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WEST OF THE PECOS

By E. L. STEVE STEPHENS

(Continued)

We had a few young unbroke ponies on the ranch. I said Poncho, we are going to get them young ponies this morning. Poncho said what are we going to do with them? We are going to break two apiece and feed them the rest of the winter. We penned them and picked out four. They was a little salty. I roped them and we put hackamore on them. The next morning Poncho said, Mr. Steve, can I saddle one up? We saddle one and I eared him down and Poncho crawled on him. We had a wild west show that day. The next day it was snowing. Didn't fool with them. We was working on the corral. Poncho said Mr. Steve, I love my girl. If I married her would you let me bring her to the ranch? She could cook for us. I said Poncho, I will think about that. I knew it wouldn't do to bring her to this ranch. Too many Indians and cattle rustlers. You can't tell when some of them would come by. That would cause trouble.

Boys keep down trouble if you can, but don't run. These days if you run you might get killed. It has been a week since Poncho asked me about marrying and bringing his wife to the ranch. One morning we were drinking coffee and eating breakfast. I told Poncho in a day or two we would go over and see your mom and dad and you can see your girl and maybe I can find me a girl. I let it go at that. I hadn't never seen his folks. Poncho and I went over on Saturday and come back Sunday evening. We rode up in the evening. His Mom met us at the yard gate. Poncho said this is Mr. Steve, Mom. Before we went in I saw a girl or two in the house. The lady said us go in. We will have some coffee. I think the girls have a cake baked. Going to have a party tonight. We set down. His mother poured us some coffee. Soon his two sisters come. One was a good looker and the other one was on the fat type. About that time his dad come in. He was a nice looking man. Was long supper was ready. We all set down at the tabel. The old man turned thanks. He carried me to the lot to show

me his fat calves and hogs. He was fixing to butcher. While we were gone to the lot all got ready to go to the party.

Was several families lived in the small valley. Was about a half mile where the party was. Poncho's girl and her brother come in. Poncho's dad hooked some ponies to the buchboard and we all climbed in and went to the party. I could tell which one of these girls was this boy girl friend. I said to myself I can tell when we get to the party. The party was very nice. The girls and boys played and sung and we danced some. We made back to Poncho's folks' house. Poncho went home with his girl. Poncho sisters sung and played the guitar. Poncho had a very nice room. The girls went and got the bed ready for me. I told Poncho's dad I wanted to talk to him.

I told him about Poncho wanting to get married and bring his wife to the ranch. I told his dad was too many Indians and cattle rustlers for him to bring her to the ranch and leave her all day by herself. The next morning Poncho and his girl come over. His dad and myself told Poncho and his girl we wanted to talk to them. We talked it all over. Something might happen to her. Poncho and his girl decided to wait a while and he would work for me.

We got ready to go back to the ranch. Poncho's mom and father said you boys come back to the wedding and supper. I said we will if we can. We made it in about sundown. Some one had been there and eat and left a pony but never taken a pony in its place. The next day Poncho and myself got up our broncs and rode them againe. Poncho saddled up one and I was earing him down so Poncho could get on him. He was trying to buck and stomp my foot. I told Poncho he would have to ride them all for I couldn't get on them. I was crippled a few days.

In a few days Poncho and myself went over to see the Indians. We had a watering place clost by the reservation. The Indian chief seen us and come over where we was. I saw him coming. I got off my pony and when he rode up he got off his pony and we shook hands and he patted me on the head. That's the way of showing friendship. We talked a while. He wanted us to go home with him. I said we haven't got time today. Are you out of beef? He said I will see you

poak timper [poco tiempo]. That means I will see you soon. On our way back to the ranch we run across a cow and a fat calf. We carried them to the ranch and put them in a trap for I knew he would be over in a few days.

The chief come and three Indians. We butchered the calf. He patted me on the head. That thanks. He said for us to come over. They are going to have a war dance. I said if we can we will be there. You have to make friends with them if you stay in business. Winter are here and getting cold and snow. Poncho got sick on me and I carried him home to his mom and dad so they could doctor him up and so he could see his girl. I stayed all night. I went back early the next morning. Finished my work putting brush in the narrow canyons to keep the cattle from getting on the mountain top. The weather cleared up the sun was shining.

