

Will Works

interviewed by

Mrs. W. A. Schmidt

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Ruby Schmidt Collection of BiCentennial Interviews

ORAL HISTORIES OF FORT WORTH, INC.

WILLIE WORKS RECALLS THE PAST

In

An Interview with Mrs. W. A. Schmidt

Summer - 1975

MAY I HAVE YOUR FULL NAME, PLEASE?

Willie Works (nmi). I was born May 5, 1895 at Comanche, Oklahoma, Indian Territory at that time.

My daddy was Joseph Spaulding Works, better known at that time as 'Buckskin Joe,' (b. 1844), and my mother was Birdie Flickinger Works (b. 1861).

YOUR BEING BORN IN INDIAN TERRITORY AROUSES MY CURIOSITY. HOW LONG HAD YOUR PARENTS BEEN IN THAT AREA?

My daddy went there in 1887. He had been up there when the soldiers put white men out, but he found out that Greer County was in conflict between the government and Texas. Texas claimed it, and he went into Greer County. And he built a fort there in the Navajo Mountain. There's a place there they called 'Nava Joe'. It was the Navajo Indians but they put it 'Nava Joe' because he was one of the first men in there. So he got across the river into Oklahoma and got established and started in to get colonists to move in there. Then when they put 'em out they could come into Greer County and then on Texas soil.

HE WAS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN PROMOTING A DEVELOPMENT THERE?

That's right. Before that he served two terms in the Civil War.

WHY TWO?

He went home sick. He was discharged and went somewhere in Arkansas. He didn't go home. His mother went down in Arkansas and got him. And when he got well enough he got enthused again and rejoined. So he served two terms.

He was quite a showman. He had one of the first balloons. He didn't go up in it--he had a one-legged man that did go up in it. But he traveled with circuses and things like that. He had built up to where he had a showboat on the Ohio River. In a storm it sank.

WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE SHOWBOAT?

It was a small one (boat); not a big one. The sign on one of them said 'Buckskin Joe's Cabin.' He sank two boats on that Ohio River and got out of there in a little skiff with my mother's trunk and a few things the last time.

WHERE DID YOUR PARENTS COME FROM ORIGINALLY?

My daddy was born in Dubuque, Iowa. My mother came from Ohio.

WHEN WERE THEY MARRIED?

It was a second marriage for my daddy. One of his first daughters was a movie star in the old silent movie days. She was

EVIDENTLY SHOWMANSHIP WAS SOMETHING SHE INHERITED.

He stopped in Kentucky and got started there again. He bought a farm from a man that had to leave the country on account of his whiskey still.

BACK UP A BIT, PLEASE. HE WAS ON THE OHIO RIVER AND KEPT LOSING HIS SHIP AND GOT OUT WITH HIS LIFE, HIS WIFE AND THE TRUNK AND THAT'S ABOUT ALL HE SAVED. DID THEY HAVE ANY CHILDREN AT THAT TIME?

No.

THEN HOW DID HE GET OVER TO KENTUCKY?

I don't know. But first thing I know of where he was established on the ground again was in Kentucky, where he bought this farm and he started in being more of a showman type. He said it was a beautiful valley. There was a pass into the valley that you could come into a cave where this man had his still. He had a ladder where he could go from the still up to the mountain and get away from the law.

My dad got this land for a a very small amount. In about two years this (gossip) all died down and the man came back. And he paid \$500 to get the farm back. Paid all in silver except two \$5 bills. So he had collected that silver where he had been moonshining somewhere else. (He cleared and cleaned it up and started giving picnics out there.

THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

They came on into East Texas; that was where the first child was born. It was a girl called "Iowa," but that wasn't her name. She died of malaria from that low country down there. When he got there he bought a tract of land from where they had moved a sawmill out. There was a lot of lumber like they always had scattered around. They left a huge pile of sawdust close to a hole and he wheelbarrowed that sawdust and filled up the hole and gathered up the lumber and built two houses there. He sold that out and the next thing I know of he was in Dallas. He came to Dallas with the idea of going to the Indian Territory and getting some Indians, and getting back into show business with a "wild west" show. Well, what he ran into there was that these Indians weren't allowed off that reservation, and he wasn't allowed in. But he used to get in. They watched him pretty close and they knew if he got in there he had a lot of Indian friends there.

