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THERE AIN'T NO FENCES



MEMOIRS OF HAROLD JESSE JACOBSEN
A TRUE NEVADA COWBOY

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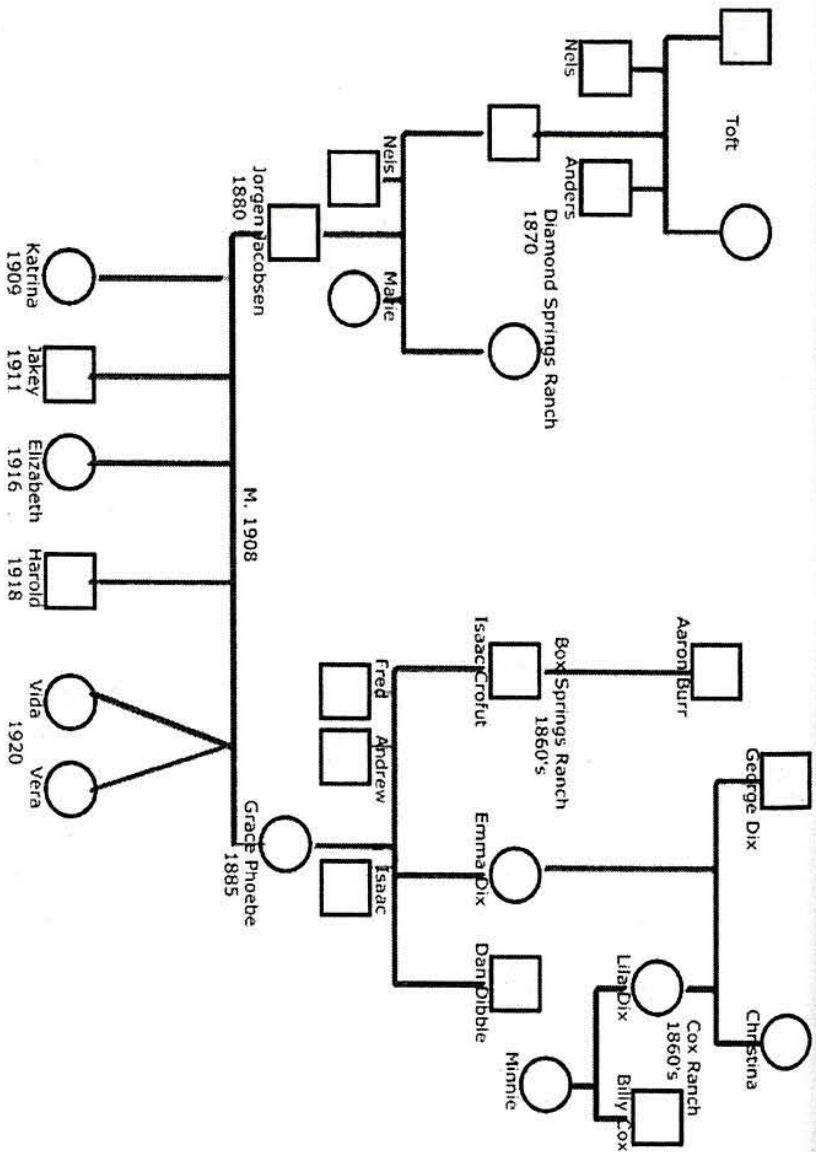
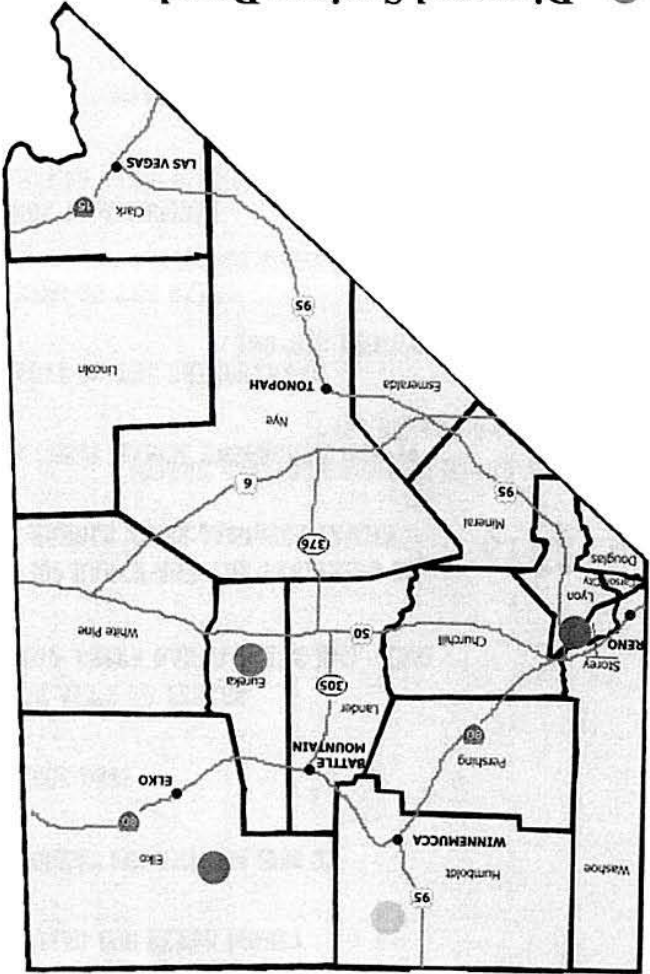
THERE AIN'T NO FENCES

