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Interview with
Mrs. Ruth Roach Salmon

Place of Interview: Nocona, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins
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Business Oral History Collection

Mrs. Ruth Roach Salmon

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Place of Interview: Nocona, Texas

Date: November 7, 1984

Dr. Jenkins: This is Floyd Jenkins recording for the Business Archives Project, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, November 7, 1984. I am talking with Mrs. Ruth Roach Salmon, rancher and early wild west show bronc rider, and we are in her kitchen about three miles north of Nocona, Texas. We are on her ranch where she and her husband ranched for many years. Louise Addington, librarian in Nocona and a long time acquaintance of Mrs. Salmon and her family, is with us, helping with the interview.

Dr. Jenkins: Mrs. Salmon has been running this ranch alone now for the last, what, eleven years, since he passed away. Now, let's get you to go back and tell us what you know about your family background, kind of where you came from. Do you know about your grandparents, for instance, on your daddy's side?

Mrs. Roach: John Scantlin. He left the "g" off of his name. There wasn't a "g" on there. That was my Grandfather Scantlin. I can't think of all of their names. I haven't thought

of them in so long.

Jenkins: This is your father's father?

Salmon: Yes, Scantlin was my maiden name.

Jenkins: Do you remember your grandmother's name?

Salmon: Lynn Scantlin. I know they were on one of the sides. I never paid much attention to them.

Jenkins: Where were they?

Salmon: In Missouri. They were in Excelsior Springs for a long while.

Jenkins: How did they make a living?

Salmon: He had a bunch of men working for him painting and paper hanging.

Jenkins: Oh, so he was not a rancher, farmer or anything like that.

Salmon: No, he was nothing like that.

Jenkins: What about your mother's side?

Salmon: She was the best woman that ever lived.

Jenkins: So you know her father's name?

Salmon: I guess it was Craven. I think there were two or three of those Cravens. I was a little kid. I didn't know much about them.

Jenkins: So you don't remember much about your grandmother.

Salmon: No.

Jenkins: Do you remember her name after she married?

Salmon: Anna Pauline Scantlin. She is buried in Excelsior.

Jenkins: How about your own parents? Your father's name.

Salmon: My own father's name was John.

Jenkins: John Henry Scantlin. And your mother's name?

Salmon: Anna.

Jenkins: And they were raised in Missouri?

Salmon: Yes. They moved back from Excelsior and moved into
Kansas City, Missouri.

Jenkins: What kind of work did he do?

Salmon: He did the same kind of work, paper hanging and painting.

Jenkins: As your grandfather did.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: He probably grew up learning that trade, then.

Salmon: I guess so, yes, painting and papering. Kids would climb
over the fence and get it all over their clothes, but I
didn't.

Jenkins: And you were born where and when?

Salmon: I was born in Excelsior, the 17th of September.

Addington: Good, we know when to remember you.

Jenkins: So let's kind of get you growing up there in Excelsior.
How big a town was Excelsior?

Salmon: Oh, it was a pretty good size town. There was a school
where all of these people went. It was a good size school.

We would have to go by Big Springs and pump our water up to get a drink of water. We would pump the water, take a drink out of the cup and never wash it out and throw it in a big, old pan down there, and everybody did the same thing.

Jenkins: What kind of restroom did you have at the schoolhouse?

Salmon: A nice one, we had a nice one.

Jenkins: Indoors?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Flush toilets?

Salmon: Yes, we had a nice one.

Jenkins: How was the schoolroom heated?

Salmon: Stoves.

Jenkins: What kind?

Salmon: Big round ones, potbellied.

Jenkins: Wood or coal maybe?

Salmon: Both.

Jenkins: Now as you were growing up there in town, did you have horse experiences?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: When was your first horse experience?

Salmon: My uncle lived out in the country three miles. He lived out there, and they had some Shetland ponies. I wanted to ride them. I would get on them ponies and ride out there, and I was just a kid. I was just big enough to get

on them, but I would ride. I would jump the horses and do everything else, but I would still stay on them. I would get hold of the mane and away I would go.

Jenkins: You got used to horses very early in life.

Salmon: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: And we should say that Mrs. Salmon was a rodeo or a wild west rider, one of the first women wild west riders in the United States, if not the world.

Salmon: When you see some more of these papers and pictures, and you will see.

Jenkins: How old do you suppose you were when you first got on a horse? Do you have any idea at all?

Salmon: I was about three years old.

Jenkins: You were pretty much raised on a horse, were you?

Salmon: I wanted to ride horseback, and then I wanted to get in the swimming pool and ride out there to that water we had out there. You know that salt water? You know what it is, at Sioux City, Iowa, and I hadn't been in any of that water before. And I thought, "I sure would like to get in there and swim." And this uncle of mine came close. And I said, "I will tell you, put me in one of those rings. Everybody else has got hold of them rings." Now he said, "You hold to them rings." And he got me back and pulled me out of there, and said, "Drop, drop." I dropped and my eyes were open and I was going down. And the man that was

with me said, "Come on, come on." He would get back a ways. "Come on." I was going just like a frog. My legs were beating the water.

Jenkins: You said that by your best recollection you got on a horse when you were about three years old, or something like that.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: So you were kind of raised on a horse.

Salmon: Yes, I would ride them.

Jenkins: Let's grow you on up in Excelsior, seeing what is happening to you there before you leave there. So you grow up, and you go to school there.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Finish school?

Salmon: No, I didn't finish, but I went to school there.

Jenkins: How many grades did they have there?

Salmon: They had twelve. On one side of the school they had eight, and on the other they finished four more the next year. These people that we are talking about, they are aunts of ours, they are aunts. And everytime we done anything at school, they would tell it.

Jenkins: How many years of school did you finish?

Salmon: Eight.

Jenkins: And what did you do after you quit school?

Salmon: I married before that. I married before I quit.

I married Bryant Roach.

Jenkins: Bryant Roach, and in Excelsior?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: How long did you stay in Excelsior before you left?

Salmon: We stayed five months down there. That was when the war broke out, you know.

Jenkins: What were you doing? Were you doing any riding after your marriage before you left Excelsior?

Salmon: Yes. They had a bunch of ponies there that they turned loose, like show people, you know.

Jenkins: This was just right after you married and before you left Excelsior, and you were riding somebody's horses. Show people.

Salmon: Yes, show people's horses. And that was when they told us that when we fell off in the creek we would get \$2 and if we just fell off we would just get \$1. We were little kids riding.

Jenkins: Was this in a show?

Addington: What were they doing, filming a picture show?

Salmon: Yes, we were working in a picture show.

Addington: It was on location for a picture show.

Jenkins: So you were in movies at that time as a rider?

Salmon: In Excelsior as a rider. I was a kid. They had to lift me up and put me on those hooks and tell me to drop off. I tried to drop.

Jenkins: But you were married at this time.

Salmon: Yes. I would tell them I wanted to get up there. They said, "All right, go on."

Jenkins: Okay, now what caused you to leave Excelsior?

Salmon: Because I got married.

Jenkins: You got married, and where did you go?

Salmon: I came back to stay in Excelsior for quite a while. Then my mother passed away. My daddy married again, and I left and stayed away from him.

Jenkins: Where did you go from Excelsior?

Salmon: I went and made shows. I wanted to tell you something about my horses. They turned those horses loose, you know all the high class people where they ride up in the mountains. They turned them horses loose in town, and everybody would grab a horse, and I grabbed one, too. I would get a white horse. I would ride him, and he would be the last one to go eat, you see. And then they would stay up there. There would always be two or three boys up there waiting for the horses. They would stay an hour up there eating. And I would go. If my daddy had seen me up there running around, he would have whipped me, but he couldn't catch me. So we made the corner, and everytime we would make that corner the horse would buck me off, and I would go to crying. And they would say, "Well, get up and get on him again." And I would get up and ride in the barn. Then I would ride back home. One of the

boys said, "Let me look at that thing, Ruth." And I said, "All right." He looked at it, and somebody put a cucklbur under the blanket. I went on and rode him just the same, and he bucked me off just the same.

Jenkins: You went with a rodeo type outfit before you left Excelsior?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Do you remember what outfit it was?

Salmon: 101 Ranch, Mr. Joe Miller. The Millers' had three boys and one girl was the daughter, and she lived at Ponca City.

Jenkins: Oklahoma?

Salmon: Yes. When I would get up there I would get so tickled. I would want to get up, and I would say, "My teeth are hurting. I want to go down and get my teeth worked on." This woman would say, "Well, are your teeth hurting?" And I would say, "Yes, a little bit." But I wanted to get away from that old Indian looking woman, you know. Because she would sit over there a long, long time, and I would want to go around town. And Ponca City is a little, old town, you know, just a little, old, tacky town when I would get up there every time.

Jenkins: You joined the 101 Ranch while you were in Excelsior?

Salmon: In Excelsior, yes.

Jenkins: And then you went out to Oklahoma with the 101 Ranch.

Salmon: Yes, I went.

Jenkins: Let's pick up there and see what you did while you were

operating out of Oklahoma with the 101 Ranch. You were traveling across the country with a wild west show.

Salmon: Wild west shows, yes. They have fairs, and Tommy Kiernan is the one that did all of that advertising. He did all the advertising, made all the arrangements for us. We stayed with the 101 until it was real late.

Jenkins: Let me dig in on the 101 Ranch a little bit. Was that the Miller Brothers?

Salmon: The Miller Brothers they were, and he had a sister. One of them was a sister. And I would ride to town in one of them little wagons that could turn. I would ride with her. I thought I was just playing everything. I would sit just as close to her. She just had a seat for two, and she did all of the driving, and I would have to sit over here. And I would say, "That won't go off in the ditch, will it?" She would say, "No, it is all right. We are all right." We would go nine miles to Ponca City. And I would go down to her house where her mother was living. Then we would come back the same day. Go slow. It didn't take very long to get anywhere.

Jenkins: I have some notes here from the first time that we talked about some experiences with the Indians while you were with the 101 Ranch.

Salmon: They gave all the people a three-room house to live in. And the married people like Bryant and I, we would have a front room and another little room. They fed all of us.

They fed everybody there. Everybody went about, I guess, four miles, ride horses up there and eat. Stay all afternoon. That is the way we worked up there.

Jenkins: And the Indians?

Salmon: The Indians were with us, too. Dancing, we were all together. The Indians were dancing, too, the Ponca and all of them.

Jenkins: There was something about Indians and money. Does that strike a note to you?

Salmon: Yes, because the Sioux's has more money than any of the rest of them. But they got out there and the boys used to say to the girls, "Y'all stay close to us because we don't know where there is a place where somebody might step off there and drown. You stay close to us." We would stay just as close to that old Indian. I had one old Indian woman, I have got her gloves in there now. They asked me if I had anything old, and I said, "Yes, I have got those old kid gloves." Fringe all over them down the side. I can just start to tell you things that happened. I looked up one time when I was out there, and I was fooling around. I saw someone open a gate out there, they were in a pasture working down there, and I started to run. And I climbed a tree. I got up that tree. I was looking over there, and they said, "Stay up there Ruth, stay up there. Here comes that buffalo after you."

Jenkins: Did they make motion pictures?

Salmon: Motion pictures, yes, they made motion pictures.

Jenkins: Do you remember some of the motion pictures and some of the people, the stars of them?

Salmon: I knew one had a sweetheart, had a man up there living with her.

Jenkins: But you don't remember any of the pictures that you made, the names of the pictures?

Salmon: I couldn't remember right now. Let me see. The stars, I used to go with them, you know. We would all go together out there. We were all together. Then we would go at dinner time, go to the ranch house up there, to what they called the ranch house. A man and his wife cooked for us. We would all eat. Everybody would eat together, you know. All of the rodeo people would eat here, and different ones would eat other places. They would always say, "Where is Ruth tonight?", "Where is Ruth today?" "She is up there where those monkeys (for one of the acts) are." I would stay up there with the monkeys. They would close them big gates down there and clean out the cage, and I would stay up there to look at the little baby lions. They would clean them out, see, and I would stay out there. The old man would be inside, and I would stay out there. They would say, "Where is Ruth?" "She is up there petting the baby lions."

Jenkins: How long did you stay at the 101 Ranch before you went to

Europe?

Salmon: The first time?

Jenkins: Yes.

Salmon: Five months.

