A HORSE NAMED PINTO AND A BOY NAMED JIGGS

By LaVarr B. Webb

Jennifer's Book

Jennifer Weiss asked me to write this book. I wrote it for her, and dedicated it to her. It will be known as **Jennifer's Book**, however I want anyone who might find it interesting to have to opportunity to read it as well. I want all readers to know that all of the events related actually happened, but in a few instances, not directly to me, and not necessarily in the sequence depicted.

Periodically I become discouraged by my inability to love my neighbor as I should, and I am literally overwhelmed by the violence and sadism in the world. When I was younger, I cried, as many people have cried, "Stop the world, I want to get off."

A few days ago, after watching television and hearing how some members of our own families treat each other, I told Grandmother Maxine, "In the world I create, I will not have any people, just horses and dogs." But worlds are not created for the benefit of one man, woman, or child, or horses or dogs. Worlds are created so that all of the spirit children of God will have an opportunity to prove themselves, and, hopefully, perfect themselves. It has been so, and will always be so.

Horses and dogs can help in the perfection process, but it is our contact and relationship with each other that will eventually perfect us or destroy us. Neither horses nor dogs can do that for us. I want all who read this book to realize that loving our neighbors as ourselves is the key to the perfecting process. Therefore, horses, dogs, cats, sports, and careers should not become more important than our neighbor, and our mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters are our closest neighbors.

When I was growing up, much to my detriment, I knew very little about the church or the gospel. The scriptures were foreign to me. Most of this story is taken from that period of my life. I hope you find it worthwhile.

Granddad Webb

A HORSE NAMED PINTO, AND A BOY CALLED JIGGS

Come along my little fellow,
Come along and ride with me.
I'm going back to Dixie,
My home I long to see.

We will travel trails together,
I'm sure you will enjoy
The scenes of my childhood,
And the adventures of a boy.

There will be ducks on the river
And fish in the creek.

The hawk won't soar above us,
For we'll climb the highest peak.

So come my little fellow,
To adventures on every hand.
Of life we'll learn together
In that enchanted land.

It was 1930. I was nine, living in the little town of Virgin, Utah. School had just let out for the summer, and I was lonely. I had no brothers, and because almost all of the people in Virgin depended upon farming and ranching for a livelihood, all of my friends were kept busy doing farm chores, hoeing corn, and herding cows.

We didn't own a farm or a ranch. My dad had managed a service station in Salt Lake, but when the depression hit, he lost the station, and we went back to Virgin where I was born, and where we had lived until I was two. But, back in Virgin, Dad's job paid little, and took him away from the family most of the time.

My uncles, Rube and Joad Maloney, had a ranch up on North Creek. Rube had four sons, my cousins, Ray, 12, Allan, 10, Jack, 6, and Fred, 4. Allan was my best friend, but the four of them made up for the brothers I had never had. Joad had one son, Nelson, and we didn't like each other very much, and we were always fighting.

I had been up on the ranch several times, but I wanted to stay with my uncles, aunts, and cousins the whole summer even though I hated hoeing corn. I didn't mind doing farm chores like milking cows, slopping pigs, feeding chickens, and throwing hay to the cows and horses. I didn't even mind herding cows. All I had to do was keep them out of the garden, the corn and alfalfa fields. Most of the time I sat against a rock and watched the great white clouds float across the bright blue sky, or I lazed in the shade of a cottonwood tree and listened to the trill of a mocking bird while watching busy squirrels and chipmunks hunt for last year's seeds and nuts, or race each other up rock faces and pinion trees.

Yes, I wanted to be on the ranch with my cousins, because even when we had to hoe corn, we could talk. We talked about dogs, and horses, and about skunks getting into the chicken coop, and we talked about school, and girls, and deer hunting trips. We joked and told stories. I remember once, we were in a corn field, and Nelson Maloney, the cousin that I didn't like very much, said, "Jiggs, you're so dumb, you think Manual Labor is a Mexican."

I guess I was dumb, because Manual Labor could have been a Mexican or an Irishman like my Irish Uncles for all I knew, but I didn't like being called dumb, so I got even with him. I went down to the creek to get a drink of water, then I filled my mouth as full as I could get it, and I squirted that water all over the front of Nelson's overalls. All of my other cousins started to laugh, and Allan yelled, "Look at Nelson, he's wet his pants."

Anyway, I wanted to spend the summer on the ranch where we actually didn't have to work all of the time. On some days, if we had worked good all morning, Uncle Rube would let us go swimming in the creek, or we could trap skunks, kill squirrels, or even hunt rattlesnakes. Like I said, we trapped skunks because they kept raiding the chicken coop, eating the eggs and even the young chicks. We killed squirrels because

they raided the peach and apricot trees. If we didn't keep their numbers down, they would strip the whole tree in one night, leaving the tasty fruit littering the ground, but carrying off the pits in their bulging cheeks. We hunted rattlesnakes because we were afraid of them, and once in a while someone got bit, and became very sick. Nothing could make me move faster than a rattlesnake. When I unexpectedly heard a rattlesnake play his song with the castanets at the end of his tail, I could jump farther and run faster than at any other time.

So, I went to my mother, and asked if I could go to the ranch? She thought for a moment, then asked how I was going to get there? I said, "If you would get me a horse, I could ride it."

She looked very sad as she answered, "You know very well we can't afford a horse. We can't buy it, and we couldn't feed it."

I knew what she said was true, but truth didn't help, and I have learned over the years that truth, itself, can sometimes hurt.

Then I begged, "Let me walk to the ranch. It's only six and a half miles. I could leave early in the morning and be there a long time before noon."

But mothers are worriers, and she told me in the voice she used to end an argument before it even started, "Your not going to walk to the ranch all by yourself. You'll just have to wait until someone comes to town."

That was fine with me. I knew one of the boys would be coming to town soon to get the mail, so I went to the post office, and asked Sister Flannigan, the post mistress, to tell anyone who came down from the Old Mill Ranch that I wanted to go back with them. Now you might wonder why I called her Sister Flannigan.

Well, we were all Mormons in the little town of Virgin, even though some of us were not active, but all of the adults were called Brother and Sister. I don't think I even knew Sister Flannigan's fist name. She was just Sister Flannigan, and everyone knew that, but I did know her sister-in-law's first name. To distinguish between the two, we called to younger woman Sister Jenny Flannigan.

Sister Flannigan's husband was the bishop of the Virgin Ward, and we called him Bishop Flannigan. At the time, I thought it was rather odd, because we also called the oldest man in town bishop, Bishop Earl. He was a great old man, over 80, but he played the fiddle for all of our dances. He was skinny, with a lot a grey hair, but when he played a schottische or a polka, he would stomp his feet, and sometimes dance in a full circle.

However, two or three days later, Ray Maloney rode his horse, Old Sorrel, up to our front gate. We had to have fences and gates in those days because there were cattle loose on every street, and they loved to tromp through gardens, chomping young beets or corn, or whatever they could find. But, anyway, I heard Ray call from the street, "Jiggs."

I was outside, laying on my bed, under a great big mulberry tree. I jumped up, ran to the front yard, and Ray said, " Sister Flannigan says you want to go up to the ranch. Do you?"

I answered, "I sure do, will you take me?"