He'd ride around there on a horse in the daytime, pick them up and that night he'd get that horse and cross the Red River and get up in there and hide. The Indians would help him hide. They'd stay in there and talk. He found out that the Indians all had a claim, but they didn't know where it was. They had 160 acres of land. It was just in there and the cattlemen had that leased--all of it--they paid the chiefs off and these other people were starving. He got worked up

over that and then he started trying to colonize that and break that thing up. That put Dad in very poor taste with the cattlemen and anybody else who wanted that thing to stay like it was. He had a long hard fight there. He could take up a claim, being a Civil War veteran, he could get it in two years whereas I think it took the average person four years. But he never did take up a claim. He had staked out where he wanted to get his land; that was back in here around Comanche. And when they put that on, they didn't have a run or anything like they had the first time so he drew for it. Him and my oldest brother and my brother-in-law, and I--I can remember us going to Fort Sill for that drawing. None of 'em drew a claim.

There were so many people that came from all over the United States. They had, three or four times as many people as they had land claims.

So they offered enough tickets. You were good if you got one and if not you drew a blank, and my family all drew blanks.

There's a man who lived right here--Joe Hart--a queer kind of Irishman, but a natural born blacksmith. He worked in a shop with my brother and me 'way back there when there wasn't nothing but very few cars. He had gone up there, drew a claim between Walters and Lawton, and sold it for \$50 and thought he had done a big deal, and it was. He just got on the train and went up there. He didn't want the claim. Course so many people couldn't stay there in that wild country like it was then.

WHAT WAS YOUR DAD DOING IN DALLAS?

When he was in Dallas he got in with a company there called the Fort Worth Real Estate Company. He was such a promoter that they put him in charge and they started to boom two or three little towns on the Fort Worth & Denver Railroad. Mother and Dad left here and started to move to Vernon. And he built a hotel there that was a lot like the one out here at Ederville. I've seen pictures of both of them. He stayed there; then he went to Iowa Park. Close to the end of his time, before he passed on, he found out that he had 70 lots in Iowa Park. He had moved off; sold what he could and left. The first thing he knew about it they was suing him for taxes on it. They went through all that oil boom--all those years; they had paved the streets and built the school houses and city hall and everything like that; it was all against the real estate taxes. The stuff wasn't worth the back taxes on it. He and I went up there and hunted up a bunch of that land and those lots. Some of them were good and some wasn't. We started in; got a lawyer to see if we could get the lawyer to buy it for taxes and sell it back to Dad and me. We sank \$200-\$300 in it, which was quite a bit of money for us in those days. We thought we had it whipped but that City couldn't do nothing. Now they wanted to get it on the tax rolls and us to pay up all the back taxes. Well, there was so much, it wouldn't pay out because some lots there would be worth more than that but some that was in a low area wouldn't. They had a law that one couldn't drill in the city. The oil boom had done come and gone and all the debts were there on it when he found it.

Well, after he passed on, the sheriff was down here several times and served papers on me; he was going to file tax suits, but I found out I had to be up there. They couldn't do nothing cause I was here. But every two or three years one of them would be down here. Also, they was trying to get me to sign off my right-of-way and I wouldn't do it because I didn't know what could happen, you know, and I wouldn't do that. So they got very dissatisfied because I wouldn't give up my right to them, and they couldn't come down here and file suit against me for taxes up there.

DID YOUR DAD GO FROM IOWA PARK UP TO GREER COUNTY?

He went from Dallas to Okaunion. That's one he started. And then, if I'm correct, from there to Vernon. At Iowa Park they done a whole lot better. He was doing so good that this Fort Worth & Denver Railroad, they sent him \$100 a month (check) for what he was doing for their railroad in developing, although he never went on their payroll.

My mother was with him at Iowa Park and at Vernon. She ran the hotel there and at Vernon. They had lots of cowboys and some Indians who came across (the river) to get meat. The cattlemen brought Indian chiefs, you know, and fed them. The chiefs kept the Indians off the cattlemen. But anyway, when they went on to Greer County that all fell apart. In the meantime, he had decided that he was going on into Oklahoma and the company didn't, so they dissolved and they gave him Ederville for his property out here.

It was called Fort Worth Mineral Wells. The mineral well was there and the hotel was there, but it had been shut down, and was kind of like a ghost town. Every time he'd get a hold he'd try to bring it out; then somebody would come along and try to buy it. But anyhow, he got 90 acres of land on this side of Ederville and all the property this company had left in Ederville, which was maybe around 100 lots. Lots were small like 25 by 50. They had them cut down so that people would come and buy a small lot where they could put up a tent and park a wagon and stay there and use that water.

WHEN WAS THIS DEVELOPED? IT WAS ACTUALLY A TOWN SITE WASN'T IT?

A pretty good little town was there at one time. A restaurant, two or three stores, as well as this hotel. But I'll tell you what happened. This acreage--they were some people who came from Arkansas here--and they had traded for this land that wasn't worth nothing. They found this mineral water here. They didn't have any money to promote it, but there was a wholesale company in Fort Worth on Lancaster and about Commerce Street. They had a pretty good size building--Mayfield and Want Wholesale Grocery. Well, Mayfield & Want got Eder to start this thing up and they had it going! They had this town started and there was a store and a lot of people there. They built this hotel and then they deeded this mineral well to the public so people would come there and buy lots and they'd have a right to the mineral water.

