



OLD-TIMERS
of
Southeastern California

LR

by **LESTER REED**

REED

THE MARK LACEY FAMILY

It was about the latter part of March, in the year 1942, when I first came to a wide place in Highway 395 where the sign on the front of the small post office building was "OLANCHA." The place was in Inyo County of California, and I had moved into the area to trap coyotes under supervision of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and my wages were to be paid from an appropriation from the Taylor Grazing Agency.

Bordering the highway on the east was a beautiful meadow in which Hereford cattle were grazing, and there were corrals in which to work cattle, modern scales for the weighing of livestock, and a chute for the loading and unloading of livestock transported in trucks. A few huge cottonwood trees bordered the highway on this same side, and then on the west side of the highway was a sizable grove of the huge cottonwood trees, a ranch house surrounded by tall poplar trees, and a little further to the south, and beside the little post office building was a fair sized lumber structure where the sign on the front was: "RANCH HOUSE CAFE."

Wanting to find a place to make camp, I went into the cafe and inquired as to whom would be the right person to see for getting a camping place. With no hesitation, the man I was talking to advised that I go see Mark Lacey. Asking where I might find Mark Lacey, I learned he was the owner of the beautiful meadow, and the ranch house surrounded by the tall poplars was pointed out to me. Going over to the ranch house and knocking on the door, the lady answering informed me that I would find Mark Lacey a short distance to the west working on a reservoir. Arriving at the concrete reservoir, there were three men shoveling sand from it and the man introducing himself as Mark Lacey was a slender, energetic man, wearing high-heeled boots, Levi overalls, and a felt hat not so large as those worn by others in the cattle business. When I told him what my mission into the area was, he told me of a little shack to the north of the ranch house, and on his property. He started apologizing for it not being much of a place, but I told him all I needed was a place where I could turn off the switch key and tie up some hound dogs.

When I went down to the little post office, I found the postmaster to be a sizable old gentleman, wearing a heavy mustache and rather gruff in his manner. Later, when I began to get acquainted with the postmaster, I learned his name was Jake Beebe, and found him to be a kindly man in many ways. I well remember of him telling about a right young fellow coming to him wanting to borrow a small sum of money. In telling me about it, Mr. Beebe said "I knew the young fellow was honest, and I knew that he needed it, or he would not be asking, so I let him have it without asking any questions."

From Mark Lacey I learned the man in the restaurant, who told me to see Mark Lacey about a place to camp, was "Dick" Hiter, and both the restaurant building and the postoffice were on the Lacey property under some sort of land lease arrangement. Today, in 1966, the little post office

where I met Jake Beebe has for a long time been burned down, and now the post office is in a quanset hut type of building just to the north of the restaurant, where Mrs. Irene Carstensen is the postmaster. This building does not join the restaurant on the south as did Jake Beebe's little post office. Now, just across the highway from the restaurant, the Laceys have a building in which Mr. and Mrs. "Bob" Gallaway have a very nice grocery store where anyone can find just about anything they want in the way of food (including good meats). Right near by the store the Laceys have a gas station where Mr. and Mrs. Earl Mullen sell Mobil gas and oils, repair tires and do grease jobs. During the summer time, many people, when driving through Olancha, stop beside the highway, on either side, to enjoy the shade of the huge cottonwood trees.

After being camped for a short time in the little shack on the Mark Lacey Ranch at Olancha, I met with a nearby neighbor to the north by the name of "Artie" Lubken, and while talking with him I learned he was looking for someone to help work a bunch of cattle. I told him that if he had some old horse that would not buck me off, I would go with him to help and try to stay out of his way. He answered that he had an old black horse that would not buck me off, but said that I might think he was bucking every time he stopped when I had to run him to head something off. I found that "Artie" was right when he said the old horse was really rough in the way he stopped, but we did get the job done.

The following Sunday morning I started out in my car to learn more about where I might catch a coyote, and when passing the Lacey corrals I noticed there were some men getting ready to do some branding of calves. Stopping, I found that "Artie" Lubken, Mark Lacey, and another neighbor by the name of George Brown, were there to brand calves belonging to George Brown. A good looking old white horse was standing in the corral with a saddle on, and "Artie" told me to get on the horse and help him rope the calves by the hind feet.

I needed no second invitation to help with the roping, and I soon could tell I was mounted upon as good a horse as I have ever been on for the roping of calves by the hind feet when in a corral and dragging them up to the branding fire. The rope was of good quality and just the right weight for me, and the old white horse was always in the right position, so along with that which we refer to as luck, I spent my first very pleasant forenoon roping calves in the Mark Lacey corral. I found "Artie" Lubken to be very good at catching both hind feet of the calves. He was that type of hand who knew how not to be in the way of whoever was in the corral with him, and I hope that I was just as fair to him.

A little later when Mark Lacey brought his cattle to the Olancha Ranch from the desert range in the Coso Hills, he let me know the day he was going to brand, and again I experienced a very pleasant day in the Mark Lacey corral roping calves with Bev Hunter and son Roy. So, it was in the Mark Lacey corral that I became acquainted with Mark Lacey, George Brown, and Bev and Roy Hunter, of whom I write in these pages.

