

Gc
976.402
L77b
1867922

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

L



3 1833 02299 6455

"EARLY
DAYS
IN
LLANO"
Tex.

By Miles Barler

17.50 - P.O. 3500 - 5-20-75. Jenkins

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

BY MILES BARLER

This narrative which appeared some years ago in the Llano Times under the following note is here reprinted at the earnest request of many of the author's friends.

(NOTE).—The following articles and series of articles to appear each week in the Llano Times, will be of interest to all those who are or have been citizens of Llano county. It was written by Mr. Barler for the use and benefit of his children and not for publication, and it was only by urgent request that he consented to have it published. Our readers should preserve this bit of history from the pen of a pioneer citizen, and a man, than whom none stands higher in the estimation of his fellow-citizens.—ED.).

CHAPTER I.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I will give a short sketch of my life for the benefit of my children and friends after I am dead and gone. I was born in Licking county, Ohio, in 1833. We left there and went to Illinois in 1838; stopped in Woodford county, that state, where we lived a few years and then moved to Tazewell county. While in Woodford county my mother died. I

think I was about eight years old, and about three years after that my father died. There were five brothers of us. I was the middle one, and we were turned loose there among strangers. I lived about from place to place until I was sixteen years old. At that age I was living with James Oatman when old man John Oatman and Clem Oatman came by going to Texas and I begged them to let me go along, which they did. I paid them \$25 to bring me through to Texas—the last cent I had in the world.

When I landed on Cedar creek, in Bastrop county, in 1850, I went to work for Grandpa Oatman, father of the one that I came here with, for a while at \$12 per month. I then went and lived with Col. Bunton and worked with cattle at \$15 a month; then \$18 and \$20, and as fast as I got enough money ahead to buy a cow and calf, I did so.

In 1853 I went to Burnet county where I lived with Billy Magill about one year, then I returned to Bastrop county. From there I came in 1857 to Llano where I have lived ever since.

BEFORE BEGINNING

the main part of my story, I will tell of a few incidents in my early life in which you will notice that, as in more recent days, I was in some rather close places. The first will be

ROPING A STEER.

One day Grandpa Oatman invited several cowboys, including myself, to help pen a wild steer he had out on the range. Well, we all met one morning and penned him. I never saw a worse steer to fight. He wouldn't let a man get in the pen. He would try to get to a man on top of a staked and rider fence. But now comes the tug of war. The old man wanted him roped and necked to another steer, and who was going to rope him? Several tried but failed. At last they called out "Miles, you are the best roper on the ground, you try him." I knew that I could rope him, for I never saw any white man or Mexican that could beat me with a rope in those days. But I was afraid I couldn't manage him by myself. Well, I got my lariat and told one of the boys to run across the pen in front of him. He did so.

THE STEER TOOK AFTER HIM

and I took in after the steer. I threw the lariat on him and he ran clear through it and I caught him by the hind foot. As soon as he saw me he turned on me. I threw my end of the lariat around a tree as he turned on me. I had about ten feet of rope and tried to take up the slack as he came, but the lariat wouldn't slip around the rough bark on the tree to do any good and he caught me. When within about four feet of me he threw his head down to send his horns clear through me. I jumped to one side and caught the horn next to me with both hands and threw my whole weight on him. He threw me clear above his head and I came down in front of him. I had no more than struck the ground when I was on my way to the fence, which was about 20 steps, but the boys said that I made it in about 2. When I got to the fence the boys came running to me and asked me if I was hurt and I told them no, but when I came to look, my shirt was torn from waist to collar. His horn had struck me and went through the skin right over my heart, and grained the hide clear up to my arm.

All that saved me was that I accidentally caught the steer's horn so close to the end with my hand that it was prevented from going clear through me.

But don't you forget it, we tied and necked the steer all the same.

DAMP IN A WELL

In 1853 I lived in Burnet, and during that year I was employed to help dig the first well that was ever dug in Burnet. When we got down about twenty feet the well became impregnated with "damp." We never thought of such a thing until one morning when it came my time to go down in the well. I got in the box and they let me down, and when I got near the bottom I smelled a very peculiar odor. I could hardly get my breath. I called to the boys to pull me up. They laughed at me and asked me if I was ever down in a well before. I told them yes, but to pull me up quick. About that time it occurred to them it might be the "damp," and they just did get me out in time. They then let a candle down to see if it was damp and the candle went out before it got near the bottom. We had to burn it out every morning after

that, before we went down and they tell me the well has the damp this day, though 45 years since it was dug.

I lived in Bastrop county seven years and left there and came to Llano in 1857. I brought with me one hundred head of cattle that I had worked out in that time. That winter, on February 25, 1858, I married and lived with my father-in-law about four months, until I got a house built. Then I moved, and what do you reckon I moved with? My father-in-law had an old yoke of oxen and a water-slide, and I hitched on to that and carried everything at two loads. We put our things in the house, on the dirt floor, and lived that way some time, which were the happiest days of our lives. The house I built was just across the river from where I live now. My wife's father, Mr. John Buttery, lived close to where the passenger depot now stands. There is where we were married. Many a deer and turkey have I killed there from the yard and cow-pen fence, and my wife has helped drag some of them to the house. There were

NO INDIANS IN THE COUNTRY

at that time, but in about eighteen months they broke out on us and we had it with them then for about fifteen years. They killed about 40 persons during that time.

In 1862 I went into the confederate war and was there three years. I will not undertake to tell all that transpired while I was there but will only relate a few incidents that occurred up to the time I was taken prisoner.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE WAR

We organized a volunteer company, among whom were Henry Buttery, Clint Breazeale, Jim Moss, Amos and John Eaker, and a number of others besides myself, and left Llano for the war in the spring of 1862.

While we were in Louisiana in March, 1864, our command was camped on Yellow Bayou not far from the Mississippi river.

One night the Yankees commenced landing at the mouth of Reed river not far from us. General Walker was our commander. He commenced making preparations to give them battle. When we found out there were about ten thousand and others still coming, and we had but six thousand. Gen. Walker thought best to fall back a little to get a better position and to get out of reach of their gunboats. When we started to retreat one company from each regiment was detached to go to Fort De

Russy, on Red River, and our company was one of the number. Fort De Russey was established while we were camped at Yellow Bayou. When our command started they never stopped until they got to Mansfield. The whole of Banks' army, numbering about twenty thousand, attacked our fort. We had only one hundred men, but we fought them from 12 o'clock until sundown before we surrendered. There were

NINE GUN-BOATS PLAYING ON US

all the while. Their bombs would explode right over our heads and the old burnt powder would settle down on us until we were as black as negroes. Only three of our men were killed outright and several wounded, but the enemy's loss was quite heavy.

After we surrendered the Yankee soldiers cried out, "where is Walker's Division?" They thought the whole of Walker's Division was in the fort. We told them just to keep on and they would find Walker's Division.

They put us on a boat that night and guarded us right there in sight of the fort for two or three

days. During that time some of Walker's cavalrymen ran on them and killed and wounded some two or three hundred of them. One day as a big steamboat loaded down with wounded Yankee soldiers came past us, our boys hollowed out, "Hey, there; have you found Walker's Division?" Our guard said, "here, no more of that." That night another load came along. Our boys couldn't hold in, and hollowed the same thing again. The guards threw their guns down on us and told the men if they hollowed that any more they would stick their bayonets through them. So that stopped the racket.