WERE THEY DRINKING THIS WATER, OR BATHING IN IT?

Both. They were taking baths in it in such things as a wash tub. I've gone there many a time. They'd go to the well that had a rope and a bucket on each end.

DID IT SMELL LIKE SULPHUR?

Not too much. But it had sulphur in it. It wasn't hot. It was cold water. Well, this was all going and Eder wasn't gettin' any money. They was promotin' the thing and he thought they was stealing from him. He got him a lawyer and he found out that they never had put that townsite on record; this lawyer showed him how to make a deed, sell that as 60 acres or 90 acres; sell it to his oldest boy, Jim, and then these people who bought these lots, they didn't have anything. So that killed it the first time. There had been some houses built there and where

they had stood they named this 'Ederville.' The street names were changed. But Eders took the wells back and then somehow or other Mayfield and Want had this hotel and they had sold it to a man named Beck so in that mixup, well they decided Beck won his suit. Well, some of these Eder boys, they went in there to put a padlock on that well. They decided that people were coming to that hotel and staying to use the water, so it was a public well and they decided they'd go put a padlock on it and whenever you wanted to use the water you could go get a key and get some water, but the hotel couldn't. And when they went in there to do that Beck came out and got them with a .45 and there came near to being a killin'. They got out of there and they never did close the well up, but they always said that that was a public well. But that property sold and re-sold and re-sold. There was a sanitarium there at one time. Two doctors by the name of Taylor came from Kauffman County and had a place there that they took care of dope heads. They'd go to town and bring them dope heads out there and would keep them out there. And they run it that way for two or three years.

This old doctor was a man that had had polio--little legs and walked on two crutches. His nephew, Homer Taylor, was a young, strong man and he was a doctor, too. They had several farms down around Kauffman, down in that swampy land. My Dad was trying to trade 'em stuff down there for what he had here, but it never did materialize. The Taylors came from there and the two doctors run that place and his wife taught school at Ederville, a one-room school with one teacher.

And that school is on the property where Brentwood Stair and Handley intersect, on the northeast corner. That's the school I went to and got out maybe in the seventh grade.

After my Dad went through all this boom there in Oklahoma, he still had this property here that he couldn't sell. Well, all at once he got several different letters from people. They wanted to buy lot so-and-so, or block so-and-so, or wanted that "tract down there" for a hog lot or calf pasture. After getting two or three letters, he got suspicious so he got on the train and came down here with the intention of selling that to them for what he could get out of it. But when he got down here to Fort Worth they told him to get on that interurban that ran every 30 minutes to get to Handley. Well, he got on that interurban and came out to Handley and walked out there; boy, that changed everything! When he came back he told Mother, 'We don't want to sell that. We're going to sell this and move back.' And that's what they did. When they got out of there and back down here, it was about 1907 cause that was when statehood was there. He was there until it became a state; he'd worked so many years to get it a state and then moved away.

HIS BELONGINGS ARE IN SOME OKLAHOMA ARCHIVES?

That gun collection the man sold when my dad gave that knife, was supposed to be kept there in that state, I think. But after he passed away and before my mother and my oldest sister passed away, Fred Sutton sold that gun collection to an oil man in New Orleans for \$10,000. And I know my Mother and my sister wrote there and they were very upset because Dad had talked him and those other people out of giving that stuff for a historical collection and then selling it for that amount of money. . . They never got no return on it or anything. There wasn't anything they had. . . it was just that he didn't do what they thought should have been done. But this man passed away and his wife--I never saw or knew her--but she evidently figured there'd been a wrong done there. When she got possession of that

she had it put back there in Oklahoma--the entire collection.

A knife in an ivory scabbard, originally owned by Buckskin Joe Works, is in a collection permanently loaned to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma. It was given to Fred Sutton, U.S. Marshall in the Oklahoma Territory for more than fifty years. Every article he collected was authenticated with a sworn affidavit from either the original owner or the lawman who confiscated the weapon.

In 1925 a series of articles by Fred E. Sutton, as told to A. B. MacDonald, appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. In 1927 these articles were published in book form under the title "Hands Up," which is today a collector's item.

Rock Jenkins of Orleans, Indiana, became a close friend of Sutton after reading the book and bought the collection eventually. When Jenkins died in 1957 his widow gave the gun collection to her daughter, Mrs. G. F. Engeler. She had the collection on informal display in her family room in Mountain Home, Arkansas. Through the generosity and western-minded spirit of the Engelers this fabulous collection has been permanently loaned to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. The collection is literally priceless, not just to the owners, but to posterity. As Mrs. Engeler explained, "Oklahoma was the scene of about ninety percent of the history written in blood by these guns, and that's where they belong."