One morning I rode up the canyon to see some of the cattle to see how they was doing. I saw some cows running. I topped a ridge and I pulled out my field glasses and seen two men driving some cows and calves the direction they was going. Wasn't but one place they could get up. I rode around there were they would come out. They drove the cows and calves up to that place. I watched them a while. They started up the trail. I started down. I said Excuse me. I didn't see you all. Are you all gathering some cattle? Yes we are gathering some strays. I said some in this bunch are not strays. One said we will look through them. I cut out what belonged to this outfit I worked for. One said do you work for this outfit we are in. I said yes. I had them where the wool was short. I knew they was cattle rustlers.

I had seen them before in Belen Jarales in a liquor and gambling house and girls in the back of that house. Was a big gang fight. Was several hurt and one killed. It started at the dice table. Was a pimp running the dice table. They taken the cows on over the mountain. I kept my eye on them. It was getting late in the evening. All the cow camps we tried to get in before dark and the big part of the time we would have any lights. If we had any light it was very dim. In a few days after that the same two men rode up after dark. Said to me, Have you got any meat. I said, yes, hanging on

the side of the house. One got down and got a quarter. The other one stayed on his horse with his gun in his hand. You haven't got a chance when the other guy got his gun in his hand [in] them days for they won't let you get too close to him. They rode off. I was lucky they didn't take two fresh horses. I had one pony they could taken.

About six months ago was a tough looker come by and left this pony. He said I will get him sometime. He didn't stay but a few minutes. I don't think he could ride him. One day I thought I would ride him. I saddled him up. He was nice and fat. I crawled on him. He done everything but shimmy. He sure could buck. I sure was glad to get my saddle off him he was as bad as I ever tried to ride. About that time Poncho's dad rode up. He said Mr. Steve what are you been doing? I have been riding this old pony. He said don't you ride that old pony no more here by yourself any more.

I asked him how was Poncho. He is about well. I come over to help you catch up with your work. It not but three days until Thanksgiving so you can go over to the wedding and the dance Thanksgiving morning. I got up with my work. The old man and I left for his home. He lived in a nice valley. Was about a hundred Mexican families lived in the valley. We was about half way a bobcat jumped out of a tree and scared our ponies and the old man's pony started to run into a brush-tree and bruised him up some. About that time my old pony begin to buck. I pulled him up and went back where he was. His face was bleeding. I cleaned his face off and we went on.

The next morning the old man was bugged up. Couldn't walk much. I said Pop are you going to the party. Yes, Steve, I will be all right. We begin to get ready for the blow out. By this time was several boys and girls had dropped in. The wedding and supper and dance was a big thing. It was worth going to. The music started. The boys begin to get their girls. I went over and got Poncho's sister and we danced that set. Poncho said Mr. Steve dance with my girl the next set while I am gone to see mother. We danced that set. I went over where Poncho's sister was and sat down by her. I saw a Mexican boy watching us. I asked her was that boy her boy friend. She said I never seen him before. He don't live in the valley.

We danced a couple of sets then we went and got some coffee and this boy come in there. You couldn't blame him for she was a swell looking girl. I had my pigging string on her.

The music started. We was going to dance. This old boy said we are going to dance this set. She said not this one and we went to dancing. While we was dancing I told her if you want to you dance with him. I was watching him all the time. This boy and his Buddy bunched up talking. I figured they was framing up on someone. I went and got my popgun and buckled it on. I danced with Poncho's girl and Poncho danced with his sis. The priest called everybody to come in the dining room for the wedding and supper. The priest married them and we all followed the married couple in to supper. We all gathered around the table. The priest turned thanks. The couple cut the cake and the priest called on two boys and two girls to sing a song and we all eat supper.