In time I learned that Mark Lacey was truly a native son of California, born November 25, 1888, at Fort Independence in the Owens Valley. Mark Lacey's mother, who was Anna Marie Meyer, and her four brothers, Hans, Otto, Pete, and "Billy," came from a province in Den-

mark that was annexed to Germany. Hans was the first to come to the United States in 1861. He then sent for the three brothers, and about the year 1873 the sister Anna Maria came to America accompanied by an older lady companion. At that time the Owens Valley was very much an isolated area as far as train service was concerned, so the Meyer brothers and sister Anna had to finish the journey by stagecoach.

The trip from Denmark to the United States, and then across country into Owens Valley when having to finish the journey by stagecoach, was quite a venture for a young lady in a land where her language was not spoken. After her arrival in Owens Valley, a man by the name of Shoeber, who hauled freight with wagons drawn by horses or mules between Bishop and Mojave, would, whenever he could, help the young lady from Denmark with her learning of the English language. Having been well educated in the language of her native land, she was better prepared for learning to speak and read in English. Through reading and conversation, she very well mastered the English language.

Evidently it was at Georges Creek of Inyo County where Anna Marie Meyer started living in America, for it was there that her brother Hans had settled during the winter of 1861 and '62 as a partner in ranching with a man by the name of John Kispert. Hans Meyer, for a short time, had been in the Southfork Valley where he no doubt met John Kispert, for the information I have indicates that they came back into Inyo County when the soldiers were stationed at Fort Independence.

After not too long a time, Hans Meyer sold his interest in the ranch on Georges Creek to the partner John Kispert and took up a claim of his own. Hans Meyer then sent back to the old country for his three brothers, Otto, Pete, and "Billy." Then, as I have stated before, the sister Anna Marie joined them. "Billy" Meyer's time in Owens Valley was not for long. In 1892, when at the age of 36, he was thrown from a horse and killed.

It was about the year 1873 when Mark Lacey's father (John W. Lacey) came out west from Madison County, Missouri. He was born in Batesville, Arkansas in 1851. When leaving the State of Missouri, John W. Lacey traveled west into the State of Nevada where he stopped over to work in the mines, and then became a partner in an antimony mine. Retaining his interest in the mine, he moved on into the Owens Valley of California. The railroad then ended at Elco, Nevada, so when he came on to California he had to travel by stagecoach.

Then in June of 1886, John W. Lacey and Anna Marie Meyer were united in marriage, to first live not far from the Owens River at the foot of the Alabama Hills. They then moved onto a 160-acre ranch at Fort Independence, where on November 25, 1888, their first child Mark Buckner Lacey was born. Then came along three other children: Beulah, "Tom," and Gladys.

The next deal that John Lacey made was to sell to the partner his interest in the antimony mine over in Nevada. When the partner came to pay the Laceys for their interest in the mine, the money was carried and concealed in a trunk with a false bottom. After the man asked Mrs. Lacey if the floor had any holes in it, he took the money from beneath the false bottom of the trunk and poured in upon the floor from a small Navajo blanket or rug in which he had it wrapped. Mrs. Mark Lacey still has the Navajo rug or blanket in her possession at the Olancha Ranch.



Anna Maria Lacey and John William Lacey, mother and father of Mark Lacey.

Mark Lacey always remembered playing with the shiny gold coins when they were poured onto the floor.

John and Anna Marie Lacey remained on the 160-acre ranch at Fort Independence until after the four children were born. The sale of the mine enabled the Laceys to pay for their ranch, and then when it was sold, they moved to Georges Creek where John Lacey and Hans Meyer were partners in the cattle business, no doubt up until the death of Hans Meyer about 1904. The old log cabin which Hans Meyer built on Georges Creek was still there until not too many years ago. Pete Meyer lived at Georges Creek until about 1922 when he moved to Lone Pine, and there he died in 1935. Otto Meyer moved to Montana and lived there until his death of which I have no date.

Evidently, not too long before the death of Hans Meyer, the first Forest Service permit for the grazing of cattle in the Monache Meadow was issued to John W. Lacey, Hans Meyer, and Edward Walker. In my files is a letter, loaned to me by Mrs. Mark Lacey, that is addressed to Mr. John (Hans) Meyer and dated January 1, 1904. This letter is from the Office of Forest Supervisor at Visalia, California, and reads to notify cattlemen that on December 19, 1903, the Secretary of the Interior decided to allow the grazing of cattle and horses in the South Division of the Sierra Forest Reserve during the season of 1904. The letter also informs that not more than 500 head of cattle could be grazed under the permit of any one person or firm.

Evidently, in the year 1913 it became necessary that a drift fence be built near the lower end of Monache Meadow to keep the cattle from Owens Valley separate from those of the South Fork Valley. The Southfork Valley of course is on the South Fork of the Kern River above what is now the Isabella Lake.

In the list of names I have of those old-timers to be benefited by the drift fence, I find the names of John W. Lacey, August Walker, Frank

Butler, Charles Summers, Albert Lubken, Arthur Lubken, J. W. Lubken. All of these men, I am sure, were from the Owens Valley area. Other names appearing on the list of those to be benefited by the drift fence are: T. S. Smith, W. A. Rankin, L. Rankin, and Charles Powers, belonging to the Southfork group. J. Johnson is a name that is not familiar to me, so I do not know whether he was of the Owens Valley or the Southfork group. If I am wrong about any of them I must offer my apologies.