Included in the collection are: Wild Bill Hickock's Colt .45 with the dog filed off; given to Bill's friend, Pat Garrett, Sheriff of Lincoln County, New Mexico, who killed Billie The Kid with this same gun and gave to Sutton later. Emmett Dalton's small gun belt is there. Belle Starr's .72 Winchester rifle with her name spelled out on the right side of the stock in brass tacks and seven tacks for the men she killed. Bill Doolin's rifle has 27 notches on the stock and three filed on the barrel. Henry Starr's hand tooled pistol is elaborate. Arkansas Tom's .44 Colt has a stag-horn handle. . .12 notches. Frank James owned a .44 caliber derringer in the collection. Bat Masterson, a personal friend of Sutton's, gave him a Colt .45. Others are a .44 Colt used by Wyatt Earp in taming Tombstone, Arizona, the gun used by Sutton while marshal at Dodge City, Kansas, and a double action Colt .45 used U. S. Marshal Heck Thomas in guarding U.S. mail in transit through Indian Territory.

I don't know but I believe it's in Oklahoma City, but I'm not sure of that. He has a scrapbook and a bunch of other stuff, and he spent enormous lots of money on advertising and all like that to boost that thing as long as he was working in it. In later years he was in Comanche. My dad was progressive and a lot of people weren't. They had a fight over stock laws. The cattle would run out in the street. He was on the side of keepin' em up. The strongest side let them stay out. Well, it went on and there was the period to incorporate the town and of course he was on the side to incorporate it and one of the leaders of incorporating. Well, they had had a meeting upstairs and he came down out of that stairs and there was a man that had hidden behind the door. As he passed the man had a 3-cornered rock tied up in a red bandana handkerchief and hit him in the head and knocked him out. But my Dad was pretty much of a scrapper. He got this guy down but 2 or 3 other guys run in there and they pulled him off and dragged him down there and stomped him. My brother-in-law, Dad's son-in-law, George Grider, was right next to him but he was a man who stayed out of politics and stuff like that. Most

everybody liked him; he was a carpenter and worked there for several years. So they grabbed him. Now he was a big man, but of course that was a mob. Well, this John Montgomery was a doctor. When he came out there (he was a real big man) and he jumped in that fight on Dad's side and he didn't even know Dad! He just said, 'That's too many on one.' Every time he hit one that done away with him. He didn't have to hit him any more. So in a very short while this Montgomery wiped out that fight because one of them guys after he had been socked ran in there with a blacksnake whip, and he was using his whip. John Montgomery hit him and knocked him about twenty feet back there; the man got up and said, 'Damn the incorporation,' and took off with his whip. But anyhow, John Montgomery took Dad into the drug store and washed him up and brought him home. They was going to put a guard around the house. The house where he lived had been dug into the hill and walled with rocks. The back of it was built like a fort. He built two houses that way. And the two rooms in front of the house was of lumber. He told them not to put any guard up there; his Winchester was by him and he hoped someone would try to come in. He was bout six feet tall and had brown eyes. He was an excellent shop, especially with a Winchester.

WHERE DID HE ACQUIRE THIS KNIFE HE SO GRACIOUSLY GAVE THE COLLECTOR?

When he was at Vernon, when he was going into Oklahoma, there was a man named Woods. He ran a hardware store there. They were very close. This Woods said, 'Joe, what kind of a gun you got?' He said, 'I've got a real good little Smith & Wesson.' And he said, 'That's not good enough. You're going to need more than that.' and he gave him this .4440 Winchester my son has now. Gave him a belt and a box of shells and reached back and got that ivory handled Bowie knife and gave him that.

I had four children; three girls and one boy and I had long thought of giving each one of them one of them guns. Couldn't figure out just what to do with the guns, so I gave 'em all to my son. And he, in turn, took a little hideaway pistol--Smith & Wesson--that he had with him and gave to me because he didn't want to leave me without one. Later, he came back and brought this here model and got his cause he'd been in a tight place and needed that more modern gun than the older type.

THIS MAN EVIDENTLY REALLY CARED A GREAT DEAL FOR YOUR FATHER TO BE SO CONCERNED FOR HIS WELFARE. IT MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY ROUGH UP THERE.

It was. It was plenty rough.

DID HE JUST GO OUT AND LIVE IN A TENT UP THERE?

Yes, he moved in there and unloaded the furniture in Navajo and covered it up with a tarpolin till he built his house. He went from there to Vernon and got lumber. I think the lumber in that house cost him \$35. And he came back and built that house. But he, in turn, had built this stone house behind there because it was like a fort.