The next day they started with us

TO NEW ORLEANS

where they kept us I believe near four months before we were exchanged. The battle of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill was fought while we were there. There is one thing I cannot pass by without special mention here, that is the noble-heartedness of the women of New Orleans. May God bless them; never will I forget their kindness, and how they managed to get in through the guard to see us.

The orders were not to let any one inside with-

out he had relatives in there. Well, a few of them did have relatives in there, and when they came in to see them, they would get acquainted with others and get their names and as soon as they went out would find some friends and give the names to them, and they would claim the parties whose names they had as cousins or brothers, and the guard would pass them through.

Another way was, some of the boys would have kin-folks in town, and this is the way I found my kin-folks. I had to be doing something all the time during the whole war and I had a little set of tools which I used in making rings and what were called confederate fans, made out of white pine boxes. I never saw anyone that could beat me making either fans or rings, so I would put my name on them and send them out by some lady and she would see some good confederate woman and sell them for what I asked. The next day she would come back with a great big basket of everything good to eat and would take orders for any kind of clothing, it made no difference what it cost. They would help you lay plans to get out, and

hardly a night passed but what from one to a dozen escaped. When they got out these women would dress them up in citizens' clothes and they never would be detected. Sometimes they would keep them right at home. If I had stayed there much longer I would have had more kin-folk there than anywhere else. I could have gotten out as well as those other fellows, but I was doing so well where I was I didn't care about it. The officers of the guard would get so mad sometimes that they would give orders to the guard to let no one in. But there were some women that they couldn't keep out. They would go to the officers and talk so good to them that they could not refuse them. Well one morning they put us on a boat and said they were going to

TAKE US TO SHREVEPORT

to be exchanged but we didn't hardly believe it. We thought they were just taking us to some other more healthy place, as the small-pox had broken out among us. While we were going up the river, Clint Breazeale and I took a notion that we would jump off the boat into the river and get away. We fixed ourselves and as I could not swim much I got

a beer keg. I intended to drop off in the water as easy as I could and turn over on my back and pull the keg over my breast to keep me from sinking and to protect my head from the bullets if they shot at me. Well, we got all ready and told the boys good-bye. We stepped to the wheel house where we were going to slide off. I stuck my hat inside my shirt-bosom and

ASKED CLINT IF HE WAS READY

and he said yes. Just at that moment a gun fired. We thought we would step back to see what it meant and it was two men that had jumped off and made such a splash that the guard heard them and shot at them but never hit them. They then doubled the guard around us and we never had another chance to escape. They took us to Shreveport and we were exchanged sure enough.

We all got a sixty days furlough to go home and when our furlough was out we went back and stayed until the war closed, which was the next spring—1865.

CHAPTER III.

CAME ACROSS INDIANS.

After we got back from war nothing transpired worth mentioning until in the fall. Charlie Roberts and I one day went to the Salt Works on the Colorado horseback to get some salt, and on our return we overtook John Scott coming to town. When we got on this side of Wright's Creek, and within about three miles of town, I was riding a little ahead of Charley and John, when I looked off to my right and got a glimpse of about ten or fifteen head of horses, traveling at quite a lively gait. I stopped until Charley and John came up. I asked Charley if he knew of any loose horses running out there and he said he did not. Then we got down off our horses and peeped under the bushes and behold! There were six Indians driving that bunch of horses. Then the question was, what shall we do? Charlie and I had only a six-shooter each and no more ammunition with us and John

had a Spencer rifle. We knew if we undertook to do anything we had to do it quick and fast. I turned to Charley and asked him if we couldn't take those horses from those fellows. He replied that he believed we could, but whether we could keep them or not was the question. I turned to John and asked him what he thought about it. He said, "well, my horse is mighty foolish." We saw that John didn't want any of it, and we happened to think that there were a lot of cow men that were going to start on a cow hunt that evening from town. So we lay low until the Indians got out of sight, and as they never did see us, we slipped back down the branch and came to town. There were ten or fifteen cowmen just getting on their horses to go out on their hunt, and we told them what we had seen. They at once threw off their packs and started for the place where we left the Indians. They followed them till dark but couldn't overtake them.

NARROW ESCAPE FROM DEATH.

I believe it was in the same year that I came so near getting killed by a horse running under a limb with me when I was running a wild horse. I

was trying to pen him in a pen just about where the Algona Hotel now stands. I was riding a splendid pony, and he was fast for a pony. But he was one of those educated ponies that sometimes thought he knew more than the rider. Just before I got to the pen the horse broke past me and I was trying to cut him off from a leaning tree where a limb hung so low on the north side that I didn't think my horse could possibly go under it. I was crowding the horse pretty close and aimed to make him go on the south side of the tree on account of that leaning limb. When my horse got within a few feet of the tree he jumped as quick as lightning to the opposite side and under that limb. I had a long Citizen's Rifle loaded lying across my lap, and when the horse jumped I saw he had to go under the limb. I couldn't see anything but death. I threw myself over on one side of my horse and caught my big spur on the opposite side under the saddle skirt to keep me from going to the ground. I did this so quick I don't know how it was done. When I threw myself one side of my head struck the muzzle of my gun, which knocked up the breech, and the hammer

striking the limb, it went off right at my ear. I was so confident I could not dodge that limb and that my brains would be knocked out right there that when I straightened up in my saddle I put my hand on my head to feel my wound. I had heard the loud report and thought once that maybe I was killed and was now in the other world; but I looked around and thought this still looked like the old one. I tell you it was sometime before I could reconcile myself to the fact that my head had not struck that limb, for I heard the loud report and if it wasn't my head that struck what was it? I went back and picked up my gun and looked at it and found out that it had gone off. When the horse ran under the limb it scratched the horn of the saddle. I consider that I escaped death there in two different ways—one by the gun and one by the limb.

KILLED AN INDIAN.

In 1871 or 1872 the Indians came in and stole the last horse that I had on earth. (Just as I wrote this my daughter, Cora, returned from the post office and handed me a letter containing a check from the government for \$300 to pay for those horses.)

It was early one morning that Luke Moore came to town and notified us that the Indians had stolen some horses from him and others the night before, and he had trailed them to within two miles of town right along the road. He quit the trail where it left the road, and came to town to get more men to follow them. He said he thought they would cross the river just below my house. I had four good horses and would keep them in the stable at night and about sunrise would turn them out in my little pasture. I went up in town after breakfast and Moore was there and with some other men was ready to start after the Indians. I told them I wanted to go with them and told Carter Dalton if he would let me have his horse a few minutes I would go down and get one of mine. He did so and I rode down home and down into the pasture but couldn't see a horse. I loped down to the lower part and there I saw the fence torn down. Then I knew what was the matter. The Indians had taken my horses since I turned them loose that morning. I then rode back to town and told Moore that I could put them

ON A HOTTER TRAIL

than he had left for they had gotten my horses since I turned them out that morning. I told them I would like to go, but the Indians had taken the last horse I had. Dalton told me to stay on the horse I was on and he would get another one. So we came down and took the trail where they took my horses. We trailed them where they crossed the river just above the mouth of Oatman. They bore in a northwesterly course and went close to Town Peak; then they took a northerly course for Horse Mountain. We rode in a lope nearly all the time. When we got on top of Horse Mountain we saw where an Indian had come back on the trail to spy out. Then we thought he had seen us and we would never see them at all. We were getting discouraged but we kept on, and didn't go more than four hundred yards before we saw some cattle running. We knew then that the Indians were right close.