Jenkins: Only five months at the 101 Ranch before you went to Europe.

Salmon: Yes, we stayed there, and then they brought us back to New York City. And we would stay there and practice. Girls were riding, trying to ride horses so they could be ready for the show. About four weeks. We stayed about four weeks.

Jenkins: So you really were just getting ready to go to Europe.

Salmon: Getting ready to go to Europe, yes.

Jenkins: So you didn't do a lot of traveling at that time.

Salmon: No, no. We had rodeo boys there; Indians, too. All of them were ready. Everybody was doing something.

Jenkins: At one time you talked about the Cowboy Rodeo Association and the cowboy strike. Was that while you were out there or after you got back from Europe? Cowboy strike.

Salmon: Well, they would strike different times. Different times they would strike out there.

Jenkins: Was there a strike, as you remember it, while you were in Oklahoma?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Do you remember anything about it? Why they struck, for instance.

Salmon: They had to strike out there because they were killing people up there at that time. Four months, you know. We stayed four months up there. We all exercised and worked with shows, and then they came back. This old man Miller got up and made a speech and said, "The ones that wants to stay with me," that is his oldest brother, Joe Miller, said, "you are all welcome to stay, and I will pay you like I always have." Let me see. I don't know what has happened to them.

Jenkins: Were they striking, then, for safer conditions?

Salmon: Yes, they killed them. You bet they were.

Jenkins: You really, though, were mostly getting ready to go to Europe.

Salmon: Getting ready to go to Europe. They were exercising them. They roped some of the girls out there. They said, "Ruth, get up on one of them horses." I said, "All right." I got on. Zack Miller now was the youngest rodeo man. He said, "You don't need to train or anything. You are all right." I just stayed on them horses. They couldn't get me off.

Jenkins: Let's get you to Europe the first time now.

Salmon: Well, four months we stayed.

Jenkins: About when did you go to Europe? 1914 I think you said.

Salmon: 1914.

Jenkins: And you stayed over there how long?

Salmon: Five months.

Jenkins: Okay. Let's talk about some of the things that you did and

some of the places that you were in Europe that first time. Where did you do your wild west shows in Europe?

Salmon: We went over there and we stayed over there. After Mr. Miller got through with his cold weather up there then. This is Joe Miller. We stayed up there four months. They took care of us: they put us in a house, they fed us and took good care of us until we came back.

Jenkins: Were you doing about the same thing in Europe that you had been doing over here?

Salmon: Yes, about the same.

Jenkins: What kinds of things went into a wild west show at that time? You did what yourself?

Salmon: I went on the stage.

Jenkins: And did what?

Salmon: Rode bucking horses. Bucking horses on the stage.

Jenkins: So what you did was bucking horses?

Salmon: Yes. This was later on, and I wanted to ride. I said to one of the boys sitting next to me out there, I said, "I wish we could find somebody I knew up here. I don't know any of these people up here at Paris." One of the old boys punched me over there, and said, "You don't know me?" I said, "No, I don't think I do." He said, "When that buffalo got out and you went up that tree, you remembered everybody, didn't you?" I said, "Yes."

Jenkins: What other kinds of acts were there in the wild west show

in addition to what you did?

Salmon: They rode bucking horses, and they trick rode, they roped steers and calves on stage. We done everything.

Jenkins: Were there any other women in the rodeo besides you?

Salmon: Yes, this man's wife and another woman and myself.

Jenkins: What did the other women do?

Salmon: They rode broncs, too.

Jenkins: The same thing. All of you did bronc riding.

Salmon: This boy's brother, Tommy Kiernan that put the show on out there, he said, "Now, go out there and fix that good place so she can tie up on that fence out there when she gets ready to get on the bucking horse." You know how you drive, don't you, how to drive cattle and everything? This brother of Joe's went out there to get up on this horse, and he fell down. Instead of putting the boards in cross-ways so you had a place to climb, they put them in upside down. That is what they done, and I was ready to get on this horse and they were upside down on there. I said, "What is the matter with that horse?" He said, "You better get off of that horse." I fell down on the side, and they put them back up again and put them up right.

Jenkins: Now you were in Paris, France. Where else?

Salmon: London, Dublin, Ireland, Belgium. I stayed over there. Four weeks a show, each show, every day.

Jenkins: And each show was pretty much the same.

Salmon: Yes. And they fixed a place for us to have a place to go in and undress. You have been to show acts, haven't you? Some of the boys would hurry up and get through, and some of them wouldn't. I could sit here all week and tell you things they had done while we were out there. I played with them little lions. He would hug me, and I would hug him. I went in there one day, and one of the boys, one of the sons, had been drinking. And she said something to him. He said, "You leave that cat alone." They called them cats, you see. They were lions. "You leave that cat alone." He had scratched a long place, and he was licking that blood. They will do that on their arm. I could just sit here all night and tell you things.

Jenkins: I have some notes here about the first time that you went, and they took your horses from you.

Salmon: They did. They kept them over there. They used them and killed them. They used all them horses. I cried all the time I was over there in 1914.

Jenkins: They lost all the horses.

Salmon: All the horses. I had one I called Patsy, and they took her. They said, "Ruth, they are not going to take her." I said, "Yes, they are." And I cried all the time until we got away from over there.

Jenkins: What were some of the trophies and gifts that you got while you were over there?

Salmon: I have got some setting in here on the table. I got lots of gifts. I got this watch.

Jenkins: Were these all trophy type gifts, or were some of them personal gifts?

Salmon: Well, different kinds. Some are not and some are.

Jenkins: You are wearing a watch that was given to you in 1919.

Salmon: 1919, yes.

Jenkins: And you were saying that you would tell us about the same fellow who gave you this watch offering you a car?

Salmon: Yes, he wanted me to come back. And I said, "What have you got for me?" "Oh, it is something nice." And I went back down there and he was sitting down there. I have a picture of him in the car.

Jenkins: Why was he offering you a car?

Salmon: He wanted me to marry him. I didn't marry him. I wasn't going to marry him.

Jenkins: You turned him down.

Salmon: I wasn't going to marry him. He was all right. He was a nice fellow, but I was ready to do that rodeoing.

Jenkins: Now when they took your horses, then, the show was over. Is that right?

Salmon: Yes. They were still over there, they kept them over there, but killed a lot of them in battle.

Jenkins: You had to leave Europe.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: And come back to the United States.

Salmon: Yes. We came back.

Jenkins: Where did you go to?

Salmon: New York City. We had to stay on them old trains all night long. And they kept us off. And when they showed us the next morning what we had been doing, why, they were show people, see, and they all stayed and watched us come off the show.

Jenkins: Now you were saying that when you reached New York, the owner asked which people wanted to stay with him? Tell us about that.

Salmon: Well, they wanted us to stay. Mr. Joe Miller was the oldest one now. He said, "Y'all stay or go home, if you would like." Most of them stayed, but a lot of them went home. A lot of them were married and had children, and they went home. We didn't have any, so I stayed in New York.

Jenkins: With the show.

Salmon: In the show. That night a man there said, "Ruth, why are you dressed up tonight?" "I am always dressed up, aren't I?" He said, "Yes, you are always dressed up out there in the show ring." I went in there, and I was all dressed up. I don't get embarrassed very much, but I was sitting out there with this man, and my husband, and I looked around and tears were just flying out of my eyes. I was crying because I knew I couldn't see my horse anymore.

Jenkins: Your husband went on the tour?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Did he work with them?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: What did he do?

Salmon: He rode horses.

Jenkins: Oh, he was a performer.

Salmon: Yes, he was a performer.

Jenkins: And the two of you stayed with the show in New York.

Salmon: Yes, we stayed the show. We went out to New York and stayed out there quite a while.

Jenkins: How long were you in New York?

Salmon: I don't know exactly how long. They would give us houses to live in, two rooms in the front. And the boys, two or three of the boys, would have the back bedroom. They kept them locked. They fed all of us, they fed every one of us. We would ride clear up there, and get off the horses. Ride our horses up there and get off and eat.

Jenkins: While you were in New York, where did you perform?

Salmon: New York City and Boston and I don't know where else.

Jenkins: Still doing basically the same act.

Salmon: Yes. We had a nice place. They fixed a nice place for us to stay. I could sit here four or five nights and tell you all the things that I have done.

Jenkins: From New York, then, why did you leave New York? When did the show and you leave New York? How long did you stay there?

Salmon: I worked all the fairs. I would come back home, and I would go out again.

Jenkins: You would come back home to New York?

Salmon: Yes, I would come back over there.

Jenkins: When did you leave New York and not come back? When did you move to some other place?

Salmon: We were rodeoing then, making fairs. We were making fairs then.

Jenkins: All over the country, with Tommy Kiernan, our manager.

Salmon: Yes, all over the country. First one place and then another. Five days a week. We had our own horses.

Jenkins: When you never went back to New York, where was your home place? While you were traveling around making fairs, you simply lived wherever the fair was?

Salmon: Wherever it was.

Jenkins: You didn't have a home?

Salmon: No. We would go to a hotel and stay. Get in there after the show was over Saturday night, and then we would sleep until Sunday morning late, and then we would get up and start with another show.

Jenkins: Did you keep going back to New York, though?

Salmon: Yes, I would go back to New York. You bet. I was back there a lot. And this man introduced me, you see. It embarrassed me. I was sitting back there with another fellow there that was born and raised there in New York,

an old man. I forget his name now. And he had me introduced up there, and I was so embarrassed because I knew so many people up there. The boys used to stay downstairs where they were having these shows, and then have to go up steps, winding steps like that to go up there. And we kept on hollering at them, "Come on over here." They would say, "No, we want to stay by the steps." They had those short dresses, you know.

Addington: What year was that, 1920? I wanted to tell him about being with the Tom Burnett Show. About when was that?

Salmon: A bunch of the boys wanted to go over where they were rodeoing. Everybody said, "You better not go now, you won't make any money over there." And Clarence, my brother, you know my little brother?

Addington: No.

Salmon: I got him, and he said they told him that somebody was selling tickets over to that show. Now that show belonged to us. We put that show on.

Addington: Where did you put the show on?

Salmon: In Wichita Falls.

Addington: You and Bryant Roach?

Salmon: Me and Bryant Roach and Leonard Stroud's wife. I have a picture in there of his wife, we are sitting on a fence in there. Leonard Stroud and Bryant Roach and myself and his wife, we sold tickets over there.

Salmon: Yes, we sold tickets for the first ones over there. They wanted Clarence to go in there and sell some tickets. He said, "I don't know anything about that." He was just a kid, you know. So he left. He went up to the house. He said, "I don't want to stay down there where that bird is." But anyhow, whatyoucallit had bought me a horse, and had this Negro man riding him. He trained this horse.

Addington: Who bought you this horse?

Salmon: Tom Burnett. We went down to the show. They didn't have a place for anybody to go in down there.

Addington: Where did they have that show? Did he own a tent?
Burnett?

Salmon: Yes, he had a tent out there. Had partitions out there for them. Men on one side, men and women in the middle, ladies on the other side. That is the way you see them at the rodeos.

Jenkins: Now do you have any idea what year this was? You got back from Europe to New York in . . .

Salmon: '24.

Addington: It was in '24, this Burnett show.

Jenkins: So you picked up with the Burnett Show, then, kind of out of the New York thing.

Salmon: Tom Burnett was stuck on Lucille Mulhall. There was one old boy out there, he would sit there outside. Everybody

thought he was the smartest thing. He was a smart boy, kind. He would play a fiddle all the time, he would play a fiddle. Just the same old thing over and over. Everybody would say, "Shut that thing off, and let's do something else." There were some Indian women out there, and they told me, one of these women told me, they make these balls, you know, for a man to throw up and shoot at the shows. You've seen those? She lived nextdoor to me. And they said, "Do you know that woman has false hair?" I said, "No!" I was just a kid, you know. I didn't know about false hair or wigs. I have got her gloves right in there now, her gloves I saved she give me. I was going to tell you something else about that.

Jenkins: What did they make balls out of that they threw up to shoot?

Salmon: I don't know, but they cook them someway. They cook them and they come out white. They throw them up, and then the men go behind them and shoot. A boy in front goes, and he throws the balls up. This other one stays behind and shoots them, and they come down right then. That is the way they do it.

Jenkins: And you were with the Tom Burnett Show how long?

