

OCTOBER 15, 2009

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I WAS A "CITY KID" AND HAVING A HORSE WAS NEVER AN OPTION LIVING IN THE SUBURBS OF LOS ANGELES... . As a child I loved visiting my relatives, Bob and Doris, that lived in Encinitas, California. Among my fondest memories are the times I spent on the back of a horse at their ranch. I was a "City Kid" and having a horse was never an option living in the suburbs of Los Angeles but I always had a dream that one day I would live the life of a horse person.

Living in Southern California and living the crazy and hectic life of a custom home builder, dad and husband, I often found myself designing and building horse facilities and barns for others, all the while fantasizing of one day living "that" life. When my wife Leslie and I moved to Cottonwood in 1998 my dream started to materialize. We were lucky enough to buy a home on four acres, a perfect setting for a horse.

I took riding lessons from a wonderful woman in Cornville and began fine-tuning my equestrian skills and looking for the perfect horse I could call my own. I never really thought about owning a gaited horse until I met Chester, a beautiful specimen of a Missouri Fox Trotter with a mind of his own and a personality of a Labrador retriever. I remember how stubborn he could be, refusing to get into a horse trailer. I very patiently worked with him for hours at a time but Chester did what Chester wanted to do and getting into that trailer was not something he wanted to do. Finally, out of desperation, I asked my riding instructor for help and within a few hours Chester gave in and she and I got our way. With help from professional instructors that very obviously knew what they were doing, Chester and I have finally learned to be at one with each other (or as close as possible)!

Family and friends are still in California but Cottonwood is definitely home. We visit our kids, Julie and Kyle, often and they love visiting us. They always say that coming to visit us is like coming to a very fun camp. They are city kids (now city adults) and really seem to get a kick out of our menagerie, "Taco" the donkey; Chester; and "Pig" the pig. For Leslie and me, our constant mantra has become "Life is Definitely Good".

VVHC Board member Craig Stevens is now a true "horse person".

IT RAINED ON THE HIGH COUNTRY RIDE. Steve Rench's ride in August had five members and one guest. Until the rain started we were having a wonderful ride in the pines. Once that storm hit and the ground underneath us looked like a river it was a whole different story. The lightening and claps of thunder brought hoses and riders off the ground. So goes summer riding in the high country. This was definitely a ride worth repeating.

OUR CONDOLENCES to Judi Avery and her family for the loss of her mother who lived in Canada.

WANTED a sound 8 1/2 foot 2000+ camper for a long bed Chevrolet pickup. Must have toilet, refrigerator, heater, and be self-contained. Air conditioning and generator would be appreciated. Call Beth Blay at 928-300-7782.

VVHC WILL APPLY TO MAINTAIN THE LIME KILN TRAIL. The Board of Directors agreed to see that the Lime Kiln Trail between Deadhorse Ranch State Park and Red Rock State Park is properly maintained. The Board has to sign an agreement with the Forest Service before this can be done. It is anticipated the form will be completed at the next Board of Directors meeting. If anyone is riding the trail and sees anything that needs repairing or fixed, please let Steve Harris know. This is becoming a popular trail and things like cattle rubbing on the rock cairns, utility companies driving over the trail, etc. need to be taken care of as soon as possible.

CENTENNIAL RIDE PLANS. Plans are still in the works for a trail ride from Black Canyon City to Mormon Lake to celebrate Arizona's centennial in 2012. Discussion centers around using the old Sheep Driveway as the trail. This might help get the Sheep Trail on the map, finally. Any comments or suggestions call Steve Harris.

JOIN THE VVHC HORSE SOCCER TEAM. It was voted to sponsor a horse soccer team. The team can have as many members as it wants, but only fields three at a time. There are some administrative duties such as roster, insurance, etc. If anyone is interested call Steve Harris at 928-301-4825. Team will probably purchase t-shirts and hats.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- October 17 Cultural Park Ride. In the saddle ready to ride at 9:00 a.m. Rated a 3. Ride for approximately 4 hours. Bring a snack. Call Craig Stevens at 928-639-1867 to let him know you are coming or with questions. This is a scenic Sedona ride not to be missed.
- November 7 Cienega Ride. A Memorial Ride for Cathy Hubbard by the Prescott Saddle Club. Ride site is off of I-17 on 169, approx. 2 miles from I-17. In the saddle ready to ride at 9:30. Bring lunch. Try to double up on trailers as parking is limited. PLEASE CALL Lorraine Owen on Thurs. Nov. 5 if you are going at 928-636-2251. She will give you a mile marker and know to expect you. Wait for Prescott riders if they aren't there yet. Rated a 3.
- November 20-22 Back Country Horsemen Bumblebee Ride. See August Voice of the Horseman.
- December 10 VVHC Board of Directors meeting 6:30 p.m. at Ginny Rensch's home. Members are always welcome.
- December 12 VVHC HOLIDAY RIDE. Ride the beautiful Lime Kiln Trail and enjoy lunch with the Board and members of VVHC. The club will furnish turkey and ham. Bring a potluck dish to share. Be in the saddle ready to ride at 9:30 a.m. Call Judi Avery at 928-646-8609 BY DECEMBER 8 to let her know you will be coming. Please call even if you aren't going to be riding so we know how many to ride and how many to lunch. The ride and lunch site is off of 89A onto Bill Gray Road just north of the Cornville Road light. At the third cattle guard, turn right toward the corrals BEFORE crossing and go back in toward the corrals. Non-riders welcome. Site has easy access.
- January Chasm Creek ride. Details in the December Voice of the Horseman.

