



WHITE, JOHN W. <sup>THIRD</sup> INTERVIEW.

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Linnaeus B. Ranck, Interviewer.  
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Interview with John W. White  
Shattuck, Oklahoma

By 1903, the cattle business ceased to be the leading industry in the western end of the Cherokee Strip for this region had been practically all preempted by the "settlers". There remained only a few small ranches. No longer than a year later the same condition obtained in No Man's Land or Beaver County. The process of taking up Beaver County public lands differed slightly from the homesteading of the extreme west end of the Strip. The land of the Strip was not so good as that of much of Beaver County and consequently while the last of the Strip was being homesteaded many homeseekers were pushing on west into Beaver County and preempting the rich, level black lands there instead of the rough and sandy area of the Strip.

So the cattle business on a big scale and in the true western way collapsed in Beaver County a short time after it passed into history in the west end of the Cherokee Strip.

Their kingdom was wrested from them by the hordes of homeseekers and during the late summer of 1902,

from about July 20 to September 20, the final real roundup of this once vast cattle domain occurred.

This roundup was no small undertaking and therefore required a great deal of intelligent planning and careful thought to carry the project out. This roundup was to include a lot of the north Texas Panhandle, all of No Man's Land and the western portion of the Cherokee Strip. It covered an expanse of open country about 100 miles north and south and about 250 miles east and west.

Along a course southeast through the heart of the region over which the roundup outfit was to work cattle, Beaver Creek and Wolf Creek flowed. Beaver Creek heads well towards the west end of what was then Beaver County but is now Cimarron County.

The outfit for the roundup was organized and composed of thirty or more men.

At the beginning of the roundup the outfit started up Wolf Creek from this part of the country. "Dock" Fore, who owned a small ranch about fifteen miles northwest of Gage but who previously had been quite a big

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operator and prominent among the cowman, was selected as general boss or captain of the roundup proper when the outfit left these parts. John W. White was selected for wagon boss and cook. Others in the outfit follow:

Tom Hudson, foreman on the Chain C. Ranch, which at that time embraced most of what is now Harper County; Billy White, representing the C. G. Ranch of the Cimarron River country just south of Anglewood, Kansas; Mark Terry, another Chain C. Ranch puncher; Alex Young, representing the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers' Association; Ed Coffee, from the Gerlach Ranch or 7H's. This outfit belonged to the late John J. Gerlach of Woodward and his brother, George Gerlach. The 7H Ranch had headquarters near what is now Comarge, in the southeastern part of the present County of Ellis. What is left of the old E H Ranch now belongs to Oklahoma's junior senator, Josh Lee.

A young fellow whom the cowpunchers called "Clabber" from the Fritzland Ranch took part in this roundup, too, as did John Hammerly from the Lockhart Ranch on Beaver

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Creek west of old Fort Supply. "Jack" Campbell, representing the Spade Ranch, located on Beaver Creek northeast of Fort Supply took his place among those in this last roundup. "Medicine" Ben Steadman was there from the L E Ranch on Beaver Creek to the east end of Beaver County when the outfit started from this section and rode with them through it all. Last of those who took part was Tom Gafford, who came from the Eddleman Ranch on Clear Creek, about the southwest corner of what is now Harper County. The two Eddleman brothers owned the Eddleman Ranch. As a matter of fact, there were three Eddleman brothers, Ira, Bud and Elzie. Ira and Bud ran the ranch in this country and Elzie ran a large ranch in Texas.

The roundup outfit worked up Wolf Creek and its tributaries well past its headwaters and swung to the north and returned down Beaver Creek. They proceeded west near the west end of No Man's Land. They worked Beaver Creek and its tributaries, too, and followed their eastern course and wound up on Coffee Creek,

northwest of Fort Supply. Here the outfit disbanded and its members went their several ways.

Quite a pow-wow was held at the end of this roundup. Most, or at least many who took part, well knew it was their last roundup. Some who took part were men well up in years who had spent their life on the plains and prairies of the West punching cattle. This fascinating life and industry had been wrested from them by the "nesters" and "settlers". They gave it up with misgivings and melancholy regrets.

"Dock" Fore, who started as general boss of the outfit, was a "Squaw man"; his wife being a Cherokee. About 1903, probably at the end of the roundup, Dock Fore took his family and what cattle he had and ventured into the Texas Panhandle. Mrs. Fore rather ~~dreaded~~ the move, but Dock could not give up ranch life and the cattle business. He held fast in the Panhandle for many years but finally was forced out there and went on west into New Mexico, determined to stay in the saddle to the last.

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After he was out of the cattle business on Clear Creek about 1903, Bud Eddleman went on west into New Mexico to continue there where homesteaders would not drive him out for awhile. Ira Eddleman located at Woodward after he left the ranch on Clear Creek but long since went to California and entered the Insurance business. Ira Eddleman was a gentleman of the first water; dignified and intelligent. He was an educated man, too, having been schooled and trained for a druggist. He stood well with the cowmen and was respected and admired by the settlers.

"Medicine" Steadman died several years ago in Beaver County. His widow still lives in Beaver County.

Tom Hudson of the Chain C. Ranch, who took part in this roundup, replaced "Dock" Fore as boss or captain before the roundup ended since he knew the country on west better than Fore did.

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