THEN, AFTER THIS OCCASION WHEN HE GOT BEATEN UP, WHAT THEN?

Well, he sued them guys for what they did there. The law arrested the men that did that and took them away from there. They all got drunk and they stayed

away awhile and then he sued them in that little court they had which didn't amount to much. They usually settled before they went to court. But he won that, although he never collected anything from it. So he stayed there until this break and ne never did quit.

That never did scare him off from being on the promoting side of everything there. But they broke him down in health; it discouraged my mother, of course, and they would arrest him on their trumped up charges. I can remember one night when it was pouring down rain when they had arrested him for something; took him down there and locked him up and she took that knife that's there in that picture and went through that rain and handed it to him through the door. He went down to the post office (when thà mail came. in everybody used to go to the post office till they went through the mail and opened the window and you got your mail); well, he was there and there were two U. S. Marshalls that came from Duncan there to get him. They told it that they had come down there to kill him. Well, they thought they'd arrest him and he'd resist it. They didn't want just to arrest him; they weanted a gun fight too. They were big guys. One came to him and asked if he wasn't Buckskin Joe and he said 'Yes.' They said they'd come down to have it out with him. He said, 'Well, you're not giving me much chance. There's the two of you both armed and I don't have a gun.' So he said, 'Go get your gun.' Well, he started to go get it and one of 'em kicked at him and he didn't hit him much but he just felt it on his coat tail a little, so he knew he had. He went straight down to where they lived in Comanche (3 blocks from the post office) to get this Winchester and started back. As he went back, it dawned on him that if he went back there and they were officers, he was going back for a gunfight. They said different people would come down the alley and give him encouragement, 'Give 'em hell, Joe.' There was a well there where they drew water and watered their horses. He said a thought came to him so he just sat down on that trough and told one of them guys, 'You go up there and tell them guys to come down here and get me.' He kept waiting and hoping they'd come down and start something. With their pistols and him with that Winchester that wouldn't have been an even fight by no means because of the distance. But anyhow while he was there, there was a tree above there about a block. A crowd of men began to gather around that tree; he was satisfied that they were in it. There was another man came down there behind the houses and hollered to Dad and told him they were under the tree. Dad told him, 'You go up there and tell them if I've got any friend in that bunch for them to get away from there. If they're not my friends, let 'em stay there.' So he went back up there and conveyed the message. There was a bunch of Dad's friends there and they were hurrahing them guys where they couldn't stand it. 'I'll be John Brown. There's that old man settin' down there that you all came after. Why don't you go get him. Go down there and get him. That's him there on that well curb. Go down and get him.' They kept teasin' and finally the marshalls got on their horses, yelled and took off for Duncan and that ended that trip.

All of this happened before I was born.

WHO WERE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND WHEN WERE THEY BORN?

Dixie was the oldest girl; she died at 96 about two yéars ago. You can find out about her in Oklahoma because she was honorary guest at everything in late years. She put in her late life working with flowers, iris and stuff like that. She'd take prizes all the time. She almost went blind; that was something she could hardly take.

She was married before I was born to George Greider (George Greider wasn't in that fight because they grabbed him and held him.)

She went all through that Oklahoma boom and stayed out there. She had a Colt revolver that my Dad gave her because he went out there and found her one day in the country on a claim. Her husband had gone to work and she was there with nothing to protect her, so he gave her this pistol and she had it when she died. She was older and seen a lot of his life that I didn't.

The next was Joe, and I don't know where Joe was born. But now the next two--Payne was the next boy--was born at this hotel out here; he's been dead for 20 years, I guess. The next girl is Byrdie. She is the next one older than I. She's been in California at Yucca Flats. She's in some kind of a religious group.

YOU'RE THE NEXT CHILD?

Yes. I was born in Comanche. My younger brother, Roy, was also born in Comanche and he is 2 years and 1 month younger than me.

YOUR PARENTS HAD A GOOD SIZE FAMILY.

Yes, 7. Roy was a World War I Veteran; he's been dead since 1942. He's buried out at Isham Cemetery.

IS IT AT THAT TIME WHEN THEY WERE TRYING TO RUN YOUR DADDY OUT OF OKLAHOMA THAT HE CAME DOWN HERE TO SEE ABOUT THE PROPERTY PEOPLE WERE WRITING ABOUT?

That came along right close to statehood because he wanted to wait till after that became a state. That's what he put in all that work for. But it was just nothing that amounted to anything materially. It's just that he wanted to be there and see it.

YOU SAID YOU KNEW ABOUT SHIPPING CATTLE UP THERE AND THE INDIANS BUTCHERING THE CATTLE RIGHT THERE. CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THAT?