CHAPTER IV.

KILLING AN INDIAN

Among the number who were in our crowd were Wash Holden and his son, Frank Holden, Dick Duncan and others. I was riding a little ahead and we didn't go more than four hundred yards before I saw the Indians. They were about a half a mile from us driving their horses along very slowly. They had not seen us as we supposed they had. We struck a lope and ran up behind them and within sixty yards of them before they heard us, there being a strong wind blowing from the north. Dalton and I were in front. When we were within one hundred yards of them we got our Winchesters ready. I told Dalton to let's not shoot until they saw us. When about sixty yards from them one fellow heard our horses' feet and whirled his head half around and hollowed. Just at that time Dalton and I turned loose on them and of all the scattering of blankets and beef and water you ever saw

it was there. They had their horses packed with these things and they were riding on them. When they started to run they lifted themselves up and let everything slip out from under them. You could have trailed them two hundred yards by the beef and blankets and Indian trinkets. One Indian had a beef pouch filled with water and when I commenced shooting at him one ball struck the pouch and the water flew in all directions. I kept shooting at this Indian till I had him bloody all over. At last his horse suddenly jumped to one side and turned toward the other boys. I think a ball scalped him on one side that made him do this. But I let him go for I thought he would soon fall anyway and the other boys would finish him. So I took after another one and soon had him bloody from one end to the other. But he wouldn't fall. At last I broke his horse's leg, and that let me run right on him. I

PUT MY GUN RIGHT AGAINST HIS SIDE AND
TURNED IT LOOSE.

Then he slipped off and came running back at me. As he came I went to shoot him again, but he caught my gun and then struck me in the breast

with his bow. I then ran over him and knocked him down, then put the muzzle of my gun against him and pulled the trigger. That finished him. The boys said that when I broke the Indian's horse's leg and ran upon him, one of the other Indians turned his horse half round and shot once at me with his six-shooter. But I didn't know it for I had my hands full at that time.

The other boys came running up by this time, and passed me after the other Indians. I jumped on my horse and followed suit. But the other boys were a little ahead of me so I told them that I would go back and see about the one that I had killed, for "we have heard of Indians getting away after killing them and I am determined this fellow shall not get away," I said, "so I will go and sit down on him until you all come back." And I did so.

The other boys came back pretty soon and said the wounded Indian was still with the others.

An Indian carcass was found a mile or two from there in a cave near Baby Head Mountain about four months after that which looked to have been dead about that long, and I am sure it was the

one I wounded.

I forgot to state that there were about fifteen Indians in the crowd, but they had separated at the foot of the mountain and we didn't know it until after the fight. If all of them had been together we would have had something to do. There were only four in the crowd we fought. I never got any of my horses back. They were riding mine hunting other horses.

Dr. Smith, Parson J. M. Moore, M. B. Clendon, who was sheriff at that time, myself and one or two others went back and guarded the dead Indian that night thinking maybe they would come and get him, but none came.

INDIANS KILL MY HORSE

I think it was about a year or two before this that I went down to Honey creek to a party at Frank Breazeale's. I rode a mighty good horse down there and thought a great deal of him. So I took a lock and chain with me to lock him up at night to keep the Indians from stealing him, as they were thick in the country at that time. After the party broke up, which was about twelve o'clock,

I got my horse and rode about two miles to where Henry Buttery lived to stay the balance of the night. When I rode up to the house, or before I got there, I heard his dogs taking on terribly. I asked Henry **what he thought** was making his dogs bark so. He said he didn't know—wolves he reckoned. "Well," said I, "if it was dogs I would say it was Indians." "Well," he said, "I reckon not."

So I got down and pulled off my saddle and put the chain around a tree and locked my horse to it and went in the house. It was a very cold night. The ground was nearly covered with snow and the moon was shining as bright as day. There was but little fire, so I had to go to bed to get warm. I was very uneasy about my horse. I was not satisfied there were no Indians about so I set my Winchester right by a big crack in the house, so if I heard my horse cutting up I could see him, for it was not more than thirty feet from the door to where he was chained, and if I heard any Indians about I could shoot them through that crack. I then laid down and had just gotten into a doze when I

HEARD MY HORSE FALL.

I threw the cover off my head and listened a second. I heard a wheezing like he was choking and I jumped up and looked through the crack. I saw him down and kicking and thought he had pulled back and choked down. I ran out as quick as I could to make him get up. I caught him by the fore-foot to turn him over, when I discovered his legs were bloody and blood was all over the ground and spurting out of his breast. I then straightened up and looked around; I knew exactly what was the matter. The Indians had crawled up to get him, and finding him locked to the tree they had run a spear into his breast clear to his heart. As soon as I discovered this I ran in the house and put on my clothes and Henry and I ran down to the stable where his horses were to see if they were gone. But they were all right.

I hope Mr. and Mrs. Buttery will not take any exceptions to what I said about the big cracks that were in their house, for I can tell you it was a more convenient house than the one they live in now. It is true there was only one room, but it

takes that kind of a house to be a convenient one. You can then have your stove in one corner, your meal and flour in another corner, your soap barrel in another, and your bacon and wardrobe in another. The cracks answer for windows. Could any house be more convenient than that?

CHAPTER V.

A FRIGHTENED YANKEE

Along about '67 or '68 I had a little excitement with the Indians while a lawyer by the name of Mullins was boarding with us.

One bright moonshiny night about 12 o'clock my dogs commenced barking and taking on mightily. I lay there and listened to them awhile. At last I was satisfied that Indians were about. I jumped up and grabbed my Winchester and opened the door easily and just poked my head out. I soon saw two Indians on horseback about a hundred yards off coming toward the stable where my horses were. I dropped on my all-fours so they wouldn't see me and crawled to the farther part of the yard fence close to the stable and laid my gun on the fence waiting for them to come up as close as they would. My dogs by this time were right at them. I thought at one time they would take one Indian off his horse.

About that time I think they got afraid they would wake some one up. They whirled their horses around to ride away when I turned loose on them. I didn't get but two shots before they ran behind some brush. The last shot struck the Indian's saddle or something about it. You could have heard the ball strike whatever it was a hundred yards. The dogs ran them clear out of the pasture. I then ran into the house and put on my clothes and reached up to get my six-shooter to take with me and it wasn't there. I asked my wife if she knew anything about it. She said she did not; so I just took my Winchester and ran around one end of the pasture fence to see if I could get another shot at him. But they out ran me. When I came back to the house I commenced raising Cain about my six-shooter. No one knew anything about it. My wife whispered to me that she believed that Mullins had that six-shooter; "for when you shot he came running in here from his room hunting something and ran back into his room." I then struck a light and went into his room and there he was sitting up in bed with the six-shooter grasped

with both hands, shaking and trembling like he had an ague. He was nearly scared to death.

He was the first Yankee county judge after the war.

INDIANS IN THE CANE PATCH.