When John Kispert located at Georges Creek and gave it that name, it was for the Piute Indian from whom he bought the claim. This Piute Indian was known to old-timers as Indian George, and the creek still bears the name. John W. Lacey remained in the cattle business there until selling out to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power in the year 1925.

When Mark Lacey was at the age of 17, which would make the year about 1905, he took his first train ride with eight carloads of cattle to San Francisco. The cattle were driven from their ranch to Kearsarge on the narrow-gauge railroad known as the Carson and Colorado which terminated at Keeler near the northeast shore of Owens Lake. To reach San Francisco the cattle were shipped by way of Reno, Carson City, Truckee, Sacramento, and finally arriving in San Francisco.

Evidently, before going on the trip to San Francisco with the cattle, young Mark Lacey had sold a horse to have spending money while on the trip, for when at the Big Pine Hotel, owned by Hamblet and Hall, he wrote a letter to his father. The letter was dated November 25, 1905, and reads:

"I sold my gray horse to Mr. Colton for twenty dollars (\$20.00). Let him take the horse when he comes. We will start for San Francisco tomorrow.

I have gained five pounds. I have been to Bishop and to Laws, but I did not see Miss Burke. Tell mama that I am all right.

Your loving Son
Mark Lacey"

"P.S. I have the money for my horse"

When World War I came upon us, Mark Lacey went into the service with Company E of the 67th Artillery, and with them he served in France. Mark was proud of his military service, and was happy that he belonged to The American Legion.

When the Laceys sold the ranch on Georges Creek, they moved to Long Beach where it was only natural that young Mark Lacey became very unhappy and longed for the cattleman's life in Owens Valley. So, in 1929, he went back to Olancha near the southern end of the Owens Lake and bought himself a ranch from the estate of August Walker. After being in the cattle business at Olancha, wintering his cattle on the desert range of the Coso Hills, and taking part of them to the High Sierras for the summer, he met with the Olancha school teacher, and it was not long until another cowboy had fallen from the bachelor ranks. Many are the times that the country school teacher has become the wife of a cowboy.

The school teacher's name was Elizabeth Lindsay, and it was on August 21, 1937, that she became the wife of Mark Lacey, and just about a year later, their only child, a son, John William Lacey was born. Before coming to Olancha, Elizabeth Lindsay taught school in Arizona where



Mark Lacey, getting his start in life on horseback, and a lifetime in the cattle business. Photo, collection of Mrs. Mark Lacey.



Mark Lacey and Jack Fitzpatrick

she made many friends among people of the cattle world, and when meeting these people at the Lacey Ranch, I find that we have much in common to talk about.

About the first of May, 1945, when my brother "Gib" and I were camping at the Lacey Ranch in Olancha, Mark came over to our camp and wanted me to go to work for him. Wanting to stay away from cattle work for awhile, I told him that I would rather not. He said there was another man he might get and I told him to see if the other man would take the job. A few mornings later Mark came over to our camp and said, "Damn you! you've gotta go to work." Feeling that he really meant it, I promised to work until the following November.

The first work was the gathering of the cattle off the desert range in the Coso Hills where I saw the best desert range I have ever ridden over. The desert flowers were good, and the browse was what I called the very best. The watering places that had been prepared under the program of the CC camps were what I thought the best I had seen. To attest to the range and watering conditions, the cattle were in the very best of order.

The first gathering we made was of the cattle watering at the Junction Ranch, a piece of land and good watering place owned by Mark Lacey. I learned that the place had been a way station in the early days for the stagecoaches. Mark had acquired rights to the range from Summers and Butler, and before them was the man Domingo Dominique. There were still joints of pipe in a number of places where this man had piped water to save the cattle from as much extra travel as possible.

On our second gathering of the cattle off the desert, we camped at Cole Spring, and there we butchered an unbranded yearling heifer still nursing the mother and what fine meat that was. The heifer was as fine and fat as any I have ever seen when still getting the milk of the mother and grazing on the desert flowers and the desert brush. No antibiotics had been injected into its flesh, and at that time I had never ridden over a range where there was so little sign of livestock losses. We gathered a number of unbranded yearlings. Prior to my going to work for Mark, I had gone from Shoeber Hot Springs where my brother Gib and I were staying, to meet Roy Hunter at Haiwee Spring, and there I helped him drive an unbranded young cow over to Cactus Flat where we branded her in a corral belonging to Barney Sears. Barney Sears was one of the old-time mule train packers who had a station on Cottonwood Creek and another at Sage Flat.

From the camp at Cole Spring we gathered cattle from the Haiwee Spring area to the north of Shoeber and Coso Hot Springs, from the Wildhorse area, Lost House, Willow Spring, Mojave Spring, Old Coso, Chappo Spring, and Mill Canyon. After covering the areas I have mentioned, yet knowing we had not found all of the cattle we started for the ranch at Olancha to stay the first night at Crystal Spring. Arriving at Crystal Spring before night, we gathered some cattle that were watering there, and picked up a few at Tub Spring, a watering place that had not been developed as some of the others had.