MEMOIRS OF HAROLD JESSE JACOBSEN
A TRUE NEVADA COWBOY

ON THE COVER: HAROLD ON HIS HORSE PAT, 1943

COMPILED AND EDITED BY CHERI JACOBSEN AND ARDIS JACOBSEN

- Diamond Springs Ranch
- Willow Creek Ranch
- 102 Ranch
- Jack Creek Ranch



Genogram

A horse drawn wagon driven by an English speaking American took him to Charlie Hjul's store. At last he would be speaking to a Dane!

Mr. Hjul owned the Eureka Hardware Store, was the undertaker and was also a leading citizen. He arranged for Jorgen to get a ride on a freight wagon that would arrive at the Diamond Springs Ranch the next day. The wagon driver spoke no Danish so they had to communicate by actions and signs.

Jorgen couldn't believe what he saw. Rather than the lush green meadows he had imagined, he was greeted by an expanse of gray-green sagebrush that seemed to stretch forever. Eight horses, four more than he was used to, drew the wagon that plodded along a dusty, rutted road. What was his uncle thinking when he decided to make his home here? Young Jorgen knew for sure cows could never survive in such an arid, unkempt wild land.

Finally, he arrived at the ranch and was met by his Uncle Nels. His first question was, "What do the cows eat?" Looking back, I imagine he also wondered what he would eat. Now he knew he should have stayed in Denmark! But his uncle assured him he would soon grow to love Nevada and especially the Diamond Springs Ranch and all it had to offer.

When Jorgen awoke the next morning, he was pleasantly surprised to see there was indeed a beautiful ranch way out in the country. There were trees, a large pond and meadows that stretched out over a mile square. Perhaps he had made the right decision. Opportunity was here; he just had to find out what it was. And he did, beginning that very day. Uncle Nels took him along and explained how things worked.

His uncle gave him a gentle horse to ride and took him out to help move cattle. Though Jorgen came home sore and tired, he knew he would be going again the next morning so he didn't complain. Tomorrow came. That day they would be moving other cattle from a different area. There were no fences,

just streams and water hole areas where the cattle would stay for much of the year and graze.

In addition to the ranch, Uncle Nels also ran a freight station. The Diamond Springs Ranch was located on the Overland Trail that was used by emigrants making their way to California. There was an old fort at Diamond Springs constructed of rocks gathered from the area. There were holes in the rocks, presumably used as ways for the white people to shoot at the Indians, but now the holes had been enlarged so hay could be pushed through to feed the horses. Inside there were stalls for as many as 16 horses. The stalls were necessary because many of the freight wagons were powered by eight horses, and the converted fort, now a stable, was used by the teamsters when they stopped overnight.

On only the third day, he found himself getting used to the cowboy lifestyle. Life was great and so much better than being a tailor!

Jorgen Peter Jacobsen marveled and wondered about his uncle's way of life. How did he ever get so much land and so many horses, cows, pigs and sheep? Here was a green spot situated many miles from the nearest neighbor and even further from the busy mining town of Eureka.

Had he made a serious mistake leaving the beautiful lush green fields and pastures? Would he miss the dairy farm? In Denmark, the old country, the land was nearly flat and not far from the sea. It always rained and the fields yielded crops of grain, vegetables and orchards. Not so in this great new country where you had to make sure every drop of water was put to beneficial use at the only time it was available.

Back in Denmark, neighbors lived close by and exchanged help during the harvest season. Most work was done by hand. Horse drawn equipment included a wagon, plows and harrows. That was about all. I guess it is best described as a simple way of life.