There at Comanche they had a three-day carnival in August when they would give the Indians beef. The Indians would come and camp at the east side of Comanche on the prairie there and were given so many beeves a day. Those Indians would come in and camp all over those fields out there by the hundreds and hundreds. They would get that beef and take it and I've seen them put it on a wagon sheet out there and cover it up with another wagon sheet. Dogs wouldn't bother it.

One of the strange things to me was the way those women would take a chunk of beef like that (measuring with his hands) and they'd cut it this way but they wouldn't cut it all. Then they'd cut it back. When they got through, it was a string that long. Then they would have a wire that hung over a big fire there and smoke it. They drew that beef there so that was a big attraction to the Indians; the Indians were a big attraction to the whites. I've known of people being there who came from the Old Country and they came to see these Indians. One of the biggest congregations they had was there. They'd usually have a sham battle there between the travelers and the Indians. The Indians would come and the wagon would come across the grounds there and the Indians would come out of the woods and make a run and all would be shootin' and they'd throw kerosene on that wagon and burn it up. That was one of the big attractions and people would come from far and near to see it!

WE HAD SHOW TIMES EVEN BACK THEN!

Yes, my Daddy had his Indians--he had a circle tent 50-ft. across, which was a big one in those days, and he put up that tent and these Indians would have the war dnce in that tent. They'd charge a dime to see them. He'd put a white man to sell the tickets and an Indian to take up the tickets. They could count their tickets. I don't know what percent he gave them, but he furnished the tent. They would come in gorgeously dressed with all their feathers and I remember they had a green corn dance. They had this corn in there and then when the dance was over they might drink the corn, half cooked and all.

Anyhow, they had a lot of different kinds of dances but actually, as far as I know, the dancing was about the same--wasn't much difference between the buffalo dance and the green corn dance. But there was a difference between the women and they way they jumped around.

I BET YOU WERE IN THERE WATCHING EVERYTHING.

Yes, my Dad counted on me heavily from the very beginning. I stayed with him down there after everything was closed up and all till around 12 o'clock. Mother would bring us food from home and we stayed with the carnival at that time. It was tough but it's been kind of interesting.

WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU CAME BACK TO FORT WORHT AND YOUR PARENTS WERE LIVING IN THIS EDERVILLE SPRINGS OR SPA?

My younger brother and I had one of the first garages on this highway between here and Dallas.

YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT EARLY HANDLEY?

Yes. I've been all over it as a barefoot boy. I knew it when there wasn't but about three stores there. I was sitting down there talking one time. Tom Kell was there and I said, 'Tom, do you know where your Grandpa was killed?'

He said, 'Do you know anything about that?'

I said, 'I bet you I know as much as anybody,' and I told him that there used to be a store down there. 'You remember your Mother's Daddy, Old Man Haynie?' I think he said he could remember him. 'Well,' I said, 'the same store is where your Grandpa was killed.'

WHAT HAPPENED?

They had in those days a way that you'd ride up in your wagon and step out on the steps of buildings. Well, his Grandpa ran this general store there and there was this man back out here named Nick Harris. Nick was kind of an ignorant kind of man, but Kell was a big strong man. This is not my actual experience, but I've seen these fellers and I know from what my ancestors and other neighbors have told me and from a man who was there when it happened:

Kell had a lot of fun out of teasin' Nick. Nick was very serious. He wasn't maybe all there. When this built up to a peak, down there where the Texas Electric Plant is (that was all open country then) the first anybody saw him, Nick came from that direction on this blaze faced sorrel horse in a hard run. Kell and two or three men were settin' on the porch of the store He ran right up against the front of the

store there and he had a double barrel shotgun laying across his lap in the saddle. He called a question and asks, "Oh, yes, old sorrel and me have got you cornered." Kell said, 'Sorrel's got me cornered why?' Nick said, 'I'm going to kill ya.' Kell stood up and hit his chest and told Nick, 'Hit 'em in there. You ain't got the nerve.'

They didn't think so but Kell had always played with him, and Nick just turned that shotgun on him. Knocked him down. He turned and went back to where he came from--John T. White and the thickets. He stayed there and they couldn't go in there and get him.

COULDN 'T FIND HIM, OR WERE AFRAID TO?

A little of both. It went on and he stayed in there almost a year, I think, the best I can remember. It happened about spring and along late that fall he decided to get out of there. He'd been hiding in the woods and he left there and went somewhere in West Texas.

HE GOT FREE?

No, they picked him up after he got out of there. If he'd stayed in there they would never have found him.

I'D LIKE THE NAMES OF YOUR CHILDREN.

