

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.

NEVADA

George Parman, 81

My heart was always in ranching.

George Lawrence Parman was born in Lake City, Calif., in the cold winter of late 1931. His father, Lawrence, was a fourth-generation rancher. His mother, Jewelle, was a rancher and an accomplished artist.

George had an older brother, Joe, and sister, Christine. He says, "My dad and his brothers had properties from Lake City in Surprise Valley, Calif., to the Soldier Meadows Ranch in Nevada. Dad was born in 1897, and '31 was hard times and the Great Depression eventually did cost them their properties. It cost hard feelings and tears."

The family ended up in Carson Valley, south of Reno, where Lawrence milked cows, trapped coyotes and anything else he could.

Lawrence's big passion was horses, which he passed on to George. Lawrence started many horses for the ranches in Carson Valley. George's mother "was an experienced trapper and those sheepmen over there needed trappers bad."

An ad in a newspaper about a commissioned livestock sale in Reno played an important part in the family's life. "Lots more than Dad ever realized at that time. The auction started a multimillion-dollar livestock business."

One of the ranches was the Smith Creek Ranch. World War II started and it was impossible to hire anybody. "It worked us to death," George says. "We wound up with the Weeks Ranch and Dad couldn't see much sense of school, so I quit school in the seventh grade." But George could see the value of an education, so he went back after a couple of



PHOTOS COURTESY GEORGE PARMAN

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: George with bobcat skins, Diamond Valley, March 2001. ▶ George and Ruthie with children, Linda (on left) and Georgie, in Hunt's Canyon, August 1955. ▶ Mustangs caught on Table Mountain in Bald Mountain Corral, ca. 1965. ▶ George's father, Lawrence, with coyote and raccoon skins in 1934. ▶ Georgie and Linda on their way to school in a snowy March 1964. ▶ The cowboy in Eureka in 2012.

years and rode with Ruthie Weaver, who was born in Minatare, Neb. She had a ranching background and came to Nevada when her father got a job in Hawthorne. George, with help, caught up and graduated high school in 1951. Ruthie and George were married that year. He was 20; she was 17. They had three children: Linda, Georgie and Robin.

George and Ruthie moved to Hunt's Canyon in Monitor Valley in 1954. "I traded around. I loved to trade. Ruthie had a fear not to borrow money. We had lots of cattle. We inherited a range conflict. We were strange to the country, but we was forced to ride—I'm proud of that."

The drought hit in '56-'57 "and prit' near put all of us out of business. We got through with a few cattle." The drought ended in



'63 and they paid for the ranch by selling cattle. "We didn't owe a dime," George says. "We sold out and ended up at the Flynn Ranch in Diamond Valley. Ranching's hard...damned hard. And I went through some pretty rough years. I don't know how Ruthie ever stood me all those years. When I got too much money, I always spent it running horses."

After 58 years of marriage, George lost Ruthie to cancer three years ago, but he tells of a

time when they were checking water at Simpson Spring in the Sulfur Range of Nevada.

"We came up to this spring pipe that was plugged up. Ruthie took off her boots and socks and waded into the tank which had about two feet of water. She was unplugging the pipe and I said, 'Watch out for that snake.' Ruthie scolded me saying, 'Here I am wading in this cold water and you are never serious.' Just then she spied a small water snake trying to climb up her leg. Ruthie then tried to climb a tree that wasn't there. She sure got mad at me."

George still misses her. "Ruthie and I might have dodged some of the pitfalls we had through life, and I think the life we had was kinda hard at times, but we'da probably done it much the same way. Ranchin' was a hard ol' life but we both loved it." — Paul J. Etzler