

THE DAUGHERTY RANCH, CREEK NATION

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James Monroe Daugherty, son of James Madison Daugherty and Eleanor McGeehee, was born in Denton County, Texas, February 27, 1850. He lived in that vicinity until the close of the Civil War, when at the age of sixteen years he embarked in cattle business.¹

His first venture was when he bought five hundred head of yearlings in South Texas for 75¢ apiece, on credit; hired four of his cowboy friends at \$40.00 per month, also on credit, promising to pay in the event he could make a profit on the cattle when sold. He then started driving them through Texas and the Indian Territory to Kansas where he expected to find a market for them. He and his helpers packed all their bedding and provisions on mules and started on their long drive.

It was only a short time, however, before they realized they would have to have a wagon for their camping equipment. Finding a friend along the road who sold him a yoke of oxen and an old tar-bucket wagon, they loaded their possessions into it. After buying provisions enough for the trip, he had a dollar and fifteen cents left when they reached Abilene, Kansas. Their route took them through the western part of the Indian Territory, on what was afterward known as the old Chisholm Trail. As they journeyed through the Territory, a tire on the wagon broke and as the country was just a vast prairie there was no blacksmith shop within hundreds of miles. But being of a resourceful nature, he conceived an idea as to how to fix the broken tire. He told the boys to kill a yearling and bring him the hide. This he cut in one long strip, beginning at the outside and going around and around. With this he wrapped the tire and journeyed on. This procedure had to be repeated several times on the trip, a yearling being sacrificed each time. As they ate the meat, there was no loss incurred.

After reaching Abilene, he went to a leading merchant and told him what his business was there and that he had no money. The merchant volunteered to extend credit to

¹This account of the Daugherty Ranch is found in Vol. 42, *Indian-Pioneer History*, Grant Fuscman Collection, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Mrs. Belle Looney, Archivist, made the transcript published here in *The Chronicler for Spring, 1960*. The account was written by Miss Ella Robinson in 1937.—Ed.

him until the cattle could be sold. He soon found a buyer, sold the entire herd, realizing \$15.50 per head, cash. That was his first trip through the Indian Territory where he later became the owner of one of the largest ranches in the country. Having been so successful in his first venture, he then began in real earnest, buying cattle in southern Texas, driving them through the Territory to points in Kansas.

Seeing the possibilities of the country, in 1885, he decided to start a ranch in the Territory, which afterward played an important role in the history of the early ranch life. He first leased the land in the Creek Nation through Logus Perryman, Chief of the Creeks, and his brother, his secretary, for one-half cent per acre. The ranch house and headquarters were located some two miles south of Catoosa, near the present intersection of Highways 66 and 33, on a tract of land now owned by J. B. Gallo. The old house is still standing at the back of the Gallo home. It was built in 1890 by R. O. Stanifer of Catoosa. The ranch holdings extended from the Verdigris River on the east to where the Midland Valley Depot in Tulsa now stands, on the west. From the Cherokee-Creek line, which was a few miles north of the present Admiral Boulevard in Tulsa, and approximately to the Indian Hills Country Club grounds at Catoosa, then south to the Blue Springs Ranch near Coweta.

The Jay Forsythe Ranch near Broken Arrow was a part of the Daugherty holdings, and was operated by Forsythe under a sub-lease. During the year 1894, Mr. Daugherty was pasturing 22,000 head of cattle for Canady, Clair and Wood, of Texas. By 1896, he was handling approximately 40,000 head of cattle, bearing 367 different brands, 10,000 of which had been shipped to Catoosa from Florida in double-decked cars, as sheep and hogs are frequently shipped. According to John Fouts of Tulsa, one of the ranchmen, the cattle from Florida were not much bigger than sheep, but under the care of the ranchmen and the fine pasturage soon reached the ordinary weight of fine cattle. But the main portion of Mr. Daugherty's cattle were the long-horn breed from Texas. The width of the horns from tip to tip would reach from six to eight and nine feet and the rattle of the horns could be heard long before they appeared in sight, as they were being driven along the route.

Mr. Daugherty was fortunate in keeping his employees for many years. Charles Hamilton was his bookkeeper for forty years. Lem Hols, now living in Bowlegs, was an employee for forty years, as foreman. He is still serving in the same capacity for the Daugherty Ranch at Vanhorn, Texas.

Among the many employees on the ranch were two Negroes; Negro Bob, the cook, and Bob Mathis, a bronco-buster, and Chico, a Mexican chore boy and handy man. Mr. Daugherty, being of a genial likable character, was thoroughly agreeable to his employees. However, possessing a stability of his Indian nature and the shrewdness of his Scotch-Irish blood, he was always able to hold his own on any occasion that might arise.

When Mr. Bryan was running for president, Mr. Daugherty was in St. Louis on business, where he was called into the office of Clay Pierce and Company, with whom he did business, and was diplomatically informed that if Mr. Bryan was elected, Daugherty's note for \$150,000 held by them, would have to be paid promptly when due. Should Mr. McKinley be elected, all the time needed would be granted. Mr. Daugherty walked out of the office and after a brief visit with some Jewish merchant friends, returned with a check for \$150,000. Laying it down on the desk, he said, "Give me the note and the mortgage on my cattle that you hold, and you and Mr. McKinley can go where you please."

During the years that he so successfully operated his Territory ranch, he also had one at Vanhorn, Texas, where he is known to be one of the greatest cowmen in Texas. When it was apparent that Statehood was coming, in 1906, he sold his holdings in the Territory and returned to his home at Vanhorn. During the years spent in the Territory, he divided his time between each place, his family remaining in Texas.

About 1872 or 1873, he was married to Miss Elizabeth Middleton, a sister of D. H. Middleton, also a ranchman of Indian Territory days and a former citizen of Muskogee, now living in California. The Daugherty's had three daughters. One lives in China, one in California and one in Vanhorn, with whom he makes his home. His wife died some years ago.

He has retired from active service and has lost his sight completely, but he is still called the greatest cowman in Texas as well as the Indian Territory.