

# Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame Nomination

Nate Brown – what a life! Nate is a living legend and epitomizes the Ol' Time Cowboy culture and the lore that were popularized by Owen Wister in his classic book, The Virginian. As one of the last Ol' Time Cowboys, Nate has been called a Renaissance Cowboy. Jerry Sinkovec wrote of him,

“Nate is one of a kind. First, he is a gentleman and father, a horseman and teamster, then a cowboy, then a teacher, then a friend. But he is also a story teller, singer, poet, music maker and entertainer. He can do just about anything, and at the same time not look like he is doing anything. I was so befuddled by him I decided to just call him the Renaissance Cowboy.” (Jerry Sinkovec, author).

Nate, who will be 95 years young on May 11, 2016, still loves to ride his fast walking horse, Nicole. He wants to “stick around to see what happens next,” and is carried forward by his love of life, his commitment to learn from all the horses and horse people he meets, and his respect for others.

In 1996, on the occasion of Nate's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday party, commendations poured in from around the country and world from 1,100 of his friends who were personally invited. Lonnie Mantle of Pavilion, WY said,

“One of Nate's parents had to have been a horse. Because of his age, no one living can verify whether it was his father or his mother. Horses accept him as one of their own. He can walk through a corral full of horses and never stir them up. I have seen him walk through a group of loose horses, lay a hand on an unbroken horse that paid him no more attention than he would another horse.”

The late great Merle Fales of Cody Nite Rodeo fame wrote to Nate on the same occasion, concluding with a good Ol' Time Cowboy jab:

“Dear Friend Nate, There was a time I felt almost as wild as you, getting on those snaky broncs, and trying to make a hand. One of your saddle string mounts you made a hand on, Sunday Punch, went to the National Finals Rodeo when tried as a bucking horse. When Glenn Fales' Rimrock Ranch hands asked him for it, he proved way too salty for them. I have always known it took quite a hand to just stay in your dust. But when we ran together in Hereford, Arizona, and you had three or four purple and blue ribbons from Texas jumping horse shows, I had to think on that some. I had a training stable in Tucson for 10 years. Showed and trained around the English bunch. The way I took it, Englishmen don't like to admit cowboy's have horsemanship also. You really had to beat them bad to get that recognition. They didn't like to have us show them how to ride their own horse when trouble happened. But we straightened out quite a few for them. I hope they listen to you. You can help that country a whole bunch with their horse problems. So hang in there even if you have lost your class on the dance floor. The used up cowboy, Merle.”

Nate trained a former bucking horse brought to him by Jonny Wientz and wrote the poem, “Apple Jack” about him. Nate rode broncs when he had a toothache – the horses would buck and he would spur. Another horse would fall asleep and wake up bucking, but he never did buck Nate off.

As an adult, Nate provided a safe haven for lots of kids, including his own children – Ron, who grew up to take hold of the working end of the ranch and work in the oil field; Shirley, who turned into a hell of a cowgirl; and Karen Sue, who broke Nate's heart when she was tragically killed in a car wreck at the age of sixteen. Nate made work fun – “There are two kinds of ranchers,” he says, “the kind who have horses to work their cows and the kind who have cows to work their horses.” Nate is the latter. Everything he does with horses is part of their training. A fixture in parades and local saddle club competitions, Nate and his gangs of kids, adopted kids and kids' friends, were for some years the Indian riders in the Wedding of the Waters parade, once attempting to trail the buffalo ahead of them in a failed effort to increase the authenticity of their role. Remaining friends with the Shoshone and Arapahoe from his youth on the reservation and

horse dealings, Nate was honored to wear the Shoshone chief's headdress in the Denver Stock Show. His daughter, Shirley, wore the headdress of the Arapahoe. She recalls, "Nate knew the chiefs quite well. I don't think they would have loaned them out to just anybody. They were the real thing."

The ethic on the Brown Ranch was "work hard-play hard." As a young man, Nate would ride all night to a dance, dance every dance, dance with every woman there, call dances, and then ride back to the ranch in time to do morning chores, his horse stopping at gates for Nate to wake up and open them, and then continue on. He trained horses at night by lantern and moonlight, put coal dust on the ice in the corrals to improve the footing in winter, and fenced the rocky ridges in the winter "because we ran out of summer before we got the fences fixed."

This ethic trickled down to his relationships with the kids. When the work was finished, they could ride for fun, play horseback hide and seek in the dark and other horse games. This was the saving grace for adopted kids who still consider him Dad, football players from town who wanted to get in shape before the season by building fence on the ranch, aspiring bronc riders whom Nate taught to "treat it seriously and train for like any other sport," and kids from troubled homes who wanted to graduate and needed a place to live and work in order to study. The late Fuzz Hawk's mother unloaded him and his duffle at the end of Nate's driveway and drove off when Fuzz was twelve years old. That was the last he ever saw of her. "I raised him and he made a hell of a hand," Nate said about Fuzz. At Fuzz's funeral in Meeteetse, WY, his children paused to thank Nate, without whom they said none of them would be there.

Nate spent a lot of years in hunting camps. While sitting at Irish Rock above Meeteetse, he wrote the poem, "The Sheep Eaters." "I don't get any big kick out of hunting and killing animals. I just went along to take care of the horses and help hunters pack out their meat," he said. Pete and Sandy Roussan were Nate's neighbors in Grass Creek and worked with him for one year during the several decades when he was a guide for Stuart and Myrtle Armstrong at their hunting camp in Venus Basin above Meeteetse on the Greybull River.

"I remember Nate in 1952, when we moved to Grass Creek. Any time I went to their house, there was always a horse for me to ride, and boots to wear. After riding we would always just fall in on Nate's mom, Granny Brown. She could always throw out extra plates and plenty of food for everyone," Sandy recalled.

"Nate let all the kids play hide and seek on horseback. We would all ride out and hide, then ride as fast as we could to the hay wagon full of hay and jump off into the wagon and we were safe. Fun, fun, fun.

"In later years, 1972, I was Myrtle Armstrong's helper, to feed all the hunter's on Stewart Creek. Nate was the horse wrangler and always ready to help us wash and dry the dishes. Pete was also a guide for the camp and spent many memorable hours with Nate.

"I bought my one and only horse from Nate. Groucho. Black and very hardy. He died at the age of 18. Thank you Nate for all the great memories you gave both of us."

To make kids laugh, Nate would pull his hat down so his ears stuck out, brush his hair down on his forehead and pop his false teeth out. He got children in trouble in church by wiggling his ears at them and making them laugh.