ATTENTION TRAIL BOSSES. It is extremely important that you have a "Ride Release Form" with you when you lead a ride. Everyone on the ride must sign it. It is on our website at verdehorsemen.org and can be downloaded from there. It is also extremely important that you give the completed sheets to Judi Avery for file. This is just an extra step the Board wants to protect the club from liability issues. Thanks for everyone's cooperation.

Althea Burns of Cottonwood was 103 in August. Her birthday wish was to get on a horse again since she hadn't been on since she was 90. VVHC President Steve Harris is Althea's neighbor and saddled up his mustang Maggie and granted her wish.

Althea is an experienced rider having ridden off and on all of her life. She grew up in Oklahoma on a farm and rode horseback to school as a girl.

The family moved to Flagstaff when Althea was 16. She had to leave her favorite horse in Oklahoma when the family moved.

She rode for pleasure for several years And in later years, some 20+ years ago, occasionally rode the Verde River trails with VVHC members Diane Lovett and Cindy Buchanan.



Althea Burns

Verde Valley Ranching

In 1982 and 83 the Verde Valley Horseman's Council did a series of oral history interviews with a number of early residents of the Verde Valley.

One of the persons they recorded was Minna "Minnie" Pigman.

Minnie was born

March 16, 1899,

in Calumet,

Michigan. She

married three

times. She and

her first husband,

Joe Hall, were

married in 1916.

Joe worked or

looked for work in

several places

during the first months of their

marriage. Minnie's second hus-

band was Chauncey Montgom-

ery and her third husband was

Mr. Pigman. This story is an

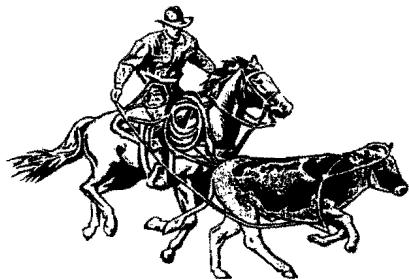
extract from her oral history

from the period she was mar-

ried to Chauncey. I have

changed the question and an-

swer format to narrative form.



Ranch roundup

stayed in a hotel owned by Sam Steinberg. We later moved into a little one-room cabin, right across from the hotel. There was no street, just a wide place. Well, you can say the cabin is still there. We built onto the cabin and our first son was born there.

I divorced and moved to Tucson in 1924. After a little while, I moved back to Cottonwood and worked at the Quill (spelling?) Grill. We built a

two story building next to the corner drugstore. We lived in the front room. Well, they had two fires in Cottonwood. We were in both fires. They say, some insurance man set the place on fire above us. The fire came through at one o'clock at night. He burned us out.

In 1928 I married my second husband, Chauncey Montgomery. He was called Whitey. He got a job at the B-Bar-V Ranch. Whitey and I lived up there at the ranch. The V-Bar-V was near the ranger station between Rimrock and Stoneman Lake. The cattle were Herefords. We lived at the ranch from 1928 through 1931. We then moved down the hill to McGuireville in '32.

My husband was the ranch foreman, you understand, and those were the years before they had fences, before the

Forest Service made them fence all the allotments. In the wintertime the cattle were in the Verde Valley here. They put in a 25 mile-long fence. It was a pretty big outfit at the time, you see. The allotment was 25 miles long from the valley to the mountain (Mogollon Rim).

Many a time I did the cooking for the cowboys. Sometimes, when they were working in the valley they came to the house to eat. We had a Dodge truck, which I used to carry the bedrolls, cooking utensils and groceries. They would say, meet me at such and such a place, meet us there where we are going to spend the night. I'd get out there, beside the road where they told me to be, start a fire, put the coffee pot on, get the cooking done; had those big old cast iron Dutch ovens.

Whitey had a bunch of poor cattle one year that he wanted to take to Phoenix. There were 50 head of cattle that were too poor for anything, so they were shipping them to Phoenix in cattle cars to fatten them up in the valley down there. The cattle had to be driven to the railhead shipping pens at Clarkdale. Well, we didn't go by road, heck no. They stuck to the country with those cattle. They didn't use trucks (for hauling the cattle).