Salmon: Yes, I don't know how long. It was different times. Everytime he had one I would be over there with him.

Addington: That family gave that name the English pronunciation.

They called it Burnett. Burk Burnett was his father.

Salmon: I looked out there one day, Tom was drunk. Tom was over at our house then. A boy had worked for him, and he wanted to stay there with some women. And this boy didn't want him to. Now all this is the truth I am telling you. The boy said, "You come on and go home, I want to take you home." Chalk's father wouldn't speak to him, have nothing to do with him. He lived there in Wichita Falls. This old boy looked out there, and they all was dancing, Indians was running. I said, "What is the matter? What are they doing out here?" This man got off out there, and said, "Look what he done. He shot through his hat, that boy's hat." He didn't want that boy to stay out there with them women, and he shot him. The man was upstairs. They had been over to our house, and he shot a hole through that man's hat.

Jenkins: When you were with the Burnett Show, was that when you were doing the freelance rodeoing, just kind of picking up with whatever show happened to be around?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: You did a lot of that, then.

Salmon: Yes, we did a lot of that.

Jenkins: Now where were you living? You lived wherever the show was, I guess.

Salmon: Yes. Bryant's mother and father were awful happy when we got married, the first time I got married. He had lots

of money, this fellow that came from New York. He had lots of money when he came down there, and he got stuck on Bryant's sister. They built a home there. They didn't want us to go back to the rodeo business; they wanted us to stay there with them. They built a house just right across, like over here.

Jenkins: Is this in Excelsior?

Salmon: Yes. And built a house over there for us to live over there. We couldn't stay over there. We didn't want to stay over there; we wanted to get up and leave. So we did.

Jenkins: So you lived out of a suitcase a big part of your life.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: You didn't actually have a home, just wherever . . .

Salmon: We lived with his mother.

Jenkins: But when you were on the road rodeoing, you were . . .

Salmon: First one place and then another.

Jenkins: Hotels, etc.

Salmon: One of the girls went down there and they hollered, "Get up," one morning. They had put a train down there, and they don't go anywhere. When they ring that bell on that train, you better get up and get your clothes and get on that horse and ride out to the rodeo grounds. If you don't they are going to leave you.

Jenkins: You lived on the railroad a lot.

Salmon: Yes, we would go places.

Jenkins: And stayed in the railroad as a home.

Salmon: Yes, they had rooms just like they do in these big hotels. You bet. Everybody had their own room down there. Two of the men would be together, a man and his wife would be together.

Jenkins: Now have we got to Europe the second time and the Hippodrome?

Salmon: Yes, I went to the Hippodrome. That show was so big. We went over there, and it was so large that they had to put an extra team on out there.

Jenkins: What year did you go to Europe the second time?

Salmon: '24. Rode horseback.

Jenkins: Had your act changed much from the first time over there? Were you doing about the same thing that you had been doing?

Salmon: About the same. We rented a big home. We rented a big house over there, a bunch of rodeo people did. We missed doing their show, that big show, over there this last time. We had a man and woman to take care of the house and cook for us. We would all run in there and grab something to eat ahead of time. All but me, I would stay out with the donkeys.

Jenkins: So you went to Europe in '24 and stayed about how long this time?

Salmon: About five months. We stayed a long while.

Jenkins: And brought the whole act back this time; you didn't lose your horses.

Salmon: No, didn't lose any that time. Three big boats came out there right at Boston. We stayed out there all night long. I know they wouldn't let us take our horses off. They would feed them and put them back on the train, you see. We didn't move our horses until the next day because they wanted all the rodeo people to see these people. And I was always in the front.

Jenkins: I have a note here about Colonel Mulhall.

Addington: Colonel Mulhall, that was Lucille Mulhall's father. Didn't he have a western show, too?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Were you with that one? With Colonel Mulhall?

Salmon: Yes, I worked for him.

Jenkins: From '24 you came back to the United States after your second trip to Europe.

Salmon: Yes, that's right. We were in a house, a big house, there. Four of us had rented a big house.

Jenkins: Where?

Salmon: In Belgium. We came back the last of May from Belgium.

Jenkins: Where did you come back to in the United States after that second trip?

Salmon: We went to Paris; then Dublin, Ireland; then Belgium.

Jenkins: When you came back to the United States, where did you start working? In the United States after that second trip?

Salmon: Just one place and then another.

Jenkins: Still with the same rodeo?

Salmon: Yes, I have got pictures of it. I can show you my pictures. I can tell you through them faster than I can anything else.

Jenkins: Let's work you down to the 1936 State Fair of Texas, because things start changing about that time. You appeared at that 1936 State Fair of Texas, did you?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: I have a note here about someone giving you a horse. Who gave you a horse?

Salmon: Mr. Johnson had bought some horses. He was the man who had the show, Mr. W. D. Johnson. I was out there with Mr. Johnson; he had bought a lot of horses. We were at the barn. There was a man standing there, and he said, "I am going to give you a horse." I said, "What for? I have got some horses. I have got four horses here." "I am going to give you a pretty horse." He never said no more, and I never said no more. He sent the horse back down there, and it was a beautiful thing. Those horses that walk around in circles and get two feet on those rings in there and leave the other down. And they are

beautiful horses. And Mr. Mulhall said, "Here is this horse." And I just stepped on him. I wasn't afraid of no horses. And he just stood there. He wouldn't get out of the barn. And I had a whip, and I hit him with the whip. He bucked me off before I could get out of that barn. I got up and dusted myself off, and I said, "What is the matter with that horse?" He said, "I don't know. It is all right, isn't it?" I said, "Yes, it is all right, but it bucked me off." So another boy got on him, and he bucked him off. And I said, "I am going to ride that horse." But I didn't. I got on him, and he bucked me off again. But this old man came over there that owned these horses. There was another little fair over there, a rodeo, at the same time we had ours. And he said, "What is the matter with that horse?" And I said, "I don't know. He doesn't want to leave the barn." And I said, "Just send him back to that man and let him have him back." And I give him to that man. I took him over there, and he gave me \$200 for him. He paid me \$200.

Jenkins: But you never did figure out why he gave you the horse.

Salmon: No. He wanted to show him off.

Addington: Did anybody ever ride that horse?

Salmon: I don't know, they left there and went some place, I don't know where they went to. I didn't follow them.

Jenkins: At the '36 State Fair of Texas is where you met Fred

Salmon.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Tell us about that. How did you meet Fred Salmon?

Salmon: I had been to the show, I had been out to a show. Let me see, where was it? I had been rodeoing, and I got in kind of late. A woman and her daughter had a place there. They lived upstairs. They had a restaurant downstairs, and they lived upstairs. And I thought, well, it is getting kind of late. There was a man there, Mr. Ward was his name. He was awful good to everybody. Usually if I got in there late and I didn't have a place for my horse, why, I would take it up there, and he would put him up for me. I talked with this woman for a little while, and Fred got up and come over there. I had never seen him before. And he got up and come over there and stood there a few minutes. This boy said, "Ruth, I have got a good place," I told you this awhile ago, though. He said, "Now I have got a good place for the show." But he was going to leave his horses. He was going to leave them horses and was going to help with them. He wasn't doing nothing that I was doing, he was just leading the horses around in there. He introduced him to me, and pretty soon one of the boys said, "Would you get that bunch of horses down here?" And all these boys were over there talking to me, they had hauled horses from here, from Nocona now, over there to this place

down there, and that is where I met him. I just saw him there one time. So every time this guy would come in he would say, "What happened to that little woman that was over here the other night? Does she come back over here anymore?" He thought I was living close. He didn't know I was just living in Nocona.

Jenkins: Is this Fred?

Salmon: Yes, this is Fred. Yes, he was here. And we went to another show, and this boy was riding a horse, Fred was, Fred was riding this horse. This old steer threw his head up right then, and hit him right under the heart right here. This woman had us stay up there with her for about a month. She had two boys the same age crazy about old what-you-call-it. And we stayed right there and worked until he got better. And I drove him back.

Jenkins: Now you met him in '36.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: When did y'all get married?

Salmon: In '38.

Jenkins: You continued to rodeo then. Did you continue to see Fred for those two years?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Were you rodeoing then, close enough?

Salmon: Yes, I rode close in all the time.

Jenkins: Pretty much in the Texas-Oklahoma area, or what?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Did you continue to rodeo after you married Fred?

Salmon: I rodeoed everytime they had had a horse out there.

Jenkins: How long did you rodeo after you got married to Fred?

Salmon: I don't know. I was rodeoing all the time.

Jenkins: After you started ranching, you continued to rodeo.

Salmon: Yes, I started ranching. I bought some horses. I bought some. Fred had some, and I had some.

Jenkins: It was in '38, though, you started ranching, and you kind of rodeoed on the side.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Rodeoing became a sideline.

Salmon: I was riding my horse one night out there. They wanted me to ride around the arena. And I said, "Oh, I am tired of rodeoing. I just don't want to rodeo no more." Up on the top out there . . . You know where the Crenshaw's live, don't you?

Addington: Yes.

Salmon: Well, you know, they had to come down that hill. You come down a hill out there, and right out here all the rodeo boys and everybody had liquor. And they all stayed down there and drank a lot, you know. They would drink a lot; every time everybody would come in there they would have a bottle out adinking. I went over there to get on my horse, and Fred saw one of those boys

raise the backend of my car. He hollered at them, and said, "What are you doing out there?" He said, "I am getting a drink." He said, "Do you know whose liquor you're drinking?" He said, "It is mine." Dick said, "Don't take another drink." And he never took another drink. He put that backend down all right. And I was on this old horse now, getting ready to ride him. And I said, "Well, I will just ride that old pony. He wants me to ride him." And this horse was trained; this horse belonged to Fred. If you ever laid down on him or put both feet up, and you didn't get hold of that horn of that saddle and that leather back there, you were a goner, you were gone. So this old horse took out, and the boys had all gone to the barn to drink, I guess, or to do something, the boys had gone out there. And I got on that horse, and he kind of stopped a little bit, and I hit him a little bit. And god-dog that thing bucked me off again. I fell right on my back, and it liked to have killed me, too. Because I put both feet up in the air now, and had hold of the horn on this side and the leather over here, and when the horse was running I put them up. The boy got one of the horses and was going to stop, he thought he was using him for a roping horse, you see, and the horse stopped. And he stopped and I did, too.

Jenkins: When did you give up rodeoing?

Salmon: Oh, I don't know. I haven't rodeoed since a long time. I bought a lot of horses. I have got my horse shoe brand on my horses.

Jenkins: You don't remember how long you rodeoed after you got married and moved here?

Salmon: I lived two years over here, south of this place, then we bought this place and moved here. Fred lived in a rent house, a house that he had. It wasn't his. He had had that horse about . . . oh, I don't know how many years he had had it, and I liked him very much. He was a gentle old horse. Then I got to riding.

Jenkins: You don't remember the last rodeo that you rode in?

Salmon: No, but I would ride with Fred every morning. We would go out and ride the horses every morning and bring them in.

Jenkins: You moved here in '38.

Salmon: In '38.

Jenkins: Did you ride on into the '40s in rodeos?

Salmon: Yes, you bet. I don't know how long I rode. Do you know how long I rode?

Addington: No, I don't remember.

Jenkins: Let's get back to the ranch then, and give us a sketch of Fred Salmon's background up until you knew him.

Salmon: He wanted to come down there all of the time to see me. I didn't care anything about it. I wanted to go rodeoing. He would saddle up my horse occasionally. We married two years after that.

Jenkins: What do you know about his parents or grandparents?

Salmon: Dick Salmon was one of the best men I ever knew.

Addington: Dick Salmon and Fred Salmon are the same. His name actually is Fred, but we call him Dick. Everybody does. Sometimes she says Fred and sometimes she says Dick, but it is the same fellow.

Jenkins: What is his father's name? Did you know his father?

Salmon: Yes.

Addington: His father died a long time ago. His father's name was Wilburn Salmon.

Jenkins: Give us a sketch of the Salmons.

Addington: He married Mrs. Salmon. Her maiden name was Mattie Walker. When she came out to this country she was married to Dr. Salmon. And Dr. Salmon died, and they had this ranch here. Dr. Salmon was practicing medicine across the territory in Spanish Fort and here, there and yonder, and ranching also.

Jenkins: About when was this?