The girl I married was a widow. She had a little girl between one and two years old. Her name is Pauline Lyles. My first girl was Marcella. She lives in Oraville, California, where they have those earthquakes.

My next was Billy Joe. He's at Comanche. He was a state game warden, but he's got a fancier title than that now.

My next and last was Dale, and she's in California.

HOW MUCH OF THIS PROPERTY DID YOUR MOTHER AND DADDY KEEP? EVIDENTLY BOTH LIVED TO BE UP IN YEARS; SO, FROM THE TIME HE CAME BACK, WHAT DID HE DO FOR A LIVING?

Senator Gore in Oklahoma passed a ^{law} lwa to give him \$24 a month. In early times they could almost live on that and did live on it.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THIS? WAS IT FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE SATE OF OKLAHOMA?

He had been in the Army two terms and back then they gave a little pension of \$8 a month; you had to get two signers to say you had served. All during that time of his life he was traveling and nobody knew anything about him and \$8 didn't amount to anything to him. In later years after he had been through and spent 'most everything he had in trying to bring statehood to Oklahoma, and had pretty well lost his health, too, Senator Gore was helpful.

He had won that election. He knew Dad and Dad got him to help him. Later on he asked Dad if there was anything he could do. Dad asked him to help get the back pay the government owed him for serving in the way. Through that, Senator Gore got the bill passed to reimburse him for what he couldn't do. He put the bill before the Senate for \$25 and they reduced it by \$1 to \$24. That was the only opposition to the bill. Later he was drawing \$125 to \$150 which wasn't a lot.

WHEN DID HE DIE?

In 1928.

WAS YOUR MOTHER STILL LIVING?

Yes. She died in 1935.

I WISH WE KNEW MORE ABOUT THEIR PARENTS. IT WOULD BE SO INTERESTING.

I never saw one of my grand mothers or grandfathers. They were gone before I came along.

YOUR DADDY WAS OBVIOUSLY AN ADVENTUROUS YOUNG MAN AND WAS OUT TO MAKE HIS FORTUNE AND SEE THE WORLD.

Yes, but he was not a money hoarder. He made it and spent it. The thing he told me, "Son, make your money like a man and spend it like a king." That's what he thought of money. When he had it, if he wanted something, regardless of what it was, he got it. As far as keeping money just for the money, he didn't.

DID HE EVER TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT WHEN HE WAS IN THE CIVIL WAR? SOUNDS LIKE HE WAS FIGHTING WITH THE YANKEES.

Yes. The first time he didn't serve too long because he went in when he was only 14-1/2 years old in Iowa. He wasn't strong enough to go through all that and got a fever; his mother went from Iowa down to wherever he was so they didn't send him home; she went and got him and they gave him a medical discharge; she got him nourished and back to health. He had a step-father that he didn't like. After he got out of the Army he was still weak and run down. There was a man organizing a company of cavalry there in his hometown who got my Dad to join as a bugler. I believe the town was Dubuque.

Anyhow, he went back and by then the war was pretty well over. He stayed longer than than he did the first time, but they never did make a bugler out of him. But he was in the cavalry and spent most of the time down in Arkansas.

Most of the fighting that he was in--according to the way I remember him telling it--was with Quantrill's gang and with what he called the 'bushwhackers.' They had a lot of government stuff and what they were doing was gathering horses and mules and wagons and anything that United States on it. They were camped someplace there in Arkansas and were getting hat at a meadow there. They were cutting hay and bringing it in for the stock--they had gathered a lot of stock. He, at that time, was a wagonmaster and went out to haul hay driving a four-mule team. One day he went on sick call and wasn't able to go; someone else went in his place on the wagon. At noon the cook said they hardly had anything to cook to feed the men. There was a big pigeon roost not too far from where they were camped. So he and another man who was on sick call, but was able to get around, got a couple of old mules that weren't able to work and they saddled them up and started for that pigeon roost. They got down in the woods and saw some guy looking around a tree. They had their pistols--the only guns they had. They rode on down and he didn't notice them till they got there. He drew his pistol and told that guy to come out from behind that tree. When eh came out they saw it was their captain. The Confederates had killed everybody in that wagon train and took all the stock. This captain who was heading the war game had been riding a big grey horse and when this gang hit 'em they didn't have anything to fight with so what he let the men do was outrun them.

He was ahead on his horse and they were running those teams as hard as they could. The gang closed in on them and shot the horse out from under the captain. It happened close to a ditch. He said it threw him near the ditch and didn't knock him out but killed his horse. The captain dropped in to the ditch. The gang jumped in the midst and stripped that harness and took the mules and were gone in just a few minutes. So after they cleared out, he commenced to try to get back to camp by foot and saw Dad and the other man coming and hid, but Dad saw him. Otherwise, he might have let them get by until they got even with him. He had lost his gun and didn't have anything. So he just made them turn around and go back. So that was the kind of fighting he was in.