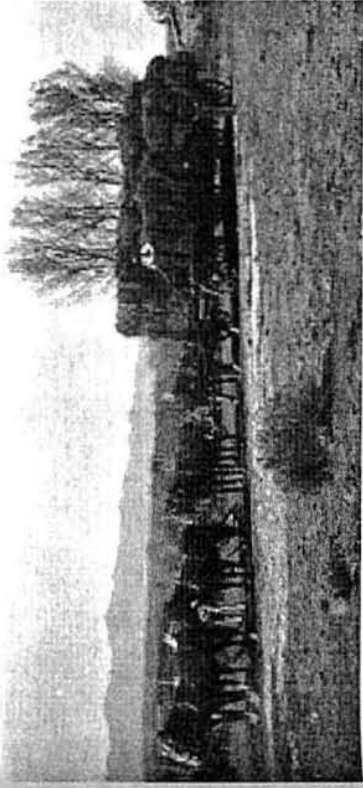
Not so in Diamond Valley. Young Jorgen had much to learn. One of his first assignments was to learn how to handle a team of horses. Now this was no easy task for a young Danish farmer who had never been around that many horses so this alone was enough to scare him.

The day began by bringing in the horses and harnessing and hitching them to the wagon that would be loaded with heavy bales of hay to be hauled to Eureka. The day was a long one, but that was the way of life that Jorgen had chosen, and it would continue to be exciting.

He learned the main source of income was to supply baled hay to Eureka where it would be fed to the horses and mules used by the miners and other businesses. That was a great market as Eureka was a busy mining town with no end in sight. The miners and many others were producing valuable metals, silver, lead and copper. At that time, Eureka was the second largest city in Nevada after Virginia City and was indeed booming.

On his first hay-hauling trip from the ranch to Eureka, Jorgen started by helping the driver, but that was only for a trip or two. He learned quickly and was soon at home caring for, harnessing and driving the team of eight horses with its heavy load of hay to one of the Eureka livery stables 28 miles away. It was a two-day trip so the first night he stopped at the Cottonwood Station, about 20 miles away, where he cared for his team and ate with the family. He rolled out his bedroll and slept in the barn. The next morning he was up early feeding and harnessing his team so he could travel the remaining eight miles to Eureka in time to deliver the hay to the buyer where it would be weighed and unloaded.

Jorgen was a small man, five feet four and about 130 pounds, so managing those pressed hay bales wasn't easy for him. He had help loading the hay at the ranch and men at the livery stable did the unloading. He received a large check, paid



Jorgen Jacobsen driving a team of horses with hay to Eureka.

Uncle Nels is along the side

the bill at the Eureka Cash Store and deposited the rest in the Farmers and Merchants National Bank. On the third day Jorgen bought the necessary supplies for the ranch and the freight station so he would be ready to make the long trip back home. He had a lot of responsibility, but he was learning how to make the ranch pay off.

His team consisted of eight horses, one of which was a black horse named Pete. Pete was the lead horse and understood when a teamster pulled the "jerk line" and yelled "gee," he was to turn to the right and when the teamster pulled the "jerk line" and yelled "haw" he was to turn to the left. Years later, as a boy of ten, I used Pete to pull the single sulky rake and "clean up" the hay spilled around the stack or along the buck-rake trails. So I had an important assignment, and it made Pete feel useful in his retirement years.

With hay selling at \$20 a ton, it wasn't a good plan to use it to feed more cattle so in Jorgen's early years at Diamond Springs Ranch the big cash crop was baled hay. Later, as the ore ran out in Eureka and mines closed, the market fell off and cows became the cash crop.

Driving a freight wagon was just one of the many things Jorgen was to learn. He also learned how to run, catch and

100 miles from the farm where they raised their pigs so this meant they had to devise a way to get them there. There were no trucks or trains to transport the hogs, only wagons. The dilemma was "How would they get the swine in and out of the wagons?" There was just one solution – drive the pigs to market. That was the way they did it in Denmark. Why not Nevada?

There wasn't much feed for hogs between Ruby Valley and Eureka and there were stretches of ten miles or more without water. The land was mainly sagebrush with patches of grass dispersed about. The upper mountains were covered in juniper trees and pinion pines, but the hogs would be driven in the canyons and valleys below. But despite all the obstacles, Nels and Anders managed to take the pigs to market.

Details aren't available, but we do know they walked and guided the pigs over the Overland Trail. Their only aids were sharp sticks and a wagon that led the way and carried grain for the pigs' evening feedings. They got water from the small springs and creeks that dotted the valleys and hills. I imagine one of the brothers drove the team of horses pulling the wagon and the other one followed behind herding the pigs.

One of their overnight stops was at Diamond Springs, located 28 miles north of Eureka in Diamond Valley. A. M. Taft owned the ranch and wanted to retire. He offered to sell his holdings to Nels and Anders and agreed to take what the pigs would bring as a down payment. The trip would prove to bring a whole new adventure to Nels and Anders.

Three days later, the Toft brothers reached Eureka where they sold the pigs to the slaughterhouse that supplied Eureka's mines. They received a check, met with Mr. Taft and closed the deal. They were in business!