He said, "Grab an extra pair of pants and a shirt, and you can ride on the back of the saddle."

Well, it only took me about two minutes to find that extra pair of pants and a shirt, because two sets were all I had, and I was wearing one of them. I got my other pair of

sox out of my mothers darning basket. The socks had a hole in the heel, but I rolled them all into a bundle, tied the bundle with a string, and was ready to go.

As I rushed to the door, I heard my mother cry, “Aren’t you going to say goodbye?”

I went back into the house, and said, “I’m sorry Mom.” I kissed her on the cheek, and said, “I’ll see you on the Fourth of July.” I promised that because all of the ranch families came to town to celebrate the Fourth. It was the biggest day of the year, even bigger than Christmas.

I made it out the door and through the gate. I put my foot in the stirrup, grabbed the back of the saddle, and swung myself up. I wasn’t a very good rider, and, unlike Ray, I had no place to put my feet, so as Old Sorrel trotted out of town, I bounced around on his narrow back like a basketball on the town’s little dirt court.

A trotting horse is difficult to ride if you don’t have stirrups to absorb the shock, so, at first, as the horse went down, I went up, and when the horse went up, I went down, and when we came together every two or three seconds, it made my teeth rattle. But, by the time we got to the first crossing of the creek, about three miles out of town, I had learned to relax, and I quit bobbing up and down like a yo yo.

North Creek came out of Zion National Park. Zion’s, as we called it, was made up of high red and white sandstone peaks and plateaus. In the West, a plateau, or what we called a mesa, is a high, flat mountain that slopes off on two or three sides. The top of the plateau or mesa is generally covered with a cap rock, what we called rim rock.

North Creek actually heads up on a mesa called Kolob. The creek winds across the flat, grass meadows and between great ponderosa pine trees, then cuts down steeply into the Navajo Sandstone through a series of deep cracks and crevices. It comes out several thousand feet lower through a vast multicolored, cave-like cavern, large enough to hold several houses.

The great hole in the rock would have been a cave, but the creek cut a long, narrow gouge out of the roof, and in some spots, I could look up through narrow holes and between the narrow gap between the cliff faces and see blue sky. Although the canyon where the creek comes out is only 30 to 100 feet wide, the towering, vertical red and white cliffs, the mighty trees, and the moss, fern and wild flowers make it a lovely place.

In the summer, at the first crossing of North Creek, the limbs and leaves of the huge cottonwood trees blot out the sun and caress the sand under the trees with shade and damp coolness. It is a delightful place to rest tired horses or bath aching feet. When Ray and I arrived there, we slid off the horse, and while Old Sorrel drank, we went upstream, lay down on our bellies, and slurped cool water into our dry mouths, then we turned over on our backs and watched the light breeze rustle the dark, green leaves.

We had only been flat on our backs a few minutes when I heard a horse whinny. Then I heard Old Sorrel answer. I looked up on the side of the ridge above us, and I saw a band of horses. They were standing like someone had carved them out of the rock, nostrils distended, manes and tails flowing, and eyes fearfully alert.

I said, “Ray, look!”

And I barely heard him breathe, “It’s Big Red and his mustang mares. They were coming down to the creek to drink.”

Big Red didn't like the man smell. He snorted, wheeled, and chased his mares back up the trail and over the ridge.

Big Red was the most beautiful horse I had ever seen. Like his name implied, he was big and red, as red as the mountains of Zion, and his chest was deep and broad, giving him the wind necessary to run steep mountain trails and rocky hogsbacks. But in the few minutes I had to look at the band, I saw a little mare that interested me far more than Big Red. She was young, just a bit more than a yearling. She was a bay, a cross between brown and black. She had a white star in the middle of her forehead, and each of her four feet were graced with pure white stockings.

I fell in love with her. I wanted her. She was what I always dreamed about, not so big that she would be hard to handle, but not so small that she would be considered a kid's pony.

I told Ray that I wanted her, and he laughed and said, "Jiggs, half of the kids in Washington County would want that filly. She would be worth a lot of money if someone could catch her."

And I could have cried because I knew there was no way I could catch her, but I could dream, and I did.

We crossed the creek two more times and finally made it to the ranch. North Creek flows right down the center of the ranch which occupies a small valley nestled between a high, black volcanic ridge to the north and a towering, rim rocked mesa to the south. There are a series of fields on each side of the creek, and the fields, at that time, were necklaced by ash and fruit tress, as well as some gnarled, giant black walnuts. At the foot of most of the fields, willows fought with tamaracks for space, while grape vines, seeking a place in the sun, shinnied up juniper, apricot and peach trees. Grape vines also wrapped themselves around stout willow limbs, their broad leaves shading the ground. The grapes themselves hung in purple cluster, like edible jewels. In the depths of summer, the cousins and I, on our way to our favorite swimming hole, delighted in seeking out a shady nook, there to lounge, to feast on grapes, to enjoy their sweet, tangy juice while seeing who could spit grape seeds the furtherest.

Anyway, we walked Old Sorrel up the lane that led to the barn and corrals. I climbed down, stiff and sore, opened the gate, and Ray rode Old Sorrel into the horse corral. Sorrel was tired, and eager to have us pull the saddle from off his back and the bit from out of his mouth. As soon as the bridle was pulled off his head, he walked over to the dustiest corner of the corral, dropped to his knees, and then rolled. At first, he didn't roll completely over. With long legs kicking, he rolled upon his back three times, then he went completely over, and rolled up on his back three times from the other side.

He pulled his feet under him, heaved up, shook the loose dirt from off his sweaty hair, and walked inside the barn where fresh, leafy hay awaited him. I envied Old Sorrel. I would have liked to throw off my clothes, and get down and roll in the fine dirt, then go jump in the creek which was meandering along just a few feet down the hill. But convention wouldn't allow it. Boys could roll in the dirt, but they had to keep their clothes on. Besides, Aunt Jo, Uncle Rube's wife, was waiting for us to come to supper.

We went into the house where my cousins waited. There was Allan, just younger than Ray, and one year older than myself, then Marie, Jack, Fred, and Shirley, the baby. Aunt Jo, a large, dark, jolly woman, gave me a big hug, and said, "We're glad to see you, Jiggs," and Uncle Rube slapped me on my shoulder, and said, "I'm hungry, let's eat." So

I gathered around a full table, and I gorged myself on fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, boiled dried corn that tasted like it had just been picked, and what I thought was mashed sweet potatoes, but was actually hubbard squash. After I had eaten two big helpings of the "sweet potatoes," they all laughed when Allan told me I was actually squash, because I had told them, "I don't like squash!" We finished the meal with Ray's favorite desert, vanilla pudding made with lots of eggs and thick whipped cream.

Before I go on with my story, I should tell you that both Ray and Allan became decorated heroes during World War Two. Ray was a bombardier and won medals for direct hits on several Japanese warships, and for bringing his bomber in after the pilot and co-pilot were wounded, thereby saving the whole crew. Ray's bomber was shot down, and he spent two years in a Japanese prison camp.

Allan received his medals for jumping into a burning gun emplacement on his warship after it had suffered a direct hit. He literally threw the burning men out of the pit while other seamen tried to douse the flames. Allan had burns over a large part of his body, and spent many months in a Navy hospital.

