

4-1-1961

## West of the Pecos (concluded)

E.L. Steve Stephens

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Stephens, E.L. Steve. "West of the Pecos (concluded)." *New Mexico Historical Review* 36, 2 (1961).  
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol36/iss2/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Historical Review* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [amywinter@unm.edu](mailto:amywinter@unm.edu), [lsloane@salud.unm.edu](mailto:lsloane@salud.unm.edu), [sarahrk@unm.edu](mailto:sarahrk@unm.edu).

## WEST OF THE PECOS

By E. L. STEVE STEPHENS

*(Concluded)*

The next day Miller had them boys to get the chuck wagon ready to send to town after chuck. In a couple days Miller sent the wagon in by one of the boys and sent the saddle to the man we borrowed it from and told him to pick my bedroll up and bring it back. We didn't do much until the wagon got back. We got the saddle ponies up. The chuck wagon was going on a cow work to mark and brand the calves and hold the fat cows and the steers. Going up the trail to Trinidad where we are to deliver them to. The chuck wagon in from town and we are ready to start the cow work. It late in the spring. Mr. Miller went back to Kan. City. We finished the cow work around the first of Sept. and we started our journey to deliver the cows and steers to Trinidad, Colorado, about Sept. 15.

It was a rough trip going up there. So much rain and the Indians. The wagon boss didn't kick off with the Indian Chief so good. The chief wanted a fat cow for his people to eat and the boss turned him down. That wasn't good. The boss didn't know anything about Indians. He never been around Indians much. I told the boss if he would let me handle the outfit we could make it all right for I had lived and been around them 15 years. So he did. So the next morning I rode up to the Indian's camp and got off my pony and the chief come out of his teepee with a rifle in his hand. I made him a few signs. He set his rifle down. I told him what I was going to do. So the chief and three Indians went back with me.

We rode up to our wagon. I told the boss to have the cowboys to throw the cattle together so the boss did. I and the chief rode into the herd and I told the chief to pick him out one so he did. I told the boss I was going to help the Indians to their camp with the cow. I told the boss they could start on with the herd, I would overtake them. We made it to the Indian camp all right. Well, chief, old Pal, I will go and overtake the herd. The chief shook my hand and pulled my hat off

and patted me on the head. That was their way to show love and friendship and said come back and see us. I said I sure will if I am in this country, and I rode off.

Overtaken the herd. Always one smart alec. This smart alec said to me we thought you had taken up with an Indian squaw. I said to him no more wise cracks out of you. The boss said boys, Steve got us out of this jam. This wise guy had his tale [tail] over his back all the way to Trinidad at me. I didn't have anything to say to him, but I kept an eye on him. We finally reached Trinidad and turned the cattle over to the man bought them. Was a big wild west show going on so we stayed there three days and taken it in. We hadn't been to town in seven or eight months. Our hair and beards were long. We all got cleaned up the first evening and went to the show. And after the show was over we went to the dance.

This smart guy didn't take any hand in the dance. But the rest of us cowboys had a swell time. Some time after midnight we went to the wagon and went to bed. The next morning after breakfast the wrangler got the saddle ponies in. We were getting ready to go to the show ground. Some of the boys was going to enter in the bronc riding. It was a good show and a good dance that night. The second day we was there several of us cow punchers taken a part in the wild west show. I was in the cow roping. I rope my cow and rode back to the chute and got off my pony. Someone slapped me on my shoulder. I looked around and it was Goldy Smith. I hadn't seen her in seven years. I rode against her in Durango, Colo., in 1907.

We had lots to talk about. We went had supper together and we went to the dance and had a good time. Goldy's father was there. He was pretty feeble. Mr. Smith had moved to Trinidad. After the dance was over I went and stayed all night with them. He was a big cow man. The next morning around five o'clock, Mrs. Smith put the coffee pot on. I heard someone up so I got up and it was Mrs. Smith. Wasn't long until the coffee was ready. She poured two cups of coffee. She carried Mr. Smith coffee to the bed for him. I had drink one cup of coffee by that time Goldy had got up and come through where her dad was in bed. Goldy poured her a cup. She said

Steve, Dad wants us to come in where he was. Mrs. Smith fixed breakfast. She called us and we set down and eat. Mr. Smith said, Steve how about you working for me? I will give you a good job. If I went to work for you I would have to go back to the O. B. and get my saddle ponies. I told Mr. Smith I would let him know in a day or two.