About that time, perhaps the same year, I went to the lodge one night and came back about twelve o'clock. Mrs. Buttery was at my house that night. She and my wife were there by themselves. When I came back they told me that the horses came running up and they believed the Indians were after them. I watched them a little while and they soon became quiet and I thought maybe they got frightened at something else, and I went to bed. Pretty soon here they came running up again. I looked out and saw by the way they looked that Indians were about. I grabbed my Winchester and crawled along the fence where the horses were standing. The moon was shining very bright, and I think they saw me when I went out, for they can see better than a white man at night. I lay down there sometime but no Indian could I see or hear. So I went out a little farther along the fence to the

cow-pen. Right along by the cow-pen there was about half an acre of sugar cane. It ran down close to where the horses stood. I lay down there and listened awhile and at last I thought I heard something in the sugar cane patch. But I concluded it was some pigs that very often went in there. Directly I got up on the top of the fence so I could see better. But I couldn't see nor hear anything, so I concluded I would go back. I thought if it was Indians they had seen me and had left, and I went to the house and went to bed and left the horses where they were. The next morning the horses were there. I went around looking for Indian signs and went in the cane patch where I thought I heard the night before some noise like something was breaking or cutting cane, and right there in 25 yards of where I was sitting on top of the fence, and right where I heard the noise, there lay a pile of chewed cane and an Indian quirt where they had been sitting and chewing cane. I know now when I got up on the fence, that they saw me and crept away. They could sky light me, and could have shot my head off, but they would rather

had those horses than my scalp. Well, this finishes the Indian scrapes of any note. When the Indians left this country there came in a class of men that did the country more harm than the Indians ever did, ten to one. There was a man by the

NAME OF ROBERTS,

who came in here and bought up a few little stocks of cattle just to get a claim on the range. He then hired about fifty outlaws and regular desperadoes, and they gathered early everything on the range and drove them off to Austin and San Antonio and sold them for what they could get and would divide up the proceeds among themselves and then come right back and get another herd. The people would indict them but they would swear for each other and get out of it every time. Maybe they would threaten a man's life if he was a witness against them, so that would intimidate some of them. Around their camps they would kill our hogs just to get them out of the way till you could very nearly walk on the dead ones. They would have to move their camp often on account of the smell. The honest people saw they would have to leave the

country at once or take the law into their own hands. So the people all met one night and came to the conclusion that we were here first and had fought the Indians for 15 long years to get what we had and when it came to giving it up and leaving the country, we said no. I knew we had as brave men among us as Roberts had. We said we would die for our country if necessary, for there were some of us who hadn't been back long from where they had been fighting for their country three or four years, and we were entirely justified in fighting for the country in which we live. We formed a vigilance committee and elected a captain. Well they were the ones who had to leave the country and don't forget it; that is, the leaders, and most of the others.

CHAPTER VI.

We didn't have many men when we commenced, but we went at it with such a vim that the thieves, I will call them, for that is their proper name, stampeded, and took for the brush and tried to waylay us, but had no luck at that. So they tried another plan to get the leaders. They found one of their party dead one day, and they picked out five of our leaders and made complaint against them for murder. They thought the sheriff would put them in jail and they would murder them right there. The complaint was made against Joe Leverett, William Jones, William Clark, Bob Rountree and myself. Well the sheriff had these men to arrest. I will say here the sheriff was a good man but he had not the nerve for them times. The thieves had him scared near to death. The first thing we knew about our arrest Frank Wilkes came in town one day, he had been over the Colorado River. He called me out to one side and he ask me if I knew what

the sheriff was summoning so many men for. Why he is summoning a lot of men said I. Why yes, he is summoning about two hundred men. I didn't know what it meant at first. He gave me a little hint what it was for. He knew all about it. I laughed and said that I had heard those thieves were going to lay that on some of our party. I told Wilkes that was all foolishness, if he would come with the papers himself not a man would resist arrest. If we were guilty that would be another thing, and I suppose he thought we were. Well he summoned two hundred men. Wilkes told me just when they would be at my house. Well I went and told the other boys about it. We knew that when he got his men together he would be considerably short of his two hundred. Sure enough he got to town with twenty thieves except one or two boys. They thought they had to obey the sheriff of course. Well the morning they were to be at my house, which was the next morning, I was up long before day listening for them. At last I heard the horses feet coming along the road. I got my Winchester and took my stand at the door. I intended to surrender

if he would come in by himself, but if he came up with a lot of those thieves I intended to drop them around as thick as they did my hogs around their camp fire, but I heard them pass. I, however, was very cautious about going out until daylight, and I will tell you why—they wanted to murder us. I knew that I was one of the main ones they wanted. After daylight I peeped out and I saw a man jump down off the fence at the lower end of my field. I knew there were more about the place, so I knocked about until after breakfast. About that time I got the news that there were two men seen standing behind a haystack that morning about daybreak. They had dropped out when they passed by and the sheriff didn't know it. They came up to the haystack where my horse was tied close by, and untied him and led him behind the stack, so when I came out to get him they could kill me right there—there would be no witnesses but themselves. They would claim that they tried to arrest me and I resisted and they were justified in killing me. But didn't I wish I had known they were there. I have been told the two men were Bill Reden and Joe

Ollany. Well I waited awhile after breakfast and got the news that there were about twenty thieves with the sheriff and had arrested Bob Rountree. Now Bob was one of my best friends. I went out to the lot and saddled my horse, and said if they wouldn't come to see me, I would go to see them. I was going to see what they were going to do with Bob. I mounted my horse and started and at about three hundred yards I met Beeson, who lived close by. He came **running out** to met me with tears in his eyes, and told me, for God's sake don't go up there, they will kill you sure; they have already got Bob. I told him I knew they had Bob and that was the reason I was going there. I am going to stay with him and I started. He stopped me again and begged me not to go so hard, and I told him what I would do. I told him I would go around the upper part of town where Henry Buttery lived and stop there, and for him to go through town and see the sheriff and tell him I would come in and surrender if he would put gentlemen to guard over me. In half hour he came to me and told me that the sheriff said he would get any one that I wished

Well I got on my horse and went down through town. You ought to have seen the eyes of those thieves stick out when they saw me coming. They were very much surprised to see me come in and give up. I rode up to where Bob was standing at my shop door. "Hello Bob," says I, "they haven't murdered you yet." He laughed and said no. I got off my horse and sat down by him in the shop door. Pretty soon the sheriff came around and arrested me and asked me to give up my arms. I looked at him with a smile and said: "Do you think that I am going to give up my arms while there is nobody in sight but a lot of thieves?" No sir, I'll not do it. You know if we would give up our arms we wouldn't live to see the sun set." I saw that he believed it but he wouldn't say anything. He was between two fires and was afraid of both parties. Well he brought up two boys to guard us. He asked us if they suited us and we told him yes. One of the boys was Newt Berry. He is living in this county now, and is a good man. The sheriff went away then and I asked Bob where his gun was. He said it was down at home but that he had his six-

shooter. I told him to send for his gun at once, for I thought I could see through the whole thing. He then sent for it and he and I sat around there all day. About two o'clock the sheriff came around again and asked us to give up our arms. We told him we said "no" once and we meant what we said. He went off then and Bob and I crossed on the other side of the street and sat down in Frank Smith's store a little while. It wasn't long before I saw them thieves passing along by the back door looking in at us. I knew at once what that meant. I sat there as long as I thought it was healthy and I then whispered to Bob, "suppose we go over to the shop." We went over there and sat down. I asked Bob if he did not notice the movements of those fellows; he said, "no."