They were both cowboys at heart, but became heroes when they were needed.

However, after eating, Ray reported to his dad, "We saw Big Red and his mustangs down by the first crossing of the creek. I think there was a bout 15 in the herd, counting the colts."

Uncle Rube asked, "Did you see my old mare, Pearl, in the herd? You remember her, don't you? About five years ago, she came up missing? I think Big Red stole her out of the pasture."

Ray answered, "We didn't have much time. When Red smells a man, he takes off. I saw several mares, but I don't know whether one of them was Pearl. We ought to catch that stallion and get back some of the mares he has stolen from the ranches around here. There's a little filly that Jiggs would like to have. Her legs are a little short, but she would make a great kid's horse. I think I also saw a young black stallion no where near as big as Red, but he is a good looking mustang."

Uncle Rube promised, "Well we're going after them. I talked to Joad about a roundup the other day. He wants to do it. The ranch is short on cash money, we could sell every animal in that herd, but Joad wants Big Red for himself. He says he is putting on weight, and his Pinto horse won't be able to carry him if he keeps growing."

Uncle Joad was getting heavy. He was over six feet tall, and he liked to joke, "I quit growing up, but then I started growing out. I could use a bigger wife and a bigger horse."

His wife, Ruth, or Aunt Ruthie, was short just about five feet. In fact, Uncle Joad used to hold his arms out straight, and Aunt Ruth would walk under them without ducking, but she was the boss. She kept a very clean house, and treated Uncle Joad about like she treated her two kids, Nelson and Bonnie. Uncle Joad would complain, half bragging, and half in sorrow, "Ruthie won't let me into the living room with my boots on, so I spend most of my time in the kitchen, and that is why I am getting fat."

When Uncle Rube said he and Uncle Joad were thinking about rounding Big Red and his herd, I begged, "Uncle Rube, do you think I could have that little filly? I would work real hard for her. I would call her Star, because she has a star right in the middle of her forehead."

Uncle Rube wouldn't promise. All he said was, "I'll talk it over with Joad, and we will see, but you would have to work hard this summer, and maybe next summer too."

I promised I would work very hard, and I did. I hoed corn, tromped hay, picked vegetables, and herded and milked cows. I was up early in the morning, and I think I worked harder than Allen, knowing that little filly named Star was going to be mine.

Then I heard Uncle Rube and Uncle Joad talking. Uncle Rube said, "We need some cash money. Let's round up Big Red and his heard as soon as second crop hay is in. Billy Lee thinks Big Red has stolen two of his mares, so I am sure he would help us."

Uncle Joad agreed, "We could drive them into the Dry Wash. It's a natural, because they spend a lot of time up in there."

Then Ray chimed in, "We could pick them up when they come down to the creek to drink. I think they come out of the Dry Wash almost every day to drink where Jiggs and I saw them. I could help drive them, and we could put the kids on the trails going up out of the Wash. I think Red would take the herd right to the top of the wash, thinking he could come out on Hurricane Mesa."

And I thought, "Ray gets to ride with the men, while Allan and I get stuck on some trail, hoping to turn Red if he gets away from the cowboys and comes our way."

But, that is just about the way it happened. Uncle Rube, Uncle Joad, and Billy Lee put a tall juniper and cottonwood fence across the dry wash up where it becomes a box canyon. The fence leading up to a gate, was funnel shaped, and the gate was in the narrow end of the funnel.

Billy Lee, who owned the ranch just above the first crossing of the creek, promised to watch for Big Red, and when he brought his herd down to drink, Billy would race to the Old Mill, about two miles up the canyon from his place, to tell my Uncles the roundup was on.

About two weeks before the Fourth of July, about nine o'clock in the morning, when we were getting the last of the hay out of the lower field, Billy came pounding up the road. He saw us in the field, and yelled, "Red has his herd under the cottonwoods by the first crossing of the creek. Let's get them."

Uncle Joad was driving the horses pulling the hay wagon. He yelled "Whoa," and he and Rube hurriedly unhitched the team. Ray jumped on one of the horses' backs, and trotted them up to the corral. When the Uncles got to the corral, they told Ray he wouldn't get to ride herd with men. His job was to get Allan, Nelson, and I up to the three trials coming out of the Dry Wash. The four of us saddled Old Sorrel and Allan's horse, Rowdy. We were in such a hurry, we forgot about water and something to eat, but the Uncles were smarter. They took time to fill their canteens with water and their saddle bags with meat, bread, and yellow early June apples.

While they were doing all that, I climbed up behind Ray on old Sorrel, and Nelson got up on Rowdy behind Allan. We rode down the road, and at the second crossing of North Creek, we turned north. Ray and Allan pushed the horses up the side of the hogs back that shaped the east side of the big mouth that was the Dry Wash. We didn't have to worry about Red bringing his herd up that way because there was no place to go. The whole area to the east was made up of purple and grey clay that had eroded into steep sided, dead end gulleys, a whole series of them that horses would avoid, because there was no feed and no water, only a highly colored moonscape.

The mouth of the Dry Wash was a little over a quarter of a mile wide. The Wash, or canyon, itself had been carved out of the Hurricane Mesa. In the far reaches of the past, a large stream had cut through the hard conglomerate sandstone that capped the entire mesa. Geologist had named it the Shinarump Sandstone. We called it rimrock. The Shinarump Sandstone was sitting on top of the Moenkopi Formation, about 1800 feet of red, brown, and grey shale, with periodic shelfs or cliffs of red and brown siltstone and mudstone sticking out. Once the stream had cut through the Shinarump, it had easy going. It washed away the softer shale and silt of the Moenkopi, leaving a big gash in the earth. As the shale and silt were washed away, great boulders, some larger than houses, came loose from the Shinerump rim rock, and rolled down the steep slopes, littering the bottom of the wash.

Where once a great stream had flowed, there was now but a trickle of water. The water was loaded with mineral, particularly gypsum, and most animals, including horses would not drink it. But the water did nourish a few large cottonwood and ash trees, and junipers and pinion pines clung to the steep slopes.

Allan took the first trail that came up out of the Wash, or canyon. According to the Uncles, if the wild horses made a break for freedom, that was the trail they would probably choose. Nelson had to walk to the trail that he would cover, but it was only about a quarter of a mile up the wash. Ray took me on up the canyon to my position. The trail that I was to guard was the last one coming up out of the Wash, and wash less than a mile away from the box canyon formed by the Shinerump rimrock.

We didn't have to worry about the other side of the Wash because the slope was so steep the horses would not attempt to climb it, besides there was no way to get over the rimrock.

On our side of the Wash, Ray had the important job. Uncle Rube had told him that after he had placed us on the trails, he was to go back to the hogs back at the mouth of the Wash to watch as the other riders pushed Big Red and his band out of North Creek and up into the Dry Wash. Ray was to stay high up on the slope where a trail, just under the rim rock, wound its way up the end of the Dry Wash just under Hurricane Mesa. He would be riding his Old Sorrel, and if Big Red tried to escape up one of the trails out of the Wash, he was to be there to help turn the mustangs back.

So, before Ray left me, he cautioned me, as Uncle Rube had already done several times, "If those mustangs start up this trail, you are to make lots of noise and wave your arms. Your job is to scare them back down into the bottom of the Wash.