Addington: I don't know. I would have to look at the graves to see when they were born to tell you. Wait a minute. I have a write-up on the family in a book in the office. It was published in 1907. I sure have. It was right there in that safe in that office we were in. While I was there I forgot about that.

Jenkins: We could make a copy and put it in here.

Addington: Right, we need that. Back here when Dr. Salmon died, Wilburn Salmon, his brother, was up here helping Mrs. Salmon ranch, and they got married. Now Mrs. Salmon at that time had one daughter, Maria, Mrs. Hoben. Then Mr. Wilburn Salmon and Mrs. Salmon married. I believe, wasn't Harry the oldest boy?

Salmon: Harry and then Dick.

Addington: And then Dick. Yes, then Helen. She was Helen Salmon, Mrs. Henley; and Thelma, Mrs. Howard: then Raymond. We called him Boss all the time. You are going to run into Raymond and Boss. The youngest boy was named Wilburn for his father, and they called him Bill all the time. It sounds like when you hear the names it sounds like they had an awful lot of family, but the boys all had two names apiece, except Harry.

Jenkins: What was her father's occupation?

Addington: Mrs. Salmon's father was named Walker, and they came from Tennessee. They came down around Gainesville, somewhere down in there. I don't know, but it is in this little book that I have got there. It never occurred to me to think about bringing that little book.

Salmon: Bring that little book.

Addington: I sure will. I will bring it out here and let you see that. I will tell you where I bought this book, how I bought this book. I borrowed it from Gladys. It is a

Salmon book, and I borrowed it from Gladys. I took it back one morning when she was in the basement washing. I heard that washing machine just a-pumping. I hollered, and I couldn't get her. I laid it down with Mrs. Broadus' Cookbook, an 1858 cookbook, I laid the two books down on an old marble topped dresser. You know how Gladys' house was. She bought secondhand furniture, and by-God you just barely could walk through there. And you couldn't do that if you were very wide in the butt. You had to be kind of narrow to get through her house. Well, I laid these two books down, and she jumped me out about it. She said, "You never did return that book." I said, "I returned both of them." She said, "You brought the cookbook back, but you didn't bring the other book back." I said, "I put them both there." She said, "I will look again." And year after year she kept questioning me about that book. Just as I laid those two books down that morning and walked out, little Bill drove up. Little Bill was picking her up, going to feed cattle with her. She had had some kind of a sick spell. Well anyhow, time rocks on and Ms. Gladys dies and Mattie Lenore, her daughter, jumps me out. "Mud Dear said you didn't bring back that book." I said, "I sure did. I know what Mud Dear said, but I brought that book back." Well, little Wilburn dies. And then Glen Wilson tells me . . . " Shirley,

(that is little Bill's wife) "has got a book by old Captain Paddock that she wants to sell," and Glen says, "You have been wanting this book, and I have already got one." I said, "Send her by here because I want the book." She came by, and she wanted \$50 for it. I gave her a check right quick and took the book. I typed out a receipt and had her sign a receipt, and that is that book that Gladys claimed I stole. Who got it was little Bill, and his widow sold it to me. I have finally got that book. It cost me \$50 to get that book.

Jenkins: Now we need to get back to sketching Fred Salmon's background.

Addington: Then his father died a long time ago. These kids were very small.

Jenkins: The father was engaged in what?

Addington: He was a rancher out here. Now he wasn't a doctor, he was a rancher. They ranched out there, and he died very young. The boys helped Mrs. Salmon ranch and helped her raise her family.

Jenkins: Do you have any idea what kind of ranch that he developed before he died, in terms of size and location?

Addington: I would have to look at that map and show you how many acres, but I don't have any idea how many acres were in

that Salmon Ranch unless I get a better map.

Jenkins: Where was it located? Approximately.

Addington: Well, it was approximately a little better than 10 miles north of Nocona, and it was in what was known as the old North Montague Oil Field, when it was developed out there. I believe, but I couldn't swear to it, I would have to look at my map, I believe it was in Samuel Little Survey. But anyway, it is 10 miles northeast of Nocona.

Jenkins: Lots of acres in it.

Addington: There were lots of acres in it.

Jenkins: Several sections, maybe.

Addington: At least two sections. Like I say, I can't tell you.

It was a big ranch, and it was just north of the J. W. Roland place. J. W. Roland had a whale of a spread there.

Jenkins: Was it cattle?

Addington: Rowland had cattle until he started getting oil in 1921 and 1922, and he thought "what-the-hell with those cows;" and he moved to town and lived off of his oil, and they are still doing it. Those wells have been pumping 60-odd years.

Jenkins: You are talking about . . .

Addington: The Salmon Ranch and the Rowland Ranch which was north of it. That will give you a better idea where it is, because people see the name Rowland as they go down the road going to Spanish Fort.

Jenkins: So the ranches were not only cattle ranches, but they were oil fields.

Addington: They developed along about 1920. But they grew fine cattle. They had nice grass, grew fine wheat out there.

Salmon: I went every morning to feed, too.

Addington: The portion of it that Fred had, the portion that he inherited, she went with him to feed cattle down there, and they had a nice, big spread down there. Mrs. Henley has part of it on the east side of the road, and Gladys had some back up on the hill, Gladys and Harry. They took their part back up on a hill where there was a windmill. I don't know just how much land there was in there.

Jenkins: Was the part that you indicated that was south, was that a part of the same homestead?

Addington: No. The Salmon holdings were all out here. Dick's parents' holdings, what his mother had, and he helped her look after it. Now this ranch that I am telling you about, that is south of Montague, they bought that later.

Jenkins: Okay, she can pick up on that.

Addington: She can pick up on that.

Salmon: I had a big wood stove out there. I have got it out there now. I have still got that old stove that I had.

Addington: Did that come from the place south of Montague?

Salmon: Yes.

Addington: Whose place was that once upon a time? Whom did you buy it from?

Salmon: Oh, that guy was over here today. What was his name?

Addington: I don't know. That is why I can't find it. The map has got the man's name on there from whom they bought it. The map I was looking at was 1924, and they didn't buy that until in the '30s.

Salmon: Dr. Porter.

Addington: Dr. Porter's place south of Montague.

Salmon: He was the one we bought it from.

Addington: Is it closer to Denver than it is to Montague? You see, Denver is a little community down there just south of your place.

Salmon: I don't know where Denver is.

Addington: I know where the place was. I have passed by it a time or two and people point it to me and said, "That is Dick Salmon's place," and it wasn't very far from there to the Denver Schoolhouse. You don't know where Denver is.

Jenkins: Did Fred get involved in any ranching organization?

Salmon: No. He didn't want to be, I don't think.

Jenkins: Did he ever get involved in any civic organizations?

Salmon: No. Dick was a good man.

Jenkins: In terms of going to town and joining the Kiwanis . . .

Salmon: No, he never did do that.

Addington: When he went to town I tell you what Dick did. When he went to town he talked to first one banker and then the other. He met the other ranchers, and they went to the coffee shop. And you would just hear the

gosh-awfullest giggling going on over there. They were telling each other funny things that happened and enjoyed the company. Then he came home and went to work.

Jenkins: So you two set up ranching here in '38, did you?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Well, let's get a sketch of what all that you did on that ranch.

Salmon: We raised cattle.

Jenkins: Did you get out and ride and help . . .

Salmon: I got out and rode and helped him move them cattle. I helped him take care of all the cattle. We sold cattle, we bought cattle. Got all brands. He gave me his brand now. I have got a brand on the loin.

Addington: What is your brand?

Salmon: Horseshoe on the leg here on the right side, and a horse-shoe on the loin on the side. I have got two brands.

Jenkins: Do you still brand?

Salmon: Yes, I still brand.

Jenkins: Has there been much change in the way you do branding from when you first started?

Salmon: No, because I have Dr. Porter to come over here. He is a good doctor. He brings a man with him, and we take him up here on this place.

Jenkins: But you round them up just like you did in the old days?

Salmon: We round them up. We don't run them. Sometimes we run

them, but I tell them about it.

Jenkins: You pen them up?

Salmon: We pen them up. When I first moved out here with Dick, they were all jumping on him, raising the devil with him. I was trying to help him all I could. They didn't want to give nothing away. They were afraid their brothers or sisters were going to get something. We cut through the fences down there and went on through anyhow. They didn't stop us, either.

Jenkins: Today you pen them up.

Salmon: Pen them up.

Jenkins: Do you throw them or put them in a chute to brand them?

Salmon: A chute.

Jenkins: They are standing up while you are branding. Is that the way you did it in '38?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: You never did throw them like they do in the cowboy show.

Salmon: When I came out here they had that big long barn, out there. Just enough for a few little calves, and I would get some feed and put on the outside so they could have it.

Jenkins: How did you get your cattle to market?

Salmon: In trucks. Then I have got a trailer out here. I bought a trailer, too.

Jenkins: What market did you take them to?

Salmon: We would take them down here to Bowie.

Jenkins: But you never did ship them to Fort Worth?

Addington: Yes, she did at first.

Salmon: At first we had them loaded up. Mr. Johnson would bring those bars down there, you know.

Jenkins: Big trucks.

Salmon: Yes, trucks. We would put them in there.

Jenkins: And take them to the market at the Fort Worth stock-yards.

Salmon: We would also take them to the Fort Worth Stock Show.

Jenkins: But now you don't go all the way to Fort Worth.

Salmon: No, we ship to Bowie. It is one of the biggest ones we have got down there.

Jenkins: Do you still run as many cattle today as you did in '38?
Do you run more cattle today?

Salmon: I run more cattle. And I run them, too. I run my part.

Jenkins: Do you run as many cattle today as you have ever run?
Did you ever run more cattle than you do today?

Salmon: No, about the same.

Jenkins: About how many do you run today?

Salmon: Cattle?

Jenkins: Mother cows.

Salmon: I think I have got about 40 some-odd cows. Then we have got 30 or 40 calves ready to go. We have got a bunch of calves ready to go. We have got 32 little baby calves.

Jenkins: In addition to the cattle, what else do you do with your land? What else have you used your land for? Oil and cattle and grain?

Salmon: No, we have never mixed up in that grain. I haven't. We have sent too many people to the penitentiary.

Addington: You don't plant grain to graze anywhere?

Salmon: No, I don't plant anything like that out here.

Addington: Do you bale any hay?

Salmon: We did.

Addington: You used to bale hay.

Salmon: Used to bale hay. I had to stop that because it was about ready to die. They worked all day. I would take a big bucket down there and feed the men. They would wait until I got down there. I would have a big, old tub. Put them in the car and go down there and feed them.

Jenkins: At hay baling time. What would you take them in a bucket to eat?

Salmon: Everything I had: ham and everything else. Ham sandwiches and everything I could find I would take down there.

Addington: Fried chicken?

Salmon: Yes, fried chicken.

Jenkins: So you fed the hands.

Salmon: Yes, you bet.

Jenkins: But you don't have winter wheat or anything for grazing?
Rye or anything?

Salmon: No.

Jenkins: You have never really had a crop. It has always just been
cattle?

Salmon: Just cattle.

Jenkins: No cotton or anything.

Salmon: We had a little cotton, I think. We had a dipping vat
out there one time. We had to have a dipping vat.

Jenkins: Oh, you had to have a dipping vat for the cattle.

Salmon: Yes, for the cattle. They tried to jump over that big
ditch out there.

Jenkins: Now you raised sheep at one time.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Tell us about raising sheep.

Salmon: I bought sheep. I had the money.

Jenkins: This was your operation.

Salmon: Yes. I made lots of money down at that stock show.

Jenkins: But this was your operation, not Fred's.

Salmon: No, it wasn't Fred's. I said, "I want to get some sheep."
He said, "No, you're not." I said, "Yes, I am." And I
thought, "Well, I will go over to the bank and see Mr.
Cad McCall. I said, "I am going to go over there and
tell him I am going to borrow some of his money." He

said, "All right." And I went over there and borrowed \$300 and got these sheep. And a man and a woman came over there, and they said, "Can we fix a little tent up here back of your place." So you know how many houses we have got on this place here? Do you have any idea how many houses we have got out on this place?

Jenkins: No.