We stayed two more days and we taken in the wild west show. The last evening we was in Trinidad I saw Mr. Smith and I told him it was so late in the fall. I will go to work for him in the spring if he wanted me to. He said that would be all right. So the chuck wagon and us cowboys left for the ranch. It taken us three weeks to reach the ranch. The boss paid some of the cowpunchers and they went to town and waited for the next spring work so they could get a job. The big part of the cowpunchers just work spring and fall. So the boss kept four of us cowpunchers counting that smart alec. Well the winter wasn't so bad. Well, spring was here and the grass was putting out.

One day the boss and I was riding along together. I told him I was going to quit. He said Steve, I wish you would stay on. I got my saddle pony and my pack pony up to feed them a few days so they could make the trip all right. I had the ponies up three or four days and this smart guy left the gate open and they got out. I said to him why did you let my ponies out? You go and get them ponies and put them in the lot. When I want them out I will turn them out. He got his tail over his back. I said to him, you keep on you might get the cuckold burrs combed out of your tail. The boss was standing there taking all in.

About the middle of April I saddled up and packed the other pony and pulled out. The second day I reached Ft. Barclay. There was where I reached the Santa Fe Trail and travelled to Raton. I put my ponies in the stage coach barn and taken the stage coach for Trinidad to see Mr. Smith. I found Mr. Smith sick. I stayed several days. I believe it made him feel better to see me.

He said to me, Steve, you didn't fool me. He asked me where did I leave my ponies. I said in Raton. We talked three days. He told me all about the ranch. He had sold the cattle

and the ranch, but would turn it over now. Be about 8 months before I will. I want you to go down and take it over. I asked Mr. Smith who are running it. Now, I said, Mr. Smith, it's not a good policy for a stranger to go on a job and take over if the owner are not there. I don't want to go down and have any trouble with the boss. He said I have sent for him to come to see me. I said what are the matter? He said haven't branded as many calves as they should.

I stayed around Trinidad until his boss come in. I never did see him. Mr. Smith told me what he wanted me to do and where I could get anything for the ranch I needed at Raton, N. M. All the time I was there I stayed in their home. I said to Mr. Smith one night I guess in the morning I will take the stage coach and go to Raton and get my ponies and go to the ranch. When I was ready to take the coach, Mr. Smith said, Steve, when I get well I will see you. I arrived in Raton the next day and stayed all night.

The next day I left for the ranch. The ranch (brand CT) was about half way from Maxwell and Springer on the Red River. I travelled down the old Santa Fe Trail to Cimarron then quit the trail, turned east. The evening of the third day I rode up to the ranch. Was two cowpunchers come out the door. One said get down stranger. I got off and wrapped my bridle reins around the hitching pole and went in. They had some coffee made. I drank a cup. Them buttons didn't have much to say. I am going to unsaddle my pony. I untied my bedroll and pulled it off my pack pony. They looked at each other and started leading my ponies to the lot so they followed me. I unsaddled and put them in the lot. I seen some feed so I fed them. All time I was looking around after a while one said us go and fix supper. We went to the house. I asked would it be all right for me to put my bedroll in the house. Yes, they said.

They started fixing supper. Didn't have much to fix. Didn't have any beef and not much bacon. We eat what they cooked. After supper one said to me do you want your horses turned out? No just leave them in the lot. The next morning they fixed breakfast. We eat and one drove some ponies up and put them in the corral and caught them a horse each. Was

a good looking dun pony in the bunch. I said who rides him. One said the boss was here rode him. I said where is he? He quit and left the other day. I said to them cow pokes how about me riding him? You can I guess. He may buck all time I was. I had a eye on them guys. I said to them how many ponies you all have in you all mount? They told me. How many in the lot the boss rode. Mr. Smith had told me how many saddle ponies he had on the ranch.