Then he left me. I found a shady spot under a juniper that gave me a good view of the slope and the bottom of the Wash. As I sat there, trying to pick out North Creek, with its trees, way to the south, and hoping to see the movement of Big Red and his band of horses, a blue jay, what we called a cedar bird, landed in a pinion tree just a few feet away. He looked at me lounging on the ground, and screeched, and warned every chipmunk, squirrel, deer, and wild mustang in the area, that there was an enemy, a human boy, under the juniper tree, and all the animals were to beware.

He screeched so loud that I was afraid Big Red would hear him, so I picked up a rock and threw it at him. Of course I missed, and he flew up the canyon away from the intruding human. But I could still hear him and about ten others of his kind discussing the situation, and I hoped Red wouldn't pay any attention to them.

The sun was slipping toward the rim rock on the far side of the Wash when I saw the first dust, kicked up by pounding hooves, in the bottom of the canyon. The horses were about a mile away, and I couldn't pick out any individuals, but they came closer and closer. Soon, I could see the bay mare in the lead, and then other mares and colts, but I couldn't see Big Red. Then the dust cleared a little bit, and I saw him. I didn't know at the time, but I could see later, that he would nip the rumps of the laggards, forcing them to a faster gait.

Finally, I could see the Uncles and Billy, spread out across the floor of the Wash. They were eating a lot of dust, but they had the mustangs heading right for the trap. I was ready to start running down the trail. I wanted to be there to see my filly when they closed the big gate, but Big Red was smarter and more stubborn than I thought he was. I saw him swing around to the left of his heard and nip at the shoulder of the lead mare. She hardly hesitated as she swung to the right and brought the whole herd up the very path on which I was standing.

The path ran along side of a small hogs back that blended into the slope just below where I was waiting. The lower part of the path was not very steep, so the horses made good time, and I could see they were worrying about the men behind them and not paying attention to me.

I started to jump up and down, waving my arms, and yelling, "Hey, ho, ho, get out of here!" Then for some reason I started to cry. I was afraid I would goof up and the mustangs would get away, but I still jumped up and down and waved my arms, and I begged, "Darn it Red, you can't come up here. Turn around and go back down," but I knew if the horses decided to do it, they could run right over me.

I don't know whether the horses heard me, but just where the trail became steep and difficult, the lead mare looked up, saw me, and stopped in her tracks, and the other horses piled up behind her. The mustangs stood there like they didn't know what to do. Then I heard a yell, "Get going yo broomtails," and there came Ray and Allen yelling like banshees, their horsing hopping and sliding, trying to keep upright as my cousins angled them around the slope. Billy had come up from the bottom, so we literally had those ponies surrounded.

Big Red turned down the trail, and the other horses followed him. When he saw my Uncles in the bottom of the Wash, he turned and led his whole band toward the trap. Uncle Rube and Uncle Joad raced up behind them and forced them into the funnel and through the gate. Before Big Red reached the cliff face that boxed the canyon in, Uncle Rube, without even getting off his horse, swung the gate shut.

I came running, jumping, and sliding down the steep hill, yelling, "We got em! We got em!"

And Ray still on Old Sorrel, pleased as he could be, came slipping and sliding around the slope, and yelled, "Yes, Jiggs, we got em, yo who-o-o, wheeee!"

I went up to the gate where the Uncles and Billy Lee were standing, and peered between the cottonwood rails. Big Red was trotting around the open ground with his neck arched and his nostrils flaring, then he picked up his pace, nostrils flaring, and ran right at me like he was going to jump over the gate right where I was standing. He slid to a stop, then turned and galloped toward the brush and rocks up under the rim rock wall.

He had scared me, but I didn't have time to run. When he turned, I started to look for Star. She was hard to see because the whole herd was milling around nervously, and

there was a lot of brush at the upper end, but then she trotted out of the crowd, stopped, and looked right at me. She was beautiful, and I fell in love all over again.

Ray was standing by me and watching the horses when Allen and Nelson came down the trail. They took a good look, then we all walked over to where the two Uncles and Billy were sitting in the shade of a big juniper. They shared their food and water with us, then Uncle Rube said, "We'll leave them alone tonight. In the morning, we'll have to bring up some water; they are probably real thirsty right now. Then we're going to have to tie Red up, and let him fight a rope until he gets tired and used to it. When he is real tired, I think two of us, with our ropes on him, can get him to the ranch corral."

Early the next morning, after breakfast was over and the chores were done, we took three 30 gallon barrels down to the first crossing of the creek. We filled the barrels with water and loaded them on three work horses, and made our way back up the dry wash. When we arrived at the corral, we could see that the mustangs were thirsty. We put a wash tub that we had also brought with us a few feet from the gate, and filled it with water, then we stepped back out of the corral.

At first, the horses refused to come near the water, then an older, branded mare with a star in the middle of her forehead, perhaps Star's mother, came up to the tub and started to drink. Soon all of the horses, other than Big Red, got what they wanted, so Uncle Rube sent Allen and Ray back to the creek to refill the water barrels.

After they left, Uncle Joad took a large innertube from a truck tire into the corral. While he trimmed a small cottonwood tree that was about a foot thick at its base, Billy, Rube, Nelson, and I grubbed out brush, making a complete cleared circle around the tree. Before we were through with the brush Joad turned the tree into a stout hitching post about six feet tall. After all of the brush and tree limbs were carried out of the corral, Uncle Joad slipped the innertube over the post, and let it fall to the ground. Then he announced to no one in particular, "Now the fun begins."

Uncle Rube went to his horse and untied a lariat, or rope, that was hanging from his saddle, then the three men went into the corral. The Uncles stood in the cleared area near the post. Billy walked up to the horses that were milling around up against the rim rock wall. Big Red charged down through the corral, the rest of the herd flying along behind him. Again, it looked like he was going to try to jump over the high fence, but just as he hesitated and started to turn, Uncle Rube flipped a loop over his head. Uncle Joad ran over and grabbed hold of the lariat with his brother.

It was a good thing the Uncles were wearing gloves, because when Red felt the rope, he went crazy. He bucked, and jumped, and squealed. The Uncles dug in their heels, and the two Uncles went sprawling, and the lariat burned through their gloved hands. Red just kept on going, the lariat dragging behind him. I heard Uncle Rube say a few choice words, then he said, "Alright, if he wants to play rough, we'll play that way too." And the three of them, taking turns, chased Big Red around and around the corral. Of course, the rest of the herd, for a while, followed him in his mad race, and several times, he almost got flipped on his head when some of the other heavy horses stepped on the rope.

But, soon, the mares and colts dropped out of the race, huddling and panting up against the rim rock wall, but Red, still dragging the rope, did not quit. Finally, even he had to slow down, and when he came trotting by the Uncles and Billy, the three grabbed the trailing rope. Again, the Uncles dug in their heels, while Billy wrapped the lariat

around and around the post. It was easy to hold him then, but I was afraid Red would kill himself.

He tried to run, but the tight rope flipped him on to his side. He tried to buck, but, again the rope pulled him off balance and upon the ground. Finally he sat down on his rear haunches with his front feet braced, and eyes bulging, pulled and pulled on the rope. Of course the loop around his neck slipped tighter and tighter, and then he couldn't breathe. Unable to get air into those great lungs, he collapsed over on his side, and I thought he was gone.