Salmon: 25. 25 houses, and we had all that, and the woman said, "Do you mind if we put up a little tent out here and sleep in it?" They had two little kids out there. I said, "Just put it up out there back of one of these little houses out here." They put it up out there, and they stayed out there. The next morning, by golly, before the sun come up they were out there shaving those sheep. They worked with those sheep out there a long time. And I bought one of them great big old warmers and put fire in there so the little sheep could be warm at night. I would go out there at night, late at night, 10 o'clock at night. Half the time Dick would say, "You are going to get caught out there. You better stay in here." And I said, "They better not catch me." He got so he had to come out there and feed the sheep, too. He liked them. I made lots of money on those sheep.

Jenkins: Did you say that you took them to shows? To the fairs and all? The sheep.

Salmon: No, I never showed my sheep at fairs. I sold them.

Jenkins: Did you show them any at the fairs?

Salmon: No, no, I didn't show them. They took the wool off of them. I sold the wool. One of the ladies here, Mrs. McCall, showed me how to tie up wool. I never did know anything about things like that because I never did do things like that. We had a big barn out there. They would take them sheep out there, and they would hold them a certain way, put that rope down there, tie it, put them over on one side, and they would take the wool to Fort Worth. I never did take them down.

Jenkins: Did you ever have a market for the meat?

Salmon: No.

Jenkins: You just sold wool.

Salmon: I like little sheep, and I couldn't stand it.

Jenkins: How long did you stay in the sheep business?

Salmon: Oh, Lordy.

Jenkins: Are you still in the sheep business?

Salmon: No, I am not selling those sheep now. I don't have any.

Addington: She hasn't had any sheep for a long time.

Salmon: A long time.

Jenkins: Were you in it for a long time?

Salmon: Yes. I stayed out there and played with them, see that they get the right titties. They would get the wrong mama, and they would cry and cry. I would go out there and get them on one of the others, and back I would come.

Jenkins: Why did you get out of the sheep business?

Salmon: Well, it was a lot of trouble.

Jenkins: Were you in it for ten years, do you suppose?

Salmon: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: For quite a long time.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: So sheep and cattle, what else on the ranch in terms of animals?

Salmon: Chickens.

Addington: Miss Ruth, didn't you use to bring them into town to sell already dressed, frying chickens?

Salmon: Yes, but I didn't dress them. I would have them dressed over there at the Johnson's place.

Addington: Oh, you got them dressed over there. I remember Molsbee's Grocery spoke about it, and they were complimenting you so. They said, "My Lord, that Salmon has got a woman that is working up a storm. She is bringing in chickens to town and bringing wool to town." And eggs, I remember you brought eggs.

Salmon: I would bring eggs to town. And I would go in the back-door and see this old boy that owned that place. I would say, "Say, go out there and see what I got for you. Chickens." He went out there and got them.

Jenkins: When was this?

Salmon: About the '40s.

Jenkins: How many laying hens did you have?

Salmon: Well, I went over to Mr. Johnson's over here now, and I said, "I want to buy some chickens from you now." He said, "All right, how many of them do you want?" I said, "I don't care, just sell me some. How about 500?" He said, "500, have you got any place for them?" I said, "I have got plenty of places for them. I have got a place as big as this room." I had some calves out there. I was going to tell you something else about them. I know so many dern things, that I can't think of all the things I do know.

Jenkins: So you were in the chicken business in a big way.

Addington: What Johnson did you buy these chickens from?

Salmon: The Mr. Johnson across the road.

Addington: Oh, across the road from you. Now how come me to ask this, Miss Ruth, you know there is a Johnson Ranch out south of Bowie there. I thought maybe you were buying them. They wouldn't be good fryers.

Salmon: No. I had this old man going in, and he was picking out chickens for me. He said, "This is no good, it is not fat." I said, "Throw it away and get me another one." He give me 50 chickens. Just give them to me. He said, "I am going to give you these chickens because I never had nobody buy that many chickens at one time in my life." I said, "All right." And I brought them

home with me. And do you know where that place is with all those houses up there? They had them little houses out there. You know that man that killed all them women up here, don't you?

Addington: Yes.

Salmon: That is the place it was.

Jenkins: So you had about 500 laying hens?

Salmon: Yes. And I had that little stove in there, and they turned it over one night. I had it in the cellar because I didn't have nothing else to do with it. And they turned it over, and it was black. One of the boys came running up the steps, and he said, "Say, something is the matter down there. The chickens are all black." Then when they grewed their little wings would get white and their little tails would be black. I thought that was the cutest thing.

Jenkins: Do you remember how much you were getting for eggs when you took them to town?

Salmon: No, I just had them in a case.

Jenkins: And you don't remember how much they were paying?

Salmon: No.

Jenkins: Now you sold eggs and you sold fryers.

Salmon: Yes, I sold chickens.

Jenkins: How long did you stay in the chicken business?

Salmon: A long time. Because I was wanting to get rid of them,

wanting to get rid of those eggs.

Jenkins: Several years?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Do you have any idea?

Salmon: No, I don't have any idea.

Jenkins: Are you still in the chicken business?

Salmon: I have got some chickens. I have got dogs come out there and caught a bunch of mine.

Jenkins: But you no longer take eggs to town or fryers.

Salmon: No, no eggs to town.

Jenkins: You got out of the chicken business.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: In terms of that. Cows, sheep, chickens. Did you ever get in the hog business?

Salmon: You bet, I got in the hog business.

Jenkins: Tell us about the hog business.

Salmon: I just helped Dick feed hogs all the time.

Jenkins: Did he always have hogs?

Salmon: He had a few. I was the first one out there, this place over there. We had moved over here. No, it was still over there. One of the boys said, "I want you to get out there and get that trailer up here and that buggy all fixed out here and everything ready. I want to put all of them hogs in there." And they killed twelve. And I thought to myself, "That is the biggest liar, I have gotten in with the biggest bunch of liars in the

world." Now that was the Hancocks and all them come up there and helped kill hogs. They killed twelve hogs that day and put them on a great big wagon. I had to go to town and get some salt, and we had to rub all their backs and go to town and do all of that. When I come back out there, I thought, "I won't have nothing out there to eat." There was not a thing bothered out there when they stayed out there because that salt was on there, you see. Twelve hogs. They were all big, too, I mean. We had them in the house out there. I would go out there and just whacked them off. I sewed I don't know how many sausage sacks. I worked on them sausage sacks, and I tell you I like to have worked myself to death over there.

Jenkins: You made your own sausage.

Salmon: Yes, my own sausage and sacked them.

Addington: You rendered your own lard, too.

Salmon: Rendered my own lard. I stayed out there with one of them paddles, back and forth.

Jenkins: Do you remember what you put into the sausage? How did you make the sausage?

Salmon: Some people made it different. Dick liked hot sausage. He would go in to one of the boys and say, "Put in some extra for me." And he had them labels put over there with marks around there, and he ate all of the hot ones. I didn't like the old hot ones. I like hot ones,

but I didn't want too many of them.

Jenkins: Did you mix your own sausage?

Salmon: Did I do it? No, I didn't, but a lot of the men did.

The men did.

Jenkins: The men did the sausage making. Now when you raised these hogs, was it for your own kitchen, or did you sell any of these?

Salmon: No, we didn't sell the dressed meat. They went around town there and sold quite a few hogs. Did you know that? They had it in the backend of a truck.

Addington: No, I don't remember them selling hogs.

Salmon: They sold part of them. This guy that is living over here, what is his name? You were talking about a while ago. He couldn't sell a fly. I don't know what his name is.

Jenkins: Do you still raise hogs?

Salmon: No, we don't have them anymore.

Jenkins: Been out of the hog business for a long time.

Salmon: Yes, been out of the hog business a long time.

Jenkins: Okay, so cattle, sheep, chickens and hogs. Any other animals?

Addington: Did you ever raise turkeys?

Salmon: Turkeys, I raised turkeys. Had a bunch of turkeys.

Addington: I thought I had seen turkeys.

Salmon: I had those great big old turkeys, and they would come up there and roost in the trees.

Jenkins: What did you do with the turkeys?

Salmon: Eat them.

Jenkins: But just for home?

Salmon: Yes. I didn't sell any, I don't think so.

Addington: Just raised a few to eat at home.

Jenkins: Did you raise horses?

Salmon: You bet. I raised some good ones.

Jenkins: Strictly for here or did you sell horses?

Salmon: Well, I had a bunch of horses.

Jenkins: Did you use them all yourself, or did you sell them?

Salmon: I had four that I used all the time when I was in show business. I kept those horses. And these two out here now I have got. I raised them. They were babies.

Jenkins: Did you ever sell horses?

Salmon: I don't know if I sold them or not.

Jenkins: You didn't really raise horses to sell, you raised them for your own.

Salmon: No, I didn't ever sell horses.

Jenkins: Did you have any other animals around the farm? Dogs and cats, for instance.

Salmon: Lots of dogs and cats.

Jenkins: Is there anything in particular you want to say about dogs and cats on the farm? Did you have lots of dogs?

Salmon: I don't have any now.

Jenkins: Did you have lots of dogs?

Salmon: Yes, God, yes, I couldn't get out of the house.

Addington: And a whole backyard full of cats.

Salmon: Two of those greyhounds would run side by side and this here rabbit. And they would run until they would get to the end down there. The old rabbit didn't know how to run, and he would hit that wire down there and back he would come, and the two dogs would get him, two greyhounds.

Jenkins: Were all of your dogs greyhounds?

Salmon: Most of them. I have got some little baby dogs.

Jenkins: Why were you raising greyhounds?

Salmon: I don't know.

Jenkins: You didn't race them or anything like that.

Salmon: No, I don't know why I was raising them. I think everybody else was raising them, and I wanted some, too.

Jenkins: But they were just for around here, you didn't race them or show them or anything like that.

Salmon: No. I used them to chase wolves.

Addington: The wolves were after baby calves.

Jenkins: Tell us about the wolves and ranching and dogs to chase them.

Salmon: They would chase them good.

Jenkins: Did you have much trouble with wolves and coyotes killing your animals?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Did you lose a good many?

Salmon: Quite a few. We lost twelve one night.

Jenkins: Oh, really?

Addington: Twelve what?

Salmon: Calves. We had cut them out down here.

Jenkins: Your greyhounds killed a lot of wolves?

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: You and your husband ranched up until his death about eleven years ago.

Salmon: He died in '73.

Jenkins: And you have been running the ranch ever since.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: Give us an idea of what is involved, what you do in running this ranch today. From the time your husband died, kind of bring us up to date on what has been happening, and you have been handling it.

Salmon: I have had a pretty tough time. This boy here, he was staying here with us when Dick passed away. He built out this little shed out here on the side. You know where my car and my Cadillac is? I had a new Oldsmobile, and it would go in here, but this other one wouldn't, this Cadillac wouldn't. So they had to saw a place out out here, cut a hole in them and widen the garage.

Jenkins: Before Fred died you had one permanent employee on the place besides you two?

Salmon: There was always another man here sometimes.

Jenkins: Usually how many people worked all the time here, besides you and Fred?

Salmon: I had about four men that worked here, and they were putting in piping. I didn't have any at that place over there. We moved up over there, didn't have any place. And they were putting up pipe and doing this and doing that.

Jenkins: Were these permanent employees, people who worked for you all the time?

Salmon: No, sometimes they would work all right and sometimes they wouldn't come to work at all.

Jenkins: What was this pipe they were putting up?

Salmon: They were trying to fix for gas and things. They didn't have any gas over there.

Jenkins: They weren't ranch hands, then.

Salmon: No. Some of them were. Some of them were good oldtimers.

Jenkins: How many ranch hands did you usually have? Did you have people living on the ranch and working on the ranch?

Salmon: Yes. Living out there.

Jenkins: How many people?

Salmon: When we first went in out there they had four men, and Dick had two boys, his sons, and then we had some extra ones to work here. I cooked for six out here then. I liked to have killed myself working, too.

Jenkins: And they lived on the place and worked on the place.

Salmon: Yes.

Jenkins: We have gone over our outline. We have covered her career as best we can. Is there anything that you can think of that we should have asked you and didn't? Is there anything that you can think of, Louise?

Addington: No, I can't think of a thing. It seems to me we have covered it.

Jenkins: All right. Is there anything else about your career either as a rodeo rider or as a rancher that you would want to say before we move on to this last question or two? Do you think we have pretty well covered it? Let's get in this last thing, then. It doesn't deal with you and your ranch particularly. It is kind of between the two of you. Since you came here in '38 and started ranching, how differently is the land used now than it was then?