CHAPTER VII.

A CLOSE CALL.

“Why, they were fixing as fast as they could to come in on us from both doors,” said I. “Why,” he said, “I never noticed it.” We sat there in the shop door about half an hour, when they commenced scattering themselves around in different places like pickets. We sat there until Bill Reden came over on our side and took his position on our right; standing there chewing his tobacco, he looked as innocent as a lamb. I told Bob it was time we were getting inside as the thing was about to come off. We jumped inside and threw our guns up to a crack which we had picked out before hand and watched their movements. They soon all got together again and while they were all huddled up there we could hardly keep from turning loose on them. If we had killed two or three of the leaders we could have run the balance out of town: Only Bob and I came in and surrendered.

They saw that we had the advantage of them and that there was no chance to get up without several of them getting killed. So they loaded up with whisky and went out yelling like a lot of Comanche Indians. As soon as they left the sheriff came and told us that he thought at one time they were going to kill him. We asked him what for? "Because I wouldn't put you fellows in jail," he said. "Why didn't you let us know that?" said I, "we would have gone sure." "Why they would have killed you to-night," the sheriff said. We told him that if we had gone in there and they had come up for that purpose, the killing would have been on the other side, for we would have had our friends bring as many guns in there as we wanted. The news had gotten out all over the country that we were arrested and

IN CHARGE OF THOSE THIEVES.

Dick Kendrick and Luke Biggam jumped on their horses and went to Burnet, which was about 30 miles, as quick as their horses could take them there, and reported the news that the thieves had us arrested and they were satisfied we would be

murdered before morning. They spread the news for miles around in a few hours. They had an understanding to all meet at a certain place on the Colorado river, about twelve miles on the road to Llano, and they would all come to Llano together. When they left there they had about one hundred men. When they crossed the Colorado a few miles they came very near running on that gang of thieves that left Llano that evening. The thieves heard the sound of the horses' feet and there were so many of them they gave the road and stopped behind some rocks until the Burnet party passed. Then they jumped on their horses and some of them never stopped until they got to Mexico. They thought the whole country was alive with people and they thought about right. The Burnet men got to my house a little before day and found us alright. We had our examining trial postponed for three days. At that time about the same number of men came up from Burnet again, and about one hundred more from this county, including a few from Mason and San Saba. When the time came for our trial to be called there

was not a witness on the ground so we were turned loose.

We had asked the sheriff to resign before this, but he had refused to do so. But that day he mounted a goods box and announced his resignation and Jonathan Bozarth was put in his place. As soon as he gave bond he appointed R. A. McInnis, Ben Beeson and myself as his deputies. Then we formed a junction with Burnet, Mason and San Saba counties. We would have a certain place to meet and sometimes there would be as many as

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY MEN

there. Then we would scatter out all over the country; sometimes we would go clear to the head of the river and we would either arrest or run out nearly every outlaw that was in the country. About this time the rangers came to assist and some of us would be with them nearly all the time. There was one crowd of those thieves and desperadoes known as the Gladden and Ringo crowd. They would play between here and Mexico. They would come in and stay around in the mountains in order to get a chance to waylay some of us. There were from ten

to twenty of them. But they never had any luck in their waylaying. I don't believe they ever killed but one man.

One day I concluded I wanted to go to Bluffton, about twenty miles from here, after a load of corn. I knew this Gladden and Ringo crowd was in the country, so I got a man to go with me and drive so I would have nothing to do but sit in the wagon and watch. We hitched up and I got my breech-loading shot-gun and Winchester and we started. We went through without seeing any of them until we got to Bluffton, There was a spy for the Ringo crowd—that is, I knew he was a friend to them and a bitter enemy to me. When my man got the corn loaded we started back. Bozarth, our sheriff, was living there at that time. He was fixing to move to Llano that day. When we got about three miles from Bluffton, I heard and saw a man coming up behind us at full speed. I soon saw that it was Bozarth. He beckoned me to stop and I did so. He said, "Miles, jump out and go back with me quick." "Why?" said I. "Why, that Ringo crowd is waylaying you at the next branch," said he. I asked

him if he was sure of this and he said, "I am; there was a man told me this since you left. He is a friend to us both and a Mason besides. He don't want his name mentioned, for if that crowd ever found out that I sent you word they would kill him sure." "Bozarth," said I, "I don't like to take the back track and if you will stay with me, we will go on. You watch one side of the road and I will watch the other, and we will give them a game if they show up." He insisted not to do that as there were about twenty of them and they had all the advantage of us. So we concluded to leave the road and go to Tom Gooch's, a friend of ours, who lived about three miles off the road. When we got there I got a horse and we went to Llano horseback through the woods.

CHAPTER VIII.

BATTLE WITH COW THIEVES—HENRY HOY KILLED

One night about twelve o'clock some men came to my horse and told me that a lot of cow thieves had come in about Smoothing Iron Mountain in Llano county and had stolen a lot of cattle and they were satisfied they knew where they could find them. Well, that night and the next morning we got up about fifty men. We started two or three men that morning to locate the cattle and they were to meet us at a certain place on San Saba river about forty miles from Llano. We started late that evening and traveled nearly all night, but got to our meeting place where we met our spies. They told us they had located the cattle. We were to meet the San Saba sheriff there that morning at day-break with a posse of men. We waited there about an hour, when we thought there was something wrong. Sheriff Bozarth told Bob Rountree and myself to take fifteen men and go ahead and surround the

herd and he would wait a few minutes longer for the San Saba crowd, and then he would come on. Well, Bob and I started to a certain round knob where the cattle were seen the night before. When we got close to the hill I told Bob to take ten men and go around on one side and I would take the balance and go on the other. In my crowd were Ben Beeson, Dan Trent and two other men whose names I do not remember. Well, when we got about half way around the hill I saw a man coming right toward us as fast as his horse could run, looking back behind him. We knew he had seen Bob and his crowd, so we stopped and stood still. He ran up in about one hundred yards of us before he saw us. Quick as he saw us he stopped and got down, tied his horse to a tree and walked up to another tree that would afford him better protection if he needed it. He stopped by the side of this tree. With Winchester in hand, six-shooter buckled around him he stood as straight as a general. He appeared to be perfectly cool. We were then advancing on him. I was in front, Ben Beeson next, and I thought the others were close about, but after the thing was over

I found out they didn't hurt themselves getting close about. While we were advancing on him and he was standing up so straight I said low to Ben, "That fellow means business." "You bet he does," said Ben. When we got in just 61 steps of him I spoke to him and said: "I don't know who you are, but surrender and you sha'n't be hurt." Just at that time I lit on the ground and Ben followed suit, and the outlaw dropped to his knees, half protected behind the tree. All three of us threw up our guns and fired at the same time. The other boys heard it and thought it was only one gun. Well, the consequence was

THE OUTLAW ROLLED OVER

and his ball went through Ben Beeson's shirt. I was in front and Ben was standing behind me. It was evident that the outlaw shot at me, but shooting so quick he missed me and hit Ben. Ben's ball struck the outlaw in the face and my ball struck him in the side and we thought went through his heart. Well, we looked around and saw a man running off from a tent on horseback. I jumped on my horse and took after him. He drew his six-shooter

on me and I told him to throw it down or I would kill him. I emptied my Winchester at him and never could hit him. About that time Bob's crowd came up in front of him and they fired several shots at him with shot-guns and Winchesters, but never touched him. At last Francis Taylor ran up behind him and caught his horse by the bridle bits and stopped him. It is remarkable that with as much shooting as there was neither he nor his horse was touched, except a slight wound on the ankle. We asked him what his name was. He said his name was Scott. We asked him who the man was we killed back yonder. He said it was Henry Hoy. We went back to where we killed Hoy and then sent a runner back to tell Bozarth and his crowd what we had done and they came back in double quick. Just before they got there they saw a man running like he was running for life, and Clint Breazeale and several others took after him and ran him several miles in a westerly direction. But they lost him. That evening some rangers came across him and as he wouldn't surrender they killed him. He was the leader of that gang and his name was Tay-

lor. I will just tell you before I forget it that the San Saba sheriff never showed up. We thought it strange.