Another time he said they were in a town, and I don't remember the name of the town, but there was a lot of opposition to the Northern soldiers. A man was there-- a Northern officer--who gave some kind of orders on the public square. I don't remember what it was, but this man got on his horse and hollered and laughed at him and rode on. The officer told Dad to get his squad of men and go get that man and not come back till they got him. He said you know that could have been a lifetime job. Anyhow, he found out who he was and I remember his name was Eli Grey. One reason I remember that is that there was an Eli Grey who was in oppotion to him there in Comanche. But anyhow, he found out where the man lived. Dad was out there next morning before daylight. He took his whole squad and they scattered around the house and they started a fire. So he told these other men to move in closer. One man with more confidence told Dad to go to the front door and that he would go to the back door (there was a light on in the kitchen), and knocked on the door with his pistol and told them to open up. When they did, this man came to the door. They took him. That's the kind of work he did. He stayed there two years after the war was over working in that kind of work and recovering property.

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A knife in an ivory scabbard, originally owned by Buckskin Joe Works, is in a collection permanently loaned to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma. It was given to Fred Sutton, U. S. Marshall in the Oklahoma Territory for more than fifty years. Every article he collected was authenticated with a sworn affidavit from either the original owner or the lawman who confiscated the weapon.

In 1925 a series of articles by Fred E. Sutton, as told to A. B. MacDonald, appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. In 1927 these articles were published in book form, under the title "Hands Up," which is today a collector's item.

Rock Jenkins of Orleans, Indiana, became a close friend of Sutton after reading the book and bought the collection eventually. When Jenkins died in 1957 his widow gave the gun collection to her daughter, Mrs. G. F. Engeler. She had the collection on informal display in her family room in Mountain Home, Arkansas. Through the generosity and western-minded spirit of the Engelers, this fabulous collection has been permanently loaned to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. The collection is literally priceless, not just to the owners, but to posterity. As Mrs. Engeler explained, "Oklahoma was the scene of about 90 per cent of the history written in blood by these guns, and that's where they belong."

Included in the collection are: Wild Bill Hickock's Colt 45 with the dog filed off; given to Bill's friend, Pat Garrett, sheriff of Lincoln County, New Mexico, who killed Billie the Kid with this same gun and given to Sutton later. Emmett Dalton's small gun belt is there. Belle Starr's 72 Winchester rifle with her name spelled out on the right side of the stock in brass tacks and seven tacks for the men she killed. Bill Doolin's rifle has 27 notches on the stock and three filed on the barrel. Henry Starr's hand-tooled pistol is elaborate. Arkansas Tom's 44 Colt has a stag-horn handle. . .12 notches. Frank James owned a .44 caliber derringer in the collection. Bat Masterson, a personal friend of Sutton's gave him a Colt 45. Others are a .44 Colt used by Wyatt Earp in taming Tombstone, Arizona, the gun used by Sutton while marshal at Dodge City Kansas, and a double action Colt .45 used by U.S. Marshall Heck Thomas in guarding U. S. mail in transit through Indian Territory.

Will Works is the son of an Iowa couple who spent many years of their lives in the townsite of Ederville, now a part of Handley.

His father, J. S. Works, was better known by the colorful name of Buckskin Joe, which he acquired after joining the Union Army at thirteen. At the end of the Civil War, time was spent as owner of a showboat on the Ohio. With the sinking of his second boat, Kentucky held his interest for a short time but Texas called him by 1883. He was very interested in the Indian Territory and helped settle 5,000 people on a strip of land lying between the north and south fork of Red River. Then it was Texas but later became part of Oklahoma. He made many agreements with Quanah Parker which were sealed only with a handshake.

After Will was born in Comanche, Buckskin worked hard for statehood and the homesteaders but met with many problems. He held carnivals when the Indians met the food trains. Letters from Fort Worth with many offers to buy his land at Ederville made ^{him} decide to return to Texas to see what was going on. The mineral wells were the big attraction, causing lots of 25x150 to sell for \$3,500.00. These were just barely large enough for a family to bring a wagon and camp on the sites while the family enjoyed the medicinal qualities of the water.

The wells are still there but unused due to dissension of whether they should be free to the public or private for a profit. The three-story Ederville Springs Resort is now gone where families used to travel by buggy from Sycamore Heights for a time of relaxation. All that remains are the bricked wells. The businesses left no reminders but the square, street names and a few old homes give you a feeling of nostalgia. No one would believe this used to be a thriving town.

Will Works helped the Eder family to move to Oklahoma long ago but their names of Ederville, Works, etc. remind us of the passage of time.

mine located