Nate's cousin, Tom Paxton, wrote,

"My fondest recollection of Nate was at Thanksgiving time. There were six boys in our family plus mom and dad. We all loaded up in the car and headed to Grass Creek for Thanksgiving dinner with Aunt Eunice, Linda, Nate and the rest of the family. After a wonderful dinner, Nate would go saddle up the horses so we could ride up in the hills. I will never forget that great smile and wonderful personality; always willing to do what was necessary to make sure everyone enjoyed themselves. Those are some of my fondest memories and needless to say Nate contributed a great deal to my love for horses. I now have horses of my own and hope that I can instill that love

to my friends and family as Nate did with me. Thanks Nate, and I hope you see many, many more sunrises and sunsets.”

One of Nate’s stepdaughters, Sandy, said,

“My cowboy never met a stranger. He loved horses and respected them. We would chase wild horses and he would break them in a gentle way – some of the best horses you could get. He took my sister and me in at 3 and 5 years of age. He was and is the best dad any child could ask for. If you did something you knew you were not supposed to do he would say, " now ," and you knew you were caught. We went to Prospect Cow Camp, getting up around 4:30 and heading out to round up the cows and to push them back to Grass Creek. Sometimes I rode on the hay baler to tie the knots if they came undone, which happened frequently. Nate showed me that there are good people in this world. I always have and always will love him.”

Nate’s influence extended to two-thousand girls each summer who went through the Girl Scout National Center West during the 10-plus years when Nate was Horse Program Coordinator. Many a Girl Scout started the summer intending to keep up with Nate, but only one, Bea Webster, was able to match him stride for stride as a Girl Scout, then as a wrangler. Nate’s multigenerational influence is typified by Bea, who was like an adopted daughter to Nate and became a successful horsewoman from Wyoming to California to the east coast. Bea’s son, Rick, spent a summer with Nate before being mentored by Buck Brannaman and became a much sought after trainer and clinician in his own right.

In 1989, Nate sold out and retired (but only temporarily). He escaped and came back to Wyoming, continued to work at the neighbor’s place, the High Island Ranch, when it was owned by Susie Eastman and George Nelson. Besides entertaining summer guests by having his stocking-legged mule Moses lay down for him to get on, he was the teamster driving the chuck wagon and Head Wrangler and, in the fall, guided hunters and packed out in all kinds of weather and all times of the day and night. Nate’s impression on guests was captured in a letter from Kristie Brooks, who wrote,

“Nate... When I think of Nate what immediately comes to mind is his smile. He wears a grin better than any man I know. And those blue eyes are forever twinkling with warmth, love, joy, laughter and of course...MISCHIEF! I first met Nate back in 1993 out at the High Island Ranch where he served as Head Wrangler and poetic genius. He won the hearts of every woman there and many men, as well. Unfortunately, the first night out on the trail I stepped in a gopher hole and severed the ligaments in my ankle. Well... off to the hospital I went. Needless to say, I was out of commission for a couple of days. Foot in an air cast, adorned with crutches and my spirit crushed with thoughts of missing out. Little did I know at the time that I was in for a real treat. I had the good fortune to travel with Nate in the chuck wagon for a couple of days. There I was treated like “Queen Bee” of the trail! Nate took me under his wing like a wounded bird. He made a bed in the back fit for a princess, rigged up a contraption so I could elevate my leg, brought me meals, told me life anecdotes, crooned to me and sang to me, and truly nourished my soul. How lucky I was to have spent that time with a truly fine individual with so much to give.”

Nate was a popular performer at the Elko, NV Cowboy Poetry Gathering. One outgrowth of the High Island and Elko days was the book and cassette that Nate co-authored, Roll On, Little Dogies: Songs & Activities for Young Cowpokes, featuring a young Nate with his two friends astride Ol’ Tex on the cover. It included Brown Ranch and wild horse stories, as well as old-time songs. Billed as a children’s book, this classic collaboration between Nate and the Bunkhouse Orchestra appeals equally to adults.

For nearly a decade, Nate was a board member and lessor of horses to the Outlaw Trail Riders, inviting his lessees to come to Grass Creek the week prior to the ride, and experience the thrill of trailing the horses for three days from Grass Creek to Thermopolis. In her article on the Outlaw Trail Ride in 2005 for Trail Rider Magazine, Charlene Krone wrote,

"The oldest and toughest rider was probably Nate Brown, 84 years old and a living legend. He'd ride from sunup to sundown, wrangle the 20 horses that people had leased from him, eat dinner, then sing and recite poetry

around the fire. And, unless it was raining, he'd throw his sleeping bag on the ground and sleep under the stars. Susan Rash said of her experience riding on the OTR with Nate that year, "I so enjoyed meeting and listening to Nate's stories of his childhood and about ranching in WY, especially in the winters, and how he lost one of his prize bulls to freezing temperatures."

In 2009, at the age of 88, Nate joined the Mexico to Canada trail ride at the New Mexico-Colorado border, saying that he'd ridden across enough desserts in his life to skip New Mexico. While in South Dakota, Nate was named 2009 Cowboy of the Year on the National Day of the Cowboy. Asked how he enjoyed the trip that lasted from May to September, he said he rides harder and faster every day on the ranch than on any day of that trip. One day, as the group rounded up some cattle, Nate's horse became very excitable and they got to see the real cowboy Nate in action as he calmed his horse. "Staying on a horse that is jumping and turning like that is harder than riding a bucking horse," someone observed. The trip culminated with the riders crossing the border into Canada on their beautiful horses accompanied by the Chief of the Tribes. Nate's only regret was that "By gollies, here came the Chief of all the Tribes walking. If I'd known he was going to be walking, I would have walked with him or given him my horse." After Nate's trip, Governor Fruedenthal called Nate an "ambassador of Wyoming". He wrote,

"I recently learned of your participation in the Mexico to Canada Trail Ride. I wish to extend my warmest congratulations on completing this journey and being recognized as Cowboy of the Year at the National Day of the Cowboy. What an incredible journey for you and Poncho.

"Wyoming could not have been represented by a better ambassador. You have brought a positive awareness to Wyoming through your work with guests on your ranch and participation as a rider in this trail ride. You've done us proud! (November 2009).