Salmon: It looked like a hog pen when I came up here. They had pulled up all of the covers. Everything in here, they had covered everything up. She took everything.

Jenkins: You are talking about the house?

Salmon: Yes. I said, "Put that ceiling down." I paid for all of this stuff. I paid for everything in the house.

Jenkins: You had to renovate the house.

Salmon: Yes. And in there they had a big quilt or blanket or something on the floor. I have got money enough to buy one. I had money enough to buy it, and I did.

Jenkins: What I want to explore is not just your ranch, but let's say Montague County and the difference between how people were using the land then and how people are using the land now.

Addington: One of the things that I notice is that there are no row crops now. And it is being planted to grass, and they are planting more coastal bermuda, which will graze the year around and does well. They are clearing out mesquite and clearing the trees. Just a lot of places that had scrub oak are clearing out. A lot of that is being done by wealthy people from the big cities that are buying this place and laying off a landing ground for a little private plane or for their friends to come in. And they, from some place, get the money to pull up all of these old trees and fill in these canyons. I was down at Red River Station here about two weeks ago, and I was astonished. The place was once so full of timber you couldn't have run a rabbit through it. It looked to me like four hundred acres of that timber had been plowed up. And the last time I went down there I saw green grass coming. I venture to say they have planted something in there for grass to hold it after they took the timber off. So we are getting rid of lots of timber and lots of mesquite and putting it back in grass. Grass is the thing they are after. Now there is not a cotton gin in the county today.

Jenkins: There used to be lots of cotton, then.

Addington: Right. This Red River valley down here was white with it.

Jenkins: What row crops were predominant?

Addington: Corn. Oh, truckload after truckload of corn. You know corn in the ear would come out of that river valley down here heading for the railroad.

Jenkins: It is reverting largely to grazing land.

Addington: Grass, grazing land. Kind of like it was when the pioneers hit the country. It is beginning to look more like it did. In fact I was up to a place over in Clay County. And the lady invited me out in the yard to look at something, and I was looking over the hill. I said, "My stars, this land looks nearly like it did when Papa described it as he saw it the first time." It was pastureland and the grass . . . they hadn't over grazed it and the grass was knee high. Papa said it was stirrup high. But many places you find grass now knee high, and they are getting rid of the mesquite.

Jenkins: What about changes in the people who are on the land now compared to what they were in the '30s or so on?

Addington: Now Sam Crownover said it better than anybody. He said, "I am ranching and running cattle on land now that we had seven families living on back in the '20s or '30s, but they were row cropping." He had seven tenant farmers

there that were row cropping. They are not row cropping anymore, so the tenant farmers have moved to town. There was a great exodus of people out of this county during the war. They went to California to work in the shipyard, they went to Fort Worth to work at whatever they were building down there.

Jenkins: Are there probably fewer people here now than there were then?

Addington: We have 10,000 fewer people in this county than was here in 1924. Yes sir, we have got 10,000 fewer people in Montague County. I got my figures out of the Texas Almanac, and I have had it a month because I got in an argument with people as to how they were. The peak of population in this county was in 1910.

Jenkins: What was it?

Addington: There were 25,123 in 1910.

Jenkins: At that time.

Addington: In 1960, 14,893; in 1980, 17,410.

Jenkins: There may be 15,000 now, then.

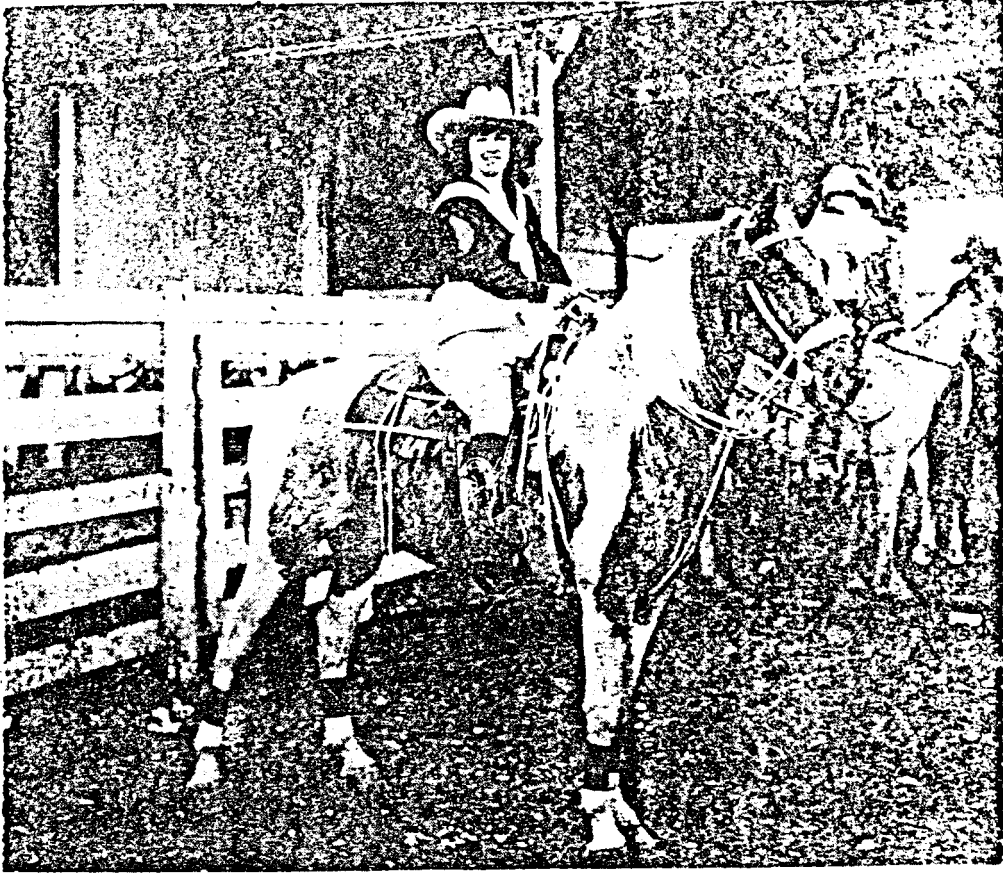
Addington: Right. Yes.

Jenkins: Okay. Is there anything else now, before we end this, that either one of you can think of that we would like to explore, anything else that you want to say? If not, then we will finish here, and we thank you both for a very interesting and informative interview.

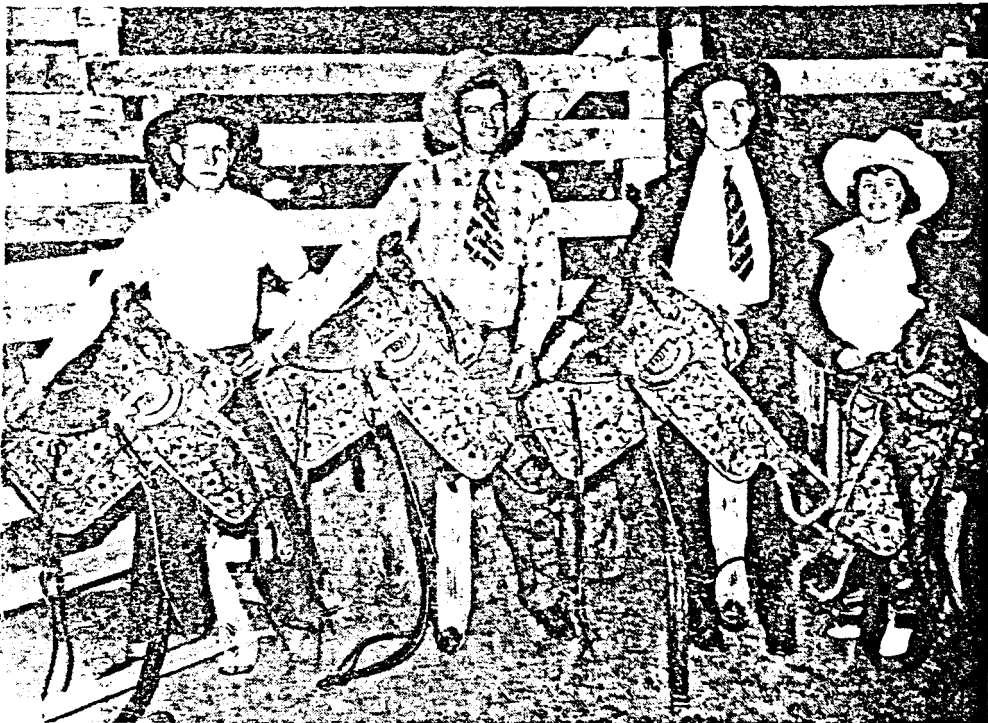
APPENDIX



RUTH ROACH SALMON



RUTH ROACH [SALMON] as she appeared in 1923 at the Fort Worth Stock Show.



THE WORLDSERIES RODEO was held in Madison Square Garden in New York in 1932 and winners included, from left, Floyd Sullivan, bronc riding; Dick Shelton, bulldogging; Everett Bowman, calf roping, and Ruth Roach [Salmon], cowgirl bronc rider.

Former Girl Bronc Rider Still All-Around Cowgirl

By Betty Stephenson

Ruth Roach Salmon hastily applied some bright red lipstick to her lips and patted her silver hair in place.

Though she lives in a country home near Nocona and may not see anyone during the day, she never goes around the house in a robe and slippers. "I dress as soon as I get up. We had to in show business, and I just kept it up," she said.

"Show business" was composed primarily of the rodeo circuit, when there were few women bronc or trick riders. She was one of the first and one of the best. She also acquired the "prettiest cowgirl" in America title.

She was born in Missouri and "always rode horses and donkeys." In 1914, when she was just a teenager, she decided she wanted to ride in a rodeo.

For two years she made movies at the 101 Ranch in Ponca City, Oklahoma and then attended fairs.

Rode First Bronc

She mainly stuck to trick riding until she attended the Centennial celebration in Fort Worth in the 1930s. It was there she attempted to

ride her first bucking horse. "It was most exciting," she said. "The first boy who rode the horse, named Memphis Blues, was bucked off. I rode him the whole time," she grinned triumphantly.

She learned trick riding by watching older performers, and eventually mastered the art of hanging down from the saddle and standing up on it while the horse was running.

She remembers riding full speed through the lobby of the Texas Hotel in Fort Worth in 1922, to open the Stock Show. At various other times she rode bucking horses on a stage in Dublin, Ireland, Paris, France and in Belgium.

An appearance before the Queen of England was one of the high points of her career. During the engagement, however, England went to war with Germany and World War I began. The rodeo horses were confiscated for war purposes, abruptly ending their tour of that country.

World Champion

She sifted through yellowed newspaper clippings that filled a cardboard box on her kitchen table. During the course of her career she was

named world's champion girl trick rider, world's champion girl bronc rider and world's champion all-around cowgirl. She truly was America's rodeo sweetheart. "I met some high-class people in my time," she said, "but I preferred being with cowboys."

Early in her career she married one of the members of her troupe, Brian Roach, who was a bronc rider. They later divorced, but she continued to be known on the circuit as Ruth Roach.

Being in a dangerous occupation, it was amazing that she broke as few bones as she did. She broke an arm during a Madison Square Garden appearance, and a broken leg resulted from a freak accident. A man was helping her off a horse when he dropped her. The horse's hoof then broke her leg in 11 places when the animal stepped on her.

She now suffers from spurs on her kneecap as a result of the trick riding, she said.

Many Mementos

The walls of the home which she shared with her late husband, Fred Salmon, for 35 years, are dotted with pictures of her rodeo days. Trophies sit on many shelves, including one from Dublin's first rodeo. All serve to keep the memories alive, along with some of her old costumes. "I used to make my own clothes," she said, displaying some with fringe and some sparkling with rhinestones and sequins. Most of her skirts were leather, but she also had some satin bloomer pants to be worn on special occasions, such as parades.

She modeled clothes from the past in the Cowboy Hall of Fame, where she is a life member, at a reunion of rodeo performers in 1978. She still attends rodeos whenever there is one around.

She traveled extensively during her years with the rodeo, but never tired of it. She displayed some gloves made by an Indian woman who had given them to her. "I mixed with everybody," she said. "Except the high class. I still keep in touch with many of the rodeo people, though they are dying off. That upsets me."