We stayed at a corral one night. My husband and another man, Owen Murphy, they drove the cattle over there

We came to the Verde Valley by freight train from Phoenix to Prescott and then to Jerome Junction (now Chino Valley). We got off the train there and got on the narrow gauge railroad that took us to Jerome. We came by bus from Jerome to Cottonwood. The road was different then. We came down the mountain on the old slaughterhouse road past the slaughterhouse, then right through the little town of Clarkdale. I remember we

and it was spitting snow when we left the ranch. I had the truck and had my two kids with me. We talked and I cooked supper there and we rolled the bedrolls out and, by gosh, before the night was over, the snow was coming down and we had about this much snow on our beds the next morning. Georgia (her daughter) forgot to put her shoes under the canvas, and when she woke up her shoes were full of snow and she couldn't put them on. So I had to wrap her feet in a blanket and put her in the truck.



Minnie did the roundup cooking

Old man Murphy, he was the man working with my hus-

band, got up and made coffee. And that's all we had that morning. We drank the coffee and then we loaded the bedrolls and I drove to Cottonwood.

I was to meet them at John Lee's at Cornville, you know, right across from the post office. All right, they started with the cattle and tried to drive them. It was storming and the cattle wouldn't drive, they just scattered, although they tried to move them. Just before noon they gave up. So Whitey and old Murphy, they'd ridden down to John Lee's and they were there, warming up when I came back out there.

I was bringing their lunch —

I had made a great big kittle of stew and brought it out. I used a pressure cooker of my sister-in-law's. When I got to John Lee's they were there. So I just loaded them all in the truck and we went into town. Stayed there four days (in Cottonwood) before they could drive those cattle into the corrals at Clarkdale and ship them.

They didn't go right through Cottonwood (with the cattle). They went up the river and through Bridgeport. They crossed the Verde River two miles above Bridgeport at Scott's Crossing. Old man Scott, he had a ranch there. When they got near the Cottonwood Cemetery, they bypassed it and followed the river to Clarkdale. They'd corral them there in Clarkdale and get ready to load them and ship them out.

Story by permission of the Verde Historical Society By Jim McMeekin VHS

In 1980 two women who rode the Verde River area and all over in and out of Cottonwood, were talking while riding one day and decided it was time Cottonwood had a "saddle club". Cindy Buchanan and Diane Lovett went about getting things organized. If anyone remembers Cindy, you know she didn't waste any time getting things done. We talked to anyone we knew who was involved in horses in any way. We set a date for the first meeting and I think we put an article in the paper. Our timing must have been just right because the night of the first meeting we had close to thirty people show up. The ordinary things like name, by-laws, officers, and etc. were discussed. Verde Valley Horsemen came out as a preferred name and horse shoer Ted Ihrman was elected president. As we later set about writing by-laws, Cindy and I decided to add "Council" to the name, thinking it would elevate us a notch above others who chose the word "club". The Council thrived immediately and became an active and respected part of the community, both local and state, at one time claiming over 100 members. After that all got settled, we decided that there was a lot of history in the area that was not written down and that a lot of early settlers that were still here needed to tell the story of the beginning of the Verde Valley. Oral histories were just becoming popular and Cindy wanted to start interviewing all those old timers. And that's exactly what she did. I don't remember the exact number of cassette tapes she made, but I think somewhere between 30 and 40. Eventually we gave the tapes to the Verde Historical Society. They had someone transcribe them all and now they are an important source of happenings in the early days of the valley. This story is one of them. I thought you might be interested to know that at one time the Verde Valley Horsemen's Council was into history. At one time we even were looking for storefronts to start collecting items, but Cindy left, I got busy and it never happened. Fortunately others took up the cause a couple of years later and today we have a fine museum we should all be proud of.

How to Interpret a Horse Classified Ad

NICELY STARTED—lunges, but we don't have enough insurance to ride him yet

TOP SHOW HORSE—won a reserve championship 5 years ago at a show with unusually low entries due to a hurricane

BOLD—runaway

GOOD MOVER—runaway

ATHLETIC—runaway

NEEDS INTERMEDIATE RIDER—runaway

NEEDS EXPERIENCED RIDER - "dead" runaway

DEAD QUIET—just dead

RECENTLY VETTED—someone else found something badly wrong with this horse

WELL-MANNERED—hasn't stepped on, bitten, or kicked anyone for a week

PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED—hasn't stepped on, bitten, or kicked anyone for a month

TO GOOD HOME ONLY—not really for sale unless you can pay twice what he is worth

NO VICES—especially when he wears his muzzle

LIGHT CRIBBER—we can't afford to build any more barns and fences for this buzz saw

CLIPS, HAULS, LOADS - clippity, clippity is the sound his hooves make when he hauls a** around the parking lot when you try to load him.