I went with them pokes that day. I seen some big calves. Wasn't branded. I said Who them calves belong to? Better brand them, they might get wandered off from their mothers. No one said anything. I let on like I could read the brand was on them calves mother. We returned to the ranch house late in the evening. We made some coffee. Later we cooked dinner and supper both in one. Wasn't much to cook at this outfit. We was eating. I asked who have been taking the chuck wagon to town after chuck? One said I have, went twice. Was no more said about that. I found out what I wanted to know that day.

The next morning while we was eating breakfast I said boys, Mr. Smith sent me down here to run this ranch and I am going to run it to suit me. After breakfast I said boys we are going to get the chuck wagon ready to go to town. Up to now I never told them my name. They said what are your name. I said Steve. They looked at each other. I asked them ruckes [rookies] their name. One was Paul and the other was John. That night I told Paul in the morning I want you to take the chuck wagon and go to Raton and get chuck and horse feed. I made out a list for him to get. The next morning I started him out for town. The wagon was gone 8 days.

The next day after I sent the wagon to town I said John us go up to Cisco Spring. I wanted to look around. Was an old adobe house set back up in a canyon a little way from the spring. I had been there one time before but didn't get off my pony then. So we rode up and got off. I kept my hand on my gun. You could tell might be a wild cat jump out. I was looking around. Was several short pieces of rope hanging down from a limb in a large tree. I walked around the sod shanty. Wasn't but one door in it and two small look out

holes. The door was fastened with a horse shoe bent together on the outside. I looked around and found something to pry the horse shoe apart and went in. Wasn't much in the house. Some old pans and two pair of boots, one pair had Wild Bill on them and the other pair said Cisco. It sain on the boots June 1900. It was carved with a knife and I kicked the junk around and found a cow horn was burned on. This what it said. We are staying here is 1895. All the time I was in there John was a little nervous. I said, John, have you ever been in here. I said I never was in there. I have worked for Mr. Smith a year. This is the third time I have ever been at the shack.

I shut the door and we rode off. I never did say what I saw in there. We pulled out on the way to the ranch. When we left the ranch I went to look for a fat calf to butcher for the ranch. We were riding down a canyon and run into a bunch of cattle. Was a cow with a fat calf by her side. I told John us carry this cow and calf in. He didn't ask any questions. We drove them on to the ranch and put them in the corral and tied the gate good. I sure was hungry.

We went to the house and we started fixing dinner and supper together. That's the way we cooked. The next morning I said, John, us butcher that calf. He looked at me but didn't say a word. We butchered the calf and hung it on the side of the house. We had steak and gravy then. We drug the intrails off that night. I thought every wild cat and every lion every panther in the country was there. They growled and fought all night. Way in the night John called me. I never did hear anything like that before. I said John, they are filled up. Next morning John and I went down where they were. Hair and fuzz were all around there. John said something got tore up. I said maybe so.

In a few days Paul come in with the chuck wagon. We unloaded the chuck and horse feed. I told the boys to put the chuck box and the sheet and bows on the wagon. I will be back in two or three days. I am going and get us a cook over east of the ranch about 10 or 11 miles. Was a Mexican settlement. Vermejo Creek valley. I figured I could get a cook over there. I rode up to a very nice house. A man walked out of the

house and told me to get down and told me to come in so I went in and his wife poured us some coffee. I asked him where can I find a man would cook for a chuck wagon. I need one for a few days. Yes I do. He has been cooking for a sheep wagon. So he and I went and seen him. This man went with me. Told him to come up to my place in the morning. I stayed the night with this Mexican. He had two good looking girls. After supper the girls sang and played the guitar. The next morning my cook was there. At the table he told me he would come over and help me work. I and my cook pulled out for the ranch. This Mexican was riding a pony and leading a burro with his bed on it.