Nate says that he was killed three times and refused to die – once by a horse he figures was locoed and ran through a fence as if it wasn't there when she got sweaty, once by a yellow-eyed Clyde Duncan horse that pawed out his spleen, and once when his cinch broke as he loped around the remuda landing him hard under the horse with six broken ribs and a punctured lung. After each wreck, he healed up and went back to riding sooner than anyone expected, often on the same horse, but with a different attitude. One of the most important lessons he learned with horses was to call a lesson a lesson. His favorite horse is, "Whichever horse I happen to be riding." His favorite sound is the sound of horses eating their hay as he sleeps beside their corral and eating grain from their nosebags in the pre-dawn camp. Nate had a habit of whipping his handkerchief out of his pocket – it was said that any horse Nate could blow his nose on you could do anything on. Somebody was always trying to play a prank on good-humored Nate by waiting until he went to sleep on his horse, "then they would ride away from me behind a hill where I couldn't see them. All of a sudden, I would wake up and I'd be all by myself."

After the winter of '49, Nate said, "I will never cuss another hot day. It was just so cold and snowy and the cattle took so much care. We just got to where we were out there all the time trying to save those cattle and get them through the winter. We wore the tops of the girls' stockings on our heads 'cause that was the only way we had of keeping our ears from freezing off, but we still froze our feet and ears and legs, they itched something terrible, then the skin went through a stage of crumbling and falling off. Then when it got toward spring and should have been spring, it came another winter spell and just about wiped out a lot of cattle and just about wiped us out with 'em."

In 2014, Nate was an Honoree in the Cody Stampede Parade on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. When the parade committee called to ask him if they could book the limo, he said, "I'll be riding my old horse, Nicole."

Nate has been on a cruise – he didn't think it was nearly as much fun as being on horseback. One night, while leaning on the horse trailer chatting after the day's work, Nate confided to a fellow cowboy that he misses being camped in his sleeping bag by a rolling stream. But Nate is also able to roll with the times and circumstances. When travelling, Nate's philosophy is, "When in Rome, do as the Romans."

Asked how he met so many people, Nate says, "Horses. I met them through horses." He has ridden in Mexico, Spain, and his favorite place, Mongolia, where he and his wife, MaeCile, enjoyed their two-month honeymoon in 1996 driving, camping, riding and visiting families across the steppes. Nate found himself one week the guest of honor at a Mongolian wedding. Another week, he found himself camped in his tent beside the ger (yurt) of one of Mongolia's leading horse trainers and enjoying his days viewing his new friend's herds of horses and yaks, exchanging horse stories and contrasting training techniques. In China, Nate enjoyed staying in the home of photographer Eva Siao in Beijing, whose poet husband, Emi Siao wrote the Chinese national anthem.

Since starting HorseWorks Wyoming in 1997, Nate has ridden with many Interns from around the world. Of interning with Nate, Bea Kilgour of the UK said,

"The only thing I can fault HorseWorks for is that I didn't know about it sooner. Had I done so, I feel as though my life would be extremely different in that I would still be there today and not at university!! Despite the fact that you feel as though you are the star of your own personal Western movie blockbuster, amongst all the enjoyment and laughter, Nate and MaeCile manage to take their Interns on a journey not only to Wyoming, but into themselves. The perspective that I received during a 3-week stay taught me a lot about the importance of not only self responsibility, but the responsibility to the animals and humans that rely on you, too. Although the experience is not idyllic like the movies show it to be, the experience is raw and real. You see the perks, but also the hardships and work that come with owning and managing a horse ranch, but that is what makes it so rewarding. I will be eagerly returning to HorseWorks as soon as I can, but will not feel like I will be returning to a holiday camp, but to a home away from home. In going to HorseWorks, I do not feel as though I have merely fulfilled a childhood dream, but have gained a greater understanding of what I want to do in the future!"

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Nate best narrates his own story in "The Brown Family" in Meeteetse, Wyoming Ranches & Cowboys: a Legacy. (July 2006, Echo Renner)

#### Background – 1921 to 1940

I, Nate (Ernest Nathan) Brown, was born in Lander on May 11, 1921. My dad was also born in Lander and my Granddad, Newton Hiram Brown, surveyed the town of Lander. My parents had two children, my sister, Linda Mae Brown, (b. Dec 15, 1922, Tipperary, Fremont, WY, d. October 9, 2000, Casper, Fremont, WY) and myself. We had seventeen cousins who were just like brothers and sisters to us and spent a lot of time with us on the ranch as we grew up, both before and after we moved to Grass Creek.

My earliest memories are of Crow Creek at the foot of Black Mountain in Fremont County, where my family started out on the Shoshone Reservation. Due mainly to their chief Washakie, who was a diplomat before his time, the Shoshone Tribe of Indians never fought the whites. In the early 1900s, they opened the portion of their reservation North of the Wind River to homestead by the whites and leased them grazing from the tribe.

My parents, Eunice Williams (b. Sept 24, 1892, Garrett, Beaver, OK, d. Mar 11, 1974, Cody, Park, WY) and Ernie (Ernest Nathan Brown, b. Mar 8, 1888, d. Apr 29, 1950, Grass Creek/Thermopolis, Hot Springs, WY) bought one of these homesteads and started from there. In 1930s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs changed the picture. The Council determined that land should not be leased to non-Indian families. They appraised land owned by the whites, paid them for their land and said they could no longer lease grazing on the reservation.

At that time, my parents, Eunice and Ernie, bought a ranch on Grass Creek (between Thermopolis and Meeteetse) in Hot Springs County, WY. We gathered up all our brood mares and unbroken horses and sold them. In 1941, we trailed our cattle across the mountain to the new ranch, which took ten days, bringing our saddle horses, work horses and cattle at the same time. I was nineteen years old.

### Learning to Ride

My riding instructors were all horses. My first ride was on Jakey, my mother's horse, with my schoolteacher, Vivian Hayes, in 1921. My first horse was Ol' Tex. He raised many kids and had a ringbone, which caused him to limp slightly. My sister, Linda, and I and the neighbor kids rode him double or triple until he couldn't get around anymore. Then, some people moved away from the neighborhood and gave us Ol' Steel. He was an outstanding horse. He had a lot of age on him, but he still was a good cow horse and fast. Ol' Steel is the one who really taught us to ride.

When I was six years old (1927), my dad bought me a pony. The pony un-taught me to ride. He was a pretty good-sized pony, about fourteen hands. He liked to buck. I was kind of scared of him. He could hardly ever buck me off, but if he couldn't buck me off, he would brush me off on a tree, or lay down with me and roll in a creek. My dad made a lot of fun of me because I couldn't handle this pony. His name was Roxy. Roxy almost made a pedestrian out of me and to this day I believe the parents who hate their children buy them a pony. He got into the oat field and foundered – no, I didn't let him in there.