After we ate Poncho and his girl and we and my girl went and got us some coffee. The music started. We went in and started dancing. This boy come up to us. Said to my girl, you are going to dance with me or nobody. We stopped dancing. I said to him, What do you mean? I mean that he said by that time he had the girl by the arm. I shoved him back. He started to his pocket. I cold cock him. One of the others started to hit me and the girl run in front of him. About that time I turned around. He struck at me and I peck him one in the head and another one started in. Poncho taken care of him. About then the law come in and carried all four of the boys off. They had one drink too many.

The party went on very nice. It was a swell supper. Up in the day Poncho went with me back to the ranch. We got up our broncs to ride them some more. Haven't been rode since Poncho got sick. We was out of beef. One day I said to Poncho, we are going to see if we can find us a fat calf. Or a deer. We rode up on the mountain. Never found anything. Started down the mountain. In the valley jumped a cow and calf. Was carrying them into the ranch. They started to running to get away. I spurred up to head them. My pony hit some slick rocks, slipped and fell and broke a finger for me. Poncho come back where I was. We lost the cow and calf. We headed

for the ranch. By that time my finger sure was hurting. Poncho said Mr. Steve, I can fix up your finger. We made it in. Poncho whittled out two splints and tore up a rag and put them splints on my finger and wrapped the strings around my finger and poured coal oil on it. Wasn't long it was well. We had fat bacon to cook in beans. Poncho said I guess we can eat bacon. I said yes, we will make another stab one of these days. So we did.

One morning I told Poncho we will go up on Bear Canyon, not too far away. We saw several does. I said to Poncho, you see that young buck? You take the first shot at him. So he did. He killed the deer. How are we going to get him in? We had to blindfold that old pony I was riding so we could tie the deer on the back of my saddle. We carried him in. We had a good supper before dark.

Spring of 1915. I sent Poncho to town to get chuck for the cow work. While he was gone to town I went over to the reservation to get the chief to come and bring some men to help me brand the calves. Poncho come in and two cowpunchers and brought me word from my boss at Saint Louis. If he didn't get there for the work for me to hold the steers yearlings. In a few days we went to work. Poncho's father come over and helped us. The chief and his men brought their pack ponies and they set up their teepees. They would eat with us. I killed a beef. They broiled their meat on a camp fire. They was good hands. Poncho's father said I want to cook for us. I told him all right. He was a good cook. We finished work. I gave the chief a big fat cow for their help.

We had been through work 2 or 3 days when the big boss from St. Louis got out to the ranch. He said, Steve I have sold the steers. Steve, I want you to deliver to Romero. He will take the steers there. We made it very well and we turned the steers over to the man [who] bought them. I told the boys we will stay here three days and we can go to town and see the sights. So we all went to town. We all got hair cuts and shaved and cleaned up. But some the boys had to go and get them a drink of pep up. I had two Cañoncito Indian boys with the outfit. The cook and two other men was bad to gamble. We was in one of the saloons and was a gambling and red-

light house. All got in a gang fight over a dice and poker game. Was crooks running the poker and dice tables. It was a little rough. Several got hurt.

The last night we was in town we went over to an old gal's place. Wasn't a saloon in it, but you could get anything you wanted to drink. The bell hop would go and get it for you. We went in there to dance and have a good time. Was several girls in there. Poncho found him a blond. He danced with her. He bought her a drink. She said boy friend come and go with me. I have got something good to drink in my room. Poncho went with her. Wasn't long till I heard a terrible racket in that room. I rushed in there. Was a pimp in there, too. Poncho was fighting both. I pecked him on the bean and grabbed the gal and shook her. She scratched me in the face. I said gal you better settle down. You might get the water slapped out of you. They had got all of Poncho's money. I told that guy to get up but he didn't. I said to that gal to get that boy's money. About that time the other boy was in there. In the ruckus they tore Poncho's pants in two. One of the boys went and got him another pair. We never seen that girl and that guy any more. Poncho got his money.

We left there about midnight. Went to look for the cook and two others. They stopped at a gambling den but we didn't find them. One of the boys said maybe they went to the chuck wagon. But they wasn't there. I figured if they was in jail they would be in after a while. This was the second night. The next morning we found them in jail. They was bunged up pretty bad. I said Boys, where have you all been. Up there in that joint. We had a free for all up there. What was the trouble? Over a dice and card game.