It was late in the evening when we got to the ranch. I told the boys to go and bring the saddle horses in. They still didn't know what we was going to do. I hadn't told them we was going to brand them big calves they failed to brand. The Mexican I went to see come and brought two more hands. We pulled out south about 15 miles and camped next day. We started gathering them gib calves marking and branding. We camped there three days. Then we moved back north a few miles. We worked that country then moved again. By this time we were close to the ranch. We pulled the chuck wagon into the ranch and we worked from the ranch. We finally finished. It was a rough job, but I figured it would be.

By this time it was late in the fall. Mr. Smith come down and stayed a few days. Then I carried him to the Santa Fe Trail and put him on the stage coach and he went back home to Trinidad. The snow began falling early this winter but everything wintered very good.

The first of May just around the corner and then was when the work began. One morning one of my cowboys got bucked off and broke his leg. I splint it up the best I could. Was a Mexican doctor in that settlement where my Mexican friend lived. I told the boy to stay here with the boy got his leg broke and I would go and get the doctor. I went in a hurry and the doctor came back with me. He taken the splints off I put on and he looked at it good and put some dope on, then he had some splints he had made. He done it up in good shape.

In about a month he was hobbling around. About time I

hadn't heard from Mr. Smith. Time was just about up to turn the ranch and cattle over to the man bought the outfit. In a day or two here come that Blow Joe and brought four city cowboys with him. Didn't do anything the first day. Mr. Smith came in that evening. The next morning I told my boys to find the horses. Mr. Smith and I was talking. I saw them city cowboys go in the corral with their ropes in their hands. I went down to the corral. I said I will do the roping here. My pet dun Pony [,] the first pony I rode on this ranch[,] was a smart guy said to me I am going to ride that dun. I said you ride any one I tell you to. I am still the boss. He said I come down here to be the boss. I said look here, drug store cowboy, you are going to do what I tell you to do.

Mr. Smith told that buyer he would have to get him a cook so he put one of his city cowboys cooking. Didn't have much to eat. One said to one of my cowboys do that boss wear that gun all thim [time]. Yes he does. Where is he from? This boy said I don't know. What is his name? Steve is all I know.

We got along very will. Turned the cattle and the ranch over and Mr. Smith went back home in a day or so. I saddled up that good dun pony and pack one and turned it to them. I don't know how they will come out in that country. They had never been in the west.

I rode across the mountain to the Santa Fe Trail and travelled the Santa Fe Trail to Raton and I put my ponies in the coach yard and told the man to take care of them until I get back. I taken the stage to Trinidad to see Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Goldy. I stayed around Trinidad a few days and went back to Raton. I was there a few days I run into Miller. He owns the 101 ranch. He was on his way to the ranch. He asked me to go with him. I had work[ed] for the 101. I said I will go with him. So we taken the stage to San Juan Pueblo that on the Rio Grande. The foreman had the buck board there to meet Miller. It was late in the day when we left San Juan. We had to stay one night on our way to the ranch. We drove in the next day. Was several cowboys around there. I set around and listened at them shoot the bull and brag on themselves. What they done the last show the 101 pulled off.

That gave me the belly ache. They asked me how long have you been in this country? I said a few days. Are you going to work in this country? I said maybe. The cook ring the bell for supper. They made a bull run. I walked up and got me a tin plate and a tin cup. Got some coffee and filled my plate with red beans and some steak. Went and set down and was eating. Miller and his foreman come over where I was. Miller said, Steve, this is my foreman, Straton. He said a few words. I said yes or no. I figured that outfit out. The next morning they was saddling up the straw boss asked me if I wanted to go with them. No, I will hang around here. They sure had ranhand horses. Could be no other way the bunch rode them. We was there a week. Miller asked me was I going to work for him. I don't think I will. I believe I will go east a little ways.

The foreman carried us back to San Juan and we taken the stage coach and I stopped off at Raton. Stayed round there a few days. I left there went a southeast and hit the old Goodnight Trail. Travelled down it to old Fort Roy [town] where the Goodnight Trail and the Santa Fe Trail cross each other. Then I travelled the Santa Fe Trail to Pasamonte. I stopped over a few days and let my ponies rest their feet. Was tender. Travelling was bad. So I stopped there put my pony up and fed them. Walked up to a cafe to get a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. Was a rawhide town not much there but saloons and gambling joints. I asked that girl waited on me was this a pretty good town. She said at times the sheep herders and a few miners from the Raton Pass country was in town.