She met her share of the "high class," and the famous, including Warren G. Harding and Will Rogers, but she still preferred her rodeo friends, and she established many lasting relationships among them.

Quit Rodeo

She met her husband, Fred, through mutual friends while in Fort Worth one year. They married in 1938 and she promptly quit the rodeo and never returned.

They moved to his Nocona home, which now has been in his family for more than 100 years. Did she ever regret leaving show business? "No," she said. "I rode every day with Fred to go out and count the cattle, so I was still around horses."

Since his death in 1973 she has continued in the cattle business and often attends auctions in Gainesville.

She will talk about rodeoing and ranching all day long, but just don't ask her how old she is. "You have to lie about your age so much in show business, that I really don't know," she grinned.

At least America's Prettiest Cowgirl isn't telling. □

Tribute To The Horse

By Boyd C. Maddox

RUTH ROACH SALMON

Ruth Roach Salmon began in rodeo work at an early age. Ruth was born in Kansas City, Mo., and signed with the famous Miller Brothers 101 Ranch during the filming of a picture that was titled 101 Ranch. While with the traveling Wild West Show 101 Ranch they were in a tour in England when England went to war with Germany in World War I. They interned the 101 Ranch Show and confiscated their horses for war purposes.

During Ruth's career as a rodeo performer she excelled in two events: to become the world's champion girl trick rider and world champion girl bronc rider.

Ruth has performed before King George and Queen Mary of England and ridden with the Prince of Wales, and many other famous and well known people.

One day in March of 1922 on a preplanned event the Main Street doors into the lobby of the Texas Hotel, Fort Worth, swung open and a lady entered the lobby riding full speed, standing up on her rubber shod trick horse, Bobby. She rode through the lobby of the hotel to the dining room after she had finished her routine. It was then proclaimed by the

proper authority that the 1922 Fort Worth Stock Show was officially opened. The rider of the horse was Ruth Roach.

On December 11, 1975 Ruth received a trophy on behalf of Samuel Thomas Privitt Sr. (Bugger-Red) Rodeo Hall of Fame, Oklahoma City, Okla. Bugger Red snubbed the first bronc Ruth ever rode in 1917.

Ruth's picture appeared on the front cover of the Fort Worth Stock Show programs in 1976. It is one of the early day cow girls in the center of the page. Ruth is on the left. On page 11, February issue of Cattleman's Magazine in the picture of a group of early day cowgirls, Ruth is second from the left in the back row standing.

Ruth has performed at Madison Square Garden and all other places of prominence in her day. In 1938 Ruth was married to Fred (Dick) Salmon of Nocona. She retired from her profession to become a homemaker and they have made Nocona their home since. Her husband passed away a few months ago. Ruth owns and operates a 658 acre ranch with headquarters 3 miles northeast of Nocona. She runs Hereford cattle and manages the ranch herself.

THE NOCONA NEWS
Thursday, July 20, 1978

RUTH SALMON: ONE OF THE FIRST COWGIRLS

By Mike Barnett
Staff Writer

It's rodeo time in Nocona, and many cowboys and cowgirls are dreaming of that one magic ride that will put them head and shoulders above the rest.

But there's a woman, Ruth Salmon, who lives a few miles north of town, that has fulfilled these dreams many times over.

She rode her first bronc in 1917, and in her long career she has been named World's Champion All-Around Cowgirl, World's Champion Girl Bronc Rider, and World's Champion Trick Rider. She has performed for kings, queens, and presidents, and has ridden with the Prince of Wales. She's a lady. She's also one of the original cowgirls.

Salmon was in the cowgirl business a long time before it was the popular thing to do. She started, when she was 16, after she married a rodeo man named Bryan Roach.

She had grown up in Excelsior Springs, Mo., and the only previous experience she had with horses was with Shetland ponies that her Uncle had owned.



Ruth Salmon was at one time one of the most famous rodeo and wild west show cowgirls around. She has travelled worldwide and has hobnobbed with kings, queens and presidents.

She started her career at the 101 Ranch, a wild west show, and worked in moving pictures as a stunt woman.

Then she joined Zack Miller's show, went to Europe, and stayed five months. These shows were performed inside, on a stage. The performers did trick riding, bronc riding, square dancing on horses backs, and other things that most cowgirls today wouldn't have the nerve to try.

After her European tour, Salmon went back to the 101 Ranch with her husband, and started working in the movies again.

"There was a salt creek that ran through the ranch. We made \$1 a day, but if the boys fell off into the creek they made \$2 a day," she said.

She added that she never had any trouble learning how to ride and do tricks; she mainly taught herself by watching others.

"I would watch someone else, work every day, fall off sometimes, and keep on going," she said.

In addition, Salmon said she had trained most of her own horses.

She is also a celebrity in her own right; she has worked with some of the most famous motion picture cowboys;

Buck Jones, Tommy Grimes, and Tom Mix.

She has performed at Buckingham Palace in England for the likes of King George V and Queen Mary. She has even been part of a show put on for a president of the United States, Warren G. Harding.

"We had to go in and shake hands—he died two weeks later," she said.

Buffalo Bill Cody was another one of her cohorts. She said he had his own wild west show, but that he came over quite a bit to the one she worked in.

"He was quite a character. But I was just a kid—I was kind of scared of him," she said.

Salmon said that Will Rogers was also a personal friend, and that they visited often in New York when he worked at the Ziegfield Follies.

But the rodeo has changed over the years, Salmon said. For example, she said she remembers times when the arena sometimes consisted of a bunch of parked cars.

They also didn't come out of chutes, as they now do in rodeos. She said the men would snub and ear the horses,

Continued on page 3

Ruth Salmon

Continued from page 1

the rider would climb on, and off they would go.

Salmon said she was scared the first time she came out of a chute.

"I felt so alone in that chute with that horse," she said.

She said one of the best changes was the forming of a union in 1936.

There use to be a lot of cowboys who would run off and not pay their bills, Salmon said, and that this would go against all of the others' reputations.

She said that the union changed all of that; if the cowboys didn't pay the bills they got blackballed and couldn't work in the shows.

Salmon moved to Nocona in 1938, after marrying her second husband, Raymond Salmon. She had previously divorced her first husband.

She's not to active on the rodeo circuit anymore, but she does still find the time to help feed her cattle everyday.

But still, she's luckier than most. Just look at all those golden memories.



Salmon is shown in her heyday on a trick horse named Tony. She said that she taught herself how to ride and that she also trained most of the horses she rode.

THE COWGIRLS

by

Joyce Gibson Roach

Chapter 7

Out of the chutes: the later years

The year 1924 was a special year for a group of rodeo cowgirls. In that year John "Tex" Austin, who began producing rodeos prior to 1924, took a group to Europe which included most of the top female as well as male hands of rodeo.¹ Using a ship called the *Menominee* to accommodate performers, mounts, and stock, Tex set sail in May for a tour which still remains vivid in the minds of those who participated. They were all much admired and the cowboys were besieged by ladies wherever they went. The English gentlemen, however, stood somewhat in awe of the cowgirls. Charlie Smith, who still has a twinkle in his eye when he remembers pretty cowgirls, recalls that the Englishmen seemed to think that women who could dog steers, ride broncs, and rope the wind were too much women for them.

The cowboys were in competition against men from other countries, and, even though the humane society protested, the show was a smashing success. Not only did the performers shine in the arena but they were welcomed into the circles of British high society. From dances to high teas to receptions at which they were requested to appear in "full cowboy kit," the cowboys and cowgirls were at their charming Western best. At dances white ties and tails mixed with chaps and satin shirts, and boots and patent leather stepped to the same

¹ Russell, *The Wild West*, (Fort Worth, Texas: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1970), p. 106.

The cowgirls

music. At one dance to which a Rumanian prince had been invited, the cowboys, tired of sedate waltzing with composed British gentility, decided enough was enough.

One by one the musicians were relieved of their instruments until there was a large enough group of cowboys to render Alexander's Ragtime Band, the tune most popular at the time, with a little extra feeling. After the English guests had begun to get the hang of the beat, a young cowgirl with a dazzling smile and a charming manner gently guided her bald-headed partner to the center of the floor and called for a square. The band took up "Turkey in the Straw," the heroes and heroines went into their native routine, and literally and figuratively swept the English off their feet.² The smile and the charm of the one who brought it all off belonged to Ruth Roach.³

The 1924 tour was not the first time Ruth had been to Europe. In fact, she really began her career there in 1914 with the Miller's 101 Show. Ruth had spent her childhood in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. Like other girls who later became cowgirls, she did not let town living interfere with finding horses to ride. There were donkeys and Shetland ponies near at hand and her uncle's farm provided her with more mounts. After her 1914 tour Ruth joined the Hagenback-Wallace circus. She did only trick riding in 1914 but by 1917 she was ready to try bucking horses, and she was the first woman to ride them at the Fort Worth rodeo. Lucille Mulhall's group was appearing there in exhibition. Some of her female performers refused to ride and Lucille needed somebody to try the broncs. She approached Ruth. Still a beginner and knowing she ought to think it over, Ruth asked to see how it was done. Lucille had a man ride "Memphis Blues" for her, and what Ruth saw was a demonstration of how quick and hard a man could get thrown. Ruth did not let the demonstration stop her. She rode the mare and a news story said:

²Thelma Crosby and Eve Ball, *Bob Crosby, World Champion Cowboy* (Clarendon, Texas: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 77-80.

³Interview with Ruth Roach Salmon, March 19, 1972. For more about Ruth see also *The Nocona News*, January 21, 1949, p. 1.

*The audience was treated to the sight of this small girl coming out of the chute on a bucking bronc, pigtails flying, spurring and screeching like a wild Indian.*⁴

Bronc riding remained Ruth's favorite event although she performed and won championship titles in other areas. During her career she won the titles of World's Champion All Around Cowgirl, World's Champion Trick Rider, and World's Champion Girl Bronc Rider. Ruth rode at Madison Square Garden from 1916 until 1934.

Some of Ruth's fondest memories are of the 1924 trip to Europe. After the tour was completed, Tommy Kirnan formed a group which continued to perform in London and also in Paris. They appeared at the London Palladium on a stage and were booked along with a puppet show and other acts.⁵ Pictures made at the time indicate that there must have been nearly as many people outside watching the horsed performers exit and enter as there were inside watching the show.

During the same season Ruth and other Wild Westers gave a command performance for the royal family in which they were not allowed to make their usual commotion with their guns. In the noise of yelling Indians, Cossacks, cowboys and cowgirls the guns were probably not missed. During their stay in London, the group also was given special permission to ride on the royal bridle path, sometimes in the company of the King. It must have been a sight – posting and galloping, derbys and Stetsons, jodphurs and angora chaps, royalty and roughness.

Ruth was not only a top rider but she was also a great beauty and to her often fell the job of posting the colors at Grand Entries and publicizing the rodeo when it came to town. In 1922 in the Texas hotel in Fort Worth, Texas, officials had the lobby floored with a special straw mat and had Ruth trick ride up and down it to call attention to the rodeo.

⁴ Lorene Bowman, "Famed Wild West Showgirl Now Nocona Ranch Woman," *Wichita Falls Times*, March 30, 1958, p. 18.

⁵ Information from the Palladium program belonging to Ruth Roach Salmon.

The cowgirls

The Eastern press probably did as much to publicize western heroines as anyone, and, while the articles emphasized the spectacular, they contained enough truth to make their releases realistic. The problem was that people remembered the spectacular features better than they remembered the facts, and the women came to be larger-than-life images of themselves when what they really were was quite impressive enough. Following is an example from the *Boston Sunday Post* dated October 30, 1932, by George Brinton Beal. Beal mislabels the pickup man as a hazer:

The shrill cry of a woman's voice, the roar of the crowd, the thundering of flying hooves in the hard packed dirt, Ruth Roach, her red silk shirt flaming through the dust . . . like a freshly lighted match came heaving out of chute number one aboard a bronc seemingly composed of equal parts of TNT and dynamite loosely bound together in a tight fitting suit of piebald horsehide. In that first wild leap into the comparative freedom of the Garden area, Ruth parted company with her broad brimmed black hat and her short curly hair was making a desperate effort to follow it from her tossing head. Sunfishing along, that bronc started due West for the land of his fathers

When the whistle blew Ruth was dragged unceremoniously from her still pitching and weaving mount, her arms clasped with ardent firmness about the waist of the hazer as he rode in to get her. Tucking her shirt which had left its natural mooring place and breathing a little heavily, Ruth retrieved her black hat and retired to the comparative privacy of a squat seat in the dirt just to the right of the mounting chutes. "Gee kid, but you've had a ride," was the admiring comment from Dogtown Slim spread out along the fence where he hung apparently suspended by his elbows. And that was the end of the day's work for Miss Roach who has been riding her way to fame and fortune through the rodeo world for nearly ten years now

November 22nd 1984.