The Taft Ranch was now referred to as the Diamond Springs Ranch because of the bountiful springs that supplied water to the ranch and much of the surrounding area. The

Diamond Springs Ranch provided the backdrop for my early years and was the beginning of the Jacobsen Family History.

Anders died shortly after they acquired the ranch, but Nels continued to operate the ranch until his nephew (my father) Jorgen Jacobsen came over from Denmark in 1901 to be associated with him. Nels lived on the ranch until his death in 1923.

For many years Jorgen raised and baled hay to supply the Eureka livery stables with feed for teams of horses hauling supplies such as wheat from Jiggs and Lamoile in Elko County. My father Jorgen added to the holdings and finally sold the ranch in 1940.

GRACE CROFUT JACOBSEN FAMILY HISTORY

break wild mustangs. Jorgen was elated when he caught a wild mustang, as he had never had a horse before. All of this was new to him, and he always said he was too busy learning and doing to think about life in the old country. He was a good listener and knew the way to learn was to watch what others were doing and to ask questions before trying to do things himself.

In Nevada, you had to brand and mark your calves so they could be easily identified when it was time to gather them off the open range and take them back to the ranch for the winter months. Just to be sure, the ears had a special mark that was made with a pocketknife. At the same time, the baby bull calves were castrated so they would grow up to be steers. Steers were generally fattened and butchered for the market. Young Jorgen learned all of this and much more. He knew one day he would take over the operation.

Jorgen soon adjusted to the sparseness of Nevada and quickly learned to range ranch. He continually looked for ways to make the ranch produce. While he continued to grow hay for the Eureka market, he began to build up a cattle herd so he would have two-year-old steers to sell to California feeder operations. He planted several acres of potatoes to sell in Eureka. Since he was going back and forth to Eureka, he bid on the mail carrying job and he had the "Star Routes" operation from Eureka to Davis Canyon, about a 41-mile stretch. An old German named Bauman lived in Davis Canyon with his goats and a white burro named Sailor. He was the Birch postmaster, and I have no idea how he survived. I remember that when Bauman died, my father acquired the 80 acres and Sailor.

Jorgen Peter Jacobsen, Danish Farmer, Tailor, Dairyman, Sheepman, Cattleman, County Commissioner, Mailman, Sheep Inspector . . . these are just some of the titles that he earned and lived. He left his Danish heritage behind and learned to love his new country.

Who was Isaac Ferris Crofut? He was a grandson of Aaron Burr who tied in electoral votes with Thomas Jefferson in the 1800 Presidential election. The House of Representatives then voted on who was to be President, and Representative Alexander Hamilton cast the tie-breaker vote for Jefferson. In those days the one who ran second became Vice President. But that is another story and much has been written about Aaron Burr, the little Colonel from Connecticut, who shot Alexander Hamilton in our nation's most famous duel and who provides much of our country's early history. So what has that got to do with Isaac Crofut? Well, Isaac Crofut was my grandfather, and Aaron Burr was his grandfather so I, Harold, am a direct descendant of a Vice President of the United States four times removed!

The story of the Crofuts coming to Nevada began right after the Civil War, or at least that is all I know about it. There were two young men from Connecticut, Isaac Ferris Crofut and William "Billy" Cox, who had served as marines during the war. They heard about the West and the need for people who were skilled in telegraphy. I don't know how they came west, nor do I know why they chose Diamond Valley as their destination. I know that Billy Cox was a telegrapher and knew the SFB Morse Code. In those days, there was no wireless, only

telegraph lines. Isaac Crofut had the assignment of riding the lines and keeping them repaired. They settled at what was to become the Cox Ranch, one mile north of Diamond Springs.

Now we have Isaac Ferris Crofut in Nevada. He was single, and there weren't many eligible girls around. But, there were two sisters back in Iowa, Emma and Lila Dix, whose sister Nina had come to Nevada with her cowboy

husband. Their father George Dix had died at a young age leaving his widow Christina and the three girls. Emma was afflicted with asthma, and her doctor told her she should move to a drier climate. With no ties in Iowa, it seemed natural and right for mother and daughters to join Nina in Nevada. Rail tickets were acquired, and the move was made. They ended up on 40 acres at Mud Springs in Diamond Valley, just three miles from where Isaac Crofut and Billy Cox were stationed doing telegraphy work.

Now there were two girls for Billy and Isaac to court, so Emma Dix became Emma Crofut and Lila Dix became Lila Cox.