The first night I was there was so bad. All them miners and thugs and pimps was gambling. The ones was gambling was dancing with the girls. Long in the night was four strange hard lookers show up in where they was gambling. After a while one walked up to the dice table and another set down to the poker table. The other two just stood around. I kept an eye on them. You didn't know what would take place. I figured they would hold the joint up. Everything went off. Not much trouble that night. But the next night the same four and two more walked in the same cave. Two went to

gambling. The rest of them danced with the gals. Some, but didn't stay in where the girls was long. Come back in the saloon where they was gambling. Some time after midnight a racket started in the dance hall. It was getting rough in there. The pimps began to go in there and began to get up from the tables. About that time some of the lights was shot out. Some one said nobody make a move. You won't get hurt. The place was held up and robbed. I backed against the wall close to the door and seen one of the six men rake the money in a saddle bag and they backed out the door. Then they was in the dark.

I went down to the cafe to get a cup of coffee. A man come in look like someone had worked him over with a bottle. That girl brought me my coffee was you up there when it was robbed. That was fun to me. I am used to that. I asked her how long she been here. Several months. Me and my man come here from Grants. How long was you in Grants? Two years, she said. She said I have seen you in Grants. Or in Bluewater, haven't I. Maybe I said. That girl said she was in that place when the Mexican had trouble with that gal tried to steal his money when he was in her room and you went in there and I seen you shake her and her man started in and you knocked him out the door. She said you like that Mexican. Yes, I did. He worked for me two years.

I stayed around there a few more days. I decided to go a little farther southeast. I pulled out one morning. Headed to Tucumcari. I travelled one day. Came up on a cow camp and stayed all night with a cow puncher. The next morning this cowpuncher told me where I could run into an old trail that went to one of the Bell camps. I made it just before sun-down. That was a wild country. I had seen a little of everything that day. I stayed all night there was two cowboys there. We was eating supper I asked what cow camp this was. They said the Bell camp. I asked them cowboys where does this trail lead to? They said to the Bell headquarters. I pulled out.

I hadn't been gone over two hours I saw a man cross the trail ahead of me. I didn't know what he was up to. I never did see him any more. I rode on down the trail. All of a sudden

my dun pony I was riding begin snorting and stepping high. There were two panthers laying on a bluff. I didn't want to kill one of them. Something else might bob up. The country was full of outlaws. I went on down the trail. Just before I got to the ranch I saw a man coming down a canyon. He was a Bell cowboy. We rode on to the ranch. Got down and went in the house.

The boss and two cow punchers was drinking coffee. Their hair and beards were long. I got me a tin cup and poured me a cup. I noticed they looked me over. I kept one eye on them. When I walked in I knew I had seen one of them guys. I figured out where. I seen him in Durango in 1908 at a wild west show. But he didn't seem to recognize me. The boss asked me do you want to work. I said maybe. Nobody asked me my name and I didn't ask them theirs. I had been there about ten days one night the boss said to me what are your name? I said Steve. I had learned their names by this time. That cowboy I knew when I first went in he said to me. I believe I have seen you before. I said maybe. I never told him where I seen him. The least you talk the better off you are. That day and time.

I worked there nearly two years. I found out what I had been looking for seven years. One morning I told the boss I believe I would hunt a new range. I saddled up my dun pony and packed the other one and rode off and led my pack pony. There was a trail leading southeast and come into the old Goodnight Trail and travelled down it to Fort Butler and stayed over night there. And decided to hang around there a few days but didn't stay there two days. I travelled down the old Goodnight Trail and come up on a big sheep ranch. Was one white man and four Mexican sheep herders. I stayed all night. They had a big pot of brown beans cooked. One Mexican warmed the beans and made some bread and made some coffee and fried some venison. They treated me very nice. They never asked me anything and I didn't tell them anything.