But the Uncles, taking advantage of the slack in the lariat, unwound it from the post, and hurriedly tied it to the innertube. When Red felt the slack in the rope, and took a few bug gulps of air, he scrambled to his feet, then he reared up, and with his front feet, pawed at the lariat, but the innertube stretched and absorbed the shock. When he found that fighting the rope didn't help, he, again started to run, and he went round and round the cleared space. The innertube went round and round with him, and kept the lariat from winding around the post. I felt so sorry for the big horse. He tried, his feet churned, and the sweat soaked his red coat, but the rope and innertube kept his head turned toward the post, and finally, he had to give up.

He was standing, head down, legs spraddled out, when Uncle Joad and Billy threw their lariats over his head. He hardly flinched. Allen, Ray, and I brought the Uncles, as well as Billy's horses into the corral. Billy and Uncle Joad mounted horses. We handed them their ropes, and they rode up to within a foot of the big red stallion. Uncle Joad was on the right, and Billy was on the left. After gathering their lariats into loops, they took dallies around their saddle horns, and Red found himself locked in between two strong riding horses.

As soon as the two riders had Red secured between them, Uncle Rube reached under Uncle Joad's horse, Pinto, and slipped a stout hackamore over the head of the big red horse, then he untied his lariat form the innertube, and carefully pulled the loop from around Red's neck. Hurriedly, he tied one end of his lariat through a ring on the hackamore. He did the same with each of the rider's ropes. When he was through, Big Red was no longer roped with slip nooses, so he was no longer in danger of having his breath cut off, but he was secured between the two riders at his side, as well as Uncle Rube who also held a tight rope at his rear.

I wanted to catch Star right then and there. I thought, with the help of the three cousins, I could handle her, but the uncles said "No, we'll get he and the other horses later." Uncle Rube slapped Red on the rump, and they walked him down the canyon. After closing the gate, Nelson climbed up on Rascal, behind Allen, and I got on Old Sorrel, in back of Ray, and we trudged along behind the men and Big Red. Red was too tired to cause much trouble, so within two hours they had him in the horse corral near the barn. There, they again put the innertube over a hitching post in the center of the corral, attached Uncle Rube's rope to it, brought Red a tub of water and some hay, then went to the house, leaving Red to think about all he had been through.

Billy stayed for supper, then as evening shadows slipped down the little valley, he with the two Uncles talked about the success of the round-up and what horses Billy would get as his share. I listened real close because I didn't wasn't Billy to get star. Star was going to be my pony, and I reminded my Uncle's Rube and Joad of that fact several times.

The next day, Ray rode Old Sorrel to two neighboring ranches to tell the owners that the mares Big Red had stolen were in a corral at the top of Dry Wash. Ray suggested that if they wanted their horses, they should go up and get them as soon as possible. Each of them said they would do so the very next day.

After the neighbors got their three mares and two colts out of the corral, it took us a full week to rope and subdue the other five mares, three yearlings, and one colt, because they were all wild, true mustangs, and they all fought, even as Red had fought. Star was a miniature Big Red. When the rope settled on her neck, she reared back, pawed the air with her small hooves, squealed, and acted just like a wild mustang. As I watched her, I wondered, "Would I dare get on her back, dare to try to ride her?" Then I decided that I would tame her, gentle her, first.

After the horses were all safely in the ranch horse corral, I started to gentle Star by feeding her apples. At first, she wouldn't come to my hand, and I had to put them on the ground in front of her, but soon she took them out of my hand. A little later, as I came into the corral, she would come up and nuzzle at my pockets, trying to figure out how to get the apples as I petted and stroked her. Then I noticed that Uncle Joad was doing the same thing with Big Red, and although Red was still tied with the rope and innertube to the hitching post, he was no longer fighting them, and was even eating out of Uncle Joad's hand.

Once when Uncle Joad and I were sitting on the corral fence watching the horses, he said, "I've got to break Red to a saddle and to riding before fall roundup. My horse Pinto has come up lame in his left hind leg. He must have pulled a hamstring, Probably stepped into a gopher hole while we were chasing Red. I don't know when he did it, and I don't know whether he will get better, so I am going to need that red horse."

I felt sorry for Pinto. I went around to the corral where the riding horses were kept. I saw him, a medium sized, well built horse, white in color, with large brown patches across his back and on his sides. A brown patch also ran from his lips, under his head, and up to his ears. One of his ears was white, and the other brown, but those white and brown ears didn't make any difference. He was a beautiful horse. I could see he was hurting because his ears were drooping, his body sagged, and he was holding his left hoof up at an angle, barely touching the ground.

Uncle Joad came around to where I was standing, and he asked, "Jiggs, could you walk Pinto down to the creek once a day, and make him stand in the water. The cold water will help reduce the swelling, and if you would take a gunny sack with you, you could massage his leg and the tendon, and maybe get the tendon to relax.

I told Uncle Joad I would do it. I wanted to do it. I was pleased that my Uncle trusted me, and I wanted to save Pinto. If his leg didn't heal, he would be killed, because the ranch couldn't support a worthless horse. So, every day, I limped Pinto down the creek into the water deep enough to cover his hock, and I rubbed his hind leg from the knee down with a wadded up gunny sack. Then, in a cabinet in the barn, I found some horse liniment. It was strong stuff, and curled your hair if you breathed its fumes. I splashed the liniment on Pinto's leg, and I rubbed it some more. It was a wonder he didn't lose all of his hair, but after a few days, I noticed he wasn't limping as much as he had been.

At supper one evening, Uncle Rube announcing, "The Fourth of July is just two weeks away. Joad and I have decided we won't go to town this year. Instead, we will

invite people to come up here. We think we'll have a rodeo and break Big Red and some of the other horses. After the rodeo, we'll have a potluck picnic under the trees in the big pasture. How about it?

I really wasn't too enthused about the idea. I wanted to go to town to see my parents, my sisters, and some of my friends. Besides, I had saved twenty-five cents, and I was going to buy some firecrackers and a bottle of crème soda pop that would come right out of the ice water. Then, too, Allan and I had made some hard cider. We had ground up some apples, put what we called sqeezens, or pulp, into a piece of cheese cloth, and twisted it until all the juice ran out. We put the juice, some yeast, and sugar into a two quart glass jug, and let them go to work. We figured it would be worked out by the Fourth, and would have a real kick. Now, of course, I realize that Allan and I were imitating the men of the town, including my Uncles and my Dad, who had bottles and flasks of spirits that they nipped at, especially when they got together to sit on their heels and "shoot the breeze."

Anyway, I told Allan what I thought, and he said, "Shoot, Jiggs. You can save your money until the Twenty Fourth, (which is Pioneer Day and a State holiday.) and we can get with Russell and Jay and drink the cider, and have a good ol' time. Besides, breaking Big Red and some of the other horses will be more fun and more important than the Fourth of July."

I had to agree, then I got to hoping that Dad would bring the family, putting up the old dirt road in his Model T Ford truck that we called the Puddle Jumper. It wasn't just that I wanted to see my family. My mother would probably bring some baked beans for the picnic, and I loved her baked beans.