The Crofut family became ranchers at Box Springs Ranch when the need for telegraph lines ended with the advent

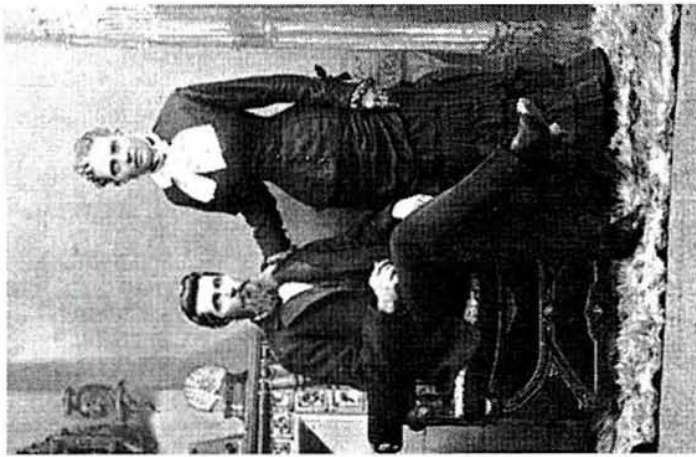
of wireless telegraphy and Isaac could no longer work as a line-man for the telegraph company. Isaac had a close friend from Texas, Andrew C. "Dan" Dibble, who came to Diamond Valley on a cattle drive. He was a cowboy who had been on several cattle drives from Texas to Montana to Nevada. When he reached Diamond Valley, he was ready to settle down. Together, they would take up homesteads and clear the land so they could produce feed for cattle in the winter months.

When the two took up their partnership, the valley was the way things had been for many years. The Native Americans or Indians had really lived off the land. There were deer and bighorn sheep and rabbits and squirrels, but no farmers or ranchers. They cleared the land at Box Springs and nearby Rock Creek and eventually brought the water from Davis Canyon over to the more fertile soil at Box Springs.

They raised enough hay to feed more than 100 cattle. There was a market for their beef in nearby Eureka, a bustling mining town. Who knows, they might have even produced hay to feed the mules and horses used by the Eureka citizens. The opportunity was there, and the land was unused at the base of Box Springs and Rock Canyon. They had some horses and a few cows. More importantly, they had the dream and willingness to go for it. And so they did. I don't have all the records, but I do know they built a working ranch.

THE COX RANCH

When my mother Grace's Uncle Billy Cox homesteaded 160 acres about one mile north of Diamond Springs, the Cox family also became ranchers. His wife Lila and their daughter Minnie raised a huge garden and had an asparagus patch that supplied the people in Eureka. They watered both from a well that was six feet deep with a path that led down to the water. I have a hard time believing that they watered those vegetables by carrying water in buckets up to the ground level and pouring



*Isaac and Emma Crofut
Wedding photo, around 1880*

the contents into the garden rows, but that's the story.

Aunt Lila and Minnie also made cheese and preserved meat as jerky and corned beef. Cabbage became sauerkraut and fruit and vegetables were canned. I guess I should tell you Aunt Lila was also the midwife who delivered local babies and was often called on to come by and nurse the ill.

The main thing I remember about Minnie was as a little girl she lost her left hand. Water was pumped from a spring about 300 feet from our house into nine wooden tanks. A contraption made of steel with a long tongue was pulled by a single horse or mule that circled the pump. One morning Minnie sat too close to the cogwheel and unfortunately put her hand in the way. Tragically, the cogwheel severed her hand just above the wrist. Her hand was buried in the graveyard across the road from our house.

THE BOX SPRINGS RANCH

I came from a family of pioneers. As it happened in those days, if you could stake out 160 acres and improve the property, it was yours. This was known as taking up a homestead. There were no patterns to look at, and many of the homesteaders failed to make the land productive, but not so for the Crofuts.

My grandparents' house was built from stones and logs. The inside was finished with boards and wallpaper. The barn was built out of logs, too, but there the logs were stood upright and tied together with telegraph wire. My grandfather and uncles cut the logs from juniper and pine trees. The cracks were filled with adobe or alkali mud. The only things made of lumber or boards were the doors.

The bunkhouse where my Uncle Fred Crofut stayed was a log cabin. Even the toilet was built out of logs. The fences were made from Juniper posts and barbed wire. Quaking aspen were used to make the gates and, as we called them, the

bars. The corrals were made of juniper pickets reinforced with aspen poles. The aspen wouldn't last long in the ground, but the poles were strong and flexible enough to tie the pickets together. There were no lumberyards. Sometimes the general store would acquire some lumber, but it was expensive and money



*The Crofut children, around 1892:
Fred age 9, Grace age 7, Isaac Ferris Jr. age 2,
and Andrew age 4*

was short. So they "made do" with what was available. In order to bring a flow of water from Davis Canyon, they had it laid out by survey and dug a ditch more than three miles long by hand. A hired hand, Gaetano Romandini, known as Pete, did

most of the digging. He earned \$1.00 per day.

To clear the land of sagebrush was another backbreaking task. The only tool they had was a mattock or grubbing hoe. The land was then plowed using horse drawn equipment. Finally, seed was planted, sprayed by hand and covered with a spike tooth harrow. One would have to see what was accomplished by hand to appreciate what they went through so they could "eke out a living."