I travelled down the trail to Fort Sumner. I put my ponies in the wagon yard and looked the doby town over. It was full of sheep herders and a few cow pokes. I went in a barber shop

to get cleaned up. Thought I would make a honk a tonk and look the gals over. I got cleaned up and walked out on the dirt sidewalk about that time some body knocked a man out the saloon door. It looked like Arizona to me. I walked up there and walked in. I walked up to the bar and ordered a drink. Hadn't drunk a drop in five years. I drank about half of it first chance I got I poured the rest in the spittoon. Everybody looked at me when I come in the door and begin to move around. I stopped at the end of the bar close to the door. The bartender said to me do you want another drink. No I said. Some was gambling. One sidled up close to me and said to me I will by you a drink. I said no thank you, I have the stomach trouble. He said it will help you. I said maybe. I found out later he was the guy that run the roulette wheel. I give him a go to hell look. He didn't look bad, although he had his gun on. I did too. The bar tender was a Mexican. He come over to me. Said to me the law don't like for strangers to wear guns in town. I said they don't. I said to myself the rest got theirs on. I will let the law tell me, but he didn't.

I stayed around there several days. I was in that place several times and go back and dance with the girls about half of girls was Mexican girls. Some good looking. The landlady the girls call her Aunt Kate she was from Clovis. Two or three them Mexican pimps tried to frame me but I beat them to the draw. I had seen several of them kind. By this time spring was here and the grass was getting green.

One morning I saddled up and packed my pony and rode out of Fort Sumner. About half way between Fort Sumner and Melrose I stayed all night in a cow camp. Was lots of sheep in that country. The cow men didn't like the sheep men them days. At the camp was one cowboy there. That cowboy told me if I want to work for Mr. Stocks are going to start to work in a day or two. You hang around here tomorrow if you want to. No, I believe I will pull out.

The ranch was in the direction I wanted to go. Was a hard days ride. About sundown I rode up. One of the cowpunchers said get down. It was the foreman. But I didn't know at the time so I crawled off. He come out and went with me to put my ponies in the corral and feed them. So we went back to

the bunk shack. The chuck wagon was sitting out there with the sheet and bows on it and the chuck box was in the back. Was five or six cowboys at the bunk shack. Wasn't long the cook said come and get it. This guy said us go and eat. That sounded good to me. After we eat this same man went with me and got my bedroll and put it in the bunk shack. Some played cards. I set in and listened at the bull. One or two wasn't very friendly. They was pretty boys they thought. They was from Texas. They hadn't been in New Mexico very long. Hadn't been in a New Mexico town.

The foreman asked me if I wanted to work for the Jinglebob out fit. I will help you this cow work. The chuck wagon pulled away from the Jinglebob headquarters on my birthday. We had a wild west show for several days after the wagon left the Jinglebob headquarters. We pulled out down the Pecos about fifty miles and worked back up the Pecos. The wagon was on the work sixty days marking and branding and held the steers and some fat cows. The chuck wagon pulled into the headquarters for a day or so and then started on the trail to Des Moines. We didn't have much trouble getting there.

We turned the cattle over to the men from K. C. The second day we headed back to the Jinglebob Ranch. Pulled into the headquarters. The foreman paid some of the cowpunchers off and the two Texas cowboys went back to Texas. They didn't like New Mexico. One trip on the trail was enough for them. They said this country was too wild for them. I stayed two years on the Jinglebob ranch. At times it was rough on the Pecos.

I had been on the Jinglebob about twenty months. Had been to town one time. Two cowboys and myself asked the foreman about us going to town and staying a few days. He said we could. We well start the wagon in about two weeks. So us boys went in to Fort Sumner. We was there about a week. Them two boys was bad to get drunk. I hadn't never been in town with them before. That was a bad town to get drunk in. I told them boys they better settle down when they was in the dance hall around them thugs and pimps. One night in there one of the boys got into it with a pimp. He was

a Mexican. He came after this boy with a knife. I knocked him down. We fought our way out the door. Two got bad wounded so that bunch was on our trail. So we rode out of town. Went back to the ranch. And we started the cow work when we finished the cow work I told the foreman I believe I would quit a while. He paid me and said when you want to work you have a job.