So, during the next two weeks, my cousins and I hoed the corn for the last time, did chores, went swimming, and waited for the big day, the Fourth of July. It finally arrived, and about 10:00 o'clock, almost fifty people came riding up the road on horses, in wagons and Model Ts. The cars and wagons were pulled into the Big Pasture, where the women had easy access to the blankets and goodies that were stowed in them. The horses were unsaddled and unharnessed and put into the east corral where there was plenty of water and fresh hay.

I welcomed my friends, Russell and Grant Cornelius, cousins, and my bosom buddy, Jay Reusch. Jay was my age, my size, and had my blond coloring. We didn't see much of each other during the summer, because he had to work with his dad and brothers on their ranch high up on the Kolob Mesa, but during the school year we were inseparable. People called us the Twins. Jay had come down off Kolob on his horse, Ginger. His parents and brothers and sisters didn't arrive until almost an hour later, because they were forced to jolt along in a wagon behind a slow team of work horses. Jay said that after the picnic, he and his family were going on into town for supplies.

Russel rode his horse, Brat, a long legged, angular grey. I once asked him why he called the horse, Brat, and he said, "Cause that is what he is. He was a wild mustang, and is still a brat. When you get on him in the morning, you don't know whether he is going to buck or play dead. I like him better when he bucks, but I've eaten a lot of dirt since I got him."

I told him, "My horse, Star, isn't going to be a brat. She's becoming as gentle as a kitten."

Grant was on one of his dad's riding ponies, a small, sway-backed, black, called Polly. Polly was a good, even tempered horse, but she was 16-17 years old, and a plodder.

Just before noon, my folks came chugging up the lane in the Puddle Jumper. I was glad to see them. My mother was the best. At that time, she was only 29, short, slim, with dark hair, dark eyes, and a mouth that smiled and laughed easily. Dad was her exact opposite, six feet three, blond, blue eyed, with a temper that at times tended to be blasphemous.

Mom had brought a lunch as well as the baked beans for the potluck picnic. After a hug from her and a handshake from Dad, we found a shady spot on the grass of the big pasture. Mom spread out a patchwork quilt, then laid out her lunch. She had thick slices of her own good, white bread, home made butter, for which she had paid ten cents a pound at Cornelius' store, a half of a dozen hard boiled eggs, which cost a nickel from the store or a neighbor, some of her baked beans, and tomatoes, radishes, green onions, and lettuce from our garden. For desert we had oatmeal cookies that she had baked that very morning.

After lunch, most of the adults gathered in groups to talk, while a few, grateful for a day of rest, collapsed on their blankets in the shade, but Allan, Jay, and I looked for a private place where we could sit and talk. There were three huge volcanic boulders in the corner of the pasture, near the horse corral fence. They were close together, flat on top, about eight feet high, and at least that wide. The rocks were in the shade of a mulberry tree, so we climbed up on them. Because the rocks were almost up against the corral fence, we had a good view of Big Red and the other mustangs.

We could easily jump from one to another, and had just made ourselves comfortable on the biggest and flattest, when I noticed a hole in one of the other rocks. It was about two feet wide, a foot deep, and there was a roof over part of it. Coiled up comfortably in that hole, under that roof, was a great, big rattlesnake. The snake was sound asleep, his flat, ugly head and slim neck laid out and resting on the rest of his coils. How that snake managed to get up on that rock, unless he could fly or had climbed the tree and dropped onto the rock, I'll never know, but there he was.

Now, as I said, we didn't like rattlesnakes, particularly a rattler that close, even though there was space between us. I jumped up and said, "Rattler." My saying *rattler* made Allan and Jay jump, and they both yelled, "Where?"

I pointed to the hole in the other rock, and said, "There." Allan was the most adventurous, and he suggested, "Lets get some clubs."

We slid off the rocks, found some solid five or six foot willow limbs that made good clubs, and carefully made our way back up. The snake was on his rock, Allan and I were on our rock, and Jay jumped to the third. Allan leaned over and poked the enemy in the ribs. It immediately came alive, and it looked like he boiled up out of the hole, mouth open, rattles singing, ready to fight. I brought my club down, but missed because the snake was stretching out in front of me. Jay swung his club, and he didn't miss. He broke the snake’s neck, but it kept coiling and writhing, its rattles still singing, so we continued to batter it.

By then, we had attracted a crowd, everyone wondering what was going on. Allan, again the adventurous one, flipped the rattler off the rock, and as it sailed through the air, the people scattered, and we laughed, but mine was a very nervous laugh. I

couldn't help wonder what would have happened if we had climbed up on the snake's rock to sit down.

Allan cut the rattles off the snake. We collected them. We thought they were good souvenirs. By then, it was time for the rodeo to start. My Uncles, Billy Lee, and a man named Claude Matthews took their saddles to the corral. The rest of the men went to the corral fence, some leaned against it, others sat on the top rail. The women gathered their children around them out and away from the action.

Billy Lee had been given a mustang for helping with the roundup. He had taught it lead, and he led it into the Uncles' corral to ride it, to "break" it, as his part of the rodeo. To break a horse the old fashioned way was to get on it and ride it until it quit bucking, to actually break the untamed spirit and make the horse docile.

The problem with that method was that the horse might develop a mean spirit and would kick and buck at unexpected moments. The method I liked and used with the horses I owned was to gentle them, to make them my friends, to teach them that saddles and bridles would not harm them. I raised an Appaloosa horse a few years ago that never bucked, never gave me any problems, except when I was working around him, then he would steal the gloves out of my pocket or the hat off my head. He would carry them away, and drop them in strange places. He became a lovable pest.

Billy had a hackamore on his mustang’s head, and when he brought it to the ranch for the rodeo, he tied it to the corral fence with a short, heavy rope, so he wouldn't have to catch it. In the corral, while the Uncles held the horse's head down, Billy put a blanket over its back. The mustang tried to jump, but the Uncles wouldn't let it. Then Billy carefully put his saddle over the blanket. Claude was on the opposite side of the horse from Billy, and when the horse felt the saddle touch his back, it gave a little buck, but Billy and Claude put some of their weight on it by pulling down on the saddle, and the mustang was trapped between the four men. Billy tightened the cinch and the belly strap, then Billy climbed into the saddle, and the rodeo was on.

The mustang, with springs in her legs, went straight up, all four feet off the ground. Billy held her head high, because if she got her head down, she could buck like a wild, untamed rocking horse, front up, hind down, front down, hind up, all of the time twisting and fighting, trying to dislodge the man on her back.

I am sure that first jolt made Billy's teeth rattle like the castanets on the rattlesnake's tail, and the horse arched, boiled, and writhed just like the snake had done, but then she got tired and started to run with short little hops. Uncle Rube opened the corral gate, and Billy whipped the horse with the ends of the hackamore reins. The surprised mare popped out of the corral and went crowhopping down the lane. People cheered because Billy had made a good ride. A short time later, he forced his quivering, sweaty mustang back to the corral, broken, no longer free, but ready to do the work of a cow horse.

Claude Matthews also put on a good show, although he bit the dirt once. He rode a long-legged sorrel mare with white stocks on three of her feet. Claude got a little careless just when he thought his horse was going to surrender. She came down legs stiff, back humped, then she whipped to the right, and Claude lost his balance. When she went up again, she threw Claude onto the ground. He rolled over and over thinking he needed to get out of her way as she bucked and crowhopped around the corral.