Ben Beeson and I were indicted in San Saba county for murder. They got this man scott to make the complaint against us. They sent the papers down to our sheriff who arrested us and our bond was fixed at

TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS

each. I never stopped until I made mine twenty-three thousand. When we got up there for trial about fifty of our friends went with us for we knew what they had us arrested for. It was to give the friends of these outlaws a chance to waylay us on the road from Llano to San Saba. When we got up there and our trial was called we made a motion for a change of venue to Lampasas and it was granted. When court came on there and our case was called there was no Scott or any one else witness against us. So we were turned loose.

CHAPTER IX.

TWO BAD MEN CAPTURED

Soon after this there were two men who came into town and got tight. One of them was named Vol Bostic and the other was an outlaw who played between here and Mexico, whose name I can't remember, but who it was said had killed two or three men. When they started out of town they commenced shooting and yelling like a pack of Indians and we didn't allow anybody to do that. In a few minutes Bozarth and a man by the name of Lane and myself started after them, overtaking them about two miles from town. When we got within a half a mile of them they saw us coming and put whip and spur to their horses, and we lit out after them. I had the fastest horse, as I generally had on such occasions, and when I got up to them Bozarth and Lane were two hundred yards behind. The outlaws had their pistols out ready for me. I jerked my pistol out and threw it down on Bostic

who was behind and told him to surrender. Instead of that he threw his pistol down on me; we ran that way two hundred yards with our pistols on each other, and not over ten feet apart. About the time I had made up my mind to kill him, his horse ran under a limb and knocked him off and his pistol fired right in my face. Well, I thought the fall had killed him, so I never checked my horse but kept right on after the other one, who was the worst of the two. This fellow thought I had killed his partner, as he was not looking back when Bostic was knocked off his horse. He thought I had shot him. Well, I ran right onto this fellow. I threw my pistol in his face and told him to drop his in a minute or I would kill him. He let it down. He looked around and saw his partner coming that he thought was killed. Then he commenced caving. I rode right up and stuck my pistol in his face and told him if he raised his hand he was a dead man. Bozarth and Lane came up about that time and disarmed him and we took them both back to town. The last man said if he had not thought I had killed Bostic he and I would have had it.

THE COGGINS AND CARTER FIGHT

A feud was worked up between two parties here. One was called the Carter party and the other the Coggins party. I leaned toward the Carter party because I thought they were right and because I saw they were nearly all good men, while the other side were my bitter enemies. There were eight or ten on a side. They came very near coming together several times, but were prevented. One day while district court was going on the thing came off. R. A. McInnis was sheriff at that time and Sam Stoudenmire and I were deputies. One day the Coggins party commenced collecting in the rear of my store. At last Jack Herridge walked out in open view. Jack was one of the Carter party. He told them if they wanted anything just to open up. The sheriff saw that the thing was about to come off and he told Sam and me to go out there and see if we could stop it. We went out and were up in front of the Coggins men who had their guns up ready for business, and we tried to get them to put their guns down. They said they would not. About that time they leveled their guns to shoot

Stoudenmier and myself gave a spring to one side to get from between them. We did get away in time to escape a volley from both parties. Stoudenmier and I thought we wouldn't take any stock in the fight, as we were officers. So we ran around Zincke's saddle shop on the east side of the square to get out of the way of the balls. I was a little behind and just as I turned the corner of the house two or three balls struck the corner close to my head. "Look here," says I, "do you reckon them devils are shooting at me?" Some men that were standing close by said it looked mightily like it. I turned and walked back to the corner and stood there a minute. Well, when I started away I

LOOKED AT MY PISTOL

and there wasn't a load in it. I went into Zincke's saddle shop and there I saw a man stretched out on the floor, face downwards. He was lying so flat he didn't hardly look like a man. He said he heard the balls striking the house and threw himself on the floor to prevent himself from being struck by them. When he raised up I saw it was Lessen, a little lawyer that I believe lived in San Saba.

Well, when the battle was over there was one dead man and one mortally wounded. He died that night. One was slightly wounded. All were out of the Coggins party. None of the Carter party were hurt.

CHAPTER X.

PULLING A STICK OUT OF MY PISTOL WITH MY TEETH.

During those days I had to go very heavily armed, and every morning when I started to town, after I got out of the yard, I would pull out my pistol and see if it was in good working order. One morning I pulled it out and it wouldn't revolve, and just as I cocked it I noticed a stick in the muzzle sticking out about half an inch. I turned it up and took hold of it with my fingers but could not start it. I threw the muzzle up to my mouth and took hold of the stick with my teeth and pulled my best before it came out. Then I just happened to see that the pistol was cocked. Well right there I was worse scared for a few minutes than I ever was by Indians or outlaws. I know I had my finger on the trigger while I was pulling at the stick with my teeth, but it happened that I didn't pull it quite hard enough to make it go off. If it had gone off I

would have been shot in the mouth and everybody would have thought that I committed suicide. The way the stick came to get in the pistol was this: When I would get my pistol in the morning I would pull it out of the scabbard and stick it down in my pants and leave the scabbard hanging on the bed-post. My little boys, Lee and Eugene, were playing with some little sticks the day before, calling them six-shooters. One of them stuck a short one in the scabbard and it just happened to fit my pistol. When I came home that night I stuck my pistol in the scabbard as usual and just happened to put it so that the stick stuck into the muzzle of the pistol. I thought it went down a little tighter than common, but I never thought what was the matter.