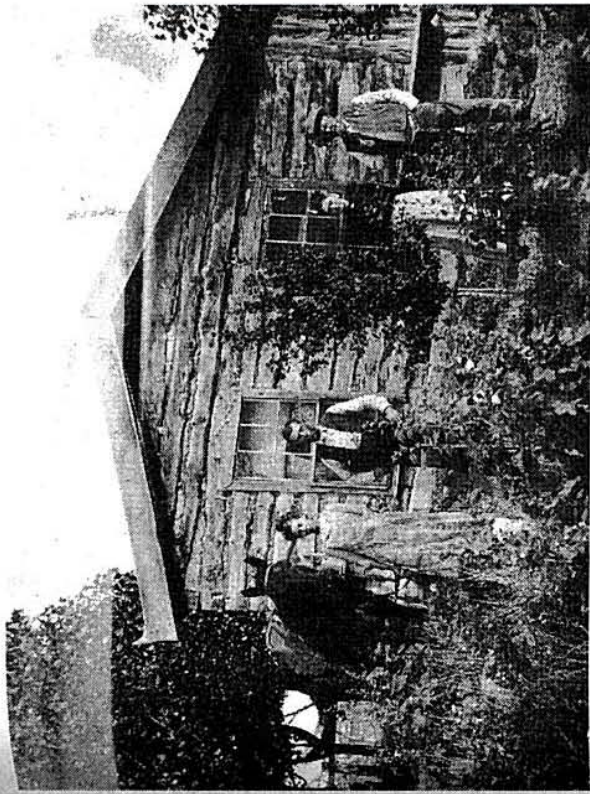
All of this was done in Diamond Valley at an elevation of well over 5,000 feet with a very short growing season and water that came from the runoff from the Diamond Mountains. That range only has live streams from April through June. That meant that every drop of water had to be used efficiently.

This all goes to prove determination and hard work can produce good results. My grandparents and their children made things happen. They didn't expect to or have luxuries, but they were very happy people. There were many other pioneer families who homesteaded ranches in Diamond Valley and other counties in eastern Nevada who experienced hardships. Most of those ranches are gone today.

Though my ancestors prospered, later owners weren't willing to take care of the land and improvements. All of the property my family worked so hard to improve has now reverted to native grasses and sagebrush. However, there are deep irrigation wells and other beautiful farms in the valley today because of available electricity and today's mechanized equipment.

Isaac and Emma Crofut had four children: Fred, Grace, Andrew and Isaac Ferris, Jr. My mother Grace entered the world on May 16, 1885, the second child in the family. Being an American even in 1885, Grace was a beautiful composition of German, Swedish and English.

When she was about six years old, Grace experienced the tragedy of her father's sudden death. He had traveled



Grace Crofut, Jorgen Jacobsen, Emma Dibble and Dan Dibble in front of the Old Pioneer House at the Box Springs Ranch, around 1906

to San Francisco to sell stock and had caught pneumonia. For years, Grace kept some paper dolls her father had given her under her bed.

My Grandmother Emma knew she needed a husband and father for her four young children so about a year later, she married Dan Dibble. That marriage lasted until Dan's death in May of 1936. Grandpa Dibble was the only Grandpa I ever knew.

The Dibble's lived an austere life in the wilds of Nevada. They made use of everything. Emma sewed clothing from flour sacks. Once she made a pinafore for Grace from a flour sack. This was Grace's first dress, and she wore it proudly for her first journey into the town of Eureka at the age of ten.

My mother's name was Grace Phoebe Crofut, and Grandpa Dibble affectionately called her Phoebe. Grace was petite and pretty.

JORGAN AND GRACE'S COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

When the young Danish immigrant Jorgen Jacobsen met the cute little teenager Grace Crofut, he immediately fell for her. She was 16, small and beautiful, and he courted her for seven years. They were engaged for two years. I have copies of the love letters sent by the mail carrier to her home at Box Springs seven miles away.

Jorgen had to wait seven years to become a US citizen before he could return to Denmark and not be drafted into the German Army.

He and Grace planned to marry and then go to Denmark on their honeymoon. They married on March 7, 1907 when he was 27, and she was 22. They went to Denmark when Jorgen became a US citizen in 1908. Grace loved Denmark and during the six months they lived there learned enough Danish to converse with her new family. I still have the copy of the diary she wrote while on their trip.

Later, she taught us children the few Danish words we know. Father Jorgen, however, said he was an American and refused to teach us any Danish. Nevertheless, we did hear him converse in Danish with Danes who lived in our area.