When she calmed down a little bit, the Uncles threw their loops over her head, and brought her to stop. Uncle Rube and Uncle Joad held her head while Billy pulled the ropes off, then, again, Claude climbed on her back, and that game lady went to work again, trying to dislodge him, but Claude stayed with her, and when she started to run and crowhop, someone opened the gate. Claude tickled the mare's ribs with the spurs he was wearing, and they went racing down the lane, Claude whooping and a hollering.

As soon as Claude brought the sorrel mustang back, tired and docile, the men went to work on the young stallion. He was a very frightened young horse, and the four men had a hard time holding him down. They tried several times to put a hackamore on him, but he kept throwing his head back. Finally Mort Jameson, a man who farmed down in the fields by the Virgin River, opened the gate, and walked into the corral. Mort was a big man with a big belly, and a big hearty laugh. He weighed at least 300 pounds.

Mort walked up to where the men were trying to hold the stallion, reached up, grabbed the stallion's ears, and yelled, "Ok, put the hackamore on." The only problem they had was getting it around Mort's big hands, but they managed that as Mort turned loose one ear at a time.

With Mort helping to hold the trembling mustang, Uncle Rube climbed into the saddle, and yelled, "Turn him loose."

They did, but Mort didn't move fast enough, and the stallion sent him flying onto the seat of his pants. He wasn't hurt, and he got up laughing, as Uncle Rube and the mustang stallion battled. The wild horse fought for freedom, the wide open spaces, and a wild band of his own. Uncle Rube fought for a good riding horse, and the money a good cow horse would bring.

The stallion was not like the typical rodeo bucking horse, trained to buck., trained to trick., trained to fight hard for eight to ten seconds. No, the young stallion fought hard and honestly, no tricks, for as long as he could lift his feet off the ground, and throw his twisting body into the air, but Uncle Rube was an old hand, and like a cocklebur, and he won.. He was still in the saddle when the young horse quit, game but tired

Uncle Rube pulled the saddle off, found a burlap bag, and rubbed the stallion down, while the other men talked about how to handle Big Red. The breaking of Big Red was to be the main event

Red probably was what is called a throw back. It is claimed by historians and paleontologists that there were no horses on the North and South American continents prior to the arrival of the Spanish explorers and adventurers. They brought horses with them. Many of those horses were blooded Arabians. Some of them escaped from their owners, or were left on the two continents when the Spaniards sailed back home. The historians and paleontologists have said that the western mustang is descended from those Spanish horses.

Now, whether Big Red's early ancestor was an Arabian brought to America by a Spanish Don, or whether he was a more recent escapee from a Utah, Nevada, or Arizona ranch, no one knew, but he looked like an Arabian, he held his head high and proud like an Arabian, and he had the speed and endurance of an Arabjan.

I have seen other mustangs that looked like Arabians. I had a friend named Milt Swift who caught a mustang colt on the western Utah desert. Milt named him Chief. When that horse was mature, he looked like he had just trotted out of an Arabian horse show. Milt taught the hors~ tricks, and he, his wife, and the horse traveled the western

states putting on shows. One of their favorite tricks was to have Milt's wife walk across the stage or the rodeo grounds in front of Milt and his stallion. The wife would drop a handkerchief. Milt would lean down to pick it up, and the horse would butt him out of the way, pick up the handkerchief with his teeth, and take it to the wife.

As the mustang stallion walked back to Milt, Milt would start crying loudly. The horse would go back to the wife, take the handkerchief from her, go back to Milt and wipe the tears from his eyes. Milt said all audiences loved it, but he said his favorite trick was one where they placed a temporary wall across the center of a stage or arena. The stage was installed so the audience could see both sides of the wall. The one side was arranged to look like a living room containing a sofa.

Milt and an assistant would stage a gunfight, using guns with blank ammunition. Milt would fall down, supposedly shot. The assistant would walk off, but the horse would walk over to the fallen gunman, drop to his knees, and Milt, the wounded gunman, would crawl on to the back of the horse, head and shoulders on one side, legs and feet on the other. The mustang would get up, walk to the door, and butt it with his head. Milt's wife would open the door. The horse, then, walked over to the sofa, and the wounded man slid off the horse on to the sofa. Chief would then walk out through the door.

Milt's wife told me that he loved that throw back to the Spanish Arabians far more than he loved his family. When we were both drafted during WWII, Milt cried, not about having to leave his family, he kidded, but because he missed his horse.

However, I have strayed from my story. The men, including Mort Jameson, decided to snub Red up tight against the hitching post inside the coml. They figured that the mustang leader had learned not to fight the rope, and would give them no trouble until they threw a saddle on him. So, Uncle Rube threw a loop over his head, then Uncle load, offering him an apple, led him up to the post.

Red already had a hackamore on him, so it was easy to tie his head down to the post. With two men on each side of him, Red stood very still while Uncle Joad placed a saddle blanket on his back. Uncle Joad must have thought that was a good sign, because he immediately slipped a saddle over the blanket. The big horse came unglued. He heaved backwards trying to free his head from the post, then he bucked and kicked at the same time. The saddle and blanket went flying like big birds, and the five men scattered.

Red fought the post for several minutes, and it was a wonder he didn't smash his head or break his neck. Finally he calmed down, but the men tried three more times before they were able to cinch a saddle on him. After he had calmed down, Uncle Rube threw the reins of the hackamore over the saddle horn. Uncle Joad grabbed them and vaulted into the saddle just as the men turned Red loose.

The big red horse was ready. The great muscles of his legs were like tightly wound springs that suddenly unwound. He went up into the air, twisting at the same time. He came down with his legs stiff. Uncle Joad felt the jolt, but he hung on as the mustang wound up the springs for another trip into the stratosphere. Then Uncle Joad touched Red in the flanks with the rowls on his spurs. The horse squealed and bounded forward like a racehorse leaving the starting gate. He headed for the corral fence right where people were standing to watch the show. Uncle Joad tried to turn him as everyone scattered, but Red would not turn. Freedom in the wide, open spaces lay just beyond that fence.

As Red jumped, his rider jumped, and as Uncle Joad went rolling in the dirt, the great horse's front legs cleared the top bar, but his hindquarters slammed into it. As his

heavy body angled down from the top rail, one front leg slipped between two of the lower rails. As Red fell, the leg bone broke right below the knee, and he crashed upon the ground, his head and neck taking the force of the fall. His head was twisted under his heavy body. He twitched and quivered convulsively a few moments, and then Big Red was finally free, eternally free.

I cried, Allan cried, and some of the women cried. When Uncle Joad came through the gate and looked at his big Red stallion, his tears made long tracks down his tired, dusty face. Then he turned to his family and friends, and said, "I tried to turn him, but I couldn't, and when I saw he was going to try the fence, I had to jump. It's too bad, he would have been a wonderful horse."

And I stood there, crying like a baby, and asking over and over, "Why did we do it? Why did we do it?" My mother came over, put her arms around me, and I asked her, "Why did we do it? Why did he have to die?"