ARRESTING FOUR KIDS

A few days after this there were four young men from eighteen to twenty-five years old, who came to town and got tight. They went out of town yelling at the top of their voices just to tantalize me. They thought there were so many of them that I would not dare follow them. But I had been watching them for some time, though they did-

n't know it, nor they didn't care for they were a pretty saucy set. I was pretty sure that when they started out they were going to give me a dare, so I prepared myself beforehand. I went knocking around town whistling like I never noticed them. But I was picking out the best horse in town to give them a chase if they went out yelling. I picked out a little bay horse of Addie Swanson's and had him hitched in the rear of my house. Well, they soon started out. Sure enough they went out squalling like a lot of cayotes. I came to the front door and looked at them and walked slowly off just like I didn't care. As quick as they got out of sight, going in an easterly direction on the Honey Creek road, I ran back through my house and put on an old white hat and a different coat and jumped on my horse. I started off in a southerly direction so they couldn't see me and then bore east until I struck Oatman creek and then took down it until I came to the crossing. There I took the road back to Llano, and just as I got on top of the bank there they were in fifty yards of me, coming in a slow walk. They were not looking for me in front of them, and were looking

back. I had my hat pulled down over my eyes and they never saw me until I spoke. Says I: "All four of you

CONSIDER YOURSELVES UNDER ARREST

and go back to town." Well, they said they were not going to do it. I told them I reckoned they would. I jerked my pistol on them and told them if they didn't turn right back I would kill the last one of them; and some of them knew that I meant just what I said. They turned and started back, but they would stop every once in a while and I had a time with them. When they got right opposite my house, Charley Williamson, who was one of the four, jumped down off his horse and swore that he would not go any further. I took his horse by the bridle and started with him toward town. I told him I would take the horse for the fine. When I had gotten some distance he called to me to stop. They all came up and tried to take the horse from me. They gathered around me until I thought I would have to kill the whole posse right before my wife, who was in two hundred yards of me listening to the racket. Well, I gave them another scare and took them on to town.

CHAPTER XI.

MY FIRST BEAR HUNT

In 1853 while I was living with Billy Magill in Burnet there came up a cold norther one night and the next morning Billy asked me if I wanted to go with Logan Vandever and himself hog-hunting and I said yes. Well, we waited about an hour, when Vandever came along with a half dozen more men and about as many dogs. The men were heavily armed. I thought then that didn't look much like hog-hunters. Billy gave me a pair of big Holstein pistols about 16 inches long. They were in a scabbard and all you had to do was to throw them across the horn of your saddle—one on each side. I knew then what was coming, but I never said anything. I thought I would prepare myself for the brush. I had a bran new pair of buckskin pants that I had never worn, and as I had never before been on a bear hunt I thought I would put on as much style as possible. Well, we made a start and

struck out in the direction of Negrohead Mountain. Negrohead lies right opposite Long Mountain on the Colorado. Just as we struck the river the dogs whirled all at once and broke into a thicket and commenced baying something. We all ran in there and sure enough it was a big bear. As quick as the bear saw us he ran up a big pecan tree and I think every man lit from his horse at once and put a bullet in that bear. It was dead when it struck the ground. We commenced skinning it and the dogs kept trailing around like there was another one there, but we thought it was this one's sign. But directly they struck out right up the river and Vandever and I struck out after them. We ran up the river about half a mile and we saw the dogs

SWIMMING THE RIVER

We knew then it was another bear, and he had crossed the river right there where the dogs were crossing. Vandever said, "Miles, I am going to follow them dogs and I expect you had better stay on this side." "No sir," said I, "I am going wherever you go, it makes no difference where that is." We ran up to the edge of the water and saw that it was

about over our horses' backs right where we had to jump them off. We both had horses that would go wherever we would turn their heads. Vandever plunged in with a splash and I followed suit. I won't want you to forget what kind of trousers I wore. Well, we plunged through, at one place over a horse's back and the next jump upon a rock two or three feet high. There was a little ice around the edge of the water and we had trouble getting out on the opposite side. The bank was about three feet perpendicular, but we got out at last. We heard the dogs down on the river like they had something treed. We lit out for them. Just before we got to them we had to go through a big thicket and Vandever and I got separated and I beat him to the bear. The dogs had a cub treed in a pecan tree at the foot of Long Mountain. When I got there I was going to shoot it, when Vandever came in sight and halloed at me to hold on until he got there. When he came up he said to let him shoot it. He said he wanted to kill it dead so it wouldn't hurt his dogs. But I knew that was not the reason. He didn't want it said that a green-

horn boy right from the states beat him to the bear and killed it before he got there. Well, I let him kill it. Then we threw it on one of our horses and

STARTED FOR CAMP

where we had killed the other bear. We went to cross the river where we came over, but it looked like it was impossible for anybody to cross there. We were not excited then. We hunted a better crossing. When we got to camp they had the old bear's ribs roasted for us. We sat down and ate our dinner while the other boys skinned the cub. I was sitting around the fire when I saw some of the boys sniggering about something, and I imagined it was something about my trousers. I looked down toward my feet directly and I reckon they were traveling an upward course at about a terrapin gait while I was standing at the fire. The buckskin that my pants were made of was dressed with eggs and alum. All who know anything about dressing deer hides know that they draw up into a little wad as hard as a bone. I kept them pulled down the best I could but when I would pull them down they would draw up the other way. I began to look like

one of those pictures you have seen in the almanacs of a big frog dressed up with an overcoat on. About this time Vandever said "let's go." I tell you I was glad to hear that. We mounted our horses and started up the river. The sun by this time was not over two hours high. We hadn't gone over half a mile when the dogs

STARTED ANOTHER BEAR,

a very large one. He never ran very far until he crossed the river and at the deepest hole of water there was about there. We were close after him. When the dogs came to the river they never stopped a second. They plunged right in, with Van close after them and the buckskins after Van. It swam our horses from bank to bank. The other boys didn't want any of it, and I was mighty glad of that. They thought they would keep up the river and get a good crossing but they never found it. Van and I ran that bear until sundown. The dogs were run down by this time and we ran ahead of the bear and waylaid him in a narrow place in the river bottom. In a few minutes here he came. It was getting dark in the bottom and we could only

see a glimpse of him. Van shot at him and turned him back down the river. The dogs came to us there played clear out. Well, we were there and it was getting dark. We had no blankets and no grub except two sweet potatoes that Van had in his saddle pockets. We halloed for the other boys, but no answer. They had all the bedding and grub. We pulled off our saddles and built up a big log-heap fire. We put our two potatoes on to roast and ate them. Well, said I to myself, I had rather do without my supper than to see those boys. We took our saddle blankets and spread them down. Van on one side of the fire and me on the other. There was some snow on the ground and it was very cold. We laid down and soon fell off to sleep. I lay like a dog, with my head and feet close together, and when I got cold I would flop over on the other side. As soon as day came, Van says

“MILES, JUMP UP

and let's put the dogs on that bear trail again this morning. I believe we can catch him this morning.” I did not come as fast as he thought I ought to and he called again, “Come, Miles, come.”

“Look here,” says I, “if you was in my fix you wouldn’t come any quicker.” About that time he looked around and saw what was the matter and laughed. I was working with my buckskins and was trying to get my legs straight before he saw me. I had laid down all drawn up together before the fire with my buckskins wet and the consequence was I stayed together. Van and I worked with them until I could get on my horse. He said we would go down the river and see if we could meet the other boys. We hadn’t gone more than three hundred yards before we started that bear or another one. We ran it about two hours when the dogs ran into a bunch of Mexican hogs in a thicket. I ran to see what the dogs were baying and saw that it was a bunch of Mexican hogs. But before I got back to my horse I saw what I dreaded more than the Mexican hogs. That was them boys. They came up right there and saw me with my knee pants on. Well, right here the bear hunt broke up. The boys thought they would have more fun out of me than they would out of any bear. We stopped long enough to get our breakfast and then started home.

It didn't take me long to get off my buckskins after I got home. I always kept a sharp knife and in two minutes after I commenced on them there was not enough good buckskin left to cover a ball.