Then a man named Slim Ross went to work for my dad. Slim went to Dubois and bought a black four-year old named Darkie. He trained this horse to come when he whistled. Slim would jump on him real fast and run out of there like he was trying to get away. He was a man of few words and didn't say anything at all about where he came from. Then one day a man came to the ranch in an old, out of state car, just barely making it. After conversing with him a little, Slim came in and said, "Ernie, I'm going to have to quit." My dad started to write him a check and he said, "Nathan, if you want Darkie, I'll sell him to you for twenty-five dollars," so my dad added twenty-five dollars to the check and Slim took off. Darkie was my top horse for many years after that. We brought Darkie from Crow Creek to Grass Creek and he raised my kids. He and a little black mare named Girlie that my daughter Shirley raised and broke were standing nose to tail in front of Granny's house at the ranch fighting flies. It was just starting to rain. Lightning struck and killed Darkie without ever even touching Girlie.

In the mid-1930's, when I was a teenager, a Morgan stud escaped from some people and came across the country, showing up on Crow Mountain where he cut out a bunch of mares for himself. He sired a very outstanding bay colt, which we named Robin. When Robin was a four year old, my dad got a man to break him who was very rough and used too severe a bit on him. He cut Robin's tongue real badly. My dad turned Robin back out on the mountain and he wasn't touched for a year. His tongue healed up. When my dad was gone to market cattle the next year, I got him in and my mother helped me with him. I got to riding him. He was too much horse for me, but I rode him anyway and he taught me a lot about how horses think. I rode him for many years. He had great stamina and speed and got to be a great cow horse.

I rode Robin on several drives to Hudson to ship cattle. When we loaded cattle on the cars, my dad sorted them the way he wanted them sold in Omaha. I was cutting cattle on Robin and putting them up the chute. When I came up the chute with the last steer, my dad's friend, a commission man from Omaha, said, "Nathan, pull your saddle off that bay horse and put him in the car with the cattle and I'll give you three hundred dollars for him." He pulled three hundred dollars out of his pocket and waved them under my nose. I said, "No, this horse is not for sale." My dad, much to my surprise, laughed and said, "That's where two fools met. Joe was a fool to offer that much money for that horse and the kid was a fool not to take it."

### Rodeo Experience

When I was eleven years old (1932), my dad had a horse he wanted to sell as a bucking horse so he was going to the Dubois rodeo and lead this horse. His name was Tar Baby, a big strong horse that had been broke to ride by a good hand, but never ridden afterward. My mother said that he had dropped a hint that he might take me along, so I became very excited because I thought that would be a real adventure. In fact, when I got real enthused or excited about anything, I got sick at my stomach and threw up everything I ate for a few days. I tried to keep this under cover so my dad wouldn't decide that if I had to stop and puke every few miles, it wasn't going to be worth it.

On this nice sunny, windy day, we mounted up with my dad leading Tar Baby and we headed to Dubois, about twenty-five or thirty miles. We got to Dubois and Dubois was full of horses and horse backers. We checked our horses in at the livery stable, which was also full of horses – about fifty head of saddle horses were in a big corral with feeders of hay for them. Then my dad got us a room at the hotel. He was in pretty good spirits by then, so he whipped out a ten dollar bill and handed it to me and said, “Go have some fun.” Dad went in the bar and started visiting with his friends and talking about old times.

I wandered down the street and there was an office set up where people could enter the various events at the rodeo. One of these was calf riding for twelve to sixteen year olds, so I lined up. There was a boy lined up ahead of me who was probably a couple of years older than I was. It was going to cost fifty cents to enter the calf riding, so he signed up. He reached in his pocket and his embarrassment knew no bounds – he had no money. So I whipped out my ten dollar bill and paid his entry fee and mine.

He shook my hand and we became instant best friends. These calves were going to be yearlings. He began to coach me about how to ride – take a firm grip on your cursingle, lean back, spur the animal the first jump and that will get you in rhythm with how they buck, then you have to lean back and keep spurring until you run out of time, or are bucked off. We circulated around town. He introduced me to his parents and they were nice friendly people who followed the rodeo circuit all summer going from town to town, riding broncs and running barrels.

The next morning, my dad and I went down to the livery stable to get our horses for the parade and go to the rodeo grounds. It was quite an event. We got to the livery stable pretty early and our horses came right to us, so we watched the rest of the show – people running after their horses, some of them trying to rope their horses, some trying to walk up to them. As the horses became more excited, running from one corral into the other, several people got knocked over. Next we rode in the parade, my dad leading Tar Baby. Then we went to the rodeo grounds and the contractor checked Tar Baby in as a saddle bronc.

The rodeo progressed and the calf riding came up. Meanwhile, my friend had gathered me up and coached me some more. There were lots of kids in this calf riding. Most of them were bucked off immediately. Then my friend came out and he got a good bucking steer and rode him all over the arena. I was next, so I tried to do just like he did. My calf didn't buck as hard, but I rode him all over the arena. When the contest ended, my friend got first place, I got second. We each made a few dollars. I don't remember how much.

As we were watching the rodeo, my new friend suggested that I join them for the rest of the summer and go on the rodeo circuit with them. The evening festivities started and we attended the dance and danced very steadily. My friend took me aside and said, “Not these older guys are getting pretty drunk and are going to be pretty troublesome, so don't let them pick a fight with you. Take what they can dish out.” As they got drunker, they bullied us a little, but we ignored them. Meanwhile, we saw where they kept putting their bottle of whiskey. We watched for our chance, took this bottle and dumped some of it out, then we peed it up to the level it was and put it back in their hiding place.

After the rodeo, we had neglected to take our spurs off, so we were dancing with our spurs on because we didn't want to take a chance on losing them or having them stolen. We were very careful not to spur our partners, but we got some dirty looks from other people when they ran into our spurs. At the height of the party when my dad was socializing, we approached him about me going with them for the summer and he didn't think that was a good idea.

The next morning, after the horse catching orgy took place, we headed back for home on a medium trot and didn't speak a word for twenty-five miles. That was my first and last experience as a rodeo cowboy.

#### Moving Over the Mountain to Grass Creek: 1941

By the time we moved to Grass Creek in 1941, we had a second hand Ford truck and that was all. We loaded all we could get on the one-ton and my dad said, “That's it. The rest of it goes off the cut bank,” and it did. Furniture, heirlooms, all but one truck load of personal effects for a family of five including myself, my sister Linda, my parents and

my grandmother. With these possessions my family headed to Grass Creek, leaving my grandmother with relatives who would bring her over once we were settled at the new place.