I saddled up and packed my pony and rode off. I went into Clovis and stayed around there about a month. That wasn't a Sunday School town. I was in a hotel and run into Slaughter the one brand V. S. and he told me he needed some cowboys. He was going to start the wagon in a few days. I said to Slaughter. I will go and help you a while. Slaughter said my chuck wagon will be in town in a few days and you can go back with him. While I'm waiting here to go to the ranch I heard lots of talk about the V. S. Some good some bad. The foreman no good. That didn't worry me for I had seen several them kind. The chuck wagon come in. I helped the freighter load up the wagon and we left for the ranch on the way I got the history of the V. S. He done the talking and I done the listening. He didn't find out anything from we. I never told him my name. Was leading my pony behind the wagon and I was ridin on the wagon beside him on the spring seat.

We had seen wild things. I said I am going to kill the next thing jumps up. We hadn't gone far a coyote jumped up I pulled my gun and killed the wolf. He never said anything. Looked at me. We arrived at the ranch late in the evening. Was several cowboys there. They unhooked the mules from the wagon. I went and untied my ponies from the wagon and taken my bedroll off and went with the freighter to the corral. I unsaddled and put my ponies in the corral. He and I went to the bunk shack.

Some of them buttons popped off. That didn't set so well with me. I hadn't been used to slight remarks. I liked 2 or 3 of them cow pokes. I like some. I [they] didn't like me for I didn't take a hand in playing poker with them. I was a new man. I didn't like the foreman. He turned out just like that man told me. It was several days before Mr. Slaughter come out.

One night that same bunch was playing poker. I was out of the bunk house. I overheard them discussing me. One said he is a tenderfoot. I stepped inside with my gun in my hand and shot through the roof. I said settle down nobody won't get hurt. I said now you city cowboys, I don't want any more slight remarks out of you all. About that time that smart foreman come stepping high down. He said what going on down here? I said let your city cow boys tell you. I pulled my bedroll out the door and laid down. Kept one eye open.

The next day the foreman said to me I don't believe you and the boys can get along. I told him I was going to stay here until Slaughter get here. In a few days Mr. Slaughter come in. I told him I don't think I will work for you. I can't get along with some of your cow boys. He asked what the trouble. I said we will let your foremen and the boys tell you. He had the boss and all us cowboys come to the bunkhouse. He asked his boss what was the trouble the other night. I said to all of them youall tell it just like it was and tell it straight. Told Mr. Slaughter I won't stay here and work might be trouble. I cross on the East side of the Pecos then.

I went on the west of the Pecos in 1902 and come back on the east side in 1918. I spent 16 years in New Mexico and Arizona West of the Pecos. It wasn't long after I came back on the east side of the Pecos I married a New Mexico girl. It was rough on a woman to keep her on the cow ranches them days. We toughed it out until our first baby was born. Her health wasn't so good after that so I never did carry her back to live on a ranch any more. I kept working on for about a year. So in 1923 I gave up the wild country west of the Pecos and the wild cows. Many times I look back over my life and west of the Pecos.

*The End*

Jal, N. M.  
Feb. 4, 1960

Dear Mr. Reeve:

I am dropping you a few lines. How are you well I hope. Well Mr. Reeve wife and I made all ok from up there but the snow and ice sure was ruff going I shure haid the work to get everthing in shape for the Boss. he con in a few days ago I am at home know. Reservation I got

to thinking I got my knotes down and look them over I am sinding you the name of them Indian.

\* \* \*

Dear Mr Reeve

I look thew my notes I am sinding them to you my Love still stand out for the mexican papeal, and the Indian Papeal for they was a true friend of mine I haid Indian girls friend and mexican girls friend mexican girl save my life on time. if I could see you I could tell you lots about the Indian and the mexican papeal them days. they was a true blue friend of mine I could carry a huard of cattle threw they country iny time. and when I call on the Spanish papeal to help me never turn me dawn.

I hope this find you well I have bin puney but feel better I will close as ever your friend write me when you can

E. L. Stephens  
Box 22  
Jal N M