Leaving Crystal Spring, our destination for the evening was the Gill Corral, out in a big flat to where water had at one time been piped from Lower Centennial Spring. Inside this corral a fair sized shallow concrete reservoir had been made for the purpose of watering cattle and giving them access to feed on which cattle would not graze when having

to go to the spring for their water. This drive was made with much less trouble than the one when we had the cattle from the Junction Ranch to the south of the mining town of Darwin.

On this second drive the old-timer Bev Hunter and his son Roy were both along making more help who realized that cattle not wanting to leave the desert must not be permitted to spread out too much behind, so we made it to Gill Corral before night. I had gone to Upper Centennial alone to gather cattle from there as I had the year before. Bev Hunter, knowing that I would need help with the Centennial cattle, went to meet me after getting the main herd into the Gill corral. Knowing that my brother "Gib" had been the one to know I would need help the trip before, Bev took his horse so he would not go this time. "Gib" was badly crippled with a severe case of arthritis, and Bev wanted to give him a break. "Gib", being a man with very short legs, his stirrups were much too short for Bev, shoving his knees up beside the fork of the saddle as if he might be a jockey mounted on a stock saddle.

The drive before, because of the cattle spreading too much in the rear of the herd, we failed to get to the Gill corral by night so we had to leave them along the way to be gathered the following day, and that turned out to be quite a chore for the other men while I went to Upper Centennial. It was after getting the cattle gathered up and having them in the Gill Corral that "Gib" met me after night, having quite a struggle with the cattle from Upper Centennial, along with some of those we had left the evening before back at the Blackrock Water.

After leaving Crystal Spring on the drive to the Lacey Ranch at Olancha, the cattle—especially the drags—were without water for two days and nights. Calves were born along the way, and sometimes this was truly a hardship on the mothers, for if they went on to the Eleven Mile water at the south shore of the Old Owens Lake bed, they would have to repeat this sometimes for several days before getting their newborn babies to the water at Eleven Mile, or perhaps back to some other water on the desert range.

The drive from Eleven Mile was often a rather slow one, for many of the cattle — both cows and calves — would be very sore footed, and when drinking so much of this water that is so strong with alkali, some of them would be very slow and not wanting to travel. I mention the cows and calves, but in addition, at that time, there would be the steers, most of them two years of age, but always a few that would be of either three or four years, because of not being found the year before. The steers, of course, stood the drive much better than did the cows and calves.

Upon arrival at the Olancha Ranch, the cattle were let rest a few days, the calves were then branded, vaccinated for blackleg, earmarked and castrated, planning they would have time to very well heal before going into the Sierras for the summer. At that time Mark had just begun to drive his cattle into the mountains by way of the trail between Sage Flat and Monache Meadow. Before that the cattle had been driven to the high country over the Cottonwood Creek trail, so not being used to the steep Monache trail, they did not want to travel. So it was quite a chore to get them to Summit Meadow.

During this time the Lacey crew had been: Bev Hunter and his son Roy, "Tom" Lacey, "Salty" Peters, Elvis Bonner, my brother "Gib, and

myself. The cook was fine old Don Tysinger, a man who had never cooked for a cow outfit before, especially where pack mules were used, as we did going into the high country. Don was always on time with the meals, and was the first cow-camp cook I had ever been around with prepared salads. When the mules were being packed, Don was always right there paying close attention to what was done, and how it was done, so it was no time until no one had to worry whether the boxes were packed to balance. Don was that kind of cook that was well qualified to cook just about anywhere, and for quite a number of years it was understood wherever he was cooking that he would have time off to be with the Lacey cattle drives.

Don had been a cook in the navy, and was at Pearl Harbor when the Japs made their raid there. A nervous condition he had made me wonder if it was not the effects of shell-shock. Don died suddenly when working in a restaurant in Olancho. He was a very mild man in his manners, and during a day and evening, if he spoke a couple of dozen words, we thought of him being unusually talkative. I wish that I could be master of enough words to express my feelings just as I felt concerning Don Tysinger.

One day when we were at Brown Meadow in the High Sierras, and all in the old Lacey log cabin because of the rain and an electric storm, Don got a shock from the wood stove. Due to the storm we were not trying to gather cattle, so I told Don to stay away from the stove until the lightning slowed up in its bombardment. Don, saying he thought it would be all right to go ahead with the cooking, got another shock just as he placed the coffee pot on the stove, this time causing him to stagger back against the cupboard across the log cabin room. With his usual smile, he looked at the rest of us and said: "Maybe I had better stay away from the stove for awhile." After the storm passed over, we found



Birthplace of Mark Lacey near Independence, Calif. Collection of Mrs. Mark Lacey.

the electricity was coming down the stovepipe because one of the wires that held the stovepipe in place was too near the telephone line.

After my brother "Gib" and I arrived back at Olancha Ranch, Mark was wishing he had the calves left on the desert branded, so we suggested that we would like to go to the desert and get the job done for him. He liked the idea if we did not mind being on the desert. We assured him we liked to work with cattle in desert areas, for much of our work with our own cattle had been in the Anza-Borrego Desert where water is much more scarce than on his range in the Coso Hills. We loaded a pickup with hay and rolled barley, along with our bedrolls, our food and camping equipment. Then, with "Gib" driving the pickup and me taking the saddle horses, we headed for Cole Spring to make camp. From there we could very well ride to all of the watering places to check for cattle sign.

The not too many cattle left on the desert were well scattered. We gathered a few that were watering at Cole Spring where there were a few old houses that had been built by miners and others with interests in this desert area, but had moved out because the U. S. Navy had taken over much of the area for their operations. When we moved to Cole Spring to gather the cattle to take them to the ranch, I found a young fellow with his truck backed up to a small house that was sitting on the side of a hill. He was trying to get the house into a position so that it could be skidded onto the truck and he could "appropriate" it for his own use. I told him he had better see Mark Lacey before hauling it away. He did not do any more work toward getting the house onto the truck, and when I was there last — about two years ago — the house was still there.

At Old Coso we found a few cattle, and they were taken to Cole Spring for the branding of the calves. I told Mark before we left the ranch at Olancha, we would do the job for him without roping anything outside a corral. Old Coso was an interesting place to us, for there were the remains of about eight small houses that had been built of stone, and across a gully was the remains of a mining mill that had been built so the ore could be dumped into it from above by way of a chute. I have been told by old-timers that this little mining camp had been the property of Mexicans in early days.

Any cattle we found at the Chappo and Mill Canyon water were taken to Wildhorse Spring. We used a corral there that had been built for the trapping of wild horses. In this corral we branded a muley maverick bull — the oldest of the unbranded cattle we found. The corral was not too strong, and we had to be very cautious for fear he might break out, and then perhaps we would have had to rope him outside. We did not castrate him, for we knew that Mark had some bulls that had been born on the desert, and their feet were hardened to this rocky area and they were not so likely to get tender-footed. When the job was finished, we had managed to live up to our promise that nothing would be roped outside, for experience had taught us that roping cattle outside a corral tends to make them wild and more difficult to handle. Roping cattle outside is a lot of fun, but it certainly does not put any extra cash into the owner's pocket.

Our mission on the desert, in addition to branding up the unbranded cattle, was to count what wild horses we could with any degree of ac-

curacy. We did not count the droppings of the horses, as do the "experts" when counting our deer, for we felt that should some good cowboys start gathering the horses, the number would fall far short of our "pellet" count as do the kills in our special deer shoots. We counted what we actually saw until we knew that we would be likely to count the same ones more than once. We stopped counting when we had seen 180 head, and we reported to Mark Lacey that we felt it would be perfectly safe to estimate there were 300 or more horses in the area.

We gathered the cattle out of the high country about the first of October and took the cows back to the desert after the steers had been sold and the calves were weaned to be kept at the ranch and fed through the winter. Many of the older cows were really fat when we turned them back on the desert. A good year on the desert, and good feed in the high country summed up to what a cattleman calls a good year.

Just before the first of November came around, Mark asked me to take a ride out in the meadow with him. I felt that he had something on his mind that he wanted to talk about, and sure enough he did. He wanted me to stay on the job for another year. Feeling that he was one of the best principled men I had ever known, and knowing his heart was giving him trouble, I promised him I would stay for another year, but wanted to plan that I was leaving when the year was up, for I wanted to get away from cattle work for a while.

When the time was coming near to gather the cattle off the desert again, Mark wanted to know who I would like to have for help. When I agreed to stay for another year I had asked that Roy Hunter and the Indian Dugan Hansen work with me when I needed extra help. I told him I liked to work with younger men who did not think they had learned it all. In addition to Roy and Dugan, Roy Hunter's brother Mark, a young fellow by the name of Charley Gilmore, and Kenneth Smalley were the Lacey cowboys.

When we gathered the cattle off the desert to go to the high country again, we did not find any unbranded yearlings, or any unbranded cattle older than that. Evidently "Gib" and I had been lucky when branding on the desert. After the cattle had been gathered from the desert, taken to the mountains, and then brought out again, Mark came to me and said: "Les, you surely made me good gatherings off the desert and out of the mountains." My answer was: "Those young cowboys must have been all right then." Mark then said: "Yes! they must have been." I now look back with pleasure to the days I worked with such younger men as Roy Hunter, Mark Hunter, Kenneth Smalley, Dugan Hansen, and Charles Gilmore.

The first summer I worked for Mark Lacey I was with his brother "Tom," Elvis Bonner, "Leppy" Diaz, "Salty" Peters, Dugan Hansen, Bev Hunter, and his son Roy Hunter. Since I retired from the California Department of Fish and Game as hunter and trapper in 1957, I have been going back to the Lacey Ranch and helping them on the desert, at calf branding time, and to take cattle into the high country. This work has been under Joe Baker as foreman, and working with Austin Amick, young Joe Trenery (Little Joe), "Rick" Osborn, Willie Chamberlin, Billie Perez, Jack Randall, "Salty" Peters, Leo Rogers and two of the young Indian boys by the name of Sprat, Buck Bills and two of his young



At left, William Boyd; at right Hans (John) Meyer. These two old timers were vacationing at Jordon Hot Springs where there were no roads. Collection of Mrs. Mark Lacey.

boys, "Bob" Whitlock, "Sal" Biles, "Gummy" Hamilton, and a fellow by the name of "Jim" of whom I cannot remember the last name.

When I worked for Mark Lacey at first, there was an old boy of 66 years in the mountains to irrigate the meadows, and what a fine old fellow he was to put on an honest days work, regardless of what he was doing. When I was leaving the Lacey Ranch that fall, I told Mark that what he needed on the ranch as a steady man or foreman, was one who knew as much about cattle as did my brother "Gib," even if he was my brother, a man as big and husky as Charley Gilmore, one who would work for him as did Frank Carmichael at the age of 66, and in addition be a man who would be honest with him. Mark then said: "Yes Les! but where am I going to find all of that in one man?"

Then came along his brother-in-law (Joe Baker). Joe was everything needed except the experience with cattle, but being an honest and hard-working man he made up his mind to learn about the cattle work, and it was not long before he knew that we cannot drive the average bull very far by whipping him over the back and crowding him. He soon learned that the better hands were not those who crowded, yelled, and shoved the tail-end of a herd as if trying to drive them over the top of the leaders. In addition, he soon learned that the better hands with cattle for the benefit of the owner did not rope at every opportunity.

To me, working on the Lacey ranch while Joe Baker was there as foreman, was truly a pleasure. He made me feel that I was working WITH him rather than for him. I never did see him ask anyone to do anything that he did not do himself. More than once did Mark Lacey say to me that Joe worked too hard. Several years ago Joe Baker de-

veloped a heart condition that bothered him, but whenever someone needed help to do something strenuous, Joe was there helping to get the job done. Joe Baker was on the job with the Lacey's about 20 years until this last year (1965) when his heart quit him.

Austin Amick is another Lacey cowboy with whom it is a pleasure for me to work. He is employed with the California State Highway Department, but often he uses his time off to help the Lacey's. I well remember a time when two calves had gotten away from two inexperienced cowboys. Working up in the lead I did not know that Austin had gone back after the two calves, but after a time and looking back, I saw him coming along slowly behind them, not crowding to make them separate, as is so often done. Had he thought in terms that they must be roped, a lot of extra work would have had to be done to get them to the ranch — such as going after them with a pickup.

Bev Hunter and his son Roy are the type of hands with cattle that cannot be found just anywhere we may go. I will not go to any length concerning them because I have their story at another place in these pages.

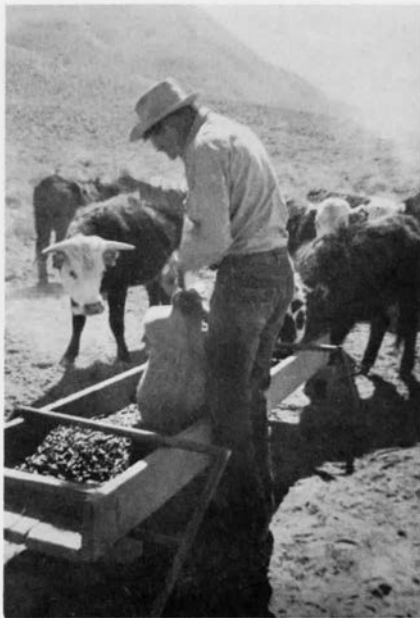
"Salty Peters" is the type of hand who can do a lot with cattle when working by himself. If there is a bull that wants to quit, he has the patience to take the time required to get the bull to where he wants to take him, and like Joe Baker was, he knows that a bull cannot be driven very far by whipping him over the back. Each fall of the year when the time is nearing for the Lacey cattle to be brought out of the high country back to Olancho, "Salty" does a good job and is the right man to work by himself at gathering the cattle into Ramshaw Meadow. Then, after the main herd is brought out he is the right man to gather up what have been missed in the first gathering.

"Gummy" Hamilton, a cowboy who goes to the Lacey Ranch from San Diego County, is another good hand of the old school. His father (Joe Hamilton) was one of the best hands with wild cattle that I have known, especially when it came to knowing how to handle them without any roping. However, if one did have to be roped, Joe's horses were always specially trained in knowing how to keep out of the way of a roped animal that is really on the fight, and in his day there were plenty of fighting cattle with which to train a horse. What I wish to say most is that I like to work with "Gummy" because he reminds me so much of his father when working with cattle.

Charley Gilmore, who was one of Lacey's young cowboys when I was first working there, has now really gone to the "bad". Last November, when I was in Boston, he met me at the hotel, and took me out to his home in Dover. The home is on a little hill in a densely wooded area where I was introduced to his wife Virginia to whom Charley owes his present day success.

After introducing me to his wife, the first thing Charley did was to step over to a closet and bring out a bridle-bit with braided reins and romal attached. Evidently, the sentiment of a cowboy and packer life has not all departed from him, for he then turned and pointing to the fire in the fireplace, he said, "There is our campfire."

I truly spent a very pleasant evening with Dr. Gilmore and his wife. During that time I learned they had first met in the High Sierras of California when she was with a Sierra Club group and he was the packer.



Joe Baker, foreman for the Mark Lacey family for many years. We worked WITH Joe, not for him. Photo, collection of Mrs. Dorothy Ellen Baker.

Stock Owners, Earmarks, and Brands

Baxter, John—	Underbit left	
Bennett, W. G.—		
Barlow Bros.—	Slit and half undercrop right	TL
Butler, Mrs. Belle—	1/4 undercrop, right Swallowfork left	6
Cannell, R. S.—	Underbit right Upperbit left	H
Carhart, J. R.—	Underbit right Underbit left	C ♥
Cashbaugh, J.—	Underslope right Upperslope left	ΛC
Cooley, N. J.—		
Crocker, F. M.—	Under 1/2 crop right Smooth crop left	L2
Deby, E. L.—		JD
Dearborn, O. F.—	Hole center right Slit left	JD
Edwards, E. H.—	Shoestring right; crop off end and two slits left	A
Ford, R. W. and W. R.—	Shoestring each ear; two full crops and two underbits	⤿ Ⓡ M

Gorman, J. S.—



Given, A. M.—



Hilton, C. A.— Under hack in each ear

Horton, J.— Plain split right
Crop and split left



Jones, Jas.— Underbit right
Split left



Jones, J. E.— Full crop each
Underbit left



Kisport, C. E.— Split down right
Hole center left



Lacey, J. W.— Under half crop right, full crop and split left



Longley, A. W.— Small crop end left



Lopez, Joe— Full crop right
2 shoest tags left



Lubkin, J. H.— Full crop and split in each



Mcronoy, J. E.— Crop left



Mitchell, W. H.— Underbit right, crop and underbit left



Miller, W. K.—



Mairs, N. J.— Underslope each ear



Naylor, Geo. W.—

Olds, D.— Split right, two underbits left



Olds, C. L.— Swallowfork in each



Partridge, C. A.— Upper 1/2 crop right
Same and underbit left



Partridge, P. S.— Upper 1/2 crop and underbit right, upper 1/2 crop left



Porteous, A.—

Roberts, W. D.— Tenou right
Full crop left



Rickey, C. W.— Dewlap
Left ear cut off



Robinson, E.— Swallowfork right
Hole left



Rossi, Rafael— Upper 1/2 crop each ear



Reynolds, S. H.— Crop and underbit right, crop and split left.



Horse brand M











Shaw, Harry—Crop right, split left



Horse brand FS

Summers, Chas.—Under crop right
Crop off left



Stewart Bros.— Split right Under ¼ crop left	JS	Wells, W. H.—Two underbits right One underbit left	
Smith, F. R.— Half crop right Two splits left	4C	Walker, Aug.— Underbit right	
Silva, Manuel—Smooth crop each	85	Walker, Ed.— Swallowfork right	W
Strohmeyer, Fred—	H ^F	Williams, Thos.—Upper bit right Under bit left	
Sterling, E. H.—		Whittock, C. W.—	XI
Symons, Wm.— Upper bit right	AS	Yaney, W. P.— Under bit right Crop left	Y
Symons, Fred.—		Young, W. B.—Under ¼ crop each	E
Taylor, Austin—			
Thomson, Thos.—Under ¼ crop right Upper ¼ crop left			
Thorington, W. R.—Full crop right Split left	O		
Turner, J. R.—Square crop under-lee right " " " " " bit left	ITI		
Wrinkle, Mrs. L. F.—2 underbits right Swallowfork left			
Watterson, Geo.—Underbit left Brand left hip cattle, left thigh horses			
Watterson, Wm.— Upper bit right Upper and under bit left			



The following year they met again in the High Sierras and if I remember correctly, Charley said the lady who is now his wife was cooking on the trip and he decided she was good enough to do his cooking the rest of the way out in life.

When Charley Gilmore and his wife were married, he had been through the second year of high school. He was of the type that his wife induced him to get the other two years of high school, then to the University of California at Davis and from there to Harvard in Boston, Mass., all the time studying to be a veterinarian and now he is teaching animal pathology at Harvard. Charley Gilmore, I believe, has well proven that it is never too late to go to school.

The last time I had seen Charley Gilmore before that night in Boston, was in the High Sierras of California at a beautiful meadow known as Redrock or Indianhead. I knew that Charley was to be in the area on a certain date with the pack mules to get a fishing party that was camped on West Stringer, so I invited him to plan on staying over night with me where I was camped and working for the California Department of Fish and Game as hunter and trapper.

Being in Dover that night in the home of Dr. Gilmore and his wife was quite different from a time when bronc-rider Charley Gilmore was in the hospital from having had a foot hung in the stirrup and being dragged and kicked around over a rodeo arena by one of those old bucking horses used only in contests between rider and horse. I boarded a bus that night for California more happy than ever that more than once I had felt there was something a little unusual in Lacey's young cowboy (Charley Gilmore).

One year there was the young fellow by the name of Willie Chamberlin who helped me bring in the drags from the desert range to the ranch

in Olancha. This young fellow was from a ranch over on the coast somewhere, and evidently someone had given him good training in the art of handling cattle gently and to the advantage of the owner. We left Crystal Spring early in the morning, and drove to Reed Corral where we let the cattle rest, then in the afternoon we moved those sore-footed cows and calves to the Gill corral where they were left for the night.

The second morning we were on the road early again, and upon arrival that evening at the Ninemile Water on the southeast shore of the old Owens Lake, and after a rest at the Elevenmile corral, the cattle were left on the water for the night. The third and fourth days I really was impressed with the young man helping me. He was in no greater hurry the last half mile than what he had been at the beginning, so I told Joe Baker he could send that young cowboy with me whenever he wanted to.

After Don Tysinger passed from us, Leo Rogers was cook for us when gathering off the desert, out of the mountains, and on some of the drives. Leo was always on time with the meals, and he never forgot to have tea for me, remembering that I cannot drink coffee. In my experience Leo Rogers is better than the average camp cook, and I can honestly say that I never left his table feeling that I could have eaten more. At times Leo would help us with the cattle.

When I first met Leo Rogers I was running a trapline out in the Cactus Flat area of the Coso Range. He was then working for Barney Sears and looking after the horses on the winter range. In later years Leo owned the Cottonwood Pack Station where he had worked for Barney Sears. From the pack station he packed fishermen back to the Cottonwood Lakes, Trout Camp, Little Whitney, Big Whitney, and many other places far back into the High Sierras. "Bob" Moore now owns and operates Leo's old pack station.

What the Lacey's call the Reed corral is one I built when I first worked for them, and to me is was the Blackrock corral because of being in the vicinity of the Blackrock water place. After we failed to make the drive from Crystal that time to the Gill corral, and Mark was wishing he had a holding corral in between the two points I told him I would like to go out there and make camp to build the corral, and added, I thought I could do the job in about six days. I found more rocks beneath the frozen ground than I thought there would be so was in my camp for eight days before finishing.

I have mentioned the names of all the young fellows I have worked with on the Lacey Ranch, and am happy to have had the opportunity to work with them. Where these young people do not get the experience of moving cattle over long distances as did the old-timers, they are much more efficient at driving truckloads of cattle to market than we old fossils who should at all times be too wise to venture onto the highways, free-ways, the city streets, or even around the ranches and range country.

About July 1st of 1965, I made what will perhaps be my last trip into the High Sierras with the Lacey cattle. At Monache Meadow I had to decide I was too far past 21 to put out the effort or the hours required to do justice to such cattle drives, so I took my first ride in an airplane when coming from Monache to Olancha. I had been saying for quite some time that if ever I did take a ride in the air I would want it to be with "Bob" White of Lone Pine, and that was the way it happened to be.

I had also been saying I was not going to be a cowboy when I grew up, so now I have decided that I am mainly grown up.

The Lacey Ranch House at Olancha was built in 1867 from lumber hauled from Kernville to Olancha by way of the Walker Pass, in wagons drawn by horses or mules over the old dirt roads the few old-timers left remember as being so sandy and full of chuckholes. The Southern Pacific railroad came into the Owens Valley about 1907, so the picture then began to change in the way of transportation. The old dirt road was reconstructed to become what is known to us as Highway 395.

The Lacey cattle brand for many years has been the Double Circle, a design of a fair sized circle with a smaller circle inside the larger one which once belonged to Archie Farrington of Nevada. In later years, because of their being someone who evidently used the Double Circle brand in the State of California before the Laceys did, they have added an L to the bottom of the Double Circle. Since young John Lacey finished his four years of education at the California Polytechnic University at Paso Robles, California, he first brands all of the calves with another old-time brand of the Lacey family — a 31 on the left shoulder. Then, whenever the heifer calves showing the better breeding qualifications of the herefords are sorted from the calves to be kept as replacement cows, the Double Circle L is put on them.

I have pleasant memories of having worked for Mark Lacey and his son John. Mark would tell of an Indian who worked for his father (John William Lacey) for forty years, and was so happy in doing so that he took the name of Lacey for himself. Another Indian worked on the Lacey Ranch for 28 years. I remember one time when I was visiting at the Lacey Ranch, there were two other old boys (George Urguhart and "Jack" Randall) who were apparently just as pleased as I to be visiting at the Mark Lacey Ranch again.

Mark Lacey's mother (Anna Maria) passed away at Long Beach, California, in 1943, and his father (John William Lacey) passed away at Olancha in 1942 at the age of 91. Two more people who had pioneered Inyo County in the days of the stagecoach had passed on, and with them, no doubt, we lost the history of many incidents that would be of real interest and value today.

In 1965, another old-timer of Owens Valley passed away, and this time it was Mark Buckner Lacey leaving as his survivors his wife Elizabeth (Lindsay) Lacey, his son John W. Lacey, a brother Tom Lacey, and a sister Gladys May (Babe) Keithly of Los Angeles. The many who attended his funeral services thoroughly attested to the many friends Mark Lacey had made throughout Owens Valley.

The pallbearers were: Alex Krater, Austin Amick, William Thornberg, Foster Webb, Kenneth Smalley, and Tom Nolan. Of the old-timers of Owens Valley named as Honorary Pallbearers were Dick Glade, Bev Hunter, A. P. Mairs, Frank Chrysler, George Urguhart, and Arley Brierly.

All of us who knew Mark Lacey of course thought of him first as a lifetime cattleman who had built up a sizeable herd of hereford cattle along with a sizeable acreage of land at Olancha, and in addition a sizeable acreage in the high Sierras where a designated number of the cattle are taken for the summer seasons under Forest Service permit.