We got them out. We all went to the chuck wagon. I said to the boys, we have got one more night to stay here. If you boys want to stay or go. So we stayed one more night. Well, everything went off very nice. Danced and had a good time. Nobody got in jail. We left for the ranch. We was four days getting in. All the cowboys let out but Poncho and myself. It was fall and getting cold. Poncho and myself had lots work to do for the winter before it got too cold.

We was out of fresh meat. I told Poncho we had to go

hunting and get us one fresh meat for the winter. One morning we rode up on the mountain to see if we could find a young buck. We didn't see nothing but an old buck [,] on our way back I killed a turkey. I said Poncho we will have baked turkey. It sure was fat and good. A few days later we went deer hunting again. We found a cow and a fat calf. Drove them in and put them in a horse trap. The next morning we was going to butcher the calf. So we did.

Poncho wanted to go and see his mom and dad and see his girl one morning. I told Poncho to catch him two ponies and bring one up to the house. I told him he could go home for three or four days. We put a quarter of a beef on this pony he led up to the house. Poncho said, Steve are you going with me. I said no I can't go this time.

I got the wagon ready for when Poncho got back. I sent him to town after chuck and pony feed. He was gone six days. While Poncho was gone to town I rode up to Bear Canyon to see how everything was doing. Had some cattle up there. It wasn't much out of my way. I went by to see my Indian friends. They was on the war path. The chief met me and told me some one had killed one of his boys. He was gone two days before they found him. The chief carried me where they buried him. I knew their signs. I got off my horse and made this sign X on the grave. The chief patted me on the back and hugged me and said Thank God my Friend. It pays to be a friend. I didn't stay long. Chief said I will see you soon. So I left for the ranch on my way back someone taken a pot shot at me. I stopped and turned my pony around but never did see any one. I went on to the ranch. In a little while Poncho drove in with the wagon. We unloaded the chuck and horse feed and cooked supper.

I sent Poncho after a hank of mohair to make me a girth. After supper we was making me a girth. The fire was getting low. Poncho went out side to get some wood to put on the fire. Something punched him in the side. Was a tough looking man and about that time was another man stepped in the back door and told me to set still. They said we are hungry. Poncho got up to go in the kitchen. One of them guys said we all go

in there. So we did. We had some beans and steak and gravy and bread cooked. Poncho put it on the table. Them guys stood up and eat with one hand and a gun in the other. After they eat we [they] want some meat and the rest of that bread. Poncho put it in a sack. No, put it on the table. One picked up the sack to go out the door. One said to Poncho and myself. You all stand there till we get gone. So we did. You can't do anything when two men got a gun on you, I told Poncho.

Poncho was a little nervous. He liked to got us in trouble. We was too far from our guns and them guys to start anything. I gave Poncho a look and he colled off. I thought maybe would get the drop on them pretty soon. They left. I told Poncho when anyone had the drop on you don't make a mistake. Keep his head. If he didn't he might get killed.

Spring of 1916 was here. I and Poncho had lots of work to do getting ready for the spring work. Marking and branding and the boss notified me to hold the steer yearlings. He had them sold. I sent Poncho to town to get chuck for the cow work and pick up 3 or 4 cow boys. Poncho was gone six days. He come in and brought back four cowboys. I sent Poncho to get his father to cook for us. I told Poncho he could stay two days and see his girl. Poncho come back the second day and his father come back with him to cook for us. In about three weeks we got the steers together and started to Laguna where we were to deliver the steers. Well we made it without much trouble. My boss and the man [who] bought the steers was there waiting for us to arrive. The next day we loaded them out.

My boss had told me this man would buy the ranch and cattle and he was going back with us and look it over. It was a good outfit he was there four days and he bought the ranch and cattle. The last day he was there he asked me if I would work for him. It was late in the fall. I told him I would stay on until the first of April. Some time in April Mr. Brown come out from Kansas City and a man come with him to run the ranch. I showed him around a few days. I told Brown I am leaving in a day or so. He wanted me to stay on. I think it best for me to move on. I asked Poncho did he want to work on. I will for a little while.