That was the beginning of the Jorgen and Grace Jacobsen family. Katrina was born May 9, 1909. Lloyd "Jakey" was born May 1, 1911. Elizabeth was born September 9, 1916. Harold was born October 7, 1918. The twins Vera and Vida were born October 30, 1920.



*Grace Phoebe Crofut Jacobsen,
1907, Age 22*



*Jorgen and Grace Jacobsen's
wedding photo, March 7, 1907*

too much. I would ride a horse to town and take a clean shirt, shoes and pants in my saddlebag. The 28 miles would take about six hours. I saddled up Dick, bundled up in my sheepskin coat (my Christmas present), put on my mittens to keep my hands warm, tied on my goatskin chaps and headed for Eureka. I was sure my Grandmother, who was now alone, would be glad to see me and have a hot meal ready. I could take a bath in her round tub, put on clean clothes and go to the dance at Mike's new ballroom.

I would visit my friends, dance with Eureka's pretty girls, ride the fire engine and drink a beer or two. Not exactly in that order, but I knew I would have a festive evening, sleep at Grandma's house and return home on January 2, 1937.

What I didn't count on was a change in the weather. About half way to town, it started to snow. That was okay because when it snows, it's warmer. But when I was about ten miles from Eureka, the wind came up and the snow turned to sleet and started beating into my face. Then it froze. The further I went, the worse it got. Finally, I reached the top of the hill just a few miles from Eureka, and I realized my face was covered with ice. My fingers were cold even inside the mittens. I made a fist with my right hand to warm it up and then I changed and made a fist with my left hand, always inside the mittens of course.

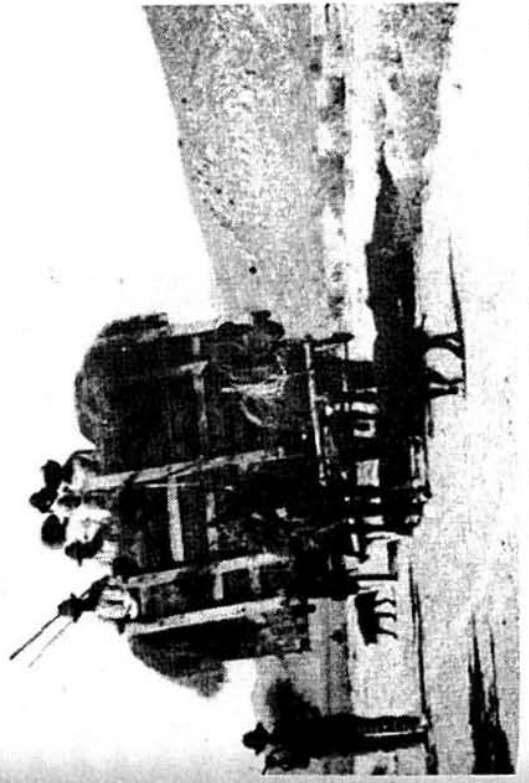
When I arrived in Eureka it was around 4 p.m. I was one cold young man. I put Dick in Frank Lewis' stable and went to my Grandma's house. She was happy to see me and fixed a great supper and heated water for my bath. By 8 p.m., I was all warmed up and ready to go to the dance. And, it was worth the long, cold ride. Everyone was happy. I got to dance with Eureka's pretty girls and at midnight, I was one of those privileged to ride on the fire truck through town. 1937 was here; I knew it was going to be a good year!

II

MAKING A LIVING ON THE RANCH

THE HAY PRESS

As with most Americans, my father was innovative. The main business was raising hay and processing it to be sold to the Eureka livery stables that supplied hay to the miners and business owners for horse feed and to the several people who had milk cows. The hay producing process was



The Jacobsen family hauling hay. Hired hand Old Pete is walking alongside.

long and tedious. My father said baled hay in Eureka fetched \$20 per ton when he first arrived in America! But let us see how it got there.

The meadows had been fenced and some seed had been planted, but most consisted of wild, native grass hay. The average acre produced one ton of grass hay. The hay was cut with horse drawn machines that had four-foot long sickles. It dried one day and then was raked into windrows and bunched with an eight-foot sulky rake, also horse-drawn. You are right - there were no gasoline engines, autos or tractors yet.

The next step was to pitch the bunches of hay onto hay wagons and haul it to the "hay corral," about one half mile from the house and farmstead. The hay was pitched into stacks. Finally someone invented the Derrick and Jackson Fork so the haystacks could be taller.

But, you still didn't have marketable hay. So the months of September, October and November were spent once again pitching the hay from the haystacks onto a wagon and hauling it to the hay press. Then the hay was pitched into the hay press, a contraption about two feet wide and four feet long and eight feet deep. It was designed much like the cotton press used in the southern states. The one at Diamond Springs Ranch was stationary and made from hardwood timbers that had been brought by freight from somewhere on the other side of the country, back east I was told. There were steel rods to hold it together. I know for sure it was sturdy and strong.