Back on Crow Creek, I was getting ready to move the cattle from Crow Creek to Grass Creek. My dad drove the four work horses, several older horses, several yearlings and two-year olds across to scout the trail. A friend, Burke Johnson and I gathered all the cows we could find off the Sand Draw and started over Crow Mountain. Because of rough terrain, we couldn't get through the three-mile canyon between Black Mountain and Crow Mountain. Burke's family had already trailed to the mountain. They always spilled a few, so he was back-riding to gather his cattle with ours, which he did. Once we were in Crow Creek Basin and ready to start for Grass Creek, a big two-day snowstorm came. The cattle all came back out looking for grass and it took two weeks to gather them up again.

Including myself, there were three of us trailing the cattle: a part Indian friend named Heck (Hector) Stall, who was a good hand and a good fellow and worked off and on for my dad when he needed a job. Heck helped us trail the cattle as far as Owl Creek on the South Fork Basin in Hot Springs County. About the time we got the cattle back into Crow Creek Basin again following the snowstorm, Burke had to go home, so my dad picked up a rodeo riding kid out of Thermopolis who was older than I was and was a bullshitter to start with. He was going to show me a lot of good tricks about working horses.

We each needed a string of horses for the trip ahead. I had three horses in my string, so I gave the new kid one of mine named Crow, my sister Linda's horse, and a sorrel horse out of my dad's string. The kid turned out to be very poor help – he was scared of all the horses. Crow found out on the first day that all he had to do was hump up and that fellow would hide behind the saddle horn and not make him do anything. Linda's horse, Comet, was a snorty acting horse and as gentle as could be, but he frightened that fellow. The guy made the trip, but when he got to Owl Creek, he told my dad, "Ernie, I'm going to have to quit."

Anyone running an outfit has to have somebody to cuss and usually it was me, but that time it was that kid. My dad said, "You can sure as hell quit. I'll write you a check right now because it's a long walk to Thermopolis (45 miles) and I'm not going to take you there." The kid subsided and went the rest of the distance, but he pouted all the way. I wouldn't let him ride Charm every day, so on the days he rode Crow or Comet, he just sat there real still and didn't make them do a thing. He couldn't stand the hours and he couldn't wake up in the morning. I can't even remember his name now, but I remember how different he was from when he first showed up to help on the trail.

You can't night-herd a bunch of cows and calves on the trail, so we just turned them loose at dark and rounded them up at daylight. It took two or three hours to round them up in the morning. My dad was moving camp with the truck, so he would help us get the cattle together, then load his horse in the truck and drive to that night's stop, which was a long way around on pretty rough roads. By then, my family was already in Grass Creek. We arrived with the livestock in Grass Creek in the late spring of 1941 about a month behind my family. I was a little surprised – I didn't expect it to be in the middle of an oil field. At that time, there were many more strange engines and trucks and smells and sounds than there are today.

#### Building up the Grass Creek Ranch: 1941-1989

The history of the West is one of ranches splitting apart and coming back together, going almost bankrupt and coming back from the brink in cycles over time. In the 1800's, when the British-owned Rocky Mountain Cattle Company ran thousands of head of cattle from the Shoshone River to the top of the Continental Divide, what is today the Brown Family Ranch was part of the rangeland. A dry summer, a hard winter and a price bust put them out of business. Not long after they went broke, the Homestead Act was passed. Homesteaders came into the West in swarms and began homesteading the creek bottoms and springs. That's where the history of the Brown Family Ranch as it exists today really begins.



Lloyd Robins built up the ranch my parents bought on Grass Creek in 1941. Initially, Sam Cramer and Lloyd Robins bought the current headquarters from the original homesteaders, the Baldwins, who were Mrs. Robins' parents. Lloyd later bought out Joe Henry, Sam Cramer, the Stag Place and the Jones Place.

Since the Browns bought the place in 1941 from Lloyd Robins, it has included the current headquarters on Grass Creek, the Joe Henry Place, the Additional, The Jones Place, the Stag Place and the Cook Place, all of which were homesteaded by families by those names. The improvements at the headquarters on Grass Creek when Lloyd bought it were limited to two round corrals, a well and a 14-foot by 14-foot homesteader cabin from the late 1800's. My grandmother lived and died in that cabin. In September of 2005, some Norwegian friends helped us renovate the cabin to preserve this part of our history.

Lloyd built a three-room cabin, probably in the 1920's, that became home to my parents Eunice and Ernie and my sister Linda when we moved to Grass Creek. This cabin still stands and is in the process of being renovated at this time. In the 1940's, I built a one-room cabin for my new bride and myself. Within several years, this became home to my son Ron (Ronald Eugene Brown), my daughter Shirley (Shirley Bess Brown) and years later my third child, Karen Sue Brown.

The ranch expanded in the 1950's and 1960's when the Browns bought out Ralph Robins and bought two sections of grazing land on Prospect Creek called the Cook Place from the Kellogg family. The road from Grass Creek to the newly acquired Prospect land went down a dug way through a low gap in the Prospect Rim, down Kester Coulee, and up Prospect Creek. Much of this road is still used today. This was part of the original road between Thermopolis and Cody.

#### The Ranch Handover: 1941-1942

Lloyd stayed and helped us for a year to get located on the new place. My dad handled the irrigating. The riding was left to me. Lloyd taught me a great lesson, which I believe is valuable to any ranch, by working with me to teach me the lay of the country, where the springs were, whose land was whose and what areas were best grazed in what seasons. At that time, he was crippled up and couldn't ride, so in the evening we would visit about the country and he would tell me about landmarks and how to find different places. The next day, my horse and I would head out to find these trails.

One of Lloyd's lessons stands out. I was camped on Dugout Creek in the original trapper dugout cabin (a room dug into a dirt bank with a pole and dirt roof). Lloyd said, "Go out on Wagonhound Flat and you will see one cottonwood tree and a spring there. Go north up that big pocket and there is a kind of half assed trail that will take you out on top of the rim." By the time that I got up that trail, I thought that it was well named. Since then it has been the half-assed trail.

With the acquisition of new land came new trails along the length of the Prospect Rim: the Upper Trail, the Crooked Trail, the Hole-in-the-Wall, and the Whiskey Trail, each with names reflecting their history. The Ivory Cooks, for example, who homesteaded the land on Prospect, had a moonshine still, when that was good business, up a draw that was later called Whiskey Trail. There is a fairly long, steep trail that we call the Whiskey Trail through the rock ledges that goes up the Prospect Rim from the site of that still to the top of the rim. Wild horses coming to the Cottonwood Spring to water made the Crooked Trail. It is virtually nonexistent now. I didn't know that when I started down that hill with five cows in the fall of 2003. We made it to the bottom, but would not recommend it. Ivory Cook gave the Hole-in-the-Wall its name.

#### Making a Living Ranching in Grass Creek: 1942-1989

There are two kinds of ranchers – ranchers who have horses to work their cattle and ranchers who have cattle to work their horses. Everyone who knows me thinks I had cattle so I could work my horses. They may be right.

In the 1940's, it became obvious that if a small rancher were going to stay in business, he would have to have a sideline. My sideline became breaking horses for the public, which I combined with working cattle. I broke and trained many horses for everybody to get money to pay the living expenses. I spent a lot of time in 1941-1942 camped in a dugout cabin on Dugout Creek riding line on our cattle and getting them located – teaching them where the water and feed were. I had a lot of work for the horses I handled, moving cattle from pasture to pasture, packing supplement to them,

feeding and putting up hay with teams and kicking cattle off the creek bottoms on a regular basis. Wherever we worked cattle, we took a remuda of young horses we were training. This enabled me to stay in the ranch business. I also learned a lot about horses and their thought processes.

My horse training career began in earnest when I was in my mid-twenties (1940's). My dad said, "All that kid knows is horses and girls." About that time, I thought I was a pretty good hand at both horses and girls. A rancher on Owl Creek who raised lots of horses contacted me and asked if I was interested in breaking four horses for him in exchange for two of them. My cousin, Art, and a boy I kind of raised, Fuzz Hawk, went over and we ran horses for three days. When we got them captured, they were such good looking horses that I came back with fourteen, making my half seven head. You can bet I was not very popular with my dad. He said, "One good thing about this is it will sure take the horse breaker out of that kid." These horses were very wild, but smart and well bred.

One of the horses in my half, a black Morgan we named Diamond (he had a perfect diamond on his forehead), was the wildest horse I ever met, but turned out to be a very fine saddle horse and stayed in our family all his life. I got them all broke, a lot of times by lantern light after dark. In the next few years, I started several other bunches for the same rancher. Then for several more years, I broke horses for the Rhodes, the Dvarshkis, Clyde Duncan, the Mill Iron and the Reed ranches and other individuals in the country.

In my horse training career, I have been killed three times and refused to die. Once was when a Clyde Duncan horse named Rex that I was training pawed out my spleen. From this horse I learned a couple of good lessons. One was to call a lesson a lesson with horses and not try to overpower them. Another was not to lose my temper with horses. I was going to spur the buck out of that horse because I was mad. He almost spurred the life out of me. When I came to in the hospital surrounded by my family giving me blood transfusions and preparing to give me my last rites if necessary, the doctor said I would be released to go home in five weeks. In five weeks, I was riding the same horse, but with a much different attitude.

Over this many years and this large an area, I have been very fortunate to have made the acquaintance of and been involved with a lot of nice people and good horses, many of whom were and are our good friends. I have always been very fortunate to have great people for neighbors and always helped them every chance I got. I have continued to train horses. Now I realize there's a lot of things I don't know about horses and I don't know a darn think about girls.

#### Day-to-day Ranching in Grass Creek

From 1941 to 2006, the ranch has survived several droughts, hard winters, divorces, good and bad cattle prices, one sale and one repurchase. It has known the footsteps of my kids, my step kids, kids whom I kind of raised who went to grade school at Grass Creek and high school in Thermopolis and all their friends.

In Grass Creek, we spent summers haying for winter. About November, we gathered cattle, weaned the calves, turned cattle back on range and fed the calves till spring. When they were yearlings, we picked out the daughters of the best cows and kept them for replacement heifers and sold the rest to the feeders. The cattle that were to be sold were trailed to the loading points on the railroad in Kirby, shipped to Sioux City, IA or Omaha, NE and sold to the packers and the feeders. In the fall, we picked out several good, dependable saddle horses and kept them in for winter horses, feeding them hay and grain and keeping them sharp shod. We kept in one team of draft horses, fed and sharp shod to feed hay. About February, we kept in cows about to have calves and fed them protein supplements on grass closer to the ranch, or fed them hay a month or six weeks before calving until green grass was ready to support them.

I was always pretty careful about not overstocking our range with livestock, but sometimes a hard winter and a dry summer would cause a person to have to sell cattle to buy feed. A time or two during this period of years, mostly due to drought, I had to sell down to a small number of the best cows, start over and build back up from there, taking in cattle to run by the head and leasing cattle to graze our pastures. Several times I had to sell most of the cattle to pay debts, but always held onto enough good cows to get back in the cattle business.

Of course, one time, the nice friendly banker kept encouraging me to borrow more money, build more fences, and buy machinery. Then all of a sudden he said, "Boy, the bank examiner is really going to get onto us. We are going to have to have a substantial payment by a certain date," so we rounded up a bunch of cows, took them to market and started over. Mostly, to build back up I took a certain number of cows to run for a certain number of years, split the calves each year and at the end of the term, split the she-stock. At that time, the grazing and cattle management were worth half the calves.

Certain years stand out in my mind. During the Second World War, I was drafted, had my examination and was supposed to report for duty at a certain time. Due to the fact that ranch help was very scarce, the government froze seven guys on ranches in Hot Spring County and I was one of them. The ranch wasn't much affected by the shortages of gasoline because we always had shortages of gas anyway. We experienced shortages of sugar and other items, as did everyone during that time.

The winter of 1949 was the toughest winter I ever saw. This was a normal winter until the first of January, when it snowed two feet overnight. Then the wind came up and it snowed and blew for two more days. When it stopped, just the tops of the sagebrush were sticking out. The cows were eating it like it was a fork full of hay. Cattle walked over fences without knowing they were there. Another boy and I were at camp on Prospect Creek during this storm. We had a little hay there for our saddle horses. When the storm was over, we gathered the cattle we could find out of the shelter of the creek bottom and headed to Grass Creek with our loose saddle horses breaking the trail. We had a good supply of hay that winter and fed the cattle hay until spring. Still some of the cattle we couldn't find survived on Prospect where the wind had blown the snow off the tops of the ridges. I had a good team that I kept sharp shod and grain fed to haul hay four miles to where the cattle were being fed. The ranchers in this area didn't actually lose very many cattle that winter, which was quite a contrast to the rest of the Northwest United States. Since then, I have never cursed another hot day.

I have heard it said that people studying glaciers could read historic weather patterns the same way we can read weather rings in felled trees. According to them, every four hundred years, there is a fifty-year drought. I wonder if we are in the midst of one now. The 1960's were a fairly wet era. Since then, the wet eras have gotten drier and the dry eras have gotten longer. We've had short wet spells and long dry spells, short periods of good cattle prices and long periods of poor cattle prices. It appears that the country is gradually getting drier; we have known several areas that we used to fence to keep cows from getting stuck in the mud. Now there isn't even a damp place there. If this is a fifty-year drought, we may live to see another wet spell in this area yet.

#### Fond Memories of Ranching in Grass Creek

All through the years in Grass Creek, wild horses were one of my main sources of recreation and education about horses. In this country, before there were lots of fences, the wild horses and people's well-bred horses mixed. Some of the wild horses mixed with the Dickie Morgans and for generations you could see horses in the Fifteen Mile country that looked just like good Morgans. Some of the horses mixed with the Gould Percherons and to this day you can see horses in the lower end of Fifteen Mile Creek look just like the dapple grey Percherons. At one time, half our saddle horses were horses we had caught out of the wild bunch and looked and acted like these. There always were wild horses within fifteen or twenty miles of this ranch, although now they are federal property and we don't get to chase them anymore. In trying to capture these wild horses, one learns a lot about the thought process and intelligence of a horse. We found in our association with wild horses that as soon as you could teach them that you weren't going to hurt them and they overcame their fear of humans, that they were very teachable. Most of them made good saddle horses and were good friends with their people.

I had a beautiful grey mare that came out of the Prospect Rim wild horse on which I won cow cutting and also reining and barrel racing. She was a great show off. Everyone ooh'ed and ahh'ed over her. She could stand on her hind legs with me on her longer than any horse I ever saw if people were making a fuss over her.

Most ranchers could not afford dependable, steady help, so when they had to have extra help, they could either hire old drunks or inexperienced kids. I always chose inexperienced kids. My kids and their friends always had horses and saddles and we did everything you could do horseback, either working or playing. We would work real hard, then go to a horse show or gymkhana to have fun on horseback. We rode all day working and rode half the night playing horseback hide-and-go-seek, practiced reining patterns and barrel races and we started a lot of young horses. Several of the girls were rodeo queens and they rode many, many horses through the auctions for me. We got a lot of work done and had a lot of fun. We had lots of horses to ride and horse activities. To that I attribute the fact that I never had any serious kid trouble or horse trouble.

When my mother and grandmother were growing up, everyone in the community rode horseback enough to know pretty well how to ride. But the girls' and most of the ladies' main jobs were cooking for the family and hands and taking care of the livestock that were kept up around the ranch. Most ladies didn't get to ride a lot out on the range doing cattle work, but whenever ranchers were short-handed, the ladies went out, filled in and made a cowhand. Then they did all the cooking and house chores on rainy days and after dark. Similarly, I saw many ranch families where the girls were really good riders when they got married, usually to a young cowboy or a man who was starting up a ranch. These ladies took a good saddle horse or two with them and soon these young wives were pregnant and doing all the cooking and the hired man was riding their horse and their saddle. The ladies were at a distinct disadvantage. By the time the ladies got to where they could ride again, they either had to ride a tired horse, or their stirrups were taken out too long for them. Inevitably, they were in too big a hurry to take them up, so they had to ride the stirrups like they were.

My mother had ridden a lot as she was growing up, then she went through a stage where she was a housewife, cook, chore girl and raising kids and didn't ride for quite a few years. When she was around seventy years old, she found time to start riding again and did a lot of riding for six or eight years. At that time, I was breaking a lot of horses. I remember with great fondness the times when she would ride a broke horse and help haze for me, work cattle and help with other livestock work. I vowed that my wife and kids would never be without a good horse and a good saddle and they never were. My daughters and stepdaughters always had equal chances to ride as the boys.

#### Retiring and Coming Out of Retirement: 1989-2006

In 1989, I retired, sold the ranch and moved to Arizona. Retiring meant not having to pull calves and put up hay. Otherwise, it wasn't very interesting, so in the summers, I returned to Grass Creek to help our neighbors at the High Island Ranch with their guest operation. I drove the team, wrangled the horses from the lower lodge to the upper lodge at the Needles and sat around the campfire and told stories of horses I have known. Then, in 1994, I was lucky enough to meet MaeCile. We got back into the horse business in a small way, training horses and starting up a guest operation taking out rides, cattle drives and roundups in the Big Horn Mountains and helping friends. Much to our surprise, in 2003 we were offered the Grass Creek Ranch back. We took the plunge and have loved every minute of being back on the old place. MaeCile and I have a willing relationship: she's willing to work and I'm willing to let her.

END

### Lonnie Mantle's Story: "Nate Brown"

It was in 1971 and the National Girl Scout Camp at Ten Sleep was just beginning or expanding. Nate had been awarded the horse contract for the riding horses at the ranch. Not having enough horses of his own, nor the time to buy enough to fill his obligation, Nate contacted us at Wyoming Horses to furnish 50-75 head of riding horses for the girls during the summer.

The spring of 1971 my horse slipped on the ice, fell and broke my leg. I had a cast on nearly all spring from the knee down. Nate came down from Grass Creek to pick out the horses he needed for summer. We were pasturing the horses on Airport Hill, west of Riverton and the corral was right at where the west end of the runway ends now.

We had the horses in one big corral and my only value was to sit on my saddle horse with my cast hanging down and rope horses out of the bunch. Nate would then saddle them, ride them and decide if they would work for the summer at the Girl Scout Camp. I had caught several and Nate had liked most of them. I caught a bay four year old colt that was gentle and Nate saddled him. After riding the horse around for a little he laughed and said, "Some kid broke this horse, but he will work all right." We turned him into the bunch he had already picked. I suppose we had tried five or six more before I caught the sorrel four year old filly. Nate rode her around, got off and said she would do. He said, "The same kid broke this sorrel filly that broke the bay four year old we picked awhile back."

Well I looked at both those young horses and mentally stored their identification numbers in my mind. I was kind of questioning Nate's ability to know that much about two horses he had never seen before and had been roped randomly out of a hundred head.

Later that evening after we had selected enough horses to fill Nate's contract, Nate went home to Grass Creek and I went to Hudson where I lived. After supper, I looked up the two young horses' identification numbers that we brand on their left shoulder. In our record books they showed to have been bought from Bob McClanahan of Scottsbluff, Nebraska. I bought a lot of horses from Bob each year.

It was a month or so before I saw Bob McClanahan again and got to ask him about the two four year old colts he had sold me. He said yes, he had bought the colts from different places and paid a Mexican kid to break them at the stock yards in Scottsbluff. He then brought them to our ranch where I bought them with several other horses. True story!!!!

NATE BROWN POETRY

“Knees”

By Nate Brown

I've spent most of ninety years horseback  
Which counts up to a lot of rides  
And after a while my legs just kind of  
Molded around their sides.

If there'd been such a thing as a bow legged king  
I would have wore the crown.  
When I stood up in the bow legged contests  
Them other ol' duffers just sat back down.

Then the shock absorbers plum wore out  
And rubbing bone on bone  
It got so every time I took a step  
I'd have to stop and groan.

Then I met a man from Mesa.  
Larry Sanders was his name.  
Oklahoma hills were his home range.  
Orthopedics was his fame.

He said, "I'll cut them hind legs off  
A little below the hocks  
And when I set them on again  
Painless you will walk."

He said, "and when I put them on  
About three degrees knock-kneed  
You'll find it will do wonders for  
Your stamina and speed."

I said, "We may have a problem here,  
Tho you know best of course.  
Can we put 'em three degrees toward bowed  
For hangin' on a horse?"

Larry said, "I swear, your horse won't care,  
But if he dare complain,  
Just hit him down the hind leg  
And give him lots of rein."

So now 'tis done; I ride, I run;  
I trip the light fantastic  
On ball joints made of stainless steel  
And sockets made of plastic.

My legs are sturdy specimens  
Of power and stability.

I can dance from dark 'till dawn  
Or 'til they close the facility.

And I must state, it's really great  
To have all this agility.  
But it raises a situation  
That destroys my credibility.

For when I walk out on the stage  
To tell these cowboy tails  
And brag about the horses I've rode  
Up and down the trails,

Each cowboy in the audience  
Just nudges his date and say,  
"That ol' bird ain't rode that much!  
His legs is bent the wrong way!"

## "Sheep Eaters"

By Nate Brown

Away on the upper Greybull where the mountains touch the sky,  
I sat upon a sunny slope and pondered days gone by.  
I thought about the people who had lived here long ago,  
Who they were and whence they came and why they had to go.

When suddenly a swish of wings and I was not alone.  
An old grey-headed camp robber sat beside me on a stone.  
He looked at me with his beady eyes and thoughtfully clicked his beak  
And I was not a bit surprised when he began to speak.

He said, "I've been here countless years, through sun and wind and snow.  
There are many tracks upon these trails. I've seen them come and go.  
Once a small band of Indians came. They stood right where we sit.  
They'd left their tribe down on the plains that dealt them too much shit.

They said they wandered far and wide in search of peace and quiet.  
Mountain water was their drink and mountain sheep their diet.  
And there they lived on the meat of the sheep and avoided the hungry bear  
And nobody but us camp robbers hardly knew that they were there.

Then one day from down on the planes, there came a shapely squaw.  
She walked just like a graceful doe. She ate her rabbits raw.  
To join these quiet people she would like to have a chance.  
Those rowdy warriors down on the plains were always after her pants.

And so in peaceful solitude she whiled away the summer,  
But when the winter came around it soon became a bummer.  
These guys didn't dung the teepee out or take a bath or shower.  
They sat close 'round the campfire and they sure didn't smell like a flower.

They were quiet people. They didn't have no fights.  
They slept away the winter days, they slept away the nights.  
And though they didn't eat no beans and didn't drink no beer,  
The snoring and the farting was terrible to hear.  
When the mighty grizzly wandered by in search of food and prey,  
You can bet he held his mighty nose and walked the other way.

Many men avoid much talk for talk may lead to violence  
Many women don't understand companionable silence.  
So the winter drug slowly by for this lady from the plains.  
It's really getting on her nerves, about to blow her brain.  
Then one day when the snoring sounds from her teepee mates emotes  
She whipped out her flint stone skinning knife and cut the bastards' throats.

Early the next morning with no regrets for their fate  
She rolled their bodies off the hill and they were coyote bait.  
Then she dunged the teepee out. She cleaned things up a bunch.  
Next day a bear came strolling by and ate that gal for lunch.



Now if it wasn't for us camp robbers and our interest in history,  
What happens on the mountain would forever be a mystery,  
For Irish Rock will tell no tales and many secrets keep.  
And now you know the passing of the eaters of the sheep."

I turned and said, "Pray tell me more, oh wise and ancient bird."  
But he had flown and left me not but a big, white turd.  
So that's how history is preserved, now as in days of old.  
Somebody makes up a wild tale and gets that story told.

Photos:

March 30, 2015, Nate & Nicole and MaeCile & Tina

Cowboy Walking Stick – Nate letting his Paso Fino mare, Estrella, guide him along, Aug 10, 2010.

Nate and Nicole, April 26, 2013 (5 photos)

Cody Stampede Parade, Nate and Nicole with outrider, July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Nate with Mongolian horseman before Nate mounted up for a ride, Fall 1996

Nate with Mongolian horse trainer and his wife and steed, Fall 1996

Nate driving the covered wagon at the High Island Ranch, 1990's

Nate and MaeCile on the Great Wall of China, Fall 1996

Nate and MaeCile riding a camel in Mongolia, Fall 1996

Nate at Prospect Cow Camp cabin, 1997

Nate taking Girl Scouts for chariot rides, 1980's

Cody Stampede 2014 Plaque

Nate driving team with Moses tied to the back, 1990's

Moses the Mule laying down for Nate to get on, 1990's

Nate on Tucker

Article and photos by Tracie Fernandez, 2013

Nate photo by Tracie Fernandez, 2013

Nate tipping his hat to MaeCile by Tracie Fernandez, 2013

Nate 2009 Cowboy of the Year

Nate book – "Roll On Little Dogies" with Nate and two friends on Ol' Tex

Nate and sister Linda as children

Loading hay into the wagon to go feed, 1948

Nate and Shirley in tribal head dress at Denver Stock Show

MaeCile and Nate

Nate in water fight with his kids, Ron and Shirley

Nate with Ron and Shirley on Ron's birthday

Nate with Ron and Shirley on Mike, who was in the first bunch of horses Nate broke for Clyde Duncan, a very nice, good, pleasant horse.

Nate with cousin Art Williams, son Ron, and kid Nate raised Fuzz Hawk

Nate and son Ron with feed bucket

Nate and daughter Karen Sue with Hereford cow

Nate portrait, 1937

Nate on some bronc, Shirley on Darky and Ron on Mike

Nate's daughter Karen Sue when she was two years old

Nate, his dad and his son, Ron, on Father's Day 1943