The morning of the fourth day I saddled one pony and packed the other one, and headed east and rode in to Los Lunas and put my ponies in an stage coach yard and walked up in town. It was a raw hide town and dropped in a cafe for a cup of coffee. It was a tough looking joint. So I stayed and set down on the end of the bench next to the door. The gal come over. I said a cup of coffee please. Was several guys setting around in there. Some coffee some whiskey. Didn't know any one in there. I drink my coffee and walked out. I walked on up the street and come upon a barber shop. Bad nights. I left out of there and went down the street. Was a cafe and whiskey joint stayed open all night and a bunch of gals in the back of this joint. So I dropped in there to get me a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. Was a big bunch of miners in there playing all kinds of games.

By this time it was getting late in the night. Some had left but still was a bunch in there. I thought I would go back where the girls were and dance a while so I did. I wasn't back there long until there was a free for all fight started. In the saloon over a dice game. All the lights was shot out. Some one got all the money was in the joint and was several thousand dollars taken that night. When every thing settled down I went to the hotel and went to bed. The next morning I went down by the joint and they was cleaning up the place. Didn't go in. I was going to get me a cup of coffee. I went down to the other cafe and went in. The girl brought me some coffee. I told her I wanted a steak. She went back and told the cook to fry a steak. By that time I had drunk that cup. I said to her another cup, please. She brought me some coffee. I said to her, What happened to that cafe up the street? She said they had a gang fight up there and it was robbed. I never said anything about me seeing it. I asked her was she there. She said I left there before it started.

I went down to see about my ponies. The man was taking care of the yard had fed my ponies. He asked me do you want to work? If it suits me I would. Well, was a man come in on the stage I know. He is a square shooter. He went to the hotel. You can find him up there. I went up to the hotel and walked in and looked around but didn't see anyone that suited me.

They was some books. I picked one and set down lestening to them others talk. I never said anything to them guys and they didn't to me.

I wasn't in the hotel long when he come in the lobby. He spoke and I did. He began to talk to me. I said yes or no. He said to me us go and have a cup of coffee. So we was walking down the street past a saloon. He said to me would you like a drink. No thank you, I don't drink. So we went to the cafe and had coffee. So set there drinking coffee and talking.

Pretty soon the man run the stage coach yard come in. I hadn't told this man I was looking for him. I hadn't asked him his name and hadn't told him my name. We all drink coffee. This man came in called him Mr. Bass and he turned to me. What are your name. I said Steve. He said to me, do you want a job? I said maybe if it suits me. He said I need a good man. Well that let me out. Wasn't no more said then. We got up and went out the door. I said Mr. Bass I am going to the yard to see about my ponies. Do you want to go along. He said yes, I don't mind. So we walked down. We stopped and talked to the yard man after a bit I went to see about my ponies. So they come down where I was. He said, Steve, you got two good ponies. He said I have got good ponies on the ranch. I never said anything. So we walked back to the barn. Mr. Bass said us go and eat dinner. Mr. Bass and myself went to the hotel. He said I am going to my room and rest a while so he did.

I fooled around town and I walked down to the barn and yard to feed my ponies. I figured on leaving in a couple or three days. When I reached the yard Mr. Jones said, Steve, I have fed your ponies. He asked me are you going to work for Mr. Bass? I said no, I haven't hired out to him. However, he talked to me some wanting me to work for him. I asked this man Jones where are Bass' ranch. He said east of here about 75 miles. I asked Jones was he any kind [kin] to Frank Bass. He said yes, a nephew. I said he looks like Frank Bass.

I started back to the hotel and met Bass. I said to him are you about ready to eat supper? So we went and eat. While we were eating one of Bass' friends came in. Bass said sit down and have supper with us. Bass asked him when did he get in.

Just come in on the stage. We finished eating supper and we went to the hotel. They done the talking and I done the listening and I never did see this man before, but he said he seen me in Trinidad, Colorado, in 1906, when I rode against Goldy Smith in a bronc riding contest. Well, I did, I said.

I told Bass I was going to leave town tomorrow. Are you going to work for me? Where are your ranch. He told me about 75 miles east of here. Have you got a boss out on your ranch and how many cowboys working for you now? And he told me his boss got hurt and was not able to work and maybe never live. What is your offer for me to work for you. Good wages. I want you to run the ranch. I will go to the ranch, Bass said. I will meet you there at the ranch. I told Bass I would look everything over then I would tell him when he got there.

The next morning I pulled out. I figured it would take me 5 or 6 days to reach the ranch if I had good luck. I had to go through the Isleta Indian Reservation. It too far out of my way to go around. I figured I could go through for I knew the chief of the tribe. I made it all right and came up on a camp in a canyon. It was getting late in the evening. I said to myself I will stay there tonight. I didn't know if anyone stayed there or not so I rode up to the half dugout and a rawhide shack and some lots. When I rode up was a hard looking man come out of the rawhide shack. He had two guns on but I was used to that. He had long beard on his face. He told me to get off. Coming out where I was he said unsaddle and unpack your ponies, so I did. My ponies feet was getting tender coming over them volcano mountains.

We went to the dugout and shack. It didn't take me long to figure out what kind of a joint it was. I kept my eye on him. He fixed supper and we eat. I knew some more stayed here for they was some extra bedrolls there. He never said and I never asked him. I brought my bedroll in and we went to bed. Didn't sleep much. We got up early next morning. Wasn't long after sunup was two men rode up and unsaddled and had some saddle bags on his arm. I stayed there that day. The ring leader rode off. Was gone for a while and came back. I overheard the one was here when I came ask the one come in

how are everything? Made a good haul. Them two guys come in I knew them for they was in that saloon and gambling joint when the lights was shot out and robbed.

Along in the evening one said us go to the lot. I want to tighten the shoes on my pony. So we all went down and he tightened the shoes on his pony. One said to the other, you beat me shooting the other day. I will try you again. I hadn't said anything. They had shot several times. One said to me, Don't you want to try your hand? They was shooting at a small can. One had the same kind of gun I had. I might a'time or two. I taken that gun and shot over the can and another shot and I shot twice and hit the can both times. I figured they was trying me out. That night we all were getting ready to go to bed. I unrolled my bed close to the door and lay down. Long after while they thought I was asleep. They didn't know me. I lay there and overheard them talking about the raid the night before and they planned how they were going to raid a big joint in Tome where lots of minors [miners] go to pucker their money off and see girls.

The next morning I told them guys I was going to leave. The ring leader said stay with us. In a few days we will go to town and see what we can find. See the gals anyway. I said I better go on and find me a job. I am about broke. He came up to me where I was packing my pony. You are a good shot. You would be broke. Here are \$20.00. He had a sack full. I thank him for the \$20.00 he gave me and I rode off. I finally reached the Bass ranch.

I rode up and got off at the bunk house and wrapped my bridle reins around a hitching pole and a cowboy stepped out the door. Come in. I just made coffee. That sounds good to me, I said. Are you the only one here? He said there was two more around here some where. When have the big boss been out? He said I haven't been out here but five weeks but I think Mr. Bass will be out in a few days. He is the man owns this ranch. Well, them two other cowboys came up.

I hadn't never seen any of these boys. They wasn't very friendly, but that didn't worry me any. I asked who is the foreman? One of these guys said he is not here. Why, you want to work? I said maybe. If you don't care I will hang

around a few days and let my ponies rest. He never said a word. He was a smart guy. I didn't like him at all. We will cook supper and you wash the dishes. Where I come from every one washed his own plate. I could say much, but knew if I stayed here I would give him a hard time. They cooked and I washed the dishes and the boy was there when I rode up dried them. The next morning I got up early. I drank coffee. That was all. The rest eat. I washed my cup and put it up. We all went to the corral. One of these other boys said to me, are you going with us today? I said have you all got an extra pony. Yes, you can ride one of the foreman's ponies. He's not here. This smart guy never said anything but he didn't like it.

I saddled this pony up and the rest got saddled and this smart alec got on his pony. I buckled my gun on and stepped on this pony. I didn't want the bob cats to take me in. We was gone most of the day. When we got back to the ranch we unsaddled and went to the house. I unbuckled my gun and put it in my bedroll. I was there three days before Mr. Bass came in. And this smart guy was swelled up all the time. The morning after Bass came in he told them cowboys to get the wagon ready. Was sending it to town to get chuck for fall work. Two days later he sent the wagon to town. It taken eight days to make the trip. All this time no one asked me my name and I didn't ask them their names.

The next day after the wagon left for town he told them two other cowboys to go and get the saddle ponies in, but they didn't find all of the ponies and the next day Bass told to go and get the rest of them that day. I went with Bass. He told me he wanted me to get acquainted with the Indian Chief. The reservation lay north [?] about ten miles. So we went up there that day. So I had seen the chief before then. We visited with the chief awhile. The chief said youall come back to see us. We said youall come to see us. And we rode off.

We went back to the ranch. On the way back Bass asked me what I thought about the ranch and working for him. Well, you have a good ranch. As far as working for you, I don't think it would pay me to work for you. I will pay you good wages. That's not it. You have one hand here I don't

think I could get along with him. He has been snotty and made some slight remarks. I got up to crawl his carcass. I had the difference, I said to myself. I would wait until you come in. It would look bad on my part for me to jump on one of your hands. Haven't been here but two days. You asked me and I told you. I found out he was from Saint Louis. So called cowboy and wanted to be a big shot. I told Mr. Bass I would like to work for him but I can't the way everything are, for me and that joker for I wouldn't take his slack jaw he got. I thanked Mr. Bass for the good job you offered me.

The next morning I saddled up and pack up my pony and pulled out for Encino. That was about a hundred [?] miles southeast. The first night I stayed all night with a chuck wagon. He was on his way to town to get chuck for the cow work. He told me I could go to work for the Scatter S ranch. But I would have had to go back 20 miles the way I come from. I didn't want to do that. The next morning I pulled out. Late in the evening I reached Fort Quarai and put up my ponies and stayed all night. And the next day I reached the old Jim Stinson trail between Mountainair and Willard and stayed in Willard that night.

I travelled down the Jim Stinson Trail. Reached the old Stone Fort and stayed there that night. Wasn't long after I got there the stage rolled in. There were three men come in on it. The stage stayed overnight there. I learned hearing them talk two of them men was going to Encino. There was where I was headed for. One said young man, where are you headed for? Encino, I said. Did you come in on a stage? No, I said. Come in a horseback and a pack pony. And the other man was going to Vaughn. They had meals in the Fort so we eat supper and breakfast there. After supper we were sitting around. One said us have a black jack game. They gathered around a table and began to play. One said to me, don't you play? I set down and played a few games with them. I soon pulled out and got up from the table. Wasn't long after I got up the man was going to Vaughn he got up. He said to me us go and get us some coffee. So we did.

We was in the kitchen drinking coffee. I knew it was not good to ask a man where are he going or what he do. Do

you want a job. I said maybe if it suits me. I asked him where are your outfit? He told me what he would pay me. I told him I was going to stay around Encino two or three days and let my ponies rest. He asked me my name. I said Steve. I said what are your name? He said Jack Miller. I live in Kansas City. I said to Miller if I don't work for the —S ranch I will know in a couple days if I will work for them or not.

The next day the —S boss was in town. I run across him and we had a talk. I soon found out he didn't pay enough for me. I said I will be seeing you. I went back up in that little old rawhide town and seen Miller. I said to him us go and get a cup of coffee. I said to Miller, I seen that —S boss. I couldn't do any good with him. In the morning I am leaving for Vaughn. Miller said for me to wait for him. He would be there in about a week. So I did.