CHAPTER XII.

MY LAST BEAR HUNT.

In 1885, or about that time, there was a party made up here to go on a bear hunt on the Nueces river. The party consisted of I. N. Jackson, J. R. Jackson, Lew Wells, Henry Cooper, Wm. Hatley, Jess Hatley, Capt. Brown, Dr. Smith, Sam Malone, Dick Kendrick and myself.

Well, we made a start and traveled on until we got about fifteen miles above Junction City before we struck anything that we thought was a bear trail. Right there one evening about 3 o'clock we were driving along up the river bottom when the dogs struck out on a trail like they meant business, and right where they started the trail we saw a bed in a little bunch of bushes and we thought it was where a bear had been lying. When we saw that, you ought to have seen the harness fly off those horses—that is, Jim Jackson's, Dick Kendrick's and my own. They never were unharnessed so quick

before. We started in after the dogs. They crossed the river and up through a cedar brake. We followed them until we concluded that it was a wolf. So we called off the dogs and came back to the wagons. We went on a little further and camped for the night. But a while before this we killed a wild-cat and Lew Wells said he would dress it and have it cooked if we would agree to help eat it. You know in such a crowd that there is always some one in the crowd that's playing off on the balance to keep the camp alive, and Lew Wells was the man for that crowd. Well, we

HAD THE CAT COOKED

all ate a mouthful or two of the cat. Lew pretended like he ate a good lot of it. We sat around telling yarns till bed time, when Lew commenced complaining of not feeling well. We told him he had eaten too much cat. Well, we fixed up tent and crawled in, and when we all got to sleep but Lew he gave a spring out of bed upon the man nearest him, and from one to another squalling like a dozen wild-cats. He tore the cover off of every man in the tent, pretending like he was mad or like a wild-cat fighting

logs. We all got quiet directly and all lay down and went to sleep. Just before day, when it was about time for bear-hunters to get up anyhow, here he came again, squalling like he did before and tearing the cover off of every man in the tent, and nearly every night and morning he would perform the same caper, especially if there was one hard to get up he would raise them. The next morning after eating the cat we hitched up and started across to the head of the Nueces river. Going over there we killed a few deer, but had no luck killing bear. Some of the boys got discouraged and wanted to go home. At last they did all start back home but Capt Brown, Dick Kendrick and I believe Henry Cooper and myself. We started across to the North Llano and when we got over there we camped, and next morning we took the dogs and struck out to

FIND A BEAR.

We struck several trails but they were so cold the dogs could not trail them. But about two o'clock in the evening the dogs struck a trail that we thought was like the others, too cool a trail to get off on it right. So we didn't pay much attention to it.

I was a little off from the other boys and all at once I noticed the old start dog get his temper up and start right off and the others after him. I knew then that was fresh bear sign and I lit out after them at full speed. The other boys didn't see me till I was a quarter of a mile from them. Then no one saw me but Dick Kendrick.

I followed the dogs about one mile over a very rough hill and down to a very brushy hollow. I was about two hundred yards behind them. When I got within about one hundred yards of a thicket in the head of this hollow, I heard the dogs baying something. Just at the moment I saw a bear run up a tree that stood in the middle of that thicket. I jumped off and was going to shoot it from where I was, but all at once the bear let all holds loose and down he came. When he struck the ground I heard a dog yelp. Then I started for the thicket. Just as I got to the edge of the thicket up goes the bear again. I could not see him plain enough to shoot him from where I stood, but he would never stay up there long enough for a man to shoot him anyway before he would turn all holds loose

and

STRIKE THE GROUND

and every time he would strike the ground I would hear a dog yelp. I saw at once I had to get right in there with them other dogs and fight it out altogether. The brush and vines were so thick that a man could hardly get through them. But I pressed my way through at last and got close to the tree that the bear kept running up and down. A big forked limb had fallen from the big tree and was lying on a pile of vines about three feet from the ground. Just beyond that was an open place about twenty feet square. When I jumped up on that forked limb I saw the bear walking around on his hind legs in that open space like an old buck negro, watching for dogs, and every dog that came in that open place he knocked him out. I threw my gun up to shoot him, when he saw me and here he came.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY LAST BEAR HUNT—CONTINUED.

He gave a vicious spring at me and I threw my foot back to place it on the big limb behind me to brace myself, but missed it and fell between the forks among the vines, and the bear passed over me. I shot at him as he went over, the ball passing through his nose. Well, I can tell you now I never went to sleep in my new bed, but the bear never came back any more. Why he didn't I cannot tell, unless it was that he smelled too strong an odor as he passed over me different from the odor of those other dogs. About this time Kendrick came up and holloed at me. "What is it, Miles?" "The devil," says I. "Oh, I see now," says he, "yonder go two cubs." That was the first time I had thought about cubs. That was what made the old hussey fight so. Well, I got up on my forked limb again and gave a yell at the dogs to encourage them. They sailed out after her.

Kendrick and I ran that old hussey four miles before we killed her. The dogs would tree her every once in a while, but as quick as she would see or smell me she would let all holds go and down she would come, and the only way we got her at last was that I ran ahead and found a narrow place in the river bottom and waylaid her. As soon as she saw me she didn't know what to do, with Kendrick and the dogs crowding her in the rear, and me in front of her. So she gave a jump up on a leaning tree close by and peeped over at me. She didn't more than get her eye on me until I had a bullet in her. Kendrick shot her from the rear. The old thing was so mad that she just lay down right there in the forks of that tree and died and we had to climb up the tree and pull her down. We dressed her and put her on our horses and went back to where we

SAW THE CUBS RUN OFF

and took their trail and caught one of them before night. By that time the dogs were so tired we never tried to catch the other one. So we went to camp and what a feast we had that night out of

that cub. We stuck his ribs on sticks before the fire, and what we didn't eat that night we finished the next morning. We struck out the next morning to see if we could find another; but we made a failure. Next morning we started for home. We killed a few deer and turkeys on our way back.

A FEW REFLECTIONS

From all I have written you see that I have lived in troublesome times, and I often think of the close calls I have had in one way and another. I have been shot at about eight times and have barely escaped death in a half dozen other ways. The thieves and their friends waylaid me and layed plans in the saloons to kill me when I would come to arrest any of them for disturbing the peace. They have strychnined my dogs so they could get up to my house and get a chance to kill me that way. But I have gone ahead and done what I believed was my duty as an officer and a citizen and have outlived most of those who tried to kill me. They laid their plans and tried to get me, but the old man is on the turf yet. I have often thought of these things and my escapes and have felt that some way the hand of Providence was in it. These reflections had some effect on me for some time, during late years, and have had a good deal to do with the change in my life. My Indian fights are over and I don't expect to have any more such narrow escapes as I have had and feeling that God

had spared me I wanted to honor him in my closing years and set an example you all could follow.

As many who will read these incidents from my life are not personally acquainted with me, I give below the names of several parties who will verify every statement I have written in these articles:

BEN CARTER,

DOC CARTER,

CLINT BREAZEALE,

HUGH LEVERETT,

JAMES LEVERETT,

LUKE MOORE,

GEORGE GRAY,

HENRY BEESON,

JOE SMITH,

GEORGE EPPERSON.



JULY 75



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA

