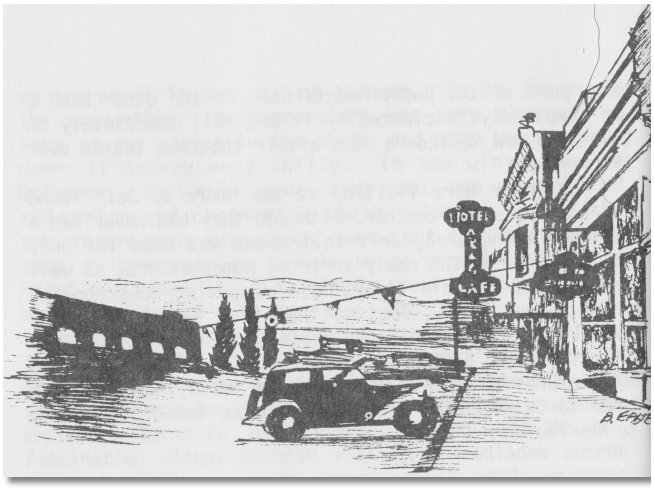
Being more interested in farmland than in grazing land, Tyner was not intrigued with the rugged beauty of this part of the Rocky Mountains. On the other hand I was completely fascinated by it an fell immediately in love with New Mexico — a love affair that has lasted over fifty years!

While we were visiting at the Moore's, Jeff found out I was a school teacher. Although they had never had a school in the area, Jeff felt there was need for one. The children of the newly arriving homesteaders, as well as those of the old timers were receiving no schooling whatsoever. He assured me that if I would return, a school would be established which I could teach and file on a homestead claim at the same time. This appealed to my venturesome spirit and I would hardly wait to get back to Oklahoma to start planning an immediate return to New Mexico.



House where we visited near Clayton.

The Long Way Back - Chapter 3



Magdalena

My father offered his car for my two middle brothers, Red and Van, to bring me back – such a simple solution compared to the way I originally came – but being an inveterate worrier, he changed his mind. His final decision was helped along by comments from the neighbors: "A young woman all alone in that big wilderness!" Also, I'm sure he felt withdrawal of his support would put an end to the whole matter. He didn't know me very well!

Determined, I drove to Altus, a larger town twelve miles north of Elmer, our village, to see the bank president. I explained to him about the promise of a school and my father's worry and refusal to cooperate, and asked to borrow one hundred dollars to enable me to make the return trip by train. I've never really understood why he unhesitatingly let me have the money, for he had never seen me before, I was only twenty-four years old, I was leaving the state to accept an uncertain job, and most important of all, I had absolutely no security – unless it was an honest face.

That return trip to New Mexico was a complete saga in itself. I left home on a Saturday and arrived at the Moore's ranch the following Wednesday night. It took five days to travel less than six hundred miles. Fast cars and improved highways of today mean that same trip can be made in one day.

Dad relented enough to let Red and Van take me in his car across the state line to Quanah, Texas, to catch a train that did not go through Althus. I rode overnight to Amarillo, Texas, where I had to change to the Santa Fe line (Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe). I arrived Sunday morning and my next train left that night. That was a long, uncomfortable, boring day in Amarillo with no place to rest. I partially solved the problem by attending several movies which at least gave me a place to sit and cost only ten or fifteen cents. I was fiercely hoarding my precious hundred dollars. The Texas Blue Law was in effect then, a law which prohibited non-essential businesses from opening on Sunday, but the movie theaters were in full swing. The owners just paid the fines and went ahead with business as usual.

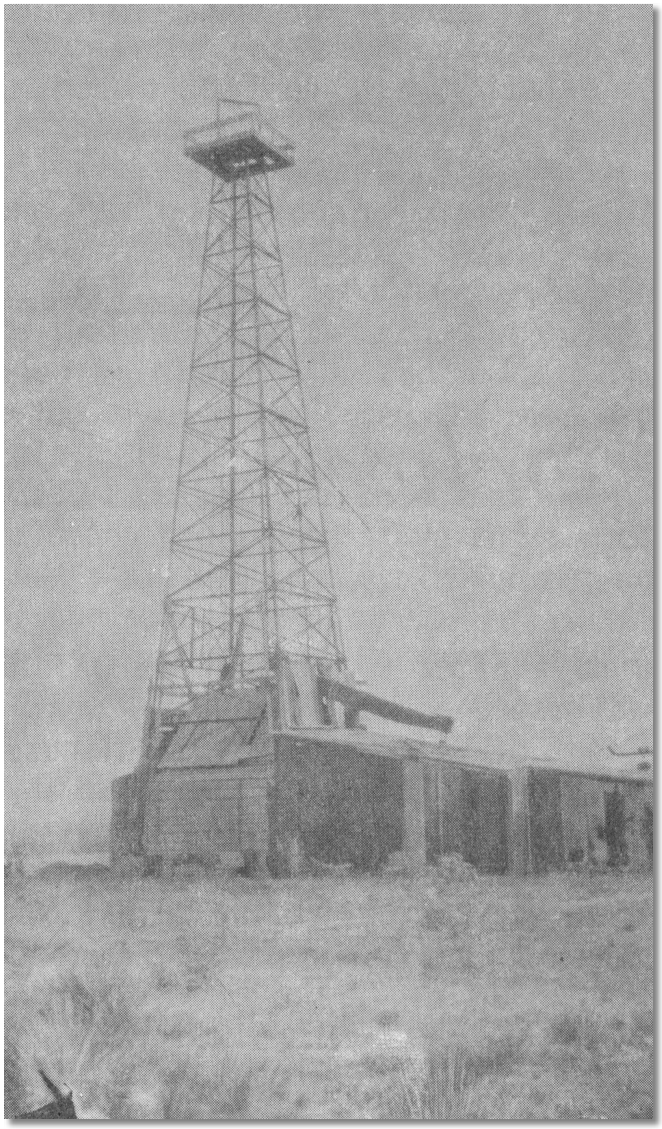
Late Sunday evening I boarded a Santa Fe train and arrived in Belen, New Mexico the following day. From there I took a short line Santa Fe train (which ran from Albuquerque to El Paso) from Belen to Socorro, a distance of forty miles, where I spent Monday night. The following day I rode the twenty-six miles to Magdalena on a spur line of the Santa Fe which went only from Socorro to Magdalena and back again. It was a mixed train with all freight cars

except one and that was half baggage and half passenger car. The Magdalena tracks had a big Y so the train could turn around and head back to Socorro.

After arriving in Magdalena, I was still one hundred and twenty-five miles from my destination with no available public transportation of any kind. I spent Tuesday night in the small Aragon Hotel on Main Street. The wall in the lobby was decorated with a taxidermist's delight — two mounted buck mule deer heads with antlers interlocked as they had died after a fierce battle and unsuccessful attempt at extrication.

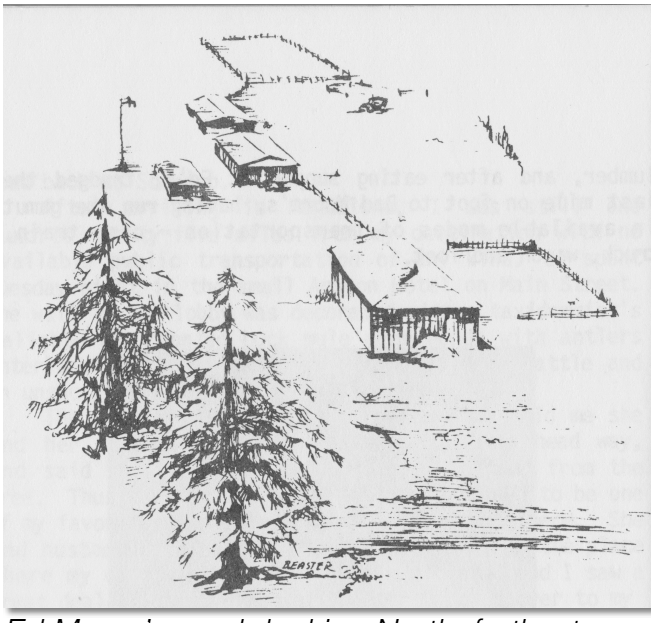
The waitress in the hotel coffee shop told me she and her husband were homesteaders out Beaverhead way, and said she would watch for someone in town from the area. Thus I first met Peggy Gibson, destined to be one of my favorite people as long as I lived out there. She and her husband Dick had a homestead not far from the place where my dad subsequently filed on a claim, and I saw a great deal of them, especially after I moved over to my dad's cabin after school was out. They had previously owned a café in Texas, but after the depression of 1929 started, they closed up and moved out to Beaverhead to homestead. When they were in need of cash during the building of their log cabin, one of them (or both) would go in to get a job as cook or waitress until they earned what they needed.

The following morning when I went down to breakfast, Peggy informed me that Lon Grogan, owner and operator of the Beaverhead Lodge and Post Office, as well as the Beaverhead sawmill, was in town after supplies in his truck. He said he would be glad to give me a lift, so shortly after noon we started out. I knew I'd be going out of my way to go to the Lodge, but at least I'd have a place to stay while I waited for a ride to the Moore ranch, maybe until next mail day. As luck would have it, a couple of cowboys from the Ed Moore ranch were there with a wagon and team after a load of lumber. So I rode thirty miles on a wagon load of lumber, and after eating supper at Ed's, trudged the last mile on foot to Dad Moore's, having run the gamut in available modes of transportation – car, train, truck, wagon and foot.



Dry ice well near Bueyeros

School Days - Chapter 4



Ed Moore's ranch looking North, farthest north cabin-school house, farthest south - residence.

A few days after my arrival at Dad Moore's, and after I had rested a bit, Jeff and I went to Reserve, the county seat of Catron County, to discuss the school situation with the authorities. Without any difficulty at all we were given permission to establish a school in the Beaverhead area. We were warned however that only enough money would be forthcoming to pay my salary – the munificent sum of one hundred dollars a month. Everything else – the building, the furniture, the books and supplies would have to be provided by the community.

Ed donated a large one-room cabin in his yard, formerly used for a bunk house, for our use as a school building. The children and I made the furniture from apple boxes and orange crates. The children furnished their own pencils and paper and I begged books from everyone I knew. One especially rich source of books was the schools where I had taught before, as they had to change their textbooks every few years and threw the old ones away.

Today, of course, fruit is packed only in cardboard boxes, but at that time everything was packed in wooden boxes. You could pick them up free at the grocery stores, or the clerk might pack a big order of groceries in them instead of in sacks. Between the two Moore families, we had more than enough boxes for all our needs.

We used orange crates (the long boxes with the dividers across the center) for making the pupil's desks. We turned them on their sides and sawed out one-half of the bottom side. This left an open space for the pupil's knees, and another space for his books. A 1x4 board nailed to each corner of the box and extending below the box made the legs.

For the seats, we used the smaller, stronger apple boxes, using the whole box for the seat, with a slanting upright nailed to either side and cross pieces for the backs. The top of each box faced the same way the child did, and could hold his lunch box.

Since this building had once been used for a bunk house, it already had a wood stove and a woodbox. Some one furnished a big desk and chair for me, and that was the total of our school furniture.

My pupils consisted of Margaret and Mamie Moore, the Butler girl, the Freeman girl, and three boys whose names I don't remember. Margaret, the Butler girl, and one of the boys were all in the first grade – beginners. Mamie was in the third grade, and the Freeman girl in the seventh. I don't recall the grades for the other two boys.

One day while school was in session, a big Rhode Island Red rooster entered the schoolroom door, followed by a very reluctant hen. The children began murmuring as if they would chase the chickens out, but I quickly put my finger to my lips for silence. There we sat frozen to our seats while the rooster clucked to the hen as if he were a hen with one chick. He coaxed her over to the chip box by the heater (low in chips, fortunately) jumped into the box and squirmed around as if settling down on a nest, all the while clucking to his hen.

After his demonstration, he jumped out of the box, and coaxed and cajoled his disinterested mate until she finally hopped into the box. With an air of great satisfaction, the rooster strutted out, but as soon as he was completely out of sight, the hen jumped quickly out of the box and went scampering off in the opposite direction. This must have been the very first strike for Women's Lib ever witnessed.

The Moore's had moved to this spot adjacent to the Gila National Forest about thirty years previously and their four sons had grown up there. The family consisted of Dad and Mrs. Moore and their eldest son, Jeff. In another log cabin about forty yards from the parents' cabin, lived the youngest son Sam, his wife Dixie, and their daughter Barbara, three years old. Down the lane about a mile east was a large frame house sheltering the second son Ed, his wife Diana, and their three daughters: Mamie, 13; Margaret, 6; and Edwina, 2. The fourth son, Jack, lived in California I think. Three cowboys completed the household; Guinn Dickerson of Lovington, N.M. and Gale and Riley Miller, Diana's brothers.

Dixie and I had more in common with each other than we had with any of the others. She was more nearly my age and very fun-loving. Even more important, she was not native to the country and had not been there long enough to lose all interest in the outside world. After winter began in earnest, we were not able to get together often through the knee-deep snow, especially since she had to carry Barbara wherever she went.

While I still lived at Dad Moore's and later after I moved to Ed's, we had many pleasant rides, with Barbara in front of Dixie in the big western saddle. Both of us knew how to ride, and how to saddle and care for our mounts, so when the men were away and didn't need the horses, we took a picnic lunch and rode far into the forest where no car could go. Dixie was a wonderful instructor and was very patient with my eagerness to learn everything about this exciting new world.

I had grown up in a small town and knew many things about animals and nature that city girls did not, but I was still a relative tenderfoot in this wild country.

Mrs. Moore knew of a place where wild grapes grew on the cliffs beside the road

in Railroad Canyon. All the women and children – Diana with her three daughters, Dixie with Barbara, Mrs. Moore and I, rode over to pick them. Mrs. Moore and the younger children stayed on the ground, and Dixie, Mamie, Diana, and I swarmed all over the cliffs, with an ever-watchful eye for rattlesnakes hidden in the vines. Each one of us carried a stick and no one attempted to pick a bunch of grapes without first beating the vine with the stick.

We picked three large wash tubs full of the most wonderful, succulent wild grapes I've ever seen. Usually wild grapes are small – about the size of the end of my little finger – but these were fully as large as the end of my thumb. Also they were exceptionally sweet for wild grapes – in fact Mrs. Moore had to add apples to the juice in order to make jelly. (We couldn't buy pectin at the corner grocery store as we can now.) And what delicious jam and preserves they made!

One week-end Riley rode horseback over to Horse Springs to visit another of his sisters. On the way back he came across a beautiful purebred German Shepherd dog wandering around on the plain and brought him home with him. The dog was very friendly and all the members of the family petted him, even little two-year-old Edwina. Someone commented that the dog's eyes looked strange but we decided it was because of his wandering around in the sun.

All of us thought it was funny when Ed's dog, old Lobo, tried to push us away from the new dog, or get between the dog and any member of the family. Everybody said, "Look at Lobo. He's jealous!" And we all had a good laugh.

A few days later the dog had a convulsion in the frame house where Ed's family lived. When I saw the family they were all white and trembling after their ordeal and Edwina was crying. The dog had left foam (slobbers, they called it) scattered all over the place with his tumbling about. There was an argument about whether or not the convulsion could have been caused by worms.

Then one evening as we were sitting in the living room at Dad Moore's, we saw a flickering light coming up the lane from Ed's place. As it continued its approach we could see it was a lantern carried by Riley and Guinn – as pale as ghosts. The two frightened men told us the new dog had been sleeping in the bunk house with them when suddenly it began attacking them. It was frothing at the mouth, snarling, growling, and trying to bite the men. They climbed up on the bed but the dog tried to get up there with them. Finally Riley fought the dog off while Guinn managed to slip out the door. He came back with a hoe and stunned the dog with a blow from the handle so both of them could get out.

They had walked up to Dad's cabin to borrow a rifle with which to shoot the dog. Jeff gave them the rifle, they shot the dog through a hole which they sawed in the door, and sent his head to Santa Fe for testing.

The only telephone in the entire area was at the ranger station. Jewell Wyche, the ranger, drove about thirty miles to give the Moore's the report: "Rabies present in the animal."

Eight people – everyone at Ed's place – had to journey to Albuquerque to take anti-rabies shots. Since each person had to take fifteen shots, and because it was very expensive for so many people to live in Albuquerque, Ed learned how to administer the shots and they all came home. Some of the group became very ill, which proved, so the doctor said, that they had been exposed to rabies.

School was dismissed for hunting season just as it was in Oklahoma for cotton picking. Everybody had to "get into the act" as Jimmy Durante always used to say. I spent that time up at Dad Moore's and even got into the act myself, on a small scale.

Dad Moore was considered the most capable guide, camp overseer and cook that the area had ever known. He had repeat customers who had been coming to him for the past twenty years, and who reserved his services for the entire hunting season each year. They were four good friends who enjoyed being together and looked forward to hunting season. Three of their names I can't recall, but I do remember one was a doctor from Texas, anther a dentist from Colorado, and one man was from Roswell. The only name I remember is that of Mr. Brunacini who owned an Italian gourmet food store on First Street in Albuquerque, just north of Central an across the street west of the Ilfeld Wholesale house. He always brought Mrs. Moore goodies from his store.

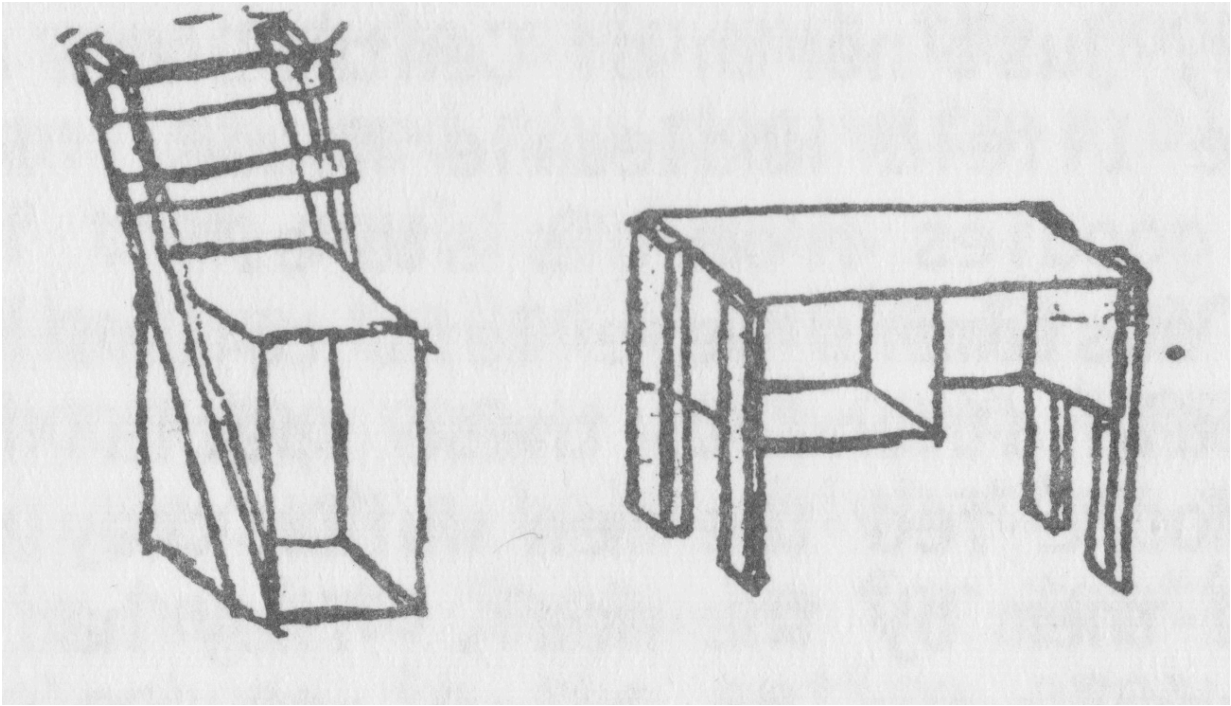
Other customers were left to Dad Moore's sons, but only Dad could attend to these special men.

Mrs. Moore fed the men while they were at the ranch and charged them by the meal. They had known her for so long and they were so happy and joyful about getting back to nature they generously gave her in tips more than the rice of the meals – $.75.

Dad prepared for their arrival weeks in advance, sorting and cleaning his equipment in readiness for the big day. He had a string of horses which ordinarily roamed free back in the forest but just before hunting season they were rounded up and brought into the corral, fed grain, and ridden in preparation for their job. There was a mount for each man and a string of pack horses for carrying in the camping equipment and supplies, and for carrying out the deer.

Dad saw to all the jobs on the trip. He saddled the horses; packed the pack horses with tents, cooking and eating utensils, bedding, and food and other supplies; guided the men to their campground; set up camp; cooked delicious meals; and helped the men locate the deer to shoot.

In order to make me feel a part of this operation, I'm sure, Jeff brought out from town three cartons of assorted brands of cigarettes for me to sell to the hunters. Cigarettes sold then for fifteen cents a package, and the idea was for me to sell each pack for twenty cents, thus making a profit of a dollar and a half on the three cartons. As it turned out, however, I was never paid only twenty cents a pack, but with the hunters' usual lavish spending, anything from a quarter to a dollar each and told to keep the change. By the time the three cartons were gone, I had cleared nearly fifteen dollars.



Home-made school furniture.

Winter Ways - Chapter 5

Often Dixie and I were afforded extra trips by riding with Jeff when we had to see someone on business. Our nearest neighbor was about thirty miles away, it was thirty miles to Beaverhead Post Office, where someone had to go once a week for mail, and homesteaders were scattered over a wide area – no two close together.