It was a small village. It wasn't very far from the Comanche Trail. It was a tough little place. Outlaws, cattle rustlers, and miners would come to that rawhide town about all there was saloons and gambling dens and redlight cribs. One large redlight house. The land lady name was Aunt Ethel. I never will forget her. She was a mean woman.

The second night I was there in town the largest saloon and a large gambling house there was a large crowd of miners and gamblers and pimps most of playing big stakes of money. I was close to the door. Against the wall was a tall man with a short beard and long mustache come in and stood around a little while and walked up to the dice table and begin to shoot dice. I watched him a while. He lost a little money on the start. I went in where the girls and boys was dancing. I was in there I danced with the girls a while. I was in there dancing was a man come in. He was drunk. Was a hard looking old gal went over where he was. She said Honey, us dance. He wasn't as drunk as they thought. Along after while was a racket in the room, so he knocked her through the door into the dance hall and followed her up there. The landlady taken it up. He slapped the water out of her and pulled his gun and everybody stood still and he backed out the door. I figured she tried to get his money. Everything got quietened down. I went back in the saloon. That man had the long mustache he

was playing blackjack. He had a big stack of money in front of him. I went on to the hotel and went to bed. Everything went off very good that night.

The next morning I went down to the cafe to get a cup of coffee. I went in and set down. The girl came over. I told her I wanted a cup of coffee. I thought I had seen that gal some place. I kept an eye on her. She said do you want some more coffee. I said yes, believe I do. She said I have seen you before. I was in here last night and at[e] supper. Finished my coffee and walked out and went to the hotel where I was staying. Two men rode up and got off and tied their horses and come in. Told the clerk they wanted to see his register book. They looked through it and walked out. I never seen any more of them until that night.

I was killing time that night. I walked in the same saloon I was in the night before. Wasn't in there very long until that long mustached man come in. Wasn't long he went to the same dice table he played at before and about that time the two guys come in the hotel that morning. I stayed around and watched them gamble and pimp take them gold miners' money. Big piles of money on every table. Around midnight I went to the hotel and went to bed. Some time after I went to bed the saloon and gambling joint was held up and robbed.

The next morning I went to the cafe to get coffee and a bite to eat. I walked in and set down. That gal said she had seen me she brought me a cup of coffee. She said the saloon and gambling house was held up and robbed last night. I said it was. She brought me some more coffee and she set down. She asked when are you going back to Blue water. I said some time maybe. I said to her what do you know about Bluewater? I was in that when you and that Mexican boy got into that fight with them pimps and that gal and you slapped the landlady. I think you have got the wrong guy down. Are your man here with you, or you got another one?

The next day Miller come in on the stage coach. I happened to be at the barn feeding my ponies when the coach come in. I saw Miller when he got off. I walked up. Miller said where are you staying. At the hotel? I said yes. We went up to the hotel and he got him a room. He said how are ever

thing? I said every thing all right. He said this is my home town. The man run the hotel said Jack how long are you going to be in town? He said two or three days. This man asked Miller, How are ever thing in K. C. Cattle are look up in price.

Mr. Miller and myself go to the cafe and we walk in and set down about that time a man come in and started a fuss with this girl said she had seen me. So Miller told the girl to bring us some more coffee. So the girl got to the table with the coffee and started to set it down and this man slapped her so the hot coffee fell in Miller's lap. Miller come up with a chair and knocked him down. He come out with a gun. I kicked it out of his hand. The marshall carried him out. Come to find out he was this girl's man. She left in Bluewater. She said that was the first time she had seen him since she had been here.

The next day Miller and I planned to get ready to leave for the SWP ranch. Leave my bedroll at the stage coach barn and borrowed a saddle from the man was running the barn. So we saddled up my ponies and left for the ranch. It taken us three days. Make it to the ranch evening of the third day. We rode up to the ranch house and got off. Walked in. Just one button there. He was cooking supper. Them other boys be in after while. The other two cowboys come in and we eat supper.

(To be continued)

The correspondence in the Notes and Documents was submitted for publication by Allen Woodrow Jones, 3804-D Meadowview, Montgomery, Alabama. The originals are in the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery.