

# CONFESSIONS OF RED MEAT SURVIVORS

Some of ranching's old-timers admit to ignoring the problems of cholesterol and other unnamed and often unsubstantiated handicaps. They believe that red meat is good, which is proven here, simply by age and attitude.

## CALIFORNIA

### Oscar Haise, 89

There were no fences.

Oscar V. Haise, the youngest of four, was born in Russell, Kan., to Edwin and Louisa Haise on Jan. 15, 1915. His parents pioneered in Crowley County, Colo., when Oscar was three.

At 12, Oscar started helping a neighbor, Bob Wright, who had cattle and horses. Horses were the boy's first love, and he had a way with the colts. There were no fences across the plains at that time, and he would ride the colts until they would respond to the reins, wherever they might run.

While in school, Oscar drove the school bus for a year and a half. "Then Colorado decided that drivers needed to be licensed. I would have been old enough for a license in January of the next year—only two months later. I asked a teacher to fill in for me until I could get a license, but he refused, so I lost that job."

The Depression was especially hard on that country because of the drought and dust storms. After Oscar graduated from high school in 1932, he would break three colts and receive one additional colt as pay. He helped trail cattle north and south looking for grass. One winter in the San Luis Valley, Oscar lived in a shack with the roof and sides so loose they had to shovel dust off the floor and beds every night before turning in.

"We'd read for a while before sleeping," Oscar says, "and the dust would drift in on the book so we had to blow it off before we could turn the page. We lived on beans, coffee, beef and biscuits, with dried apricots thrown in for dessert."

During the Depression years, Oscar went to the State Penitentiary in Canyon City, where a former neighbor was warden, to get bits, spurs, and hatbands for trading goods. He would layer the hatbands from largest to the tiniest on his hat. When someone admired one of the bands, he'd say: "What do you have to trade?" In this manner, he was able to get knives and tack for further trades. He would also trade horses, sometimes getting a cow or another horse, but rarely cash. Money was scarce. He went to Aspen to help a rancher put up hay.

saddled up my horse and took off for Gunnison, Colo. There were still some snowdrifts up high on those mountains, but the horse and I made it to Gunnison, where I sold her and got a ride on a trainload of cattle headed east. That is the way I returned home."

In 1937, Oscar met Georgia, the love of his life. They married in January 1938, after two months of dating because he couldn't afford the frequent trips to see her. Making a living in those days was tough in Colorado so, with their daughter, they moved to California where Oscar's older sister lived. Georgia

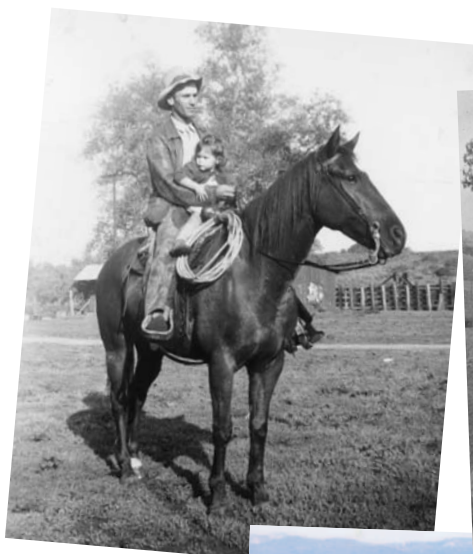
**"THE DUST DRIFTED IN SO WE HAD TO BLOW IT OFF THE BOOK BEFORE WE COULD TURN THE PAGE."**

cooked while Oscar cowboied. They were on the Santa Margarita ranch when it was bought out by the government to make Camp Pendleton. They worked for Newhall Land and Cattle Company until 1944, when Oscar took the job as brand inspector

in Modoc County, Calif.

He worked as brand inspector until 1950, then he went back to work on a ranch near Gerlach, Nev. Several other jobs followed. Eventually, an opportunity to own a ranch in Arkansas presented itself. They lived there for 22 years until Georgia passed away in 1995. They had by then retired and sold the property.

In February 1996, Oscar got in his car and drove to Likely, Calif., to visit with his son-in-law Ken and daughter Jackie McGarva. A huge snowstorm occurred the next day. Oscar went back to work helping to calve and feed cows, delighted to be back in the saddle again. He is still helping to feed, riding his old horse whenever the



PHOTOS COURTESY THE HAISE FAMILY



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
Oscar takes Jackie for a ride.  
►The Haise family in 1947,  
Georgia, Oscar, Jackie and Roger.  
►Oscar with Georgia the "love of  
his life." ►Delighted to be back in  
the saddle.



need arises and moving cattle around.

Oscar tries to visit Arkansas for a few days or weeks each year to see son Roger and many good friends.

Oscar's favorite meal is still beef, beans, biscuits and gravy.

—Jackie McGarva