One Sunday morning Jeff had to go see a fairly recent homesteader about thirty-five miles away. I had just dressed and hadn't had my breakfast yet but Jeff was in a hurry to leave. I did not want to miss the trip, so I went without breakfast. I was not really concerned, for the custom of the country was to feed anyone who came along. The distances were great and there were only dirt roads, so even if you'd eaten before you left home, it would be time to eat again by the time you arrived.

After we had been at the Johnson's about an hour, Mr. Johnson asked if we had had lunch. We said no, but it didn't matter (liars!). Mrs. Johnson said hesitatingly, "Well, we've already eaten, but I guess we could build a fire in the cookstove."

"Oh, no, no," we exclaimed deprecatingly,

"We wouldn't want to put you to any trouble."

"Or," she said, "I guess we could light up the Coleman stove and cook something."

"Oh, no! No, that's all right," we murmured, "Please don't bother." And she didn't!

Next Jeff needed to see another homestead family, and after driving another twenty-five miles farther from home, we arrived about four o'clock to find these people gone. Another trip to another cabin followed, with the same results. Finally in making a wide swing back towards home, we stopped

about seven o'clock at the cabin of an old-timer, Joe Ashley, in his sixties and living alone except for his dog. Joe had a big pot of antelope stew simmering on the back of the stove and I never smelled anything so good in all my life.

True to the custom in the area of any man refusing to make biscuits if a woman was around, Joe insisted that one of us make them that night. Luckily Dixie was there, for I was no cook. All my life I had escaped somehow, for at home my mother and sister did the cooking while I cleaned house and looked after my younger brothers. When I was attending college, I stayed in the dormitory during my freshman year, and in the other years I boarded with a private family, the Forman's. During the two years I'd already taught school, I boarded then also.

While the biscuits baked and the stew simmered, Dixie and I set the table and had everything ready for at least three hungry people.

My father had decided to file on a homestead claim in the Beaverhead area, and he and Jeff Moore took care of the paper work through the mail. In the fall of 1931, my eldest brother, George (three years younger than I) and his wife Sally came out to my Dad's claim so that George could build a cabin in preparation for Mother's coming out the next summer with the other three boys.

Money was very scarce that year, so when Jeff offered me the use of an old Buick of his, I accepted. I could then board with George and Sally and drive to school, thereby giving them a little extra cash. This lasted only a few weeks, however, before the car finally expired and left me to walk the last two miles to school. Then I boarded with Ed's family and slept in the schoolhouse.

I spent most of my spare time in the house with the family. I had all my meals with them and sat in the kitchen with Diana after we had washed the dishes. Everybody sat in the kitchen except Ed who went off in the living room alone to listen to his crystal set. One night in early March, Ed called us in to listen to some news coming over the radio. Nothing could be heard through the tiny set except through the earphones. We passed them around as we learned for the first time of the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby. For several nights we held vigil, and Ed finally contrived an ingenious method that enabled all of us to hear. He placed the earphones in an aluminum dishpan, and as we hovered over it, we could hear the broadcast faintly.

Thus it was that over a hundred miles from Magdalena, in an out-of-the-way place, thirty miles from a neighbor, completely isolated from civilization, we first heard of the Lindbergh kidnapping.

One of the pupils I had registered in school was a small daughter of a homesteader who lived over near George and Sally. Her parents stopped bringing her to school, and on one of my weekend trips to see George and Sally, I found out why.

The Butler family, consisting of the parents, this girl of seven and a boy of five, had come to this country in a pickup. To show how shiftless Butler was, he had traded the pickup for a horse and some supplies, had traded the horse for a rifle and a few supplies, had traded the rifle for a revolver and some food and proceeded to lose the revolver. It was already November, and the weather was beginning to be cold, but Butler had made no attempt to provide shelter for his family. Instead they had piled weeds and brush in a high horseshoe-shaped circle and were living in the center of it — cooking, eating and sleeping.

They had not been able to pay the filing fee on a homestead but had selected some land for "squatting." This term applied to the act of living on the land for a designated length of time, when, if the requirements had been met and a certain amount of improvements added, the man received a title to his land. If he left the land he forfeited his rights to it.

All the neighbors for miles around, feeling so sorry for the children, had agreed to meet on this Saturday to have a log-raising for the Butlers. The women all brought food and the men came armed with saws, axes, and hammers. After cutting down the trees and trimming and notching the logs, the men soon had the walls up, and before the day was over, the roof was on and the whole house complete except for the chinking and daubing — an easy job for Mr. Butler. Chinking consists of filling the larger cracks in the walls (left by irregularly shaped trees) with wedges cut from the small limbs trimmed from the logs. After the chinking was completed, the whole area between the logs was daubed with mud.

Two months later after the log-raising, the cracks were still unchinked but the larger ones had been stuffed with rags.

I had always read of log-raisings in the early pioneer days, and I was thrilled to be a part of this one.

I'm sure my life that winter at Ed's would have been much more boresome if it had not been for Guinn Dickerson from Lovington. Of the three cowboys working for Ed, two of them, Gayle and Riley Miller, were Diana's brothers, as I have said. Gayle was a quiet man of thirty, who was in great demand as a fiddler for the dances. Riley was a callow youth of eighteen who was always bashful and ill at ease. Guinn was twenty-eight years old and the tallest of the three, six feet three inches. When I had reached the limit of boredom and confinement, and was about ready to climb the walls, Guinn would insist that I take a walk in the snow. I thought he was taking advantage of my five feet and ninety pounds when he pushed me into the snowdrifts in my high-laced boots, but I knew he was basically a kind person. He would clear the ground of snow, build a fire, and make me dry my feet before we went on. Also he must have been a fair student of psychology, for getting angry at him made me lose my tensions and I thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the walk, and was thereafter able to live through another period of cabin fever.

One weekend, Guinn and I rode horseback over to the Mask homestead. There was only one horse available at the ranch, so

Guinn and I rode the same horse – I behind the saddle. It was about ten miles or more to the Mask cabin but the big rawboned we rode got us there in a little over two hours. He was very frisky on the cold winter mornings, and Guinn had to ride him first ("topping off," they called it) so that he would be safe for me to ride. After he bucked stiff-legged for a half dozen jumps, he was so pleased with himself that he was as docile as a kitten – until the next morning.

When we arrived at the Mask's, we found that Mr. and Mrs. Mask had gone back to Oklahoma for a visit. Mrs. Mask's younger brother, Alvin Crabtree, and their younger wife and their baby, were all alone, and had seen only each other for weeks. Both of the parents were in their teens and we felt that understanding and tolerance had reached a new low between them. They were so glad to see us that Alvin met us at the door with tears in his eyes. I believe our trip did as much good for them as it did us. We took horseback rides, had long talks before the fireplace, and had good feasting from their store of supplies so generously provided the young people by the Masks before they left.

Once during this long winter, Ed was preparing to take the wagon and mules to get a load of wood in the forest. We begged him to let us go, as a good chance of getting out. Most of the school children were staying at home during the worst of this below-zero weather, and I was teaching only the Moore children.

Guinn, Riley, Mamie, Margaret, and I drove the few miles to the forest, loaded the wagon with wood for the fireplace and the cookstove, and decided to do some exploring before we started back. We let the mules tied to a fallen log and with young ebullient spirits went frolicking about the huge boulders nearby. We found a few caves which fired our youthful imaginations with thoughts of outlaws hiding out for years where no one could ever find them.

Time passed more quickly than we realized, and when we went back to the wagon it wasn't there. On our several–mile walk back to the ranch, we could visualize the travels of the mules from the wagon tracks in the snow. Most of the time they followed closely the tracks we had made as we came, but once in a while they would leave the trail, go up on the hillside, circle around a grove of trees and return to the trail. Guinn said, "See, Toby is the adventuresome one. He pulls Alex off to the right to explore, but Alex is really the boss, so he circles Toby around the trees and right back to the road."

A very cold and weary group of young people arrived home about dark, and found the mules and wagon there and the wood unloaded. I was a long time before Ed let us forget about our excursion. The next time we were nearly out of fuel, he said, "well, I guess I'd better send Toby and Alex after another load of wood."

Once when the men were gone, Dixie brought Barbara down to spend the day with Diana and me. Although they lived only a mile apart, the two ladies didn't see each other very often, since each one had a small child to care for. On this occasion there was some exciting family news they were sharing, so the two Moore wives sat

together at one end of the long table and gossiped away at a very rapid rate. The children were lined up along the sides of the table on benches, while I sat at the far end of the table – a convulsed witness.

Barbara was a short chunky little girl with brick red hair, myriad freckles, and a belligerent attitude. She had none of the social graces, endearing ways, or cute looks of most little girls . She was said by other members of the family to resemble her father. Sam, an ex-navy man, had looks and ways of speech and action which most mothers would prefer that their daughters wouldn't copy, but everyone seemed to think Barbara's speech and ways were "cute."

The Christmas before, Sam and Dixie trimmed a tree for her, and when Dixie carried her in to see it for the first time, the whole family gathered around and waited with bated breath to hear what she would say. She eyed the tree for a few seconds, with her eyes popping at the glitter of the bright candles and at the gifts piled beneath, then turned to her father and said, "My God, Sam! Look what I got!"

On the day at the lunch table, Barbara said quietly, "Pass the beans, please." No response from either of the mothers.

"Pass the beans, please!" She said in a slightly louder voice. Still no answer.

"P-a-a-a-s-s- the b-e-e-e-ans!" She wailed, but the mothers were too engrossed in their conversation to hear her. When she saw a response was not forthcoming, Barbara stood up on the bench, grabbed a tablespoon, began beating on the table with it, and shouted, "PASS THE BEANS, DURN YOU!"

The little lady received immediate service.

In the high altitude of nearly 7500 feet, the atmosphere was rarified but clean and brisk. The climate was dry, and although the temperature dropped very low, the cold did not hurt as it does in a humid climate – except on one's feet down under the perpetual snow, as I learned to my discomfiture the following winter. Most activities were not curtailed by the weather as the snowy days came seldom, and the snow that covered the ground did not stop travel by horseback, and usually not by car. I learned that because the temperature did not rise above freezing, to thaw the snow and to allow it to refreeze and form a hard crust, the snow remained dry and powdery like sand.

During the winter we found diversion in visiting when we could, riding horseback, going to dances, and in reading, for me. Reading material was scarce there but I read everything I could get my hands on, and the mail always brought something new to read.

The entire population found their greatest pleasure and relaxation in attending dances. People came from a radius of two hundred miles, by automobile, truck, horseback, wagon, and even by foot, with the entire family, from tiny babies to grandparents, attending. A bedroom was always set aside for bedding down the children too young to dance, a necessity as the dance usually lasted all night long. Some of the oldsters would also sneak off for a short nap and would return chipper and refreshed.

At every dance the floor was cleared sometime during the night for a special dance by Dad and Mrs. Moore. Their's was a very fast, intricate step on the order of a polka or a "stomp," and it was obvious they enjoyed showing off their skill. Mrs. Moore danced with a gaping smile, showing her remaining teeth, but the habitual snuff stick was not in evidence, thank goodness!

At the time I moved to New Mexico, I didn't know how to dance, as my father object strenuously to dancing, card playing (except Rook and Flinch), and all other "tools of the devil."

When the first dance was announced in the countryside, Gayle was determined that I should learn to dance before the occasion demanded. He and Riley came up to Dad Moore's, and while Riley worked the wind-up phonograph, Gayle taught me to dance. He kept insisting that I listen to the music and let my feet act as they wanted to.

At first I was very stiff and self-conscious, but Gayle had given me very good advice, and he was a good dancer. Suddenly, by listening to the music rather than thinking about steps, my whole body began to feel permeated with music, especially down in my feet. All at once I had the feeling of falling into a groove or a rut, after sliding all over the place, and from then on it was easy. I just had to practice.

I didn't win any prizes, and my repertoire was very small, but I could dance the two-step, waltz, and what they called the one-step. I still didn't pay any attention to the mechanics of each dance, but following Gayle's instructions, just listened to the music. Anyway, I enjoyed it, and I never lacked for partners, even a novice like me.

One of the best dances of the whole year was held at the Evans ranch, between the Beaverhead Ranger Station and the Beaverhead Hunting Lodge. They had a very large, one-story house with a porch running all around it and with a fireplace in every room except the kitchen. The kitchen had a range big enough for a restaurant — in fact, it covered almost all of one wall.

Their ranch was called the Slash Ranch because of their brand, and some people called it the V-Cross-T. I think that was another brand. As I recall it, the Slash was a brand for their horses and the V+T for their cows. There was also a lake not for from their house called the V-Cross-T Lake.

The Evans family was very interesting. The father, G.W. (Dub) was later a state senator, and wrote a book called Slash Ranch Hounds. He had several very famous hounds that he used for tracking bear and mountain lions. These same hounds were written up in the old magazine called "Country Gentlemen," now defunct. The article was written by Paul Bransom or Branson, an artist who visited the Evans ranch for a mountain lion hunt, and illustrated the article with his drawings.

Dub's wife, Miss Beulah, was a very beautiful lady, and in 1986 was still living at the age of ninety-five on the Evans Montoya ranch. She was the daughter of James B. Gillett who was a Texas Ranger from 1875 to 1881. In 1921 he wrote a book titled Six Years With The Texas Rangers.

The Evanses had three children, Pansy, G.W. Jr. called Pete, and Robert. Pansy was attending high school in Albuquerque.

Years later when I taught school in El Paso, I lived with Dub's mother.

When the Evans family gave this dance I attended, people came from as far away as Albuquerque and El Paso. Mr. Freeman brought his truck to Dad Moore's and all of us in the two households rode in it over to the Evans Ranch. This was a New Year's Eve dance so he weather was bitterly cold. We piled into the back of the truck wearing our warmest clothing and with blankets to shield us from the wind.

This was 1931, so when midnight came, we ushered in, not only a New Year, but Leap Year as well. The young men in our group were hanging around waiting for midnight so I could propose to them. It was all in fun and added to our frivolity. They were just trying to make me feel good, for not one of them entertained any romantic notions about me.

We danced all night, then had breakfast before we left.

I haven't spent much time describing the countryside, but think right now is an appropriate time for it. I have explained how we traveled west from Magdalena on U.S. Highway 60 for about twenty miles, then turned left from the famous San Augustine Plains and went south-westerly down Railroad Canyon (a non-sequitur if I ever heard one!), past the turn-off to Dusty. My Dad's cabin was off the road to the left just before the road entered a box canyon. Farther down the road there was another fork near Black Springs, the left side continuing on to Beaverhead and the right fork turning sharply west and leading to O-Bar-) Mountain. At the foot of this mountain and across the road from I, were Dad Moore's and Ed Moore's ranches. The road on west of there led to the O-Bar-O ranger Station where Jewell Wyche and his family lived. Then the road curved. Then the road curved around to the left and passing through Willow Creek and Mogollon (pronounced Mo-go-yon), came out onto U.S. 180 near Alma.

Now back to the fork in the road at Black Springs. Just south of there and to the right of the road about a hundred yards, hidden from the road by a huge boulder, was the entrance to a prehistoric cave dwelling. A deep, deep passage way back into the rocky hillside had been blocked by a typical rock-and-mud wall. The entrance was so small that we had to get down on our hands and knees and crawl through the door, leading us to believe that the place was once inhabited by a pygmy race. Also, a hand print let in the mud over the doorway was about the size of a seven-year-old child's hand.

Ed and Diana, when they discovered it years before had found ancient artifacts — some bowls, an axe, some beads, and a metate and mano used for grinding corn into meal. The mano was held in the hand and rubbed against the stone metate. At the time I saw the cave, nothing like that was present, but the walls were smoked and the floor was covered with about twelve inches of bat guano.

Imagine my disappointment and disgust upon visiting the same place several years later to discover that it had been vandalized — the front wall completely torn down.

From there the road led south to the Beaverhead Ranger Station, the Slash Ranch, Beaverhead Hunting Lodge and on out to Santa Rita.

"The Best Laid Plans of Mules and Men..." - Chapter 6

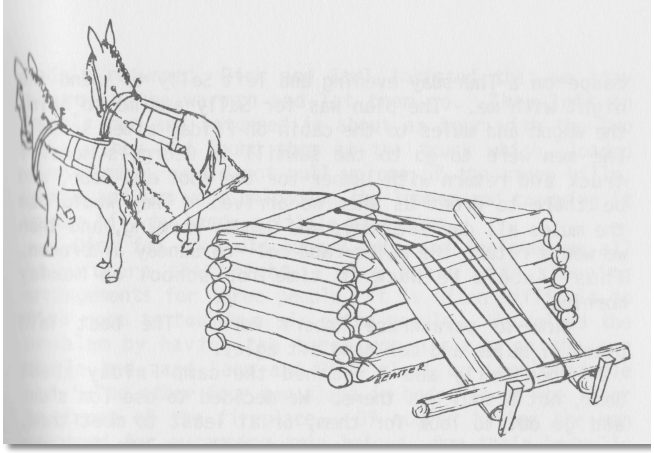


Diagram showing method of lifting logs.

While George was building the cabin on my Dad's claim, he was joined by Tom Blake as helper. They had the walls up about halfway, and then it became too difficult to lift the logs to the right height. They wanted to borrow Ed's mules, Alex and Toby, to help roll the logs up to the top of the walls.

They did this by leaning two logs against the top of the wall and driving a stake in the ground to hold each one in place. The new log was laid across the foot of the ramp, a rope was then fastened to the top log, run down underneath the loose log, and across the other wall. The ends of the ropes were tied to the mules' harness, and as they moved slowly forward, the loose log was rolled up the ramp to rest on the top of the wall. This had to be done on all four sides, notching the logs at the corners as they went, and continuing until the walls were of the proper height.

George, Sally, and Tom came over to Ed's in Tom's coupe on a Thursday evening and left Sally to spend the night with me. The plan was for Sally and me to bring the wagon and mules to the cabin on Friday after school. The men were to go to the sawmill in George's Model T truck and return with lumber for the roof and door, and be there to greet us when we arrived. They would use the mules all day Saturday, and Sunday morning, and then we would return the mules – and me! – on Sunday afternoon. Thus I would be back in time for school on Monday morning.

But – to paraphrase Robert Burns–"The best laid plans of mules and men gang aft agley."

When Sally and I reached the camp Friday about dusk, not a soul was there. We decided to use Tom's car and go out to look for them, or at least to meet them. Upon investigation we discovered that the gas tank was empty, so we had to fill it from the fifty-five gallon drum. The only way we had to get it out was to siphon it out with a small rubber hose, and the only way I knew to do that was to suck it up, trusting to luck that I could get the hose out before the gas reached my mouth.

After three or four unsuccessful attempts, I finally had the gas running into a can to be poured into the tank, but I remember yelling at Sally because she was turning the

flashlight up into the trees instead of aiming it down so I could see what I was doing.

We harnessed, fed and watered the mules, and tethered them (thinking we'd be back in about an hour), and drove over to Gibson's. Peggy's nephew, Leon Renfro, was staying with them then and that night Earl and Garrett Cornelius, other homesteaders, were spending the night because the following morning the four men were leaving for a several-month trapping trip down on the Gila River, back into the deep forest.

When we told them we were starting out to look for George and Tom, because they had gone to the sawmill but hadn't returned, Dick and Earl insisted that we stay there in the warmth and let them go. They left in Dick's car and returned in about an hour with the two men. They had found them at the truck, which, loaded with lumber, would not pull up one of the steep hills. George and Tom were unloading the lumber and carrying it up the hill by hand – a little at a time.

Dick fed the cold hungry men, and insisted we all stay there that night. In a house with sleeping arrangements for three people, it is often difficult to find room to bed down six extra people. We solved the problem by having the three women sleep on the one double bed, and Leon and Dick slept on Leon's single bed. The other four men slept in bedrolls on the floor in front of the fireplace. Of course having the men prepared for a camping trip helped, for their bedrolls were there handy.

The next morning when we got up (Saturday), Dick had already prepared breakfast (after all he was a chef), and George and Tom were ready to take Tom's car back to camp and get started with the wagon and mules to get the lumber. Sally and I were going back with them, but Peggy said she'd take us as soon as the men all left. So George and Tom set off in one direction and the trappers in another and after we three ladies had dawdled for a while, we started out for the Howell camp in Peggy's car.

Only a few hundred yards from Peggy's cabin, her motor died and we couldn't get it started again. Since there was no anti-freeze in the car, we thought we'd better drain the radiator. Then we discovered that the water was already frozen. We couldn't leave the car because the block would burst, so – can you believe it? We built a fire under the radiator until the water thawed out. The motor started again and we went on to Sally's where Peggy spent the night with us.

When we reached camp, there was a note from George saying that the mules were gone when they arrived – had gone back home. They had an ingenious way of crossing the many cattle guards on the road back – they stepped on the very ends of the metal rods where they rested on the ground instead of being suspended over a hole in the ground.

George and Tom had gone on to Ed's in Tom's car. Since the mules could not be ridden, George borrowed a horse to bring them back, arriving late Saturday night. The next morning the men took the mules and wagon to the truck to get the lumber and bring it to the camp. Finally on Monday they used the team to pull the logs onto the walls, also for part of Tuesday. Then Tuesday afternoon Sally and I rode

back to Ed's in Tom's car with him, while George brought the team and wagon.

Anyway, I arrived back at Ed's ready to teach on Wednesday – only two days late – but I was experiencing adventure, and life without adventure would be very boring, I thought.

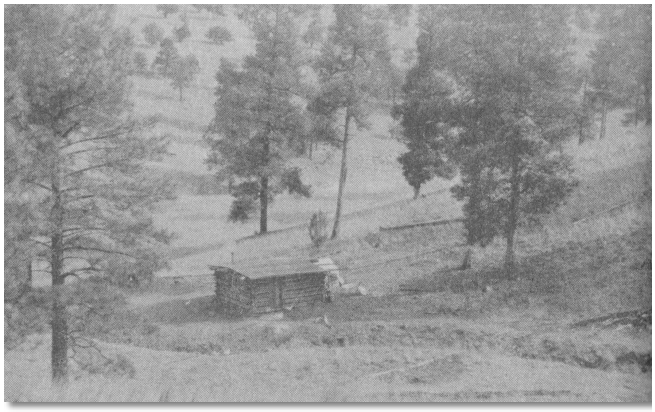
That is one of the things that I could not become accustomed to – the length of time it might take to perform a simple task.

One more occasion I remember was of going out before breakfast to run an errand and getting stuck in the mud, another one, a little more serious, of running an errand, again before breakfast, and having a flat tire. The road sloped to the right, so after I backed up the car, took off the wheel and got the spare tire out of the trunk, the car slipped sidewise off the jack. There wasn't even enough room under the car to get the embedded jack out, so I had to dig it out at arm's length with the tire tool.

I continued to dig until I had a hole deep enough to put the jack in to get it under the axle, then jacked up the car again as high as it would go. I still couldn't quite get the spare tire on, so dug some more in the area where the wheel would go, and, with a great deal of relief, got the spare tire mounted. By the time I returned home, it was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and I hadn't had a thing to eat or drink all that time.

Edwina Moore and Lobo

The First Spring - Chapter 7



Dad's Cabin

When school was out in April, after only eight months, I moved to my Dad's cabin which George and Tom had completed before Sally had had to go back to Oklahoma. I still didn't have a cabin on my claim, of course.

As I stated before, Dad's cabin was just off the Beaverhead-Magdalena highway, and was visible from the road. It was a small canyon running north and south which opened into a larger canyon running east and west. The latter one was about three hundred yards across with a flat meadow of black grama grass almost the entire length of it. The broad meadow with its gentle slope to the west, and to the highway, provided us with space for our road.

The log cabin was fourteen feet square. There were no openings on the north side, but there was a double window on the east and on the west sides, and a door on the south side. It had a lumber and tarpaper roof, but only a dirt floor. This was not so bad as it sounds, though, because the soil was all adobe around there. The floor was almost as hard as sandstone, and we kept it that way by putting water on it occasionally. Even sweeping didn't disturb its hardness.

George and Sally had brought some hens with them when they first came to Beaverhead, and I inherited them when they left. They brought them over to Ed Moore's where I was living, and turned them loose with Ed's chickens. After I moved over to my Dad's place, that was one of my first priorities – to get the chickens back home.

I didn't have any means of transportation so I had to catch a ride wherever I wanted to go. One day I was over at Freeman's and walked several miles to Ed's place to see about getting the hens.

When I arrived there, not a soul was at home, so I despaired of ever catching the hens by myself. It would have been difficult enough if they were running loose in a pen, but these were completely free in the wide open spaces. As I was standing there in a quandary about what I should do, some of the hens began approaching me through the tall grass and weds, squawking as they came. I couldn't imagine what was wrong with them until Lobo appeared behind them, limping with rheumatism and old age, and driving them toward me. With the help of that precious dog I caught all eight of the Buff Orpington hens I had to take back with me – a feat could never have accomplished without him.

After catching all the hens with Lobo's help, I then had the herculean task of carrying

them back to Freeman's homestead. And maybe you think that wasn't a big chore! A Buff Orpington chicken is a big chicken, and I weighed only 90 pounds.

I tied their feet together, as was the custom in transporting chickens, then joined several of them together with small rope. With the four hens hung over each of my shoulders, and with dozens and dozens of stops, I finally made it back to Freeman's – an experience I'm not anxious to repeat.

Here, before I leave the subject of Lobo, I must tell another story about his trying to protect all of us from the rabid dog, and now the narrative of his priceless performance with the chickens. Both of these occasions were known personally to me, but the following tale was related to me by Dad Moore.

Lobo's mother was a collie, and everybody said he was sired by a wolf, hence his name Lobo. He had a big broad head, quite unlike the long narrow head of a collie, and the whites of his eyes were reddish – both traits, Dad Moore said, being characteristic of a wolf.

When Lobo was a small puppy, his mother always went out to pasture to bring in the cows at milking time in the evenings. The cows were kept in the corral overnight, so the job had to be done only once a day.

One day the mother dog was injured in a trap and was unable to walk. As the men picked up the milk buckets, whose rattle was the signal for bringing in the cows, one man said to the other, "Well, we're going to have to do our own wrangling today," but looking up they saw that Lobo was already out of the door and on his way to the pasture. He was very small to drive several large cows, so he performed that difficult task by nipping at their heels.

And some people speak of dumb animals!

I thoroughly enjoyed my solitude during the time I was alone at Dad's cabin. I think it was the first time in my life I ever knew true serenity. The things which had been bothering me fell off me like dead leaves from a tree, and I found myself thinking, "Now, why was I concerned about that?"

Situated among the canyons as I was, I missed the beautiful sunrises we had enjoyed at Dad Moore's. I remembered with such pleasure the times we sat on the east porch to watch the ever-changing panoply of exciting colors in the eastern sky. It was much more spectacular than the fast-fading final brilliant flash of the setting sun in the west.

Many times through the years I have been asked, "What on earth did you do to pass the time away?" In truth I never did have enough time to do all o the things I really wanted to do. I read, wrote letters, wrote poetry, visited, chopped wood, rode horseback.

I was an inveterate reader, and it has always been my philosophy that anyone who lies to read never becomes lonely or ever suffers from boredom. There is never enough time to read all of the things I want to read. There was a dearth of reading material then, but my family, and especially friends, kept me pretty well supplied. I hoarded my precious cargo of books as if they were all set with diamonds and

emeralds, and my favorites I read over and over – like visiting with old and dear friends.

A first I tried to read in the shade of a tree, but soon became too chilled to be comfortable. I would then move into the sunshine to get warm, but after half an hour there, the direct rays of the sun at this high altitude made me too warm, so back into the shade I'd go. Suddenly I exclaimed aloud, "This is ridiculous!" Besides I wasn't getting much reading done, zigzagging back and forth that way. I finally solved the problem by sitting in the shade wearing a warm sweater, with a blanket over my lap. More evidence of our deceptive climate.

One of the greatest events was mail day which came only once a week. Instead of driving thirty miles – one way – to pick up the mail at the Beaverhead Post Office, we rented a box at the Magdalena Post Office and put up a large wooden box on the

Beaverhead road. The mail carrier left our big bag of mail in our box on his way to Beaverhead, and picked up our outgoing mail the next morning on his way back to Magdalena.

We greedily read our mail that afternoon and finished the letters we'd been engaged in writing all week. If we received any new mail that required an immediate answer, we had time to write our replies. Then the next morning the bag was taken down to the road for pickup.

Receiving mail was always a joy, but when I was alone it was a veritable Godsend. It was like having Christmas once a week. One week I really hit the jackpot, with fifteen letters, three packages, and five papers and magazines.

When I had a car I spent considerable time visiting the neighbors – at their invitation. It pleased me that we were free to spend one hour for a visit, one day, or a week if it pleased the both of us.

Soon my solitude was over for awhile when my former landlady at college in Chickasha, Oklahoma, Mrs. Forman, came to visit me. Her husband wouldn't hear of her driving out here alone – into the "Great Unknown"– so she brought with her an elderly black woman named Sarah. Sarah had once worked for Mrs. Forman's mother and later for Mrs. Forman. I already knew her, of course, since I had lived in Mrs. Forman's home for two years.

Sarah had brought along her guitar but steadfastly refused to play and sing anything except religious songs. The trouble was that she jazzed them up to such a foot-tapping tempo that no one would have suspected they were religious in nature.

When she met new people, Sarah always let us know afterward what she thought of them. If she regarded a woman as "po' white trash," she spoke of her as "Ole Sal", but if she thought she was a lady, she called her "Miss Anne."

Both of the ladies seemed to enjoy their stay while they were there. I think it was the peace and quiet all around us that appealed to so many people, especially those from the city. They stayed two weeks and we kept busy all the time. We took drives in Mrs. Forman's car, and daily walks up the canyons.

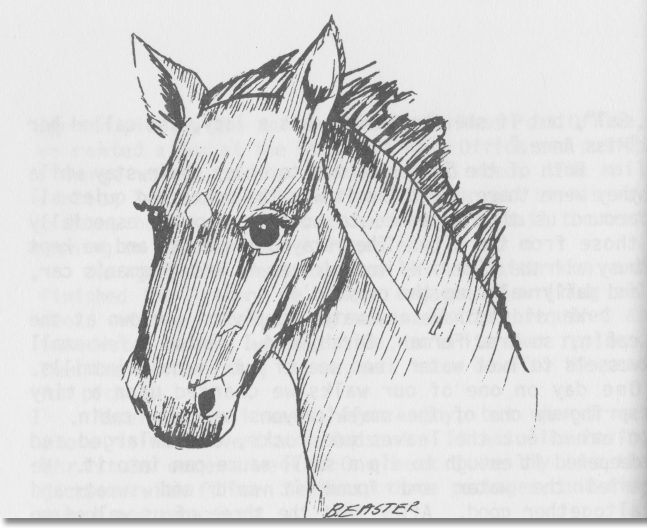
We didn't have any water supply of our own at the cabin, so Mrs. Forman, Sarah, and I hauled a few small vessels full of water from one of Dub Evan's windmills. One day on one of our walks we chanced upon a tiny spring up one of the small canyons near the cabin. I cleaned out the leaves and rocks, and enlarged and deepened it enough to dip a small sauce pan into it. We tried the water and found it cold and sweet – and altogether good. After that the three of us walked up the canyon at least once a day, laden with all our vessels with handles. We returned with more than enough water for one day's use, so gradually built up our supply.

A part of each day was spent in furbishing our wood supply and both of the ladies like to help with that.

When Mrs. Forman's and Sarah's visit was over, I returned to Oklahoma with them. We stopped in Elmer and spent a couple days with my parents and the three boys still living at home. Then I went on to Chickasha with Mrs. Forman where I had some dental work done by my former dentist. Mr. Forman helped me select a used car, and he picked a 1929 Chevrolet coupe which provided me with years of good service. I paid only $150 for it, and only $50 of that was cash.

That was in 1932, and the Catron County Board of Education had run short of funds. They were unable to pay us for the last two months of school so gave us vouchers until they had the money to reimburse us. The car dealer insisted that I give him a voucher and let him collect it – which he did.

The Coming of the Family - Chapter 8



Diamond

In my "new" used car, I drove back to Elmer and joined the frenzy of packing that was going on there. My Dad had bought a used Model A truck with a cover over the bed, like a covered wagon. The plan was for everyone except Dad to return to the homestead for the summer. Since he couldn't leave his work, Mother would be starting the residency required by the Homestead Laws.

The truck was loaded with beds, bedding, mattresses, and other things needed at the cabin. We drove the two vehicles back to New Mexico together and Mother and Sally took turns riding with me. The three younger boys thought it was a treat to ride in the back of the truck on the mattresses.

We entered the state near Clovis and drove west until we reached U.S. Highway 85 near Bernardo. There we turned south and traveled through all the little villages now bypassed by I - 25 (Polvadera, Lemitar, Escondida) as far as Socorro. There we turned west again to Magdalena and about twenty miles beyond, and southwest on the Beaverhead road.

When we arrived at the cabin, George, Sally, and I felt as if we were returning home, and Mother, Red (17), Van (14), and Jack (8), were as excited and thrilled with their new adventure as we had expected them to be. All of us set to work at once with a will, unloading the truck, setting up the beds and moving in generally.

George hauled water from one of Dub Evans's windmills in a fifty-five gallon drum until he had time to dig and concrete a new cistern. After that it was easier. When we had a good rain, we let it wash off the roof, then turned the flow into the cistern. In the wintertime, water was no problem for we kept a big pot full of snow on the stove at all times, and as it thawed we poured it into the cistern.

All of us helped plant a garden and tend and water it, but after it was ready to start producing, the wild animals made forays every night until we had nothing. The deer ate the corn and the greens (beet tops, bean vines, turnip greens, radish tops), and gophers ate the underground crops (potatoes, radishes, carrots, and beets).

The boys hurriedly put up a fence to keep the deer out, but they sailed over it as if it weren't there. For several nights the boys took turns lying in wait for the culprits, to catch them at their lives of crime, but not an

animal appeared while they were there. More dumb animals?

At both the homesteads, the mule deer and pronghorn antelope grazed on the hillsides outside the cabins, and one day while I stood in the doorway of Mother's cabin, I counted one hundred twenty-six antelope grazing just across the canyon.

Antelope had a peculiar tendency toward racing cars. Many times I have clocked them at fifty miles per hour on the level roads of the San Augustin Plains. They would be peacefully grazing until I approached them, when several of them would break away from the herd and race with me. Since it was a dirt road, and I usually came to a rough spot and had to slow down, they would pass me, cross the road in front of the car, then stop and begin grazing again – miles from the herd they'd been with. I could never understand their compulsion to cross in front of the car. That done, they were perfectly content.

I was anxious to see about my homestead, so soon after we returned to New Mexico, Red and I drove up there in my car. We parked the car in one canyon, prepared to explore on foot where we couldn't drive. Because we thought we'd have water when we arrived we didn't take any with us, so started out to look for some.

It was summertime and we were walking in the direct sunshine – not a tree in sight for shade. We walked all afternoon going constantly in the wrong direction, if we'd only known it. Both of us felt ill and dehydrated and our tongues had begun to swell when we came upon a sheep camp. The herders gave us a drink of their precious water hauled in in wooden kegs on the backs of burros. We drank ravenously from a beaten-up, blackened old coffee pot – the best drink I ever had! Because I had been so greedy, I suppose, and had drunk too fast, my nose began to bleed. After we stayed there awhile to rest, we walked back to the car and spent the night.

The next morning we still didn't feel well. All we had with us to eat was cereal with evaporated milk, and since there was no water with which to dilute the milk, neither of us ate breakfast. In order to give our bodies a little badly needed fluid, we opened some cans of tomatoes and consumed only the juice.

We decided that before we did anything else, we'd walk up the canyon where we had parked, to the top of Pelona Mountain and see what we could see from there. After struggling to the top we could see the next canyon with a big earthen tank in it.

We drove over to this next canyon and up it as far as we could and I recognized it as my section. We came upon the ruins of a cabin so old it was put together with wooden pegs. There beside it we found a clear, cold spring. We carried some water back to the car, and had a feast before we drove back to Mother's cabin.

The summer was filled with quiet pleasure, with plenty of activity to keep everybody busy as well as entertained. Even the work was so novel that we all enjoyed it. Everyone except Mother engaged in providing wood and doing other chores. <u>She</u> provided us with delectable meals from the store of home-canned goods she had brought and the big store of supplies.

Getting wood for our cookstove was always an interesting time for me. We couldn't burn anything in the range except juniper because pine and pinon had so much pitch in them they would clog up the draft around the oven. We needed juniper for the quick, clean fires for cooking biscuits, for example, and oak for the slow-burning fires for baking and ironing. Oak was very scarce, but the hills surrounding the cabin were covered with dead alligator junipers – so called because the bark is in little squares like an alligator hide.

The amazing thing was that I could push them over, even very large trees. The trunk of the tree did not rot, and for that reason provided good wood for fence posts. But for some reason that I do not understand, the roots of the tree rotted off. With a rocking motion back and forth, we could fell unbelievably large trees. After they were down on the ground, we gave them a gentle push and they went plummeting down the hillside to the cabin.

We had a saw which could be used as a one-man or a two-man saw. When the family was there, two people could take care of the wood situation in a hurry, yet when I was alone I could use it to saw the juniper into the proper length for the range.

When we cut pine, we had to chop it up, but with the juniper we only had to split it. We laid it on the sawed side and one stroke of the axe would split it apart. We sorted the wood by sizes and stacked it along the entire length of the north side of the cabin. Chips were gathered for building fires, and an ample supply was kept in the cabin where it remained dry.

That summer George traded his old Model T truck (left on the road to the sawmill) to Mr. Johnson for a mare. Old Diamond was named that because she had a white diamond in the middle of her forehead – a perfect diamond with the exception of a place at the bottom where it appeared that the paint had run.

Diamond had to be ridden to a tank about a mile north of the cabin twice a day for water. Only two drinks a day had to suffice her but having been born and raised in this arid western country, that was enough for her.

In August we could have set our watches by the rain. Every day it rained within ten minutes of two o'clock – before or after. We planned our day around it – to arrive where we wanted to go before the rain started, or to be back home by that time. Otherwise we planned to go after the rain had ceased, leaving everything smelling clean and fresh.

We enjoyed taking drives around the country side, and I especially enjoyed taking Mother as she couldn't climb the hills as we could.

Once Mother, Sally and I went in my car over to spend the day with Dixie and Sam. By this time they had left Dad Moore's place and moved onto a homestead of their own near Coyote Peak. We left their cabin just before sundown, which would have given us plenty of time to get home before suppertime, but the battery fell out of my car. Darkness came quickly in the mountains as I've said so many times, and with darkness came the cold. Sally was

complaining about being cold, so I gave her my sweater and, leaving her and Mother in the car, I walked back to Dixie's –about two miles. Sam could not replace the battery in the dark, nor did he have the proper tools. He took me, riding behind him on a hastily saddled horse, to the home of an old man who had an old Model T Ford.

Luckily, I still remembered how to drive one, because the man let me borrow it to get home. I drove back to my car and picked up Mother and Sally, and away we went.

Of course there were no real roads – only a couple tire tracks running through foot-high black grama grass. At night with the lights turned on, those tracks were especially hard to follow, considering that the lights wouldn't shine around corners. Anyway, I missed a turn and we ended up at Mask's house – in the middle of the night where we were bedded down for what was left of the night.

The next morning, after a welcome and hearty breakfast, we left early for home but met George and Jack in the truck coming to meet us. George was as "mad as a wet hen", to use one of my mother's expressions. He acted as if I had done it deliberately to inconvenience Sally. He worked on my battery reluctantly.

As an aftermath, in the summer of 1984, Van came to my house from Florida and we made a trip west to visit other family members. I was working on my book at that time, so had asked Van if he remembered this occasion. He didn't, so I knew he hadn't been along. When we saw Jack, who was then sixty years old, I asked him the same question and he threw back his head and laughed.

"I should say I remember it," he said, "He was raving and ranting before we ever left the cabin. Said you had done it on purpose."

Then Jack sobered up and added, "And Mother had connived with you."

"What did you say?" I demanded.

"That's what he said – that Mother was in cahoots with you to make it uncomfortable for Sally."

Alone Again - Chapter 9

Round-up at the Evans Ranch - Pete and Pansy.

The time was rapidly approaching when everybody except me must go back to Oklahoma. I would be alone again until Mother, Van and Jack returned in late fall to spend the winter with me in Dad's cabin. Although I loved the peace and solitude, there were other things I had to do which the boys had done before.

One chore I had after everyone left – but a delightful one for me – was watering the horse. The late afternoon drink was solved most days by returning from our ride by way of the tank.

The morning excursions were always occasions of great contentment for me, and Diamond seemed to share my mood. She had no resemblance to the spirited steed she would become in the afternoon, for I rode with a rope around her neck in lieu of a bridle – to the amusement of some passing cowboy. In the afternoon on our daily ride, she would prance and frolic around like a young thoroughbred filly, and give me the need for all my knowledge of horsemanship.

With mutual consent we set a lazy pace in the mornings and I let my thoughts wander and concentrated on my five senses – smelling the pine trees on either side of the trail, seeing the blue haze over the distant mountains, and feeling the warm comforting sun on my back. I could hear the angry buzzing of the bumble bees which darted from beneath Diamond's trim feet as she dragged them through the fields of wild horehound blossoms. And in my imagination I could even taste the wonderful breakfast I'd be eating when we returned home. Nothing ever tasted quite so delicious as that simple wholesome food eaten in that healthful, appetite-whetting altitude. I wonder, though, if it was all altitude, or was it partly attitude? I know that I'd rather eat bacon and eggs in that simple little rustic log cabin than Eggs Benedict in the most sophisticated restaurant in the world.

On these little journeys I had more time to observe the things about me. I watched the Kaibab or Abert squirrels, much larger than grey squirrels and with tassels on their ears and of a slate grey color with a rust-brown stripe down their backs.

Porcupines peered at us from behind the pine needles on the tall trees as we went by. Many birds I'd never seen before I came to New Mexico sang and flitted through the trees as we passed. I saw my first pygmy nuthatches, going down the trees headfirst, and I grew familiar with the pinon jays and western bluebirds.

That summer I watched my first round up. The Dub Evans Ranch, or Slash Ranch, was the largest ranch in our vicinity, and I loved to sit on the top rail of the corral fence, well out of everybody's way, to watch the branding.

Dub's daughter Pansy roped the calves from her horse and pulled them near the branding fire. Next someone on the ground would tie their legs with "piggin' strings," while Pansy went after another calf. When the calf was tied, one person branded it, another gave it a shot of hoof-and-mouth-disease serum, while still others dehorned and castrated the bull caves. The dehorning was done with a spoon-like instrument which gouged out the tiny embryo horns.

It was all done with clock-work precision and great efficiency.

I was really quite a walker in those days, and one trip I made occasionally was to Dixie's. On the level I could walk four miles an hour but the intervening hills slowed me down somewhat so that I averaged only about three miles an hour on these trips. I could still walk there, have a good visit, and walk home before sundown.

Many late evenings I walked down to Warren's store, ostensibly to buy a quart of fresh milk, but mostly for companionship, I'd say. Sometimes I'd stay too long visiting, so was after dark getting home. If the moon was shining, there was no problem, but one night it was as black as the inside of a cat. I could not even see my hand before my face, so kept wandering off the road. Suddenly I heard the loud unmistakable rattle of a rattlesnake, and I know I must have jumped ten feet.

In the spring the Warren's had come from Clayton, N.M., and had homesteaded along Railroad Canyon, about three and a half miles south of Dad's cabin. They started a small grocery store in their home which later became the gathering place for the whole community, not only for making purchases but to exchange the latest news.

Mr. Warren was a big tease and called me "Half Pint". I told him a squirrel had been removing the daubing and chinking from a spot in the lower part of one wall and coming into my cabin. I would awake and find the squirrel sitting on his haunches on the floor, looking at me, and chattering away. Mr. Warren said, "All squirrels like nuts."

Later on when he had to be away overnight, Mrs. Warren always sent for me to stay with her. She was deathly afraid of staying alone. On one of these occasions, I learned that she thought Mr. Warren called me "Half Pint" because I could drink a half pint of whiskey – instead of the real reason which was because I was only five feet tall and weighed ninety pounds!

One old-time cowboy who came to the store regularly was Pete Davis whom I had seen the first time when he appeared unannounced at my cabin, riding a mule. He came in and just sat with his hat on. As lunchtime approached, he went outside, chopped some wood and brought in an armload. I had never seen the man before, but considering that he was well behaved (he called me "Ma'am"), and remembering the custom of feeding anyone who came by, I took the hint and prepared lunch. He removed his hat as he sat down to the table, then put it back on again as he got up. He was very bald.

Pete started working for a homesteading couple named Bill and Noel Barrett. (Noel had a sister who homesteaded also. Her name was Mildred Robinson and she later married Ed Dickens of Horse Springs or Green's Gap.) Pete always came to the dances, and Noel said he never took a bath unless there was a dance. When he took his clothes off, according to her, they would stand alone. While he was bathing, she took his clothes and instead of putting them in the wash pot, she put them in the fire underneath it.

At the dances he would bow low before the lady when asking for a dance and he held a folded handkerchief in his right hand so he wouldn't soil his partner's dress. His waltzing consisted of hopping from one foot to the other.

He was so bowlegged the cowboys said he couldn't stop a pig in an alley!

Pete was often at the store (Mr. Warren said he used a pound of chewing tobacco a week) where he told many tall tales, with Mr. Warren egging him on. One evening the subject of a recent rabies scare was being discussed. Pete said he wasn't afraid of no old rabid skunk. "Why, once I was workin' out on the range an' in the night a skunk grabbed aholt of my ear." Dramatic pause.

"What'd you do, Pete?" asked Mr. Warren.

"Why, I jest retched down an' got my old six shooter and blowed 'im loose!"

In another story he told about a cattle-rustling war that was going on when he was a young boy and wrangler on the GOS Ranch near Silver City. While wrangling horses one morning, he came upon a group of rustlers in the process of changing brands on some cattle. They started shooting at him because he could identify them. The case came to trial and he was on stand as a witness. The lawyer asked, "Can you identify the men who were shooting at you?" "No sir." "Didn't you get a look at them?" "No, sir." "Why not?" "Man, I was leanin' forrad!"

When my supplies of groceries began to get low, I drove in to Magdalena (72 miles away) to replenish my stock and to have a few treats. I would stay at a motel (called Tourist Court in those days) for several days, take in a movie if one was available, go on an ice-cream-soda binge, and buy my supplies for the next three months. It was on one of these treks that I met Eleanor Williams, the remarkable artist (former trick rider) from Quemado. At the time I met her, she was showing a movie film in a vacant building in Magdalena.

I could buy canned and dried foods for indefinite storage, but there was always a dearth of fresh supplies – vegetables and meat. My greatest problem would have been with meat if it hadn't been for my neighbors. The families who lived out there – both native and homesteaders – kept fresh meat the year round, and each one of them shared with me.

Meat was kept fresh by hanging it at night by a rope over a limb of a tall pine tree, letting it hang down far enough that it couldn't be reached from above by bobcats or mountain lions. In the morning it would be wrapped in a tarpaulin and placed

under the bed – the coolest place in the house. The temperature was always cool enough to keep it fresh – just so it wasn't in the sunshine.

Once in a while a sheepherder, herding his sheep all over the hills near my cabin, would bring me a quarter of lamb or mutton – a very real treat for me.

The only meat I could buy or keep for any length of time was either bacon or salt pork. I always bought either one in a slab because it kept better. Even the bacon might mold, usually on the skin side only, and I'd wash it off with vinegar.

When some homesteaders returned home and gave me their huge garden, my vegetable problem was solved. I would go by there, pick green beans by the bushel (and any other produce ready to harvest), and drive on to Dr. Reed's cabin. Mrs. Reed, her daughter, and I canned vegetables nearly all day. We made great inroads on the garden produce.

This kept me busy until Mother, Van and Jack returned in August. The canned vegetables really came in handy with the four of us there. After the beans had quit bearing there were turnips, beets, and pumpkins enough to last us all winter.

Once the three members of the Cornelius family (including Earl's brother Garrett), the Gibsons, and I went fishing with the Freemans in their truck. We drove west past the O-Bar-O Mountain and turned south to Willow Creek where we turned left (east) into the Gila Forest. We slept that night with the sound of rushing waters, in some creek on our way, ringing soothingly in our ears.

The next day we drove as far as we could in the truck, even more deeply into the forest. Then we walked until we came to Iron Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork of the Gila River. On the way in we met Scotty McClaren, the owner of the Magdalena Drug Store. He was very disgruntled because he had caught his limit within an hour and had to stop fishing. I think the limit at that time was twenty-five fish.

The men in our little group started out fishing, but the brush and willows along the banks of the stream were so heavy it was impossible for them to use rods and reels. They finally cut willow poles from the creek bank and used plain hooks with grasshoppers for bait. All of the women caught grasshoppers with our straw hats, and as fast as we caught grasshoppers the men caught fish – wonderful fighting rainbow trout from the headwaters of the Gila.

What a feast we had that night!

Just before time for Mother and the boys to return, a band of horses came by the cabin. Diamond was in the pasture George had fenced off for her, when she jumped the fence and ran off with them. That meant I had one less chore to attend to, but nothing could repay me for the loss of the services and enjoyment she had given me.

Soon after the family came back, Van borrowed a neighbor's horse, and he and Leon rode all one day looking unsuccessfully for her. We never saw her again.

"A Rose By Any Other Name..."
Chapter 10

Rose at my homestead

The highlight of my entire stay out there – as far as visitors were concerned – was my college friend, Rose Conrad, who came out from Iowa. I had known her when we both attended the Oklahoma College for Women at Chickasha, Oklahoma. She was far, far from home but was living with her aunt in Chickasha.

Her father was a conductor on the railroad, and all members of the family had railway passes. She came as far as Magdalena on the trail, then came out to the homestead with the mailman.

Rose was a beautiful blonde girl, taller than I (wasn't everybody?), and more sophisticated. At home she led a hectic social life, but I knew about some of the sorrowful periods she had gone through and knew her frivolity was just a cover-up for her deeper feelings.

Our friendship was quiet and without stress. We could sit for hours without either one of us saying a word - no frantic compulsion to fill all silences with inane conversation. Our rapport was so great that if one made a remark after one of those silences, the other replied as if we'd been discussing the subject - or as if she'd been thinking about the same thing.

Rose was such a good sport, and was so much fun, that everyone loved her. The men teased her unmercifully, even Van who was only fourteen. She was such a tenderfoot that they told her tall tales and she believed them. The women were always on her side against the teasing of the men.

Many neighbors came down to see us while she was there because they wanted to meet her. Peggy was at home then and she spent all one day with us. Leon and Dick were

out trapping again, but we all told Rose stories about Leon in preparation for his return.

Peggy told Rose that Leon was an habitual liar, and I told her that Leon had said to me once that I was too friendly. I looked at him aghast, thinking he meant I was too forward, until he explained that he meant I should be more "coy and flirty".

We three young women, with Mother's help, planned a strategy whereby the first time Rose saw Leon she should flirt with him.

A few days later, Rose and I went down to the Slash Ranch to see if we could rent some horses to ride while she was visiting me. On the way there, near the box canyon, we met the wagon with four men, including Dick, Leon, and Earl, returning from their trapping trip. Rose didn't catch on that Leon was to be her target, until I said something to her that impressed it upon her mind. She exclaimed, "Oh, is he the liar?" then clamped her hand over her mouth. And that was the end of that plot.

When we reached the Slash Ranch, no one answered our knock, but I heard voices in the rear so we went around there. The cowboys were cleaning out the corrals, but all stopped to lean against the rail fence or sit on the top rail. They told us that everybody had gone to Horse Camp (Double Springs) bear hunting. Rose's eyes got as big as saucers. The moment she asked, excitedly, "Are there bears around here?" they began to tell her bear stories including the one about bears coming up at night to eat with their dogs.

We stayed there awhile talking to the cowboys, and I noticed that Rose kept looking around me to get a better look at them. Finally she stood out in front of them, with her arms akimbo, and said, "I want to know what makes him click every time he moves!" Of course, being cowboys, they couldn't remove their spurs even to clean the corral.

By the time the men had finished telling Rose how fierce the beasts were, and how brave they were in dealing with them, they declared it was lunch time and insisted that we stay to eat with them.

All the men in the West were good cooks and these were no exception. They had bear stew and a big pot of pinto beans simmering on the stove. All we needed was the bread, and as I've stated before, the men always refused to make biscuits if a woman was present. The lot fell to me and I was petrified - I, a rank amateur in the presence of experts. Also I had made only water biscuits on my homestead, and here I had to use milk (one step into the unknown), and bear grease instead of vegetable shortening (the second step into the unknown). Imagine my surprise to discover that the biscuits were quite edible and we all enjoyed our lunch.

After lunch the boys rolled their cigarettes, and Scotty, the ranch foreman, offered his Granger Rough Cut (really a pipe tobacco) to Rose with what she must have considered a challenge. She hurriedly rolled a very amateurish-looking cigarette, and began smoking it. I knew she did not smoke and wondered how she could stand that strong tobacco.

Suddenly she jumped up, grabbed the broom, and began furiously sweeping the floor. When we left she said, "When I looked out that door, the barn was going 'round and 'round. So I grabbed the broom to help hold me up. I just couldn't let those men see the way that tobacco was affecting me. They'd still be laughing if they'd known."

One day a neighbor, Archie Davis, came by the cabin and Rose, Jack, and I went with him on his old pickup to get a load of wood. I thought this would be another opportunity for Rose to see more of the countryside since we were going into the forest.

Archie's truck was an old one with wooden spokes on the wheels. Going up a hill and around a sharp turn, one wheel crumbled - just came all to pieces. The three of us sat or stood around while Archie attempted to put the wheel back together. A young sheepherder came by and asked us to his camp for lunch.

The sheep were grazing all over the hillsides and down in the canyon. There were always two men at each camp, but one of them was the cook. After the cook prepared the meal, he ate, then went to stay with the herd while the other man came in to eat his lunch. After finishing, the herder returned to the sheep and the cook came back to the camp.

This was the situation that day - the cook was on his way back to camp when he detoured to invite us to lunch. We accepted with alacrity because it was well past noon.

We all four went up to camp, where the meal had been cooked over a campfire, and partook of dutch-oven biscuits, pinto beans, fried mutton chops, hot chili, and Arbuckle coffee. Arbuckle coffee was bought by the owners in one-hundred-pound bags of whole coffee beans and was possibly the cheapest coffee in the world - certainly the cheapest tasting.

Even the cook enjoyed Rose as she tried to practice her college Spanish on him. She said,
"O-o-o-oh, este chile es-es-es-hot-hot-hot!"

After Rose and I cleaned up the dishes, Rose tried to ride the burro. Of course he was bridle wise (or trained to turn in the direction in which the reins were pulled across his neck), but Rose had a rein in each hand, held far apart, and burro kept running into the trees.

As soon as he'd eaten, Archie returned to the truck to resume work on the wheel. When he called that he was ready, we went with him on up the hill, helped him fill the truck with wood, then walked down the hill while he drove on up looking for a place wide enough to turn around. Jack ran on ahead of us, but Rose was lagging behind.

I called to her, "Rose, come on. Archie will be down at the foot of the hill and we won't be there."

She was looking around all over the ground with a troubled frown between her eyes.

"Anabel," she said, "I see these beans all over the ground, but I don't see a single bush."

I hooted in glee, then explained to her what she'd seen. Her first response was, "Oh,

don't tell your mother - or Van."

A short while later Peggy and Leon were both at the Gibson homestead, and Margaret and Earl Cornelius asked us all to come to their cabin for a get-together. Their log cabin was so elegant it put the rest of us to shame.

They had a thirty by forty-foot cabin made of logs so big it took only five or six on each side. The logs were peeled and varnished, and really looked beautiful. The floor was constructed of short lengths (some pieces only a few inches long) of oak flooring from the saw mill. Margaret and Earl were the only homesteaders I knew who had hardwood floors.

The cabin was all one big room with curtains for partitions, but the curtains could be pulled back to make one big room again. The living room section had a big beautiful fireplace.

When Rose and I arrived, Peggy and Leon were already there. A neighbor, Joe Ashley, whom I had met before, and his nephew Richard joined us later.

The floor had been cleared, and we started dancing to an old crank phonograph. I still was not too sure of myself, but Leon was an excellent dancer and I found myself dancing mainly with him. Rose was also an excellent dancer and caught on quickly to the western style of dancing. She and Leon should have been dancing together, but I think the business of "the liar" still rankled with him.

Later in the evening someone suggested we have a dance marathon and we did. Leon was again my partner, and he was so determined to win that we ended the dance (as winners!) with my feet on his and with him carrying my weight. It's a good thing I didn't weigh then what I weigh now!

And you might say he won the marathon alone - and with a millstone around his neck (or on his feet).

The following morning Rose wanted to ride one of their horses. They had two - a small pinto, and a large gray mare. She chose to ride the pinto, but he had spent too much of his life following the big mare around: Rose reined him to the other side of the pasture, but when he looked up and saw how far he was from the old horse, he returned at a dead run, bumping into the mare's side and pinning Rose's knee between the two horses.

We stayed about two more days and each day Rose examined her knee which turned black, blue, yellow, and deep purple. She was hoping it would stay until she returned home so she could tell her family she got it riding wild horses.

One night as Rose was writing in her diary, she asked me how to spell "lobing", and I told her I'd never heard of it.

"Oh, yes, you have," she said scornfully. "What we were doing on that horse this afternoon."

I still didn't have a cabin on my claim, so Van and Pete Reed (the son of the optometrist homesteader) went up there to cut the logs. They cut small ones so they could be more easily handled. All the logs came from my section.

When there is a dense growth of trees, they grow very tall and slender and straight, so the boys had excellent building material from which to choose.

As in all forested areas, the southern exposures of the hills were blanketed with scrub growth such as juniper, cedar, pinon, and live oak, while the northern slopes were covered with tall pines. This was supposed to be because the snow stayed longer on the northern slopes and the water soaked in instead of running off.

My section, which was much higher in altitude then (sic) my Dad's place, was crossed by the Continental Divide and was adjacent to the Pelona Mountain. This mountain had a triangulation station on it, and a bench mark showing 9204 ft. elevation. It was high enough to have blue spruce, hemlock, Douglas fir, and white pine, in addition to the more common Ponderosa pine and juniper.

There was no road up to my claim, so we simply made one - not as difficult as it sounds. It did not require the use of any heavy equipment. We merely left the Beaverhead road at the Garcia Ranch, drove northwest to the Reed homestead, then on to the northwest to my place. Making the road consisted mainly of removing a few rocks and driving through the eighteen-inch grama grass until we left tracks.

While Rose was with us, Van and Archie Davis started to build my cabin and Rose and I went up to see how they were progressing. We took along a bed roll so we could spend the night and come back the next day.

This was in November and so cold Rose wanted to go to bed with let laced boots and her hat on.

During the night a little field mouse got in bed between us, and you never saw such scurrying - both from the frightened little mouse, and from Rose who acted as if a mountain lion had attacked her.

The following day was bitterly cold and I insisted that we get out of there in a hurry - while we could. Before we got everything loaded, it began to snow, and it snowed on us all the way home. Before we were halfway there, we had a flat and since it was too cold to stop to repair it, I drove the last ten miles on a flat tire. Car heaters were unheard of then and we were nearly freezing inside the car.

I drove up almost to the cabin and left the car there - and there it sat for over a year.

The time was drawing near for Rose to be going back home. How badly I wanted to keep her there! She had come to stay a week with me, and wasn't sure she'd like it. She stayed three weeks and hated to leave.

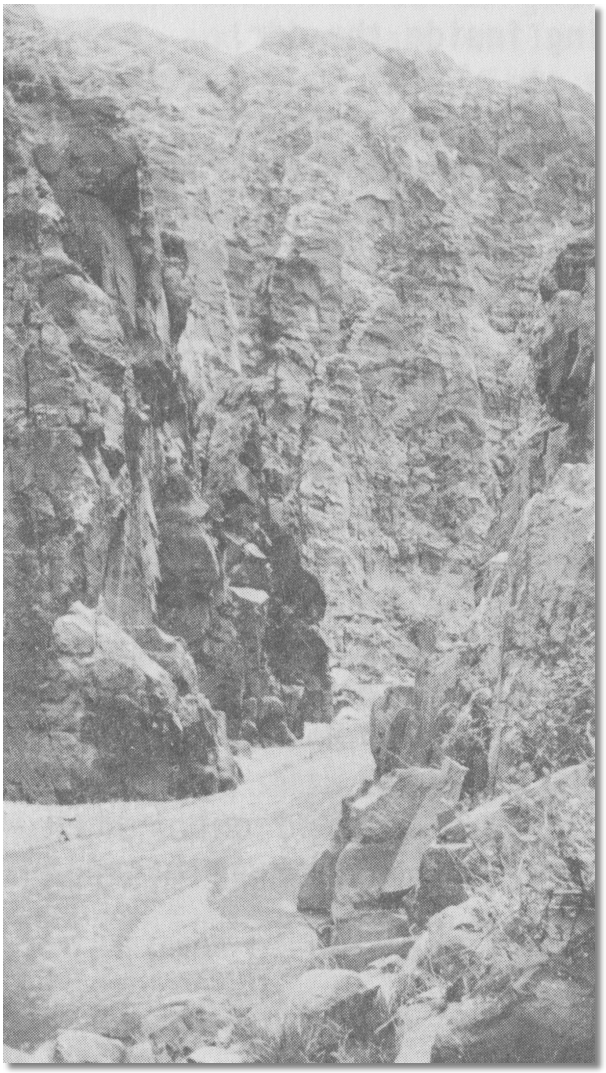
Since my car was still out of commission, Rose and I caught a ride with Lon Grogan again in his truck. When Lon stopped down on the road in the morning, Van, Jack, Rose, Lady (our dog) and I went running down. We had Rose's bags and some blankets to keep our feet and knees warm in the truck. We expected to be back with Lon's supplies before sundown.

Rose and I got out at the Aragon Hotel where she'd spend the night, then did a

little bit of shopping for candy and trinkets for Mother and the boys. Then we returned to the hotel to wait for Lon. He came a little after lunch, and we started out. When we were only a few miles from town, the truck began acting up, so we had to return to town to have it worked on.

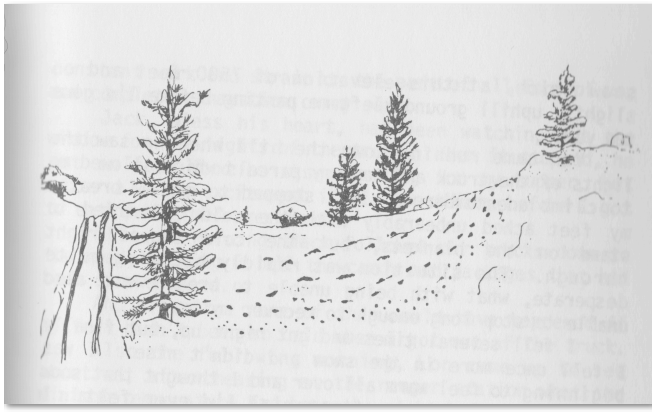
I went back to the hotel and found Rose sitting in the lobby in tears. She hadn't intended for me to see her. I always think it's an anticlimax to come back after saying good-bye.

Of all the people who visited me while I was at Beaverhead, no one gave me such pleasure as Rose. What a joy she was to everyone including me! She was fun, a good conversationalist, a good sport, wrote poetry I liked better than my own, and had a wonderful sense of humor. And I haven't seen her for fifty years!



Monticello Box Canyon

A Deceptive Climate - Chapter 11



Our footprints in the snow.

Having to have the truck worked on delayed us considerably and threw us into darkness getting home. Then driving after dark lengthened our driving time so we were well into the cold before we arrived at our cabin.

Lon let me out on the road after a three-and-a-half-hour ride in the cold truck. I still had to walk half a mile to the cabin and my feet were already like ice.

I loved the summer climate in New Mexico - cool and pleasant, high and dry - but the winter climate was proving to be deceptive. In the daytime, the sun shone, no wind blew, and it was comfortable outside without a coat. Only the cold feet underneath the snow testified to the fact that the temperature never rose above freezing in the warmest part of the day.

It was too dark to find the path we'd beaten down in the morning, so I floundered through the knee-deep snow which, at this elevation of 7500 feet and on slightly uphill ground, left me panting before I'd gone ten yards.

Van came running down the hill when he saw the lights of the truck and took my parcels which allowed me to climb unencumbered. If I stopped to get my breath, my feet ached unbearably with the cold. I tried to stand on the blankets, but the cold seeped right through. The situation was rapidly becoming quite desperate, what with being unable to breathe and also unable to stop long enough to recover my breath.

I fell several times and got right up, but finally I fell once more in the snow and didn't rise. I was beginning to feel warm all over and I thought that snow was the softest warmest material I'd every felt. I snuggled down into this downy nest to rest.

Van immediately tossed all the packages aside and ran to help me up. I fought him like a tiger because I thought he was mean to drag me from my cozy sanctuary. I pleaded with him to let me rest where it was warm, but he overrode my resistance and half carried, half dragged me to the cabin. With his added burden, he soon became winded and stood me up on the running board of my car when we came to it (still standing in the road near the cabin), while he tried to revive. When Mother opened the door for us, she was aghast at the terrible sound of our difficult and painful breathing.

As the heat of the room hit me, my body became suffused with pain, but it was

nothing compared to the agonizing pain in my feet. After I could bear to have someone touch my feet, my high-top laced boots were removed, and we soaked my feet in snow water to begin with. We very gradually warmed the water, and by the time my feet were thoroughly thawed and I was more or less at ease in my mother's old felt house slippers, two hours had elapsed. The time had been filled with constant work and strain on the part of all four of us, and complete exhaustion on my part.

Jack, bless his heart, had been watching out the window for the lights of the truck. When it stopped, he put on some food he was preparing for my supper, but after all the excitement it was ten thirty before I got to eat the warmed-over food.

The next morning, Jack followed our tracks down to the road, picking up all the candy and packages that had been strewn there.

And of course none of this would have happened if my feet hadn't been so cold when I got out of the truck.

Also the following morning, Lon came to see about me, after hearing at the ranger station what the minimum temperature had been the night before.

"My wife nearly had a fit when she found out I'd let you out on the road," he said. "If you couldn't drive up to her cabin, why didn't you bring her home?" she asked me. "Then you could have taken her back this morning."

"Well, I can tell you right now that I'd never have let you out if I'd had any idea it was so cold. I was horrified when I heard that the temperature last night was 39 degrees below zero!"

O. C. W.'s Annie Oakley - Chapter 12

The O. C. W. Administration Building

The days following my "foot" episode were filled with quiet enjoyment for the four of us. I was still wearing Mother's felt house slippers, so did not venture out into the snow. I was able to help with the sawing and splitting of the wood, though, near the cabin where the snow had been trampled down. The heat from our range kept us toasty and warm and the continuous fire was an excellent means of cooking beans or stew or any other long-cooking meal.

When the boys were lucky enough to find a dead oak tree, we were treated to some of Mother's prize-winning light bread, as yeast-raised bread was called then. Oh, what a welcome change from our water biscuits! We had to have the slow-burning oak for baking the loaves, for the juniper wood provided only a hot, quick fire.

We all missed Rose and her fun very much, but didn't have much time before Dad and Red were expected for Christmas. Mother prepared a real old-fashioned Texas Christmas dinner with baked hen and all the trimmings. They did not arrive before Christmas, neither did they come on Christmas Day. We enjoyed our feast and shared it with Mr. Warren and another man who were out hunting on foot. Mr. Warren remarked about Mother's dressing and said he knew she'd grown up in Texas from her cornbread dressing.

Two days after Christmas Red and Dad appeared. They had been delayed by the worst winter storm for many years. As they came down U.S. Highway 60 west of Clovis, through Vaughn and Willard, the snow had been too deep for cars to travel and many had been left stranded. On stretches of the road where the snow plows had been, the snow was piled up on either side of the highway twice as high as the car.

At once Dad began demanding that we return to Oklahoma with him because he was worried about what might happen to us if we stayed. Reluctantly we gave in. The irony was that after spending all that time in the below-zero weather out there, I returned to "civilization" and immediately caught a bad case of the flu.
Fortunately I had recovered in time to enroll at midterm at my alma mater - Oklahoma College for Women at Chickasha, Oklahoma. Since it was my senior year and I had only one semester in which to finish my degree, I took twenty semester hours and a correspondence course trying to get through. I still lacked six hours' work which I completed the following winter by correspondence, and returned to O.C. W. in the spring of 1934 for my degree.

I had my old job back as business manger of the college paper, The Trend, and was student assistant again to my philosophy

professor. And that's how I got by after not working all the year before.

I stayed with Mrs. Forman that last semester, as I had the two preceding years I had attended O.C.W. She made me a special deal whereby I could have a cheaper rate if I was willing to sleep on the sleeping porch. I told her anything to save money, so I did sleep on the sleeping porch (completely enclosed and very warm and comfortable) and paid her $12.50 a month for board and room!

During the spring the outskirts of Chickasha were hit by a terrible tornado. Mr. and Mrs. Forman took me with them to view the aftermath. I had always heard of the unbelievable things which happened during a tornado, but never before had I actually witnessed them.

The two-story house had been crumpled by a giant hand and the whole thing had fallen into the basement. A cow had a regular blunt-ended 2x4 driven entirely through her body. A small tree, and even some of the fence posts, had straws embedded in them but left standing out perpendicularly from the post - as if they had been twisted, the straws inserted, then released.

The most unbelievable thing I saw was a high stack of loose straw left completely undisturbed, and a tractor placed gently and carefully right on top of the stack.

Mr. Forman was the owner of an appliance store in Chickasha, and these farmers had bought a new washing machine from him. He examined the washer with the intent of repairing it for them free, but decided it was beyond repair. Instead he gave them another used washer in good condition. I remember that the lady cried, as they had no insurance.

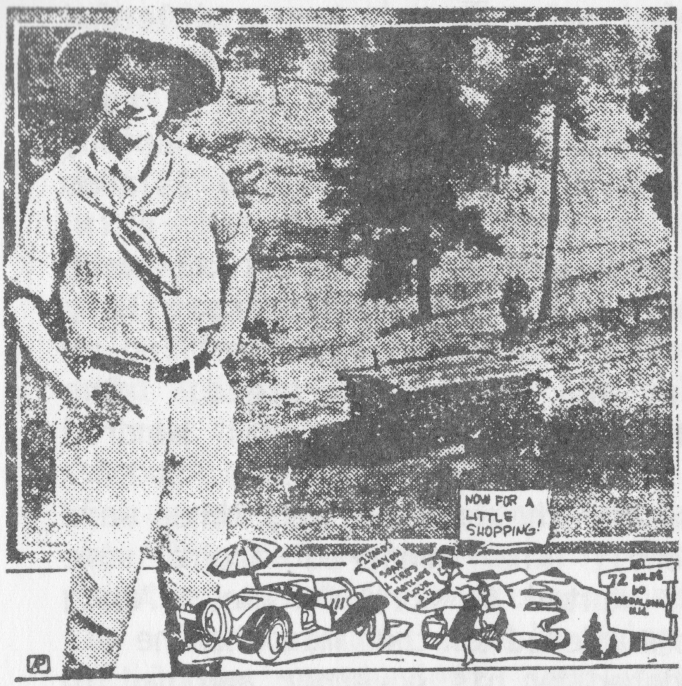
I walked to school - about ten blocks I'd guess - and I still had trouble with my feet during the winter months as the result of the frost bite.

Since I was entering at midterm, it was too late to have my picture in the yearbook among the photographs of my classmates. The registrar was a photographer and took a picture of me dressed in my boot pants, laced boots, and cowboy hat, and holding my 38 caliber Smith and Wesson revolver. This he placed in the snapshot section of the year book as "OCW's Annie Oakley." A local reporter interviewed me, then sent her article and the picture to the Associated Press. It went out all over the United States, and I received nearly four hundred letters from almost every state in the Union, plus the Philippine Islands and the Hawaiian Islands (only a Territory then).

Most of the letters were from people who were interested in the country and in homesteading. Many would write, "Please write me a long letter telling me all about that country and how to homestead." One added, "especially in Silver City" (several hundred miles away and a place I'd never even visited).

Some people told me how they admired me, three were from people named Howell who wondered about some relationship, and eight wanted to work for me. Among the last were a man who murdered another man when he was eighteen, had been pardoned by his governor and had to leave the

Oklahoma College Girl Homesteads 640-Acre Ranch 72 Miles From Town



Miss Anabel Howell divides her time between studying at Oklahoma College for Women and homesteading a 640-acre ranch in New Mexico. Above is shown her cabin, which she helped build, located 72 miles from Magdalena, N. M., the nearest town.

She's Too Busy to Get Lonesome, Besides Her Shack's Only 7 Miles from Road

CHICKASHA, Okla., March 20. (AP)—A demure Oklahoma schoolgirl is homesteading a 640-acre New Mexico ranch, alone and 72 miles from the nearest trading post.

But Anabel Howell of Elmer, Okla., who recently enrolled at Oklahoma College for Women, says: "Lonesome? I should say not. I don't have time!"

"When I first went out there I had to haul water five miles," she related. "But I cleaned out a spring and now it's right at my doorstep.

"My ranch is seven miles off the main highway, and to get my car in I had to build five miles of that mountain road myself."

When she isn't working Miss Howell, who plans to return to the ranch as soon as school is over for the year, rides, reads, studies Spanish and hikes on mountain trails.

The log cabin was built with the aid of a brother and a hired man. The earth is the floor, but Miss Howell has brightened it with gay rugs. Other furnishings are home-made table and chairs, a bunk, a wood stove and a fireplace. There are two small windows and a door.

During the early part of this winter the thermometer nestled down to 29 degrees below zero, but Miss Howell says she didn't mind because the wood she chopped last summer was on hand.

Miss Howell has "a lot of fine neighbors," even if the nearest is seven miles away. It's 72 miles to Magdalena, N. M. "There's a real thrill in waiting for the mail," she said. "It comes once a week."

Newspaper clipping

state; and an aged black man in Arkansas who wanted to work for his board and room. A number were lonely and wanted to be pen pals. "I get lonesome and so do you," from Delaware.

Other samples were "With perseverance and desire would be glad to hear from you"; and "...read where you was homesteading a ranch in N.M. and was living alone and I am made to Wonder if you need a partner or have you one in viey I am a lonly man with no help mate in this life a true helpmate in this life is Worth all of this World are have you a partner in view you shurly need some hlep this life it too short to spend it a lone that far from eny one and one lonley Woman a lone may I ask you your age and Where you was raised," from Arkansas.

Still another "I am very ConSciencious and very tender and very affectionate and tender hearted, and have no habits."

"I am a Bapits member of church, I have some education I got to in the ninth grade and quite school and I have farme every sence. I do not have so very much but I ride a horse nearly every day."

"I will close for this time with respect and Love."

"You are the kind of girl I could like."

"I am putting in my claim for you."

This was during the depression, remember, and I received one letter whose envelope was made from a grocery sack fastened together with flower-and-water paste, with Western Union blanks for paper.

Most letters were directed to me at OCW, so when some came in, the president of the college, Dr. Nash, called me into his office to get them. He was interested in their contents and I often read some of the funny ones to him to give him a good laugh. One day after I had read some especially bucolic contents to him, I said, "You know we laugh about these letters but the ones of this type make me feel cheap. I don't know why I should react to them in that way, because they can't be personal - people who don't even know me. But it is true that I feel degraded in some way - shamed."

He replied that I shouldn't take it seriously or personally, just think of it as objectively as possible and concentrate on the types of people who were writing the letters. "Someday," he said "you'll really laugh at them and enjoy them without any thought of yourself as a target."

And that's just what happened!

I was surprised to receive a letter from a former high school history teacher, and the brother-in-law of a high school chum when I lived in Nocona, Texas, before 1921.

I received another letter from Nocona, from Frank Wood, the State Representative of Montague County. He had seen the clipping in the Ft. Worth Star-Telegraph and wanted me to know he had known my parents and my grandparents in Nocona - and was proud of me.

Ten people, all strangers to me, invited themselves to come to see me when I returned to my claim. I didn't answer their letters. Some letters were sad but many

expressed a desire to be helpful.

A few people, out of the goodness of their hearts and asking nothing in return, sent me gentle and wise advice on how to make a go of it on my homestead. One person suggested I raise squab, since it had said in the article that I had trouble with hawks and owls. A couple of people suggested the raising of goats and both preferred - Toggenbergs.

One man from Denver was a veteran and was drawing $20.00 a month compensation but was living "good" on it. He always took advantage of bargains - things that really amaze us in these days at present prices. He paid 10 cents for a large box of oat meal; potatoes and onions, 1 cent a pound (or 65 cents a sack); eggs, two dozen for 25 cents; Hills Bros. Blue Label coffee for 25 cents per pound; navy beans, 7 lbs. for 25 cents. So he ate well, paid the rent, and bought the necessary clothing on $20 a month. Once in a while he took in a 10 cent, or even a 15 cent, movie. Imagine!

Another very interesting letter was from Mr. A. Garlick, or Gurlick, from West Last (sic) Vegas, New Mexico, who was a former principal of Kelly School.

He suggested I get some black and blue game chickens, because "they are good rustlers, and get on the wing quickly from coyotes." I should also get a burro for carrying wood, and to neck with my saddle horse, or even to neck up with the cow. He enclosed some grains of red flint corn which stands drought and matures in from twelve to fourteen weeks for green corn.

If I should be in Socorro, Miss Truex, who lived on his property, would welcome me to a bunk for the night.

Mr. Gurlick also recommended Toggenberg goats for milk winter and summer. He said they were "very capricious feeders." One of his goats from San Antonio, south of Socorro, would eat cactus by the hour, and another fed a great deal on soap weed. He claimed some survived on pinon branches.

Mr. Gurlick said he was a musician, a stenographer, and a school teacher - "not always a wise one."

When school was out, Red, Van and I returned to New Mexico in Dad's car since mine was still out of commission.

Red went hunting alone one day and was gone all day. We knew he had intended to make a short trip, so we were very concerned when he didn't return as soon as we expected. Our worry grew greater as time went by and he didn't appear. We thought of Van's going down to Warren's store for advice, or help as the case may be, but Red had the keys to the car in his pocket. Finally Van walked to the store and Mr. Warren brought him back. They returned, after dark, just as Red appeared - belligerent because we'd worried. He had gotten into the wrong canyon which let him farther and farther away.

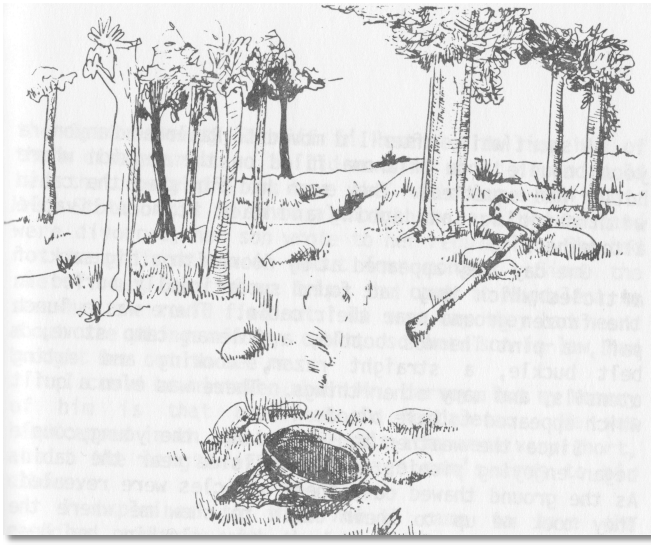
This was the summer of 1933 and I still didn't have a cabin on my claim. Leon, Smitty, Red and Van built it from scratch, since Leon said the part Van and Archie Davis had started the year before was not plumb. They made short shrift of the job,

since the logs were already felled, seasoned, and notched. Having them seasoned was a decided advantage since they were not so heavy as green logs. And of course felling and trimming the trees and notching the logs took (and in this case, saved) a great deal of time. The logs just had to be put in place.

The boys would not accept any pay for their work except a fishing license for each young man. So as soon as they had finished, the four boys drove to the Middle Fork of the Gila River and stayed for about a week.

Building my cabin.

Butler Mystery - Chapter 13



Stotts camp

Before I moved over to Dad's cabin, the Butlers (for whom the log cabin was built by the neighbors, and whose little girl was one of my pupils) left and no one knew where they had gone. Pete Reed said Mr. Butler came over to Reed's cabin to borrow a 30-30 rifle for deer hunting, but didn't bring it back. A couple of days later, when Pete went to Butler's Cabin to get the gun, their place was completely deserted.

Everyone wondered where they could have gone, and why they didn't tell anyone they were leaving. Conjectures ran rampant, with each narrator having his own idea of what had happened. I remembered that the abandoned car we'd seen all winter was at the foot of the Butler hill, but had no idea whose it was since they did not own a car. Several people said Butler had posed as a locator of homestead land, and had been showing two California men around over the countryside. We all assumed the family had left with the two men.

A short while after I'd moved to Railroad Canyon, a young couple from Oklahoma filed on the section where Butler had squatted. They soon had finished the cabin with chinking and daubing and made it more livable altogether.

One day they appeared at my door with a big sack of articles which they had found superficially buried in the frozen ground near their cabin. There was a lunch pail, a pint Thermos bottle, a Coleman camp stove, a belt buckle, a straight razor, cooking and eating utensils, and many other things. There was even a quilt which appeared to have blood on it.

Since the weather had warmed up, the young couple began enjoying picnics on the hillside near the cabin. As the ground thawed out, these articles were revealed. They took me up to their cabin to show me where the items had been buried, a place where clothing had been burned, and a fallen pine tree where the quilt had been stretched across its roots. They explained to me that they were leaving those things with me until the Catron County Sheriff came after them. All of a sudden they had decided to return to Oklahoma. The sheriff, by the way, never did pick up the articles.

The mystery deepened.

All alone in my cabin one night, I had been

writing a letter telling someone about the things spread out on the extra bed, and the bloody quilt hanging over its foot. A little field mouse ran across the chip box, rattling some papers there, and I almost jumped out of my chair.

Later a man from Magdalena, named Mr. Harvey, brought his mother-in-law (from California) to see me. She explained that her ex-husband, Victor Stotts, and their son, Ray Stotts, had been missing in the Beaverhead area for several months. She had written to the Catron County Sheriff in Reserve, telling him of their disappearance. He did nothing about it and told her the county did not have the funds for a man hunt. Mrs. Stotts told me that although she and her husband were divorced, her son wrote to her regularly. She had not heard from him in about four months. Since the sheriff had been of no help, she came to Magdalena to see what she could find out. In some way they had heard about the things in my cabin, so her son-in-law had brought her out to see me.

I could be mistaken about Mr. Harvey, but my memory of him is that he lived in Magdalena. He was handicapped in an unusual way - his arms were very short, about the length of the average man's arms to his elbows.

I explained to them how I came to have the articles, and rode with them to the former Butler cabin to show them where the things had been buried. Mrs. Stotts identified her son's razor and belt buckle, and said the quilt was one of her own.

This tiny woman seemed very brave to me as she sat tearlessly stroking her missing son's belt buckle.

They took the things with them and returned to Magdalena.

Still later in the year, while Mother was there, Mr. Harvey returned accompanied by two men: John MacDonald, owner of the MacDonald Mercantile Company of Magdalena (where I bought my supplies), and President of the Socorro County Board of Education; and a Federal Marshall named Collins.

I told them everything I knew about the situation, but I wasn't much help, I'm afraid. I shared with them - at the officer's suggestion - all of the rumors, conjectures, and gossip I'd heard. I rode with them back into the forest, where the two Stotts men had camped, but the only evidence of their having been there was an iron skillet with a broken handle.

The Federal man asked me if I'd heard about a woman from Texas who had camped out, with her husband, near the Stotts' camp, or anything about a bloody axe. Unfortunately I had been living at Ed Moore's until school was out so didn't realize there was a mystery until later.

As soon as I could after I returned from school, I got together with Chester Warren to hear the details of the case.

It was the same Federal Marshal, Mr. Collins, who found Butler, not because he had committed murder (which crime was not under his jurisdiction), but because he had driven a stolen car across state lines. It was fifteen months after the murder when Butler was apprehended in Louisiana.

Butler was brought back to New Mexico at once, and after a Federal Grand Jury in Santa Fe indicted him, was placed in the New Mexico State prison in Santa Fe to await trial. Mr. Warren said he not only confessed to the double murder, but seemed relieved to get it off of his chest. Mr. Warren was serving on the Coroner's Jury when Butler came out to locate the bodies. Butler pointed out a place in the forest, but just as the men began to dig, he changed his mind and directed them to another site. When this had happened twice, an angry mumbling came from the spectator crowd, who seem to think he deserved to be lynched.

On the third try it was the correct place and the badly decayed bodies of Victor Stotts and his son Ray were exhumed. There joint grave was only a few yards from the spot where I had found the skillet with the broken handle.

Chester said that as far back in the forest as the grave was, and as difficult as it was to locate, it would have been found eventually by a hunter going by, for the younger man's sweater was already halfway out of the grave through a badger hole, dug since the burial.

Butler's story was told to me by Mr. Warren as it came out in the confession and in the coroner's inquest: The two men decided upon some land they thought suitable for homesteading, and drove back to Magdalena to pick up their second car and their trailer, loaded with two fifty-five gallon drums of gasoline and several month's supply of groceries.

When they arrived at their campsite, Butler was there waiting for them. He told the young man to come with him because he had a "deer staked out" - an expression used by all the men out there to mean they had seen a deer in the vicinity. The young man went with Butler who led him up to an open grave he had dug during the day, shot him, and pushed him into the hole face down. Young Stotts was very tall and the grave was not quite long enough. Butler bent his legs back over his body after removing his boots.

The plan was for Butler to entice the old man to the spot on some pretense, then shoot him and dump his body into the grave by his son. The plan went astray when Mr. Stotts appeared unexpectedly upon the scene. Butler, in his excited, apprehensive state of mind, fired at him too soon, thereby missing a vital spot. Even more crazed after that, he grabbed up a new axe lying there and split open the old man's skull. Afterward he had to drag the body to the grave, then cover the grave.

Butler took one of the cars and drove hurriedly to his cabin to get his wife. She helped him pack up all the Stotts' possessions, then they drove the two cars back to their cabin for their own belongings and their two children.

In leaving the hill where their cabin was located, one of them stripped the gears on one of the cars and they had to leave it.

When Mr. Collins found the lady camper in Texas, she still had the bloody axe - still unused. Her story was that as the two Stotts men prepared for their trip to Magdalena that morning, she had gone over to their camp to ask them to bring her some snuff. That evening when they returned just before sundown, she walked over to their camp

to collect her snuff. Just as she approached, she saw Mr. Stotts standing on the running board of a car, shading his eyes and looking toward the west. While he stood there, she could hear a shot nearby, and Mr. Stotts left the car and walked toward the shot. She decided she wouldn't wait for him to return, but would come back the next morning for her snuff. She had't gone very far when she heard another shot and thought the men were out hunting deer.

The next morning when she returned, the camp had been completely cleared out. Not a things was in sight except an iron skillet with a broken handle, and a new axe with blood on it. She thought there was no sense in leaving a perfectly good axe, so took it with her, thinking the blood came from butchering a deer.

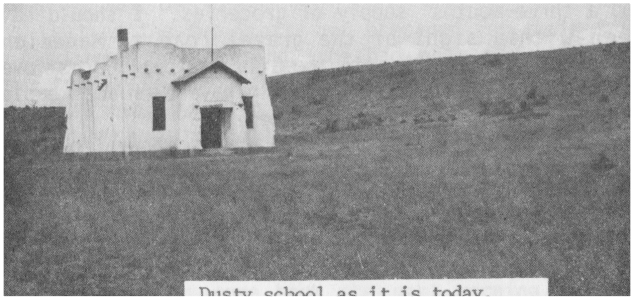
Mr. Collins had the blood analyzed and found out it was human blood, so the search went on.

In retrospect, and emphasizing the points I already knew but whose significance I was unaware of when they occurred, I learned the explanation for the abandoned car, and the burned and buried articles. I can imagine their panic during the night as they tried to do all of these things and to get away before daylight.

Mr. Warren pointed out to me something that had never occurred to me - how fortunate I was that I was living at Moore's during that time instead of at my Dad's cabin. Butler's motive for the double murder seemed to be that he needed supplies, gasoline, and transportation. If I had been living at Dad's, I should have had a car, a fifty-five gallon drum of gasoline, and a three-months' supply of groceries. I should have been within sight of the gravel road to Magdalena instead of miles back into the Gila National Forest over a dirt road. And lastly, I would have been much easier to do away with than two grown men.

I'm sure I must have paled at the thought of those three essential conditions - all of which I would have innocently fulfilled.

Over The Hill But Not So Far Away
Chapter 14



Dusty School in about 1987.

In the fall of 1933, I went to teach at Dusty, just east of my Dad's cabin over the Black Range in the valley at the foot of the San Mateo Mountains. I had board and room with Mary and Willie McCracken and their three children - Wilson (about 12), Buddy (10), and Dorothy (7). We lived right on the Magdalena-Dusty road, and about a mile north of the school house.

At that time there was Gobel's store and filling station, the adobe school building, and a post office in the home of the postmistress, Mrs. Ramsey. Now the school house is the only thing left standing.

My pupils were John and Frank Tucker, John McCauley, the three McCracken children, two Welty children (a boy Herchel, and a girl Leah), and the grandson of Mrs. Ramsey - Ray Henderson. There probably were others, but if so I've forgotten their names.

Dusty was once named Cherryville until it was changed to the more appropriate title of Dusty. It lies in a broad shallow valley between the San Mateo Mountains and the Black Range. In going there from Magdalena, you go west on U.S. Highway 60 for 22 miles to the present day VLA (Very Large Array), and turn south on the road to Beaverhead. Twenty-one miles south is a fork in the road, the right hand fork going to Beaverhead and beyond, the left going south to Dusty and on to Winston, Cuchillo and out to present I-25 just north of Truth or Consequences.

he Alamosa River traverses the entire valley from the Beaverhead fork to the Monticello Box Canyon (whose cliffs are of extreme height) where it turns toward the southeast and reaches Monticello, Placitas and eventually Elephant Butte Lake.

At the turn toward the box canyon, and back from the road, are the ruins of old Fort Ojo Caliente, named for a warm spring up a side canyon. The fort was headquarters in the 1870's for a company of soldiers assigned to keep the peace. Victorio, Chief of the Warm Springs Apaches, had his headquarters near there and appeared regularly with his followers for their government rations of food and blankets.

Geronimo, a medicine man of the Apaches - not a chief as some people think - gave himself up at the final reckoning with the United States Government, but he was captured only once. That capture took place near Dusty, at this same fort whose

ruins so fascinated me. It was performed by John P. Clum, Indian Agent for the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona.

While living at the McCrackens, I bought my first pair of eyeglasses. Dr. Reed who homesteaded near my Dad's (and whose wife helped me can vegetables), came over to Dusty and fitted them. I wore them two week and they were broken while I was playing games with the children. I had them replaced, but the night of the same day I received them, they were broken again when someone slammed the door just as I started in. The third time was the charm, and I wore the next pair until they had to be changed.

We had a cow and lots of milk, butter, whipped cream, and buttermilk. The chickens gave us plenty of eggs as well as fried and baked chicken. The pigs ran wild in the pinon scrub and fattened on the fallen pinon nuts. When it was time to butcher a hog, Willie took his rifle and shot the one he wanted. In the deep South they boast of the peanut-fed pork as being so fine, but never have I eaten any pork so tasty as that fattened on pinon nuts. We had a big, big garden with fresh cabbage all winter long - by covering it with dried corn stalks in the barn.

The McCrackens had a number of horses and each member of the family loved to ride. I really enjoyed my horseback rides while I was there. At that time I'd rather ride than eat - and Mary was an excellent cook!

A man named Sampson, who worked at the Sullivan ranch, was a good friend of the McCrackens and spent a lot of time at their home. He had a wonderful horse which he let me ride any time I wanted to. He was a very superior horse and I loved to ride him. Where some horses, with malice aforethought, will go under low-hanging limbs in an effort to scrape the rider off their back, this horse would step out of the trail to go around a tree - all on his own initiative - if there were low branches.

When I told Sampson about it, he said, "Yes, I know. I told him to take care of you."

Sampson (the only name I ever knew) took me riding to many interesting places including Wahoo Canyon. This was supposed to have been an outlaw hangout many years ago. Sampson entertained me with stories about it as we rode along. It was beautiful heavily wooded country, and quite a climb until we entered a small box canyon. On passing through it, like passing through the eye of a needle, we saw a lovely flat open meadow, enclosed on all sides by small cliffs. I could see how it would have made an excellent outlaw stronghold.

Another source of enjoyable horseback rides was Opal McCauley, John's sister. She watered some of her family's stock at McCraken's place and often watered the horses last so she could saddle a couple for the two of us for a ride after I got home from school. We made several longer trips on Saturdays when we went after wild grapes and black walnuts. The walnuts were a special treat and grew in Wahoo Canyon. We carried them home in gunny sacks and gave them to Mary and to Opal's mother. They used them in cookies and in fudge for our Halloween party at school.

The school house was built of adobe and was therefore very warm in winter (once the walls were heated) and cool on the hottest days.

We had a wood stove and sometimes one of the fathers would bring us a pickup load of wood. If we ran out before more arrived, the children and I provided our own and had fun doing it. The only kind of wood readily available was cottonwood which grew along the Alamosa River and dead wood lay in profusion everywhere. But I will say this: cottonwood is the poorest excuse for fuel I have ever seen. It doesn't give off much heat per pound and it leaves as much ash as it had wood to begin with.

The only community entertainment there were the programs we put on at school, and especially the dances, given in the school house two or three times during the school year. As was usual with all the dances in the entire country, people came from miles around, from Datil, Pie Town, Quemado. Everyone had fun and there was no rowdiness to spoil the party.

The three McCracken children and I walked about a mile to school each day. Several mornings the boys found evidence a skunk had been under the school through the ventilator in the concrete foundation. They decided to try to trap him, so set a trap, with a small chain fastening it down, in the entrance hole.

The following morning the boys left for school early to look at the trap before anyone else arrived. When Dorothy and I got there, the boys had caught the skunk in the trap and Buddy was trying to slip a gunny sack over its head while Wilson dragged it by the chain. They had heard a skunk could not throw its scent while in motion, so Wilson was going at a pretty good pace while Buddy half ran behind him, leaning over trying to put the gunny sack over the skunk. Finally he said, "Snookum, you're going to fast!" and Snookum stopped dead in his tracks. Instantly the skunk sprayed Buddy - all over the front of his shirt.

I had always thought a skunk just sprayed an odor into the air. Now I realized it was a liquid of a greenish-yellow color and it soon became stiff on Buddy's shirt. Most skunk odor from a block away makes people nauseated, but never in my life have I smelled anything like that - right in our faces. I sent Buddy home to change his shirt, because I knew he could not breathe with that odor so close to his nose - and neither could we!

Now the real problem began, for in the excitement Wilson had released the chain and the skunk was running around free but dragging the trap on one leg. I thought we could not let him go that way because he would catch his chain on something and die a slow death of starvation. The most humane way would have been to shoot him, but we had no gun at school, naturally.

The only thing left was for everybody to throw rocks at him. A rock big enough to kill the skunk could not be aimed with any accuracy, so we all used small stones and tried to hit him on the head. Finally one small rock did the trick and Wilson was able to remove the trap.

By that time we were all on the verge of illness. I wrote a note and attached it to the door; "We have gone to McCracken's house to have our lessons. The reason should be quite obvious." Then we all trudged up the road to Mary's to continue school. She said when I came in I was as green as a gourd, and I felt worse than that. Besides the terrible odor at close range, it made me heartsick to have to kill this poor animal that had done us no harm.

I think the children felt the same way. They were very serious in their work with none of the gleeful fun that normally occurred.

The county supervisor came that day - wouldn't you know it! But the evidence was quite clear.

Many people who lived in isolated places employed a governess to teach their children. Such a family was that of the sawmill owner, Mr. Thomas. He and his family lived out in the area near Dusty. Their governess was Bessie Bannerman who later married Marvin Ake.

One time Bessie asked me to go to Magdalena and Socorro with her in her car. We stopped by his place to pick up Marvin. I believe we went to a movie. We stopped in Magdalena and visited Marvin's grandmother, a very charming and interesting old lady. Marvin's teenage sister (I think her name was Winnie) was living with her grandmother.

Such a tragedy occurred in the Thomas family. Their young daughter, Joyce, was a good friend of Betty , the daughter of saddlemaker Tom Butterfield of Magdalena and his wife Bea. While Joyce was visiting Betty one time, the two girls rode their bicycles out on the highway west. A tractor trailer, owned by Mr. Thomas and loaded with logs headed for the sawmill, met them at a curve in the road. As the tractor turned the curve, the trailer became unhitched and shot straight forward. One of the protruding logs hit Joyce and killed her.

There was some difficulty about getting my New Mexico teaching certificate renewed. I already had a Texas and an Oklahoma one and had previously taught three years, one in each state. It seems I had been issued only a temporary certificate to teach at Beaverhead, but I was not told of the problem until school started. It seemed that since I had never attended a college in New Mexico I was lacking a course in New Mexico history. I was not to receive my pay until I had completed a correspondence course. This meant I could not pay my board bill. Mary and Willie were kind and understanding - and patient - about it. I immediately enrolled in a correspondence course at the University of New Mexico and hurried through it as fast as I could.

When I finished the course after months of working and sent the proof of credit to the County Superintendent in Socorro (Miquela Apodaca), I was given all my past salary at once. I paid Mary what I owed and she thought she had a fortune, getting it all at once that way. It was only a small fortune for she was charging me only $15 a month for board and room.

When school was out, I took my newly received "wealth" and had my car prepared for traveling. It had been sitting by Dad's cabin from November, 1932 until May in 1934. When it had a set of new tires, a

grease job, an oil change, it was ready to go.

I stayed in Dad's cabin until time to go to Oklahoma to receive my belated degree. While there I had a visit from old family friends, Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Alby from Oklahoma City. They had lived across the street from my parents when I was born in Ringgold, Texas. The Tom Blake who helped George build Dad's cabin was Mrs. Alby's brother.

My parents had not given me a middle name so I began using Alby as my second name when I was about five years old. When I was a young girl I often tried to decided what I should call myself when I became famous - Anabel Howell, Anabel A. Howell, or Anabel Alby Howell.

When my father was nearing retirement age, he began looking into his own birth records, and later into the matter of birth certificates for all members of the family. The younger children had been issued birth certificates when they were born, but the older ones had problems. My birth was recorded as "female child born to Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Howell" - no name at all.

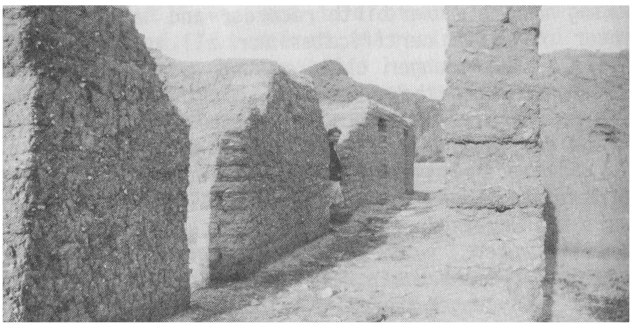
When my Dad wrote them to give them my name to complete their records, he included the "Alby", and that's the way it appears on my birth certificate today.

I'll wager I'm the only person who ever lived who named herself on her birth certificate!

In his younger days, Mr. Alby was a hunter, mainly birds. Mrs. Alby was an expert at preparing all kinds of wild game. While they were visiting me we had squirrel, rabbit and porcupine. I had never eaten porcupine before but ours was a young one and the meat was very pink and fresh looking. Old porcupine is as greasy as an o'possum and tastes of turpentine, since it lives entirely off the bark of the pine trees.

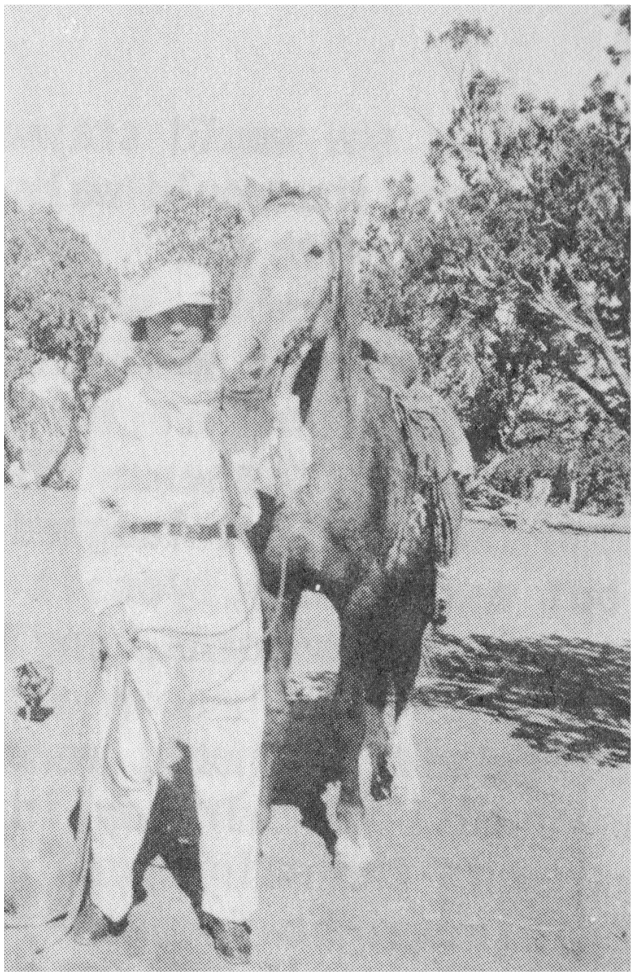
As I remember it, soaking the meat overnight in salt water was Mrs's Alby's method of removing the wild taste. Then she cooked it in the oven as smothered steak. Go-o-od!

In the national forests porcupines were once protected from hunting because they were the only animals that could be killed without a weapon by a lost traveler - just a stick or rock would do. There was no such protection in New Mexico forests. On the contrary, the CCC boys at the camp west of Magdalena spent all day long shooting them with 22 rifles. They were killing the trees by gnawing off the bark in a belt around each tree.



Ruins of Old Fort Ojo Caliente
(photo by Mary McCracken)

Snow On Our Desks - Chapter 15



Anabel and Blue

In the fall of 1934 I went to teach at a place called Sanchez (still in Socorro County) where my post office was Scholle - another ghost town now, on U.S. Highway 60, west of Mountainair. It was near the Abo Pass and near Dripping Springs General Store and Filling Station.

I boarded with a couple named Bill and Ella - I don't remember their last name. We lived a few miles from the school so I drove in my car. Later I bought a horse, a young, light-footed, blue roan gelding, and rode him to school. He wasn't a gaited horse but he had the easiest trot I ever rode. And he was so surefooted I could ride him in a gallop through a prairie dog town and he'd never stumble or miss a step.

Rose Conrad come to see me while I was there, and I was very glad to see her. I hadn't seen her since she visited us at Dad's cabin at Thanksgiving, 1932.

Sometimes Rose would ride to school with me and stay all day; sometimes she would stay at home all day; and at still other times she would walk to school late, just in time to ride home with me.

One day on such an occasion, she had some exciting tales to tell me about seeing a wolf on the way, and how she was <u>almost</u> chased by a bull. On the way home she pointed out the things she'd seen - the wolf (a German shepherd dog), and the bull. I laughed and told her it was not a bull but a cow. "Oh, yes it is a bull!" she exclaimed. "That animal has horns, and cows do <u>not</u> have horns!"

In the afternoon after school, we would both go for a ride on Blue. Once I was already in the saddle, and Rose started to step in the stirrup to get up behind me, when Blue shifted his weight from one foot to another, "Wait!" she cried. "Wait until I get in!"

As usual I enjoyed her visit immensely, and really hated to see her go. That's the last time I've seen her. We call each other occasionally, but haven't visited since. She married and had two daughters. She is now a retired teacher still living in Iowa.

Some of my pupils were Bill Fisher, who had lost an arm in a sawmill accident and lived across the road from the school, five Ezell children, and two Parker boys.

It was after I had left that the Parker tragedy happened. The two boys, eleven and twelve, were at home alone on their ranch while the rest of the family went to Belen. The boys were scuffling over an 'empty' rifle, when it went off and killed the younger boy. The older boy picked up the body of his brother, refusing to believe he was dead, and started off to find help. The two boys were just about the same size, but the older one had carried the dead body of his brother over five miles when the returning family met him.

During the winter we had a heavy snow, and when I arrived at school, the snow had come in through the cracks in the wall. Snow lay in little drifts on the pupils' desks and water in the bucket was frozen solid.

At Sanchez we of necessity provided our own fuel, for the fathers didn't bring us wood as they did at Dusty. To make matters worse, there was no convenient forest to provide us with good wood, and no river to furnish us with the inferior cottonwood. The only thing the students and I could gather near the school was dead cholla cactus. This blizzard caught us short and no way to get any with the ground covered with snow.

I left another note (as at Dusty) saying we had gone to Fisher's (just across the road) to have our lessons. Again (as at Dusty) the County Supervisor came, but this time she was accompanied by the State Elementary Supervisor, Mrs. Mary Watson, a well-known figure in state education. They disapproved of my moving over to the neighbors to have classes, but I couldn't have cared less what they thought. I'd have sent the children home before I'd have allowed them to freeze.

Sampson came to see me from Dusty, and we drove over to a little village north of Mountainair, Quarai, where they were excavating a large ruin. It is now a national monument, along with the Abo Ruins and the Gran Quivira Ruins (west and south of Mountainair) making up the Saltillo Ruins. They are also known as "The Cities that Died of Fear."

When we saw it, they were just beginning to excavate and had only a few rooms exposed. The church was the only thing wholly visible, but they had unearthed several skeletons in its floor.

I bought a "new" second had car while living with Bill and Ella. This time it was a 1932 Chevrolet Sport Coupe. It had wire wheels and a sporty looking free-standing trunk on the back - behind the regular trunk.

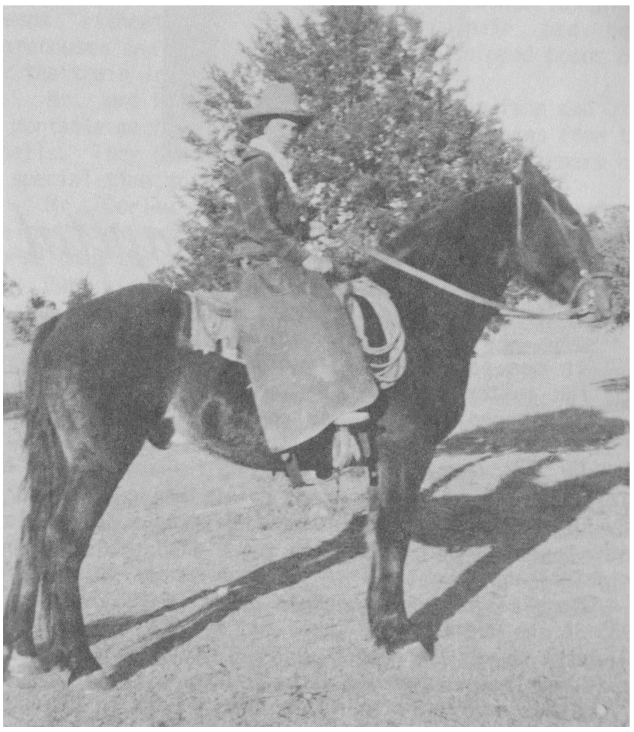
Bill and Ella moved to California and I lived in their house until school was out. Then I moved over to a small ranch with an old lady named Broom. Her husband was a switch engineer in the railroad yards in Belen and he stayed there, coming home only once in a great while.

While I was at Mrs. Broom's, and had Blue with me, a pack of dogs chased him one night and ran him into the barbed wire fence. It cut the soft fat part of his chest - just laid it wide open. I had to keep him in the corral until it healed, and fed him on oats and hay.

The Brooms had a son, Charles, who lived several miles away with his wife Marie. After Blue was healed, I rode him over to visit with Marie. I stopped at a gate in the barbed wire fence, and some people came through in a car before I had closed the gate. We chatted for awhile, then they told me to go ahead as they would fasten the gate. I started to mount Blue, but while I was still standing with only my left foot in the stirrup, he began pitching. He bucked for three or four jumps and I found myself flat on the ground. That's the only time in my life I was ever thrown from a horse - and incidentally the only time Blue ever bucked.

The other people came running to see if I was hurt. I kept trying to tell them I was all right, but the way I had landed had knocked the breath out of me. Ever time I tried to talk, it came out sounding like a groan.

When I tried to get on Blue again, he was as docile as a lamb. I've never been able to figure out what made him do it, so can't think of any excuses to make for him. Maybe he was just feeling his oats - all those I'd been feeding him for weeks.



Anabel and Sampson's horse

I returned home after dark and could never have made it without Blue's cooperation and his unerring instinct of direction. It was as black as pitch and I couldn't see a thing, but Blue led me straight to each gate and stopped for me to open it.

I made two trips to Peggy's, who was back on the homestead, that year. The two older Ezell girls went with me once and Marie Broom went the second time. I just couldn't get that old Beaverhead country out of my system.

The Pinto Bean Capital - Chapter 16

Mrs. Ethridge, Imogene, and Dora Elsie at Imogene's birthday celebration.

In the fall of 1935 I went to Claunch to teach, on the far eastern side of Socorro County, southeast of Mountainair and Gran Quivera National Monument, and west of Corona.

We had four teachers: Imogene McClure taught the first and second grades, Mrs. Zola Ethridge of Claunch taught the third through the fifth grades, Dora Elsie Ladd taught the sixth through the eighth, and I was the principal and taught all of the high school students.

Dora Elsie Ladd taught at Logville in 1932-1933. In 1933-34 she was at White Lake, and in 1934-35 she was in Claunch as was Imogene. Dora Elsie's parents lived there and Imogene boarded with them.

Since the two other teachers lived in Claunch, Imogene and I rented a couple of light-housekeeping rooms from the Corleys. One room was a bedroom, and the other was living room, kitchen, and dining room combined. Our only stove was a small stove called a monkey stove. For an oven we had a cylindrical device that fit onto the stove pipe. The heat which usually escaped up the stove pipe, went on all sides of the oven, and it baked beautifully.

Imogene was saving money to buy her parents a new car, so she was glad when I suggested I buy all the groceries and she do all the cooking. That was the beginning of my gaining weight - thanks to her culinary art.

Claunch, as well as the entire Estancia Valley, was fine bean country, and the area raised wonderful pinto beans without irrigation. Mountainair had bean warehouses and packing facilities and shipped beans out by the train load.

Mr. and Mrs. Corley had a large bean farm and used a portable machine for removing the dried beans from the shells. They had bean harvest just as other farmers had a special time to harvest corn, cotton, or wheat.

Mr. Corley had about half his nose cut off in a saloon fight when he was a young man. He looked much worse that the artist Van Gogh with his ear cut off.

Our biggest problem at the Corleys' was with bedbugs. I had never had any experience with them at all, but Imogene had come across them somewhere. I didn't have much trouble with them so long as Imogene was there, but if she went away for the weekend, they began to attack me. I guess she was more palatable than I was.

We tried everything we'd ever heard of to get rid of them. We put the mattress out to sun all day, we sprayed it, we set the bed legs in cans of water, and later in kerosene, and absolutely nothing seemed to phase them. We finally decided they were dropping down from the ceiling. One thing we didn't try was burning the mattress.

This was in the days of the WPA, and they were going to build a new school house for Claunch. The ones in charge said they needed a room for an office and for storing some of their materials. Why they couldn't have found an empty room in some building in town, I'll never know, but we gave them one of ours. Since we had only four rooms in the school - and they were all in use - that meant that two rooms had to double up. Dora Elsie moved her room of teenagers and preteens into my room of teenagers. The room was divided by a curtain but that did not curtail the noises of two classes going on simultaneously. That was really one hectic time for all of us, especially with the added noises coming from the construction site while we were trying to teach school.

The most sorrowful part of it was that after all that inconvenience and difficulty, and our own patience and forbearance, I never even got to see the building completed, much less teach in it awhile. You know what they used to say about the WPA men leaning on their shovels.

A most terrible odor permeated the room at one time. We decided it came from under the floor, but had no way of getting to it. The high school boys and I took up the floor and found a long-dead skunk. After it was removed, we were all right again in about a week.

The county was having some kind of school fair, and we had all the pupils doing art work of every kind to put in it. Dora Elsie had found a place where there was a deposit of crystalline material that proved to be just right for making castles and things. It was strong enough to hold its shape but soft enough to form anything we wanted by pinching off a bit here and another bit there.

We ran out of material on Friday, so because the time was growing short for delivering the finished product to Socorro, that afternoon after school Dora Elsie, Imogene and I went after more. We were in a big hole in the ground about twelve or fifteen feet across, and taking the crystal out of the sides of the hole. We were digging it out in large chunks and we pulled out a piece about the size of a laundry basket. It was very light weight as you can see.

Just behind this piece was a huge hollow space - filled to overflowing with about a hundred hibernating rattlesnakes, all coiled up together like tangled string. In the

interest of science I guess I should have waited to learn more about hibernating rattlesnakes - but I didn't.

In the spring of 1936, my brother George came out from Oklahoma to look for a place to live in Mountainair. He, Sally, and their first son Arles were moving to Mountainair where George was to work for Burt Blake in his general merchandise store. Burt was a brother of Tom Blake who helped George build Dad's cabin, and of Mrs. Alby.

Even today the words "Blake Mercantile" can be read over one of the brick buildings on the north side of Main Street. I think it is now a coin-operated laundry.

Imogene and I went to Mountainair to meet George, and he showed us some of the prospective rent houses. I had my 1932 Chevrolet Sport Coupe, with the little stand-up trunk on it, parked across the street. We heard a terrible commotion outside and ran to see what was happening. A team of horses, pulling a wagon, had run away down the street. Whey they came to my car, one went on one side and the other went on the other side, leaving the wagon tongue to crash into my trunk and smash it flat, then go on to knock out the back glass and the body on one side of it. The thing that concerned me most was the fact that one horse was <u>under</u> the car, kicking and squealing.

When the men caught up with their runaways, they were unable to turn the horse over under the car, so the only way to extricate him was to pull him out bodily by his harness.

The owner of the wagon and team told me to take my car to a certain place in Albuquerque to have it repaired and have them send him the bill - which is what happened.

Although Imogene was an only child, she had never had any birthday celebration of any kind - no presents, no parties, nothing. The other two teachers and I were determined to put as many birthday surprises into the event as we possible could to help make up for the previous neglect.

In April when her birthday came, I gave her a present that morning at breakfast, so she'd think that was all. After school that afternoon the three of us told Imogene we were kidnapping her, so we blind-folded her and tied her hands with small rope. We went by our house to leave my car, then we all got into Dora Elsie's car. She drove around and around trying to confuse Imogene. We drove to the ranch of a couple who had helped us plan the whole thing - I <u>wish</u> I could remember their names - who took turns driving one of our school buses. They had to deliver their bus children before they could go, and that was the reason we were killing time.

Their ranch was in the direction of Corona, and we continued on in that direction until we reached the Gallinas Mountains where we stopped at an old deserted saw mill. We went by the ranch to leave our presents with the couple, who preceded us to the picnic spot in their pickup. That was the <u>real</u> reason for the blindfold. We also left food for them to take up there.

Imogene was freed from her fetters to enjoy a hearty meal before her execution. We sat around the campfire talking and singing until it started to get late. The man explained to Imogene that before she was executed she had to dig her own grave. He handed her a shovel, turned on his pickup lights, and pointed out the exact spot in the mountain of sawdust where she was to dig. Good naturedly she began, but almost at once she began to find packages with her name on them. Altogether there were about a dozen packages. The pleased smile had never left her face all afternoon, but after this climax it broadened to a grin.

I know she had a wonderful time, and so did the rest of us. We had done our best to cover her birthdays from childhood into adulthood.

One weekend toward the last of school, Imogene and I drove to Deming to apply for a job with the Luna County School Superintendent for the coming year. We both obtained positions in the county school system but not in the same school.

Imogene and I rode the bus to Flint, Michigan, after school was out, to pick up the new Chevrolet, her gift to her parents. When we returned, I went down to Peggy's to spend the rest of the summer. I think the furniture had been removed from my Dad's and my cabins, so I couldn't stay at either place. No one was at Peggy's but I thoroughly enjoyed living alone in her house and being back in the Beaverhead area - my favorite place in all the world.

I didn't realize it then, but this proved to be my last visit for over fifty years to the area of Ninety Miles from Nowhere.

High Pockets - Chapter 17

Her real name was Shirley Imogene McClure. Her father called her Shirley, most people called her Imogene, and her mother called her "Girl". Her parents lived about nine miles south of Datil. Their success story I shall relate later on.

Imogene runs through my memories for fifty years - as a fellow teacher, traveler, camper and friend. Her parents came out to New Mexico to homestead about the same time I did, but she didn't follow them until school was out at Southern Methodist University in Dallas where she attended.

Imogene's teaching career began at Plains in 1932-33, then she taught in Datil where she lived in Ray Morley's Navajo Lodge. She taught at Claunch in 1934-35, and then again in 1935-36 when I moved there. Later she was in Dona Ana County at a school near the Tres Hermanos Mountains.

Imogene was blackhaired and beautiful and was six feet tall to my five feet. We were subject to much teasing about the difference in our heights. There was the "Long and Short of it," "Mutt and Jeff", and so on. My favorite for her was "High Pockets"; I guess because it matched my "Half Pint". It was even more incongruous when I was the principal and she was the primary teacher.

One summer we decided to go camping down in the Gila Wilderness. Perhaps it was partly because everybody tried so hard to discourage us that we were even more determined to go. "Two lone women out camping in the wilds? Why, I never heard of such a thing!" Always the theme song for my early days in New Mexico.

Several professional guides had refused to take us into the Wilderness, but when we had about reached the point where we would have walked in from Silver City, we discovered that Doc Campbell would drive us in, in his pickup with compound gear.

We took the bus to Silver City where we spent the night in a small hotel. That evening we talked for several hours with Mr. and Mrs. Fred Thomas, owners or managers of the hotel. They knew the country well and were thrilled at our chance to go.

"Have Doc take you to the mouth of Little Creek," admonished Fred. "We've camped there, and although it's a little sandy, you'll have an ice-cold spring right at your door for your drinking water. Lots of fish in the Gila there, too."

So the next morning when Doc came for us, our first question was where he intended to take us to camp.

"Well, I thought the mouth of Little Creek would be a good place," he said, and we lapsed into a pleased anticipatory silence.

Before we started out to pick up the other passengers bound for Doc's Gila Hot Springs Hunting Lodge, Doc took us by to see an old lady also named Campbell but no relation to Doc. We enjoyed our short visit with her - and she re-enters our story later on.

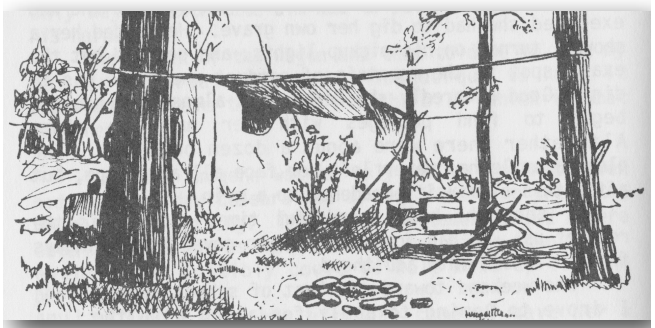
We picked up Doc's supplies for the lodge, and several other passengers and their gear. Then we started on the road to two weeks of wilderness experience.

Passing through Pinos Altos and on up to Sapillo Creek, the road was very good, but after we left the state highway and started up the mountain, our speed was cut down considerably. The rough road and our overload delayed us somewhat, so that we spent about six hours making the trip to Doc's. On the way, at the highest point on the road, Doc stopped the pickup and used a portable telephone on the telephone lines, somehow, to call his wife to let her know where we were and when she could expect us.

At Doc's we grabbed a quick bite to eat before Doc took us on up the river to our camping spot, about a mile and a half above their place.

We started setting up our camp before dark. We unpacked our provisions and put them away, using our cardboard boxes for storage. I cleaned out the spring, filled with leaves and moss, and widened and deepened it enough to dip a sauce pan in. We stored our perishable foods, such as oleo, canned milk, an opened package of bacon, etc. in buckets with lids, submerged under the icy water and held down by rocks. Fred was really right about the temperature of the water. Several times while I was clearing the spring, I had to stop to warm my hands. I hollowed out a place in the wall following the creek bed where it was always shady and cool, to hold our eggs, unopened bacon and oleo.

We made up our bedrolls, but darkness caught us before we had a proper bed prepared. The first night we slept on the sand, apparently so soft, but proving to be as hard as a rock. During the night we turned and tossed and mumbled and groaned. Several times we got up to shovel out hollow places for our hips to recline in, otherwise we shouldn't have had much sleep.



Our camp on the Gila.

The next morning the first thing on the agenda, after breakfast, was to make comfortable beds. We placed four small pine logs to form a rectangle, and filled the inside space with green pine needles for our mattress. We put the bed rolls on top of this and had a good springy bed. There were no sleeping bags or air mattresses then, and this served as a good substitute. The needles had to be changed occasionally as they became packed down or dried out and lost their spring.

During the days we took walks, looked for wild flowers, went for swims, read, slept, worked on improving our camp, gathered wood, and gathered edible wild plants. Among the last we found lambsquarter and watercress and horse mint for our tea.

In improving our campsite, we made a rock-encircled fire pit, cleaned up the area of all

debris, and used our cardboard boxes on their sides for storing clothing, pots and pans, and tableware. We used a wooden box, left there by some previous camper, for our table.

Since it was the dry season, we had no tent but slept out under the stars. We had a couple of small tarps with us, and used one on the bed, and the other we strung up between two trees for shade.

Although we didn't do any fishing, we were kept supplied with fish by everyone who came by our camp with a good catch. Doc came by one day to invite us to the Lodge for a fish fry. We walked down later that afternoon, and together with Doc's family and the other guests, gorged ourselves on delicious rainbow trout, just large enough so they didn't have to be thrown back, and tender and juicy. Altogether we ate 85 fish that night - with nothing else except bread if we wanted it. No forks! For desert we had canned pineapple - a feast fit for a king!

Doc's place at the Hot Springs had some rooms in the big house, and cottages scattered around outside. What fascinated me was the fact the hot water from the springs was piped into the house and cabins. Since the water was constantly running and was steaming, a faucet in the sink had to be left open at all times - to prevent an explosion, I suppose. Where the water hit the sink there was a build-up of mineral deposits.

One of our most delightful walks was up the river to the Gila Cliff Dwelling National Monument. In those days, of course, there was no paved road as there is today, and certainly no visitor's center kept manned at all times to greet the visitor. The cliff dwellings were about three miles from our camp and we walked it easily. We climbed all over the caves and enjoyed the view from each doorway, imagining ourselves back in the days when they were inhabited.

One room had many small corn cobs in it, about the size of a popcorn cob today.

On the way back to camp, I found a large turquoise pendant, about one inch in length, and about half an inch wide at the smaller end, as it was pear-shaped. A small hole was at the small end. Two strips of matrix had crossed it diagonally at one time but had been completely eroded away.

Later I had it examined by an expert in El Paso and he assured me it was a stone surviving from the time the Dwellers had lived there - not something dropped by a tourist.

One night I was awakened rudely by Imogene's shouting, "Get away from here!" I sat straight up in bed, calling out, "What's the matter? What happened?"

"Oh," she said, "one of those pesky old hounds was licking me in the face."

Then I remembered how worried she had been that afternoon when a couple of men from the XSX ranch down the river came by with their hounds. I couldn't understand why they worried her so, but she told me hounds would eat <u>anything</u>. I had never had any experience with them, so I guess I didn't know enough to worry. That night we made sure the hound had left our camp and went back to sleep. The next morning there was utter confusion.

Those hounds had destroyed our carefully set up camp - knocked over the boxes containing pots and pans, silverware and dishes. They had eaten all our bacon plus wrappings, two dozen eggs including cartons, two pounds of oleo (boxes and all), whole packages of dried beef and all our flour. Everything edible was gone. The most amazing thing was we had slept through it all!

That morning we had to walk down to Doc Campbell's to buy supplies from him to finish out our trip. We passed all the hounds lying flat on the ground and wagging their tails feebly as we went by. They were too stuffed to even lift a head. We both said we really hoped they had a tummy ache. (To tell the truth, I wanted to shoot them but Imogene wouldn't let me!)

When it was time to leave, Doc was busy so he asked Fred to drive us out. Fred was reported to be a heavy drinker, but he was an excellent driver over the terrible mountain roads.

There was an old hunting lodge on the Gila whose caretaker was a friend of Fred's so he took us by for a visit.

This hunting lodge had a very interesting history which I had heard many years before I saw it. I hope in recounting it from memory I do not fail to tell it correctly.

Years and years ago, two friends named Lyon and Campbell (no relation to Doc) had a ranch in the Gila - Cliff area somewhere northwest of Silver City. Mr. Lyon eventually married a comely miss and built her a large beautiful home on some land he owned on the Gila River not far from the Gila Hot Springs. The house had many rooms, all of which were furnished luxuriously. It was situated in the deep forest and could be reached only by packing in.

This section of the country later became known as the Gila River Forest Reserve (now the Gila National Forest) in 1899 and was designated as a wilderness area in 1924.

Mr. Lyon was killed in a saloon brawl in El Paso, Texas, and his widow married his ex-partner, Mr. Campbell. This was the tiny old lady we met in Silver City. I think she must have been about ninety at time we saw her.

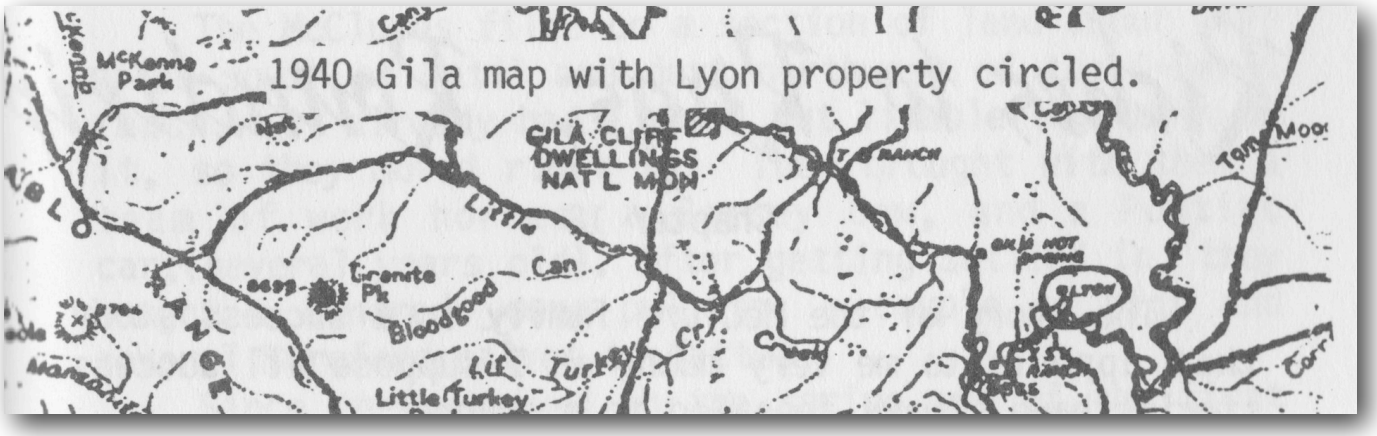
In hearing about the hunting lodge all those long years before I saw it, I was told that Teddy Roosevelt had been there as a guest on a hunting expedition. And I'd heard that it was sold after Mr. Lyon's death to some religious group. I also heard that Pat Hurley had owned it at one time. He was a New Mexico man who served as Secretary of War in the federal government in the 1930's.