Two cogwheels mounted on an axle forced the heavy planks downward pressing the hay into the heavy box. Baling wire was poked through the special slots at the bottom of the box. When the hay was pressed into a bale, the haywire was inserted over the top again through the slots so the two ends could be brought together and securely twisted. Each bale was secured by three wires and weighed somewhere between 100 and 150 pounds.

There was a wheel on the side of the hay press. It was welded to the axle that turned the cogwheels pressing the hay into bales. A cable was wrapped around the wheel. A single horse was hitched to the end of the cable so he could turn the wheel by pulling and unwrapping the cable.

When my parents were first married, Mother's assignment was to lead the horse that pulled the cable that turned the wheel that turned the axle that forced the cogs that pushed the steel-braced timbers onto the hay so the bales were made. The grass hay bales were just what were needed for the market in Eureka. The prosperous mining town residents used many horses. This meant it was profitable to bale the hay and haul it to Eureka where it sold for \$20 per ton.

SHEEP

My father went into the sheep business in the 1920's. He always said he did so in self-defense.

Over the years and under President Teddy Roosevelt, the National Park System was created to encompass some of the most spectacular and fertile lands owned by the federal government. These lands included Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks. However, there were still many acres of choice land that weren't under private ownership. Consequently, the National Forest System was created, and it was to be managed and maintained by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

After these choice lands came under federal control, there remained all of the undesirable land, and much of it was available to those who wanted it. There were two industries that could and would use these lands. First, there was mining and prospecting, but the miners only wanted rich veins of ore and some quarries to obtain building materials from.

That left thousands of acres that could be used by the livestock ranchers. There were two major livestock growers, the sheepmen and the cattlemen. Most of the ranchers and

homesteaders in the west had cattle. They raised enough hay and grain to take care of the animals in the late fall, winter and early spring months. That left five to seven months when cows could be turned out on the open range, which, of course, was not under private ownership. This was referred to as a balanced cattle ranch.

Generally ranchers such as the Jacobsens raised as many cows as their land would support from October through April. The cattle were then turned out on nearby acreage for the balance of the year where they foraged for themselves. Cowboys packed salt to various spots called salt-licks. In the fall, they had a roundup and moved the cattle back on to private land.

That wasn't how it worked with other kinds of livestock, namely sheep. The sheep ranged in the Diamond Mountains and other high country for about six months of the year and then were taken south to lower altitudes. You could own a band of sheep and never own any land with the exception of areas around the springs and creeks.

A whole new kind of entrepreneur emerged. They were known as "tramp sheepherders." Over a period of 50 to 80 years, they became a large portion of the users of the grazing lands still under U.S. government ownership. As these "tramp sheepherders" began to emerge, my father entered the sheep business. As I said earlier, it was in self-defense.

He claimed he had the right to graze in all of the canyons next to our ranch. He wanted to operate the cattle ranch the same as it had been conducted for many years. He would use the mountain areas to run or graze the sheep in the spring and summer months and then send the sheep south to Nye County for the fall and winter months.

In order to do this, he had to make two major decisions and then follow through. The first decision required acquiring the water rights along the trail south and leases to property in the Duckwater, Current Creek and Round Valley areas of Nye

County about 200 miles south of the Diamond Springs ranch. He did this so he could control the range where the sheep would spend the winter.

The second decision was to find the best help to work and manage the sheep operation. He found the ideal man, Pete Etcheverry. Pete didn't have a lot of money, but he knew and understood how to operate the sheep business. Plus, he didn't require a large salary. He would take his pay in the form of part ownership of the sheep.

Father then sold some of his cattle and went to the local banker to get the rest of the money to buy a herd of sheep, consisting of 1,000 ewes and 50 bucks. He knew by saving the ewe lambs, he would have a 3,000 sheep herd in about five years. Pete Etcheverry would own about 20% and would make the operation work. Our sheep would graze the high country on the major portion of the west side of Diamond Valley, which covered about 20 miles. With this in mind and our own sheep to graze the border, we would have the control of the grazing land next to our ranch.

Pete proved to be the ideal partner. He was single, Basque and very ambitious. He was like an uncle to us kids. He always took an interest in what we were doing and we enjoyed his camp. I often ate with him. He used a lot of garlic in his mutton stew and his beans were delicious. When the Great Depression came, prices went to almost nothing. There was no local market for wool, and lambs sold for less than it cost to raise them. We didn't have money to pay the sheepherders so we gave them an interest in the sheep plus Levis, shoes and tobacco. President Roosevelt said it was over-production and some believed him. Father, on the other hand, called it under-consumption.

At one point, the government would buy cattle and sheep and destroy them. Cows were shot and buried. The real problem was people weren't buying anything but bare necessi-