Dear Mrs. Roach,

I heard that you would like to have some photographs of a 1924 bronze statue, by sculptor Malissard, representing you, smiling and saluting on your rearing horse. Having now your address, I am very pleased to send you some pictures which I did in an antique shop in Paris, France, where this statue is presently for sale.
(The statue was then standing on the front of a dark mirror.)

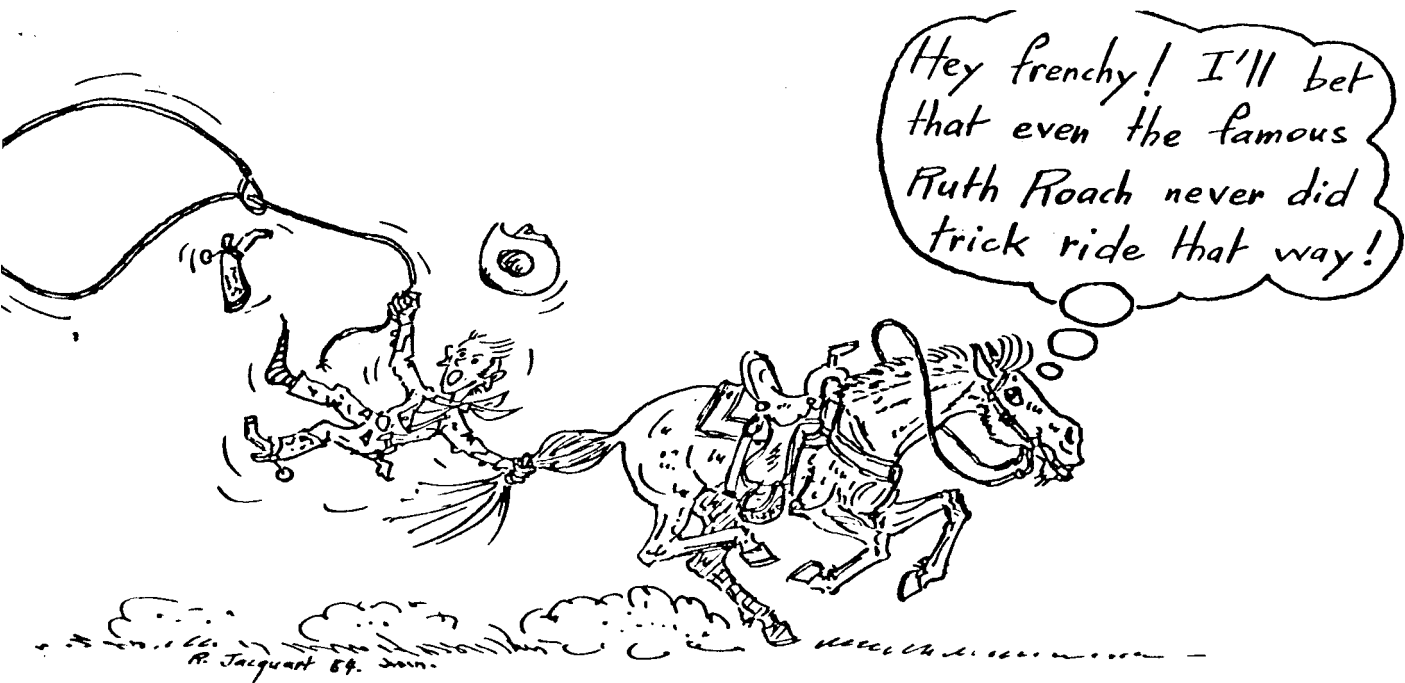
I was very surprised when I found this statue in that antique shop.

I join a typed page with more details about it.

Mrs. Roach, I would like to take the opportunity of this letter to introduce myself:

My name is Roger Jacquart. I am a Frenchman and a professional trick roper. Under the pseudonym of "Jack Rogers", I have been performing, mainly in Europe, for the last fifteen years.

I am coming quite often to America. I know very well Mrs. Tad Lucas for whom I have much consideration.



I know also her daughter Mitzi, Mary Mc Pherson, Marianne and Bob Estes, Flaxie Fletcher, Buster Ivory, J. W. Stoker, Rex Rossi, etc.

I met J. W. Stoker in 1970. He was touring in France with Buster Ivory ("Rodeo Far-West"). I was just starting trick roping on shows, then.

When I am in Texas, I usually stay at the home of my good friends Dan and Florine Coates of Weatherford or at Stoker's place. I have a great passion for the history of the American West and for the Wild West Shows.

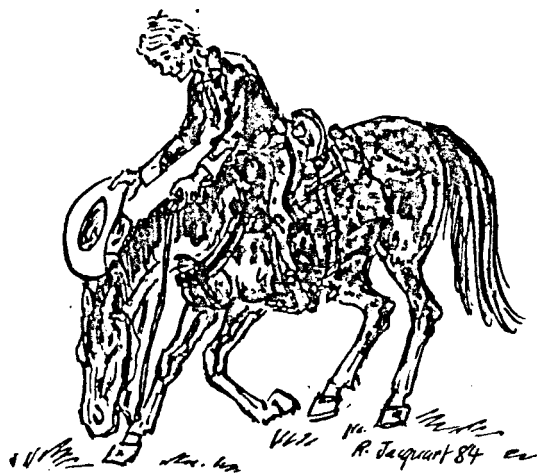
When I am not on the road, I like to paint the West.

I read about you in books like "Rodeo Road" by Vera Mc Ginnis,
"Cowgirls" by Joyce Gibson Roach, "Cowgirls, Women of the
American West" by Theresa Jordan and in
publications like "The Wild Bunch"
or articles in "The Western Horseman".

Each, I know you had a great Rodeo life.
I hope you will keep for long time your very good
and I wish you to stay in good health.

Respectfully yours.

Roger Jaquart



SOME INFORMATIONS ABOUT THE STATUE.

This bronze is a fine replica of a photo printed in the book "THE COWGIRLS" by Joyce Gibson Roach.

The piece is about two feet high (about one foot and ten inches high for the bronze statue and about one inch and a half for the marble pedestal). It is in a very good condition.

On the pedestal is a plaque inscribed as follows :

" Miss RUTH ROACH
Wembley 1925
Paris - Stade Buffalo 1925 "

On the bronze base (by the horse feet) are casted :

" MALISSARD " - "1924"

and, inside a little circular stamp :

"CIRE PERDUE" - "C. VASVANI"

(cire perdue = lost wax process)

(C. VASVANI = the foundry)

It seems that only one unique exemplary of this statue has been made.

The statue is for sale in the 'antique shop of an "expert d'art" :

Mr. Alain LESIEUTRE
Louvre des Antiquaires
2, Place du Palais Royal
32, Allée Riesener
75001 - PARIS
France

Telephnone (1) 297.28.63

Mr. Lesieutre wants 65.000 french francs (about \$ 7.200.- seventy-two hundred dollars) for the statue.

Sculptor Georges MALISSARD was born in 1877 at Auzin, North of France. Member of the "Salon des Artistes Français", he became very famous. Among others, he did the equestrian statues (heroic size) of Maréchal Foch (still standing in Paris, facing the Eiffel Tower), and of King Albert 1st. I saw this large sculpture last summer, when I was on tour in Belgium with an american Rodeo ("RODEO USA").

" Paris - Stade Buffalo 1924"

The stade Buffalo (Buffalo stadium) was named after Buffalo Bill who came in Paris with his "Wild West" in 1889 and 1905. This stadium was disbuilt before the second World War.

In the same antique shop (to see photos), there is another 1924 bronze statue, by Malissard, representing a rider looking like a U.S. Cavalry trooper of that period but without rank stripes or badges. I dont know who he was. (The plaque of the marble base is gone.)

R. Jacquart
Nov. 84

A Twentieth Century HISTORY and BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD of
NORTH AND WEST TEXAS - Capt. B. B. Paddock, editor -
Illustrated, Volume II - Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co.,
1906

W. M. SALMON who is ranked with the prominent farmers and stockmen of Montague County, Texas is a native of the Lone Star state. Mr. Salmon was born in Rusk County, Texas, December 28, 1866, son of John L. and Martha (Linchacum) Salmon, both natives of North Carolina, and in 1846 came from there to Texas, settling in Rusk County, where the father bought a large tract of land, improved a farm and had extensive cattle interests. Also he conducted a country store on his place. He owned a number of slaves, and carried on his operations successfully up to the time of the Civil War. The war cost him the savings of a lifetime and robbed his heirs of the vast estate that would have been theirs. He was a Democrat and an ardent secessionist, but, physically was not strong, and took no active part in the war. Fraternally he was a Mason. Both his brothers, Thomas and Edward, also settled in Texas, and, like him, became honored and respected citizens. He died at his homestead in 1880. Some time after his death his widow moved to Gainesville, where she remained until death claimed her, in 1883, at the age of sixty-five years. She was a member of the Christian Church. Her father was one of the early settlers and well-to-do farmers of Rusk County. Her brother Row, the only member of the Linchacum family now living, occupies the old homestead in Rusk County. The children of John L. and Martha Salmon are: Mrs. Laura Birdwell; William G., M.D.; who died July 3, 1887; Mrs. Susan Galloway; John, a physician of Breckenridge, Texas; Mrs. Martha Wilson; Mrs. Fanny Williams; and W. M., whose name introduces this sketch.*

W. M. Salmon, being the youngest of the family and his boyhood days being passed on the pioneer farm in Rusk County, did not have the educational advantages that the older members of the family enjoyed. After the death of his father, his mother moved to Gainesville, where his brother William G., for some years had been engaged in the practice of medicine and had leased the March ranch near Spanish Fort and was interested in the cattle business. In 1883 W. M. Salmon went to work as an assistant on the ranch and remained there until after his brother's death in 1887, at which time he had control of the stock and everything pertaining to the farm. In 1890 he disposed of most of the stock and moved the rest to lands owned by the family, near Nocona, where he now lives, and

to which he has added by subsequent purchase until his holdings comprise at this writing no less than 2,540 acres, four hundred acres being under cultivation. He has made many substantial improvements, including commodious residence, three tenant houses, other farm buildings, wind mills, orchard, etc. Having the most of his land rented, Mr. Salmon gives his chief attention to his cattle, his herd averaging four hundred head. Also he owns a fine stallion and jack and raises horses and mules.

Politically Mr. Salmon is a Democrat, and fraternally he is identified with both the Masonic order and the Fraternal Brotherhood.

May 3, 1889, he married the widow of his brother, Dr. William G., Mrs. Mattie H. (Walker) Salmon. She was born in Tennessee in 1861, only child of Dr. Addison Walker and wife Mentlo, nee Sutton, both natives of Tennessee. It was while on a visit to Texas with her uncle that she formed the acquaintance of Dr. Salmon. Her grandfather, Addison Walker, Sr., was a prominent farmer and slave owner of Tennessee. His children were John P., a physician of Missouri; Mrs. Mary Balcom, and Addison. By her first marriage Mrs. Salmon had one child, Mariah, born May 23, 1880, and now the wife of Thomas Hoben, a prominent rancher of Montague County. The children of the second marriage are: Harold, born May 20, 1890; Fred, June 21, 1892; Helen, July 8, 1894; Raymond, August 3, 1896; Thelma, July 8, 1899; and Wilburn, July 7, 1902.

* A few years ago, some of the Linchacum family told me there was one son left out of this list--Elvin Remus Salmon, M.D., of Spanish Fort.

TEXAS ALMANAC - 1982-1983

POPULATION OF MONTAGUE COUNTY, TEXAS

1880	-	11,257
1890	-	18,863
1900	-	24,800
1910	-	25,123
1920	-	22,200
1930	-	19,159
1940	-	20,442
1950	-	17,070
1960	-	14,893
1970	-	15,326
1980	-	17,410