At the time we were there, it was owned by an oil company - or at least a group of oil men - from Oklahoma. It was a long, rambling structure of one story throughout. There was a big kitchen and a dining room big enough to seat about two dozen people. I don't remember how many bedrooms there were, but there were many, and one was arranged dormitory style with three-tiered bunks enough to sleep fourteen people in that one room. My guess is that the bedrooms would have held around 24 people. The living room, or lobby, as it was then used was enormous with a large fireplace. The whole place was furnished and decorated with southwestern and

Indian artifacts. Outside was a swimming pool fed by the natural hot springs along the river, just as was all over the house - in the kitchen and in the bathrooms.

I have an old map of the Gila National Forest dated 1938 which shows "Hunting Lodge" at the right place along the river; and a map of the Gila Wilderness area dated 1940 which specifies "Lyon" at the same place. The modern forest map dated 1982 shows no mention of the lodge, but I'm happy to have proof that I didn't imagine it all.

The caretaker of the lodge prepared lunch for us after he'd shown us around. As I remember we had a delicious salad, sandwiches, and coffee. Then back to Silver City we went, where we spent the night before taking the bus out the next morning - two happy, lone women who had experienced, survived and <u>enjoyed</u> the Gila Wilderness.



1940 Gila map with Lyon property circled.

Riches to Rags, Roundtrip - Chapter 18

The story of the McClure family is a success story that appeals to me very much, as I suppose all success stories have always appealed to everyone.

Jim and Ida both lived in Graford, Texas, about halfway between Weatherford and Graham - hence its name. It is a small town not far from Dallas, and Jim was born there and grew up there, a member of a large family and one of a pair of twins.

In 1930 he was a successful, prosperous business man with a wife and a grown daughter. Imogene was attending Southern Methodist University. He owned three farms near Graford, and lived in a beautiful home at the edge of town. He was looked up to by everyone as an honest, reliable, responsible man.

Jim was a cotton broker, and as I understand it, that means he dealt in futures on the market. This involved contracts for the delivery of cotton at some future date and at such a stated price. Speculation was therefore involved, and fluctuations in the price of cotton were of supreme importance in providing either a loss or a gain.

When the 1929 crash came, the price of cotton plummeted to rock bottom, and Jim was caught short with not enough cash to cover his shortages. Legally he was liable for only a percentage of the losses, but being the honest man he was, he felt he had a moral obligation to repay every cent of his debt. He sold all his farms and applied the proceeds to the debt, then sold even his home - something he could not have been forced to do. He still owed $5000, a sizable sum in those days, and instead of crossing it off, he regarded it as a just debt to be paid as he could. Jim withheld enough cash to homestead some land in New Mexico and make a start on rehabilitating the family fortune. His wife Ida accompanied him, and his daughter, Imogene, joined them in the summer when her college term was over.

The McClures filed on a section of land about nine miles south of Datil and just northwest of the C-Bar-N ranch. It already had a small but livable log cabin on it, so they moved right in. They brought with them a team of work horses, a Jersey cow, and a Pontiac car, (several years old). After getting settled in, they bought a hundred young pullets, a couple of pigs and several Hereford calves to fatten.

Since they arrived in the spring one of the first tasks attempted was the clearing and plowing of a large portion of virgin land, and the planting of a very large garden. Soon the garden was furnishing them with fresh vegetables, and the industrious Ida canned, dried, pickled, and stored enough vegetables to last them through the next winter. There were fresh green beans, black-eyed peas, squash, onions, lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, green peas, carrots, corn, and okra. Other vegetables such as cabbage, beets, turnips, and potatoes matured later in the season.

The whole family reveled in the wonderful fresh produce, but the hardest work began with the preparation of the food for winter. Most of the vegetables were canned but some of it could be dried such as peas, beans, and onions. One of the most satisfactory methods of preserving the food was just plain storage. Many vegetables placed in a trench and covered with dirt, put underneath the hay, or in a small cave were still fresh and green all during the winter. Cabbage, pumpkins, beets, turnips, and potatoes remained fresh and sweet if protected from freezing.

They planted a very large patch of corn, and while the ears were young and tender, the family enjoyed plenty of "corn on the cob". Ida canned it as creamed corn, whole grain corn, corn relish. After it matured, the dried ears were stored for winter feed for the stock and the stalks were piled high for roughage in the animals' diet.

During the summer everything on the ranch thrived as it foraged for itself. The hens found plenty of insects and weed seeds, and helped hold down the insect population in the garden. The stock - the two work horses, the milch cow, and the Hereford calves - had plentiful grass, and the pigs grew fat on the pinon nuts that fell to the ground. They also had scraps from the table, milk, and roughage from the garden (outside cabbage and lettuce leaves; turnip, beet, onion, and carrot tops; hulls from peas and beans; and husks from the fresh corn).

With milk, butter, buttermilk, cream, and cottage cheese provided by the cow; plenty of fresh eggs, and chicken when desired; all the fresh garden produce they could possibly eat; and their own pork, there was very little in the way of groceries the family needed to purchase - only sugar, coffee, flour, meal, etc.

At the end of the summer, several changes took place. Imogene had found employment as a teacher at a small school in Catron county in the community called Plains. (The following year she taught in Datil and lived in Ray Morley's old Navajo Lodge.)

Later in the fall the pigs - hogs by now - were butchered and the McClures feasted for a time on fresh pork. Most of the meat was cured for winter usage in the form of ham, bacon, sausage, souse, and salt port, but everybody enjoyed the fresh ribs, backbone, and pork steak.

Also in the fall the Hereford steers were sold for cash and the entire amount applied to the debt. The heifers were saved back to start building up a herd for the McClures.

The purchase of the hens was the smartest deal Jim McClure ever made. I'm sure, since he was such a good business man, he knew just exactly what he was doing. The only ways he had of making cash were from the sale of the steers (which all went to pay off the debt), and from the sale of eggs. Those hens paid for <u>all</u> the expenses of that family.

With one hundred hens to start with, and keeping them well culled, Ida gathered about ninety eggs a day. This meant that she could sell about fifty dozen eggs a week (and leave two and a half dozen for family use), or two hundred dozen a month. In most places, on account of the depression, eggs were selling for about ten cents a

dozen, but as is truce of most cattle ranch areas, milk and eggs were scarce. So in Magdalena eggs cost ninety cents or one dollar a dozen. Ida got ninety cents a dozen for hers, and that was a very high price then! So she took in $180 of good hard cash a month - and at that time that amount would buy many times what it will today.

The hens paid for all the car expenses, all groceries that had to be purchased; any feed needed for the animals during the winter, including their own; clothing, gifts, and all incidentals; and even replacements for the calves, pigs and hens.

At the end of ten years, the McClures had paid their debt in full, they had proved up on their homestead, and had bought more land until they owned thirteen sections of land with a good house upon it and had leased other land from the government - all well stocked with cattle.

I know it seems impossible that the few calves they could buy at first could pay off the debt so quickly, but each year they bought more calves to fatten, and when their own heifers began to produce, the number of calves was greatly increased.

As they prospered, they bought more hens, resulting in more money for replacements. And I'll have to admit that a new windmill and a new car, bought by Imogene out of her teacher's salary, really helped to rush things along.

Of course foremost among the reasons for their success was the fact that the entire family was very frugal. Nothing was ever wasted. Both Jim and Ida dressed like sharecroppers, unless it was necessary to dress up for a special occasion. Then Jim put on an expensive pre-depression suit and looked wonderful in spite of his long, lanky figure. Imogene, of course, dressed appropriately for her position as a teacher.

And it has occurred to me those old biddy hens made more money that I did teaching school - $180 a month to my $100.

Deming and More - Chapter 19

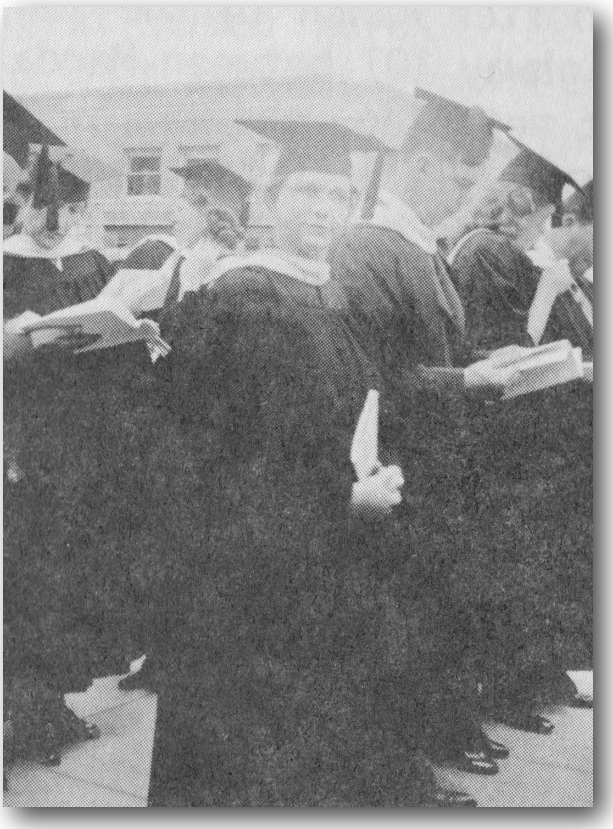
When Imogene and I moved to Luna County, she taught at Waterloo School, south of Deming and west of the Columbus road, near the Mexican border and the Tres Hermanas Mountains. She lived in a small apartment in the yard of Thelma Inmon's family on their ranch. Mrs. Inmon was later a member for many years of the New Mexico State Board of Education.

I lived in Deming, sharing a house with some other teachers, and taught in the Sunshine School. In our household were Dona Townsend and Ora Matthews, teachers, and Ora's two younger sisters still in school. Ora later married Roy Perkins who working in the Deming Post Office and was nicknamed "Si". Dona married a man in Luna, New Mexico, in Catron County, and moved there to live.

While I was in Deming, I met the Fletcher Tigner family, living on a ranch between Deming and Silver City, near the City of Rocks. The family consisted of Fletcher, his wife Cleo, and their three children - Patsy, George (Buddy), and James. Years afterward they bought the old Woofter Ranch in the San Mateo Mountains just off State Highway 107 between Magdalena and I-25.

When I first met Cleo, she was awaiting the arrival of Buddy, who many years later taught agriculture in the Socorro High School and now owns the Paul Woofter Ranch.

After teaching in Luna County for a couple of years, I went to the University of Southern California to earn a master's degree in psychology. I returned to New Mexico in the spring. Since I had no hope of obtaining a teaching job at that time of year, I went out to the C-Bar-N Ranch a few miles south of Datil, where Bill Benton, foreman, his wife Alvera, and their two sons, Billy and Johnny, lived. For a few months I taught the older boy, Billy, who was in the first grade.



Getting my Master's Degree in Psychology.

The C-Bar-N had once been owned by Dub Evans, but at that time it was owned by a banker from Kansas City named Johnson.

A mile or so north of the Benton residence, Mr. Johnson had a large tri-level house on the hillside with a four-car garage underneath. The house is now occupied by Marvin Ake. The caretaker was Slim Fullingim who later became sheriff of Socorro County and whose wife taught in the Socorro Schools when I did. Slim took care of the place in the absence of the Johnson family, then when they came out to spend a vacation, he took care of them also. He had the reputation of being a very fine cook.

Another cowboy at the ranch was Kub Barker. He took me to a dance once at Eagle Guest Ranch in Datil, owned by Lee Coker. Kub later married Gracie Baxley, another teacher in the Socorro schools when I taught there.

I had a job in Bingham (still in Socorro County) for the fall. Until then I did some remedial tutoring in Magdalena where I renewed my friendship with Dora Elsie Ladd of Claunch days. At some time during the intervening years since we taught together, she had married a druggist named Hardin. He once had a drug store in Socorro, but at that time he owned a drug store in Magdalena on the corner of Main Street and U.S. Highway 60 - now known as Evett's.

"High Pockets" and "Half Pint"

Warm Springs pool which gave the old fort its name.

Bingham - Chapter 20

In the days when I taught there in 1941-1942, Bingham was not located where it is now. At that time there was a WPA schoolhouse, a small motel where the teachers lived, and a general store and post office, everything except the schoolhouse owned by Harold Dean. Years later, U.S. Highway 380 was moved a few miles south. The only building moved to the new highway was the store and post office.

High School at Bingham: front row - Helen Harless, Elma Lucero, Nolan Hefner, A. Howell; back row - ____, _____, Betty Long, Anna Marie Long, Wayne Kennedy

The school consisted of four rooms. Mrs. Kennedy taught grades one through four, fifth through eighth grades were taught by Miss Storey from Bosque (south of Belen), and I as principal taught the high school students.

The fourth room was the cafeteria where all of the children ate. We were furnished a cook and a kitchen helper by some organization of the government, and were well supplied with many kinds of surplus foods. I charged the pupils three cents (that's right, 3 cents!) for each meal, which added up to sixty cents a month. If they paid in advance by the month, they paid only fifty cents for the school month.

There were about forty pupils, which meant that I had twenty dollars with which to buy extra food. I bought canned vegetables by the case, staples which were not provided, and even a front quarter of beef occasionally. I never bought hind quarters because, in addition to being too expensive, the meat didn't go far in steaks and roasts. We used the meat instead in nourishing soups and stews.

In the spring of 1941, the Rio Grande had flooded from a high run-off of melting snow in the northern part of the state, and the bridge across the river on U. S. Highway 380 east of San Antonia, was washed away. At that time there was a bus line running between Socorro and Roswell. Since the bus couldn't cross the river, one bus loaded with passengers came from Socorro while another one came from Roswell. They met at the river, the passengers dismounted, walked across the river on 2x12 planks, boarded the bus on the other side, and went on their way.

It was very difficult for us to get from Bingham to the county seat at Socorro. The surest way was to drive up to Gran Quivira, on to Mountainair, west on U.S. Highway 60 to Bernardo, thence down U. S. Highway 85 to Socorro - a distance of 131 miles compared to 42 miles by way of the regular road.

In the spring of 1942, after a year without a bridge, the Highway Department began work on a new one. They used the two undamaged approaches of the old bridge, and built a temporary by-pass around the washed-out mid-section. Thus they could work unhampered by traffic. When the midsection was completed, the road was opened all the way through and the temporary by-pass was removed.

On December 7 of that first year, occurred the famous, or infamous, Pearl Harbor Day. It was on Sunday morning, as you remember, and Mr. Kennedy came over to my place to tell me about it. I thought at first that he was kidding me, but finally I was convinced that it was true and turned on my radio. All of us spent the rest of that day glued to the radio. Most of the broadcasts consisted of the Pearl Harbor story and various updates.

One weekend I caught a ride to Socorro to spend a few days with George and Sally. They had moved there in 1938 from Mountainair. George and his partner, Scotty, also from Mr. Blake's store in Mountainair, had started the Socorro Hardware Company on Manzanares Street where Gambles store is now - on the north side between the old post office and a confectionery store.

I don't remember how I got to Socorro, but well do I remember the ride back home with Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy in their car! We drove the few miles north to Escondida and crossed the rickety bridge there with the water lapping up over it but somehow holding together. From there we went on over dirt roads, wandering around even where there were no roads - all in a blinding rain. We saw that we couldn't reach home that night, so when we came to a deserted, dilapidated house, we moved in for the night. We had a hard time finding dry spots where the rain was not pouring in through the roof. Mrs. Kennedy and I immediately set about gathering wood to burn in the fireplace which fortunately would still draw. We piled the wet wood high by the fireplace so the heat would help dry it out. We kept the fire going all night long - not only to give us warmth but also to dry out our clothes. We had no changes of clothing, no blankets and most importantly, no food. Mr. Kennedy curled up on the floor by the fire and blissfully snored away the night.

The next morning we drove on down to Highway 380 and east to Bingham, still cold and wet and as hungry as three bears.

Epilogue

Many people have asked about the whereabouts of persons mentioned in the book, so I shall bring some things up-to-date - as briefly as possible.

Van served in England in World War II in the Air Force and won the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. He flew sixty-nine missions in a B26 Martin Marauder. He and his wife, Mary, live in Florida, have three married children with a number of grandchildren.

Jack has retired after years of service with IBM Co. He is married but has no children. He was in the Air Force also. Red was an instructor in airplane mechanics at Amarillo, Texas.

George moved from Mountainair to Socorro in 1938 where he was in partnership with Scotty in the Socorro Hardware Co. In 1956 he sold out and returned to college for a degree in psychology. Both his boys, Arles and Jimmie, graduated from high school in Socorro, and Arles received his bachelor's degree at Texas School of Mines in El Paso (now UTEP) in the same graduating class with his father. George went on to get his master's degree and became a counselor with the Texas State Rehabilitation in Lubbock, Texas. He retired in 1974 and moved to Mountainair, New Mexico. He and Sally now live in Blair, Oklahoma.

In the summer of 1942, I was spending my vacation with the Tigners when a group came up from San Antonio, Texas, recruiting workers for the Deming Army Air Field. There was no separate Air Force at that time. A cadre of civilian workers was organized and we were all taken to San Antonio for a six-week training session for the new Bombardier School in Deming.

In the Sub Depot Headquarters I was Test Administrator for all civilian applicants, and Job Analyst. Later I moved to the Post Headquarters where I served as Training Director.

Mamie Moore, who was married at that time, was working at the Deming field.

As the post was being closed down, I moved to El Paso where I taught at Bowie High School for two years, and just couldn't wait to get back to New Mexico. I taught in the Gadsden Schools for five years. Imogene (High Pockets) had completed her degree in library science at USC and was high school librarian in Las Cruces. We made two trips to Mexico, one by train and one in my second-hand car.

Next I moved to Socorro where I taught fifth grade for four years - in the old high school building facing on Fischer Avenue which has since been torn down. After Socorro I taught a year in Honduras at the American School, while there we went through two revolutions - with bullet holes in our blackboards.

I then went to Grants where I worked as homebound teacher, classroom teacher and counselor until I retired in 1970.

Imogene moved to Albuquerque where she was librarian at the old Albuquerque High School on Central and Broadway. She went from there to be cataloguer at the State Library in Santa Fe for many years. She married Newton Curtis from Quemado who was then state senator who owned the Curtis Salt Company out by the Salt Lake northwest of Quemado. He brought in Zuni stone workers to build their home in Quemado and the building where the post office was housed.

Our Gila trip was only the beginning of traveling Imogene and I did during our summers. We went to Alaska by car and around the world by ship. I went with another friend soon after my retirement to spend six months on the island of Jersey in the Channel Islands between France and England. Several trips to Europe, Scandinavia, Tahiti, Hawaii, and England rounded out my traveling before I settled in the small town of Bosque Farms about nineteen miles south of Albuquerque. Here my life is quiet, but still full and interesting, with good friends like Elsie Goad, formerly of Socorro, to see often and talk to over the phone even more often. Circumstances seem highly comfortable for writing.

Attending the Magdalena Old Timers' Reunion in 1985, I met for the first time in fifty-three years the three Ed Moore daughters, Mamie, Margaret and Edwina. All are now grandmothers. Such excitement and pleasure for me, as well as letters from Dixie and from Opal Owens - formerly Opal McCauley of Dusty.

In January, 1987, I was visited by Dixie and her daughter Barbara. Dixie and I had so much fun - we just took up where we left off over fifty years ago.

L'Envoi - The Right Century

I began my story with the statement that I must have been born in the wrong century. Now I should add that, although I still love the pioneer days and pioneer ways, my homesteading alleviated the frustration I had felt. I began to lose my enthusiasm for those pioneer ways in their strictest sense, preferring the dangers and hardships in smaller doses as on my homestead in the 30s - not when they were life or death matters.

Now that I'm a writer, I'm more and more conscious of the experiences in my life which are valuable to a writer, and which would have been impossible to enjoy in those earlier days.

I should not have known the joy of growing up in a small southwestern town if our family had lived alone on the prairie. Nor would I have learned about small town kindliness and friendliness - and inquisitiveness.

I could not have attended the university, or spent my adult life in education. My love for reading could never have been satisfied in pioneer days for they would have failed me for lack of opportunity for obtaining books - no public libraries and no book stores. And in case I could have borrowed a book from a neighbor, I should have been forced to read it by candlelight or by firelight - a la Lincoln.

My other hobby is travel - anywhere, anytime. I'm afraid in pioneer days my travels would have been restricted to riding horseback to the nearest neighbor for a cup of molasses. I'm sure it would have been curtailed somewhat by being limited to covered wagons and four-masted schooners around Cape Horn.

No, the Twentieth Century is just fine. I may sentimentalize over the pioneer days, but if I'm really honest I'll have to admit I'd hate to give up some of the advantages I enjoy today.

Besides, although I should have experienced many exciting adventures to write about, when could I ever have found time to write about them - between building log cabins, spinning, weaving, and fighting the Indians?

Now that I've retired after forty years as an educator, I realize that there could have been no retirement in pioneer days - except under the ground!