My mother had tears in her eyes when she answered, "Timothy, Joad and Rube thought they were doing the right thing. They needed money, and the wild horses were there and could be turned into money, but in this life, when you open a door, you never know what is on the other side. The open door can lead to sorrow or to happiness. This one led to sorrow, but remember, Tim, life goes on. There are other doors, and there will be other horses. "

Uncle Rube and Uncle Joad harnessed up the work team, Peg and Sam, and dragged the big red body away, so that people could enjoy the picnic. But I don't think anyone really enjoyed it. With long faces, they sat and picked at the food. It was more like a funeral than a picnic. Soon people climbed on to their wagons, or into their cars, and drove away. My friends, Russell and Jay, saddled their horses, and they, too, loped down the road. Mother gave me a big hug, and then she and dad climbed into the Puddle Jumper, and rolled down the lane. We who were left, my Uncles, their wives, and my cousins, cleaned up the picnic debris, and trudged off to do the evening chores.

I had neglected Pinto because of all the excitement over the wild mustangs, so I decided to walk him down to the creek, give his leg a good rubdown, and treat him to some fresh hay and a handful of oats. While he was eating, I put my arms around his neck, leaned my head against his broad chest, and thought, "Mother is right. There is still Pinto and Star."

The next afternoon, as I walked up the path to the corral where I intended to feed Star an apple, I met Uncle load. He said, "Jiggs, I need to talk to you."

We stood there in the shade of a big quince tree, and he announced, "Jiggs, I am going to sell that little wild filly. Claude Matthews wants her for his girl, Anna. He has offered me twenty-five dollars, and we need money, and with Big Red gone, well you know, twenty-five dollars is twenty-five dollars."

I didn't wait to hear anymore. I just ran up the path, into the barn, and dropped onto a pile of hay. I didn't cry. I could have, but I knew crying wouldn't do any good, then I thought, "I'm getting out of here. First Big Red, and now Star. Uncle Rube and Uncle Joad promised me Star if I worked hard this summer, and I have worked hard all summer. Tomorrow I'll pack my stuff into a bundle, and I'll walk home."

I stayed in the barn for a long while, listening to the bawl of the hungry calves and the mooing of their answering mothers, then Ray and Allan found me and asked me to help them do the milking. While we were milking, I told them what Uncle Joad had said

about selling Star, and they both said they were sorry, but we all knew there was nothing we could do about it The ranch did need money.

Early the next morning, Ray rolled Allan and lout of bed. I thought he wanted me to get out to help him with the morning chores, but he said, "Jiggs, Uncle Joad wants to talk to you."

I put my overalls and shirt on, and went to the front of the house. Uncle Joad said, "Jiggs, yesterday you ran away before I got to finish what I was going to say. I was going to tell you that you can have Pinto for your horse. You've earned him, and you have been taking good care of him. He doesn't seem to be limping very much now. I think if you are patient, he will make you a good horse."

And I cried, "You'll give me Pinto. How can you do that? You need him." My Uncle disagreed, "No, I have talked it over with Rube. We both feel Pinto will never be able to carry a man as heavy as me. He's not a big horse, and with that game leg, I would be too much for him. I'm going to take the young black stallion that Rube broke. He's bigger than Pinto already, and he's got another year to grow. If we sell the filly and the other mustangs, we'll get by. How about it."

All I could say was, "Me have Pinto? Me have Pinto. Thank you Uncle Joad. I promise I'11 take good care of him."

And I did. I nursed him, rubbed him, and petted him. I didn't even miss Star after Claude came to get her, but I didn't like the name Anna gave her. She named her Pansy. I thought, "Pansy! What a name for a mustang."

I didn't pack my bundle and take off down the road. I stayed on the ranch until school started, but in August, the month before I went back to town, I rode Pinto every day. He didn't limp, but I kept rubbing his leg down with horse liniment just the same, and we became buddies.

After school started. I was able to go to the ranch almost every weekend. I helped with the fall roundup and branding, and I even rode Pinto to town to show him off to Jay and Russell. I was happy, the winter days slipped by without any problems, and then school was over. Allan brought Pinto to town. I said goodbye to my mother, and promised I would come to town on the Fourth of July, then I tied my bundle to the back of my saddle, and rode my own horse back to the ranch.

There would be no rodeo at the ranch that Fourth. There were no more mustangs running the hills around the ranch. Those that we had captured the year before had all been broken for riding and put to work or sold. I really wanted to go to town for the holiday. Almost every year there were races, kids racing kids on foot and on horseback, as well as men and women's horse races.

I had a secret that I carried in the back of my mind. If Uncle Joad thought it would be all right, I intended to enter Pinto in the kid's horse race. If his leg was healed, I thought he could beat Ray's Old Sorrel and Allan's Rowdy, and I knew he could beat Grant's Polly, but I wasn't sure about Lay's Ginger and Russell's Brat

A week or so later, when I was alone with Uncle Joad, I asked him about racing Pinto, and he said, "I don't know Jiggs, we'll just have to watch him and see if he comes up lame again. If he is healthy, there's no reason why he can't run if you think you can stay on him."

That was something I hadn't even thought about. Could I stay on Pinto if he was running full tilt? I was sure I could, but it was something to think about.

I didn't have to think about it very long. We went up North Creek, into Zion Park, to bring out some cattle the Uncles intended to sell. We all rode our own horses. I really admired Uncle Joad's mustang. He had named him Midnight, because he was as black as the middle of the night when there is no moon or stars shinning. Midnight was no longer a stallion. He had been castrated, and had become what is called a gelding. Stallions can't be completely trusted. They are always high-spirited, and sometimes want to challenge the rider. Geldings are far more dependable.

We went into the South Fork of North Creek through a natural gate that the stream had cut through a white Navajo Sandstone wall. There is a large flat valley, that had once been a lake, on the other side of that wall with a lot of grass and other vegetation that deer and cattle feed on. As we rode across the valley, the Uncles decided which animals they wanted to send to market.

We gathered together a bull, with long, very sharp horns, who was getting past his prime, three older cows, and Dine Steers, each weighing over 800 pounds, and ready for the feed lot. That little herd seemed to be docile as we pushed them toward the home corral.

All went well until we approached the Zion Park fence and gate. There the bull decided he was going back up to the valley. The three old cows came with him, and all of a sudden we were playing ring around the juniper trees with those four determined animals. That bull made me nervous. Each horn was at least two feet long, and he acted like he wouldn't mind using them on horses or men. The bull, with the three cows behind him, charged toward Uncle Joad and Midnight, then he swerved to go around them. The man and horse were one as they forced the bull and the cows to turn and head back down the canyon.

A short time later, Uncle Rube told Allan and I to ride ahead of the herd, and to station ourselves where we could turn the animals up the lane toward the corrals. Allan and I were in place when they crossed the creek and trotted down the field road, but that old bull was a determined soul. Instead of turning up the lane, he put his head down, and led the whole herd between Allan and I. As they passed, I didn't have to tell Pinto what to do. He started after them. The problem was that the road led to a fenced field, and at the corner of the fence, the road became a very rocky path where animals had to travel single file.

Pinto was running full out as we passed the steers and then the cows. Just before the road ended, we came up along side the bull. There wasn't room for both Pinto and the bull on the trail, and I didn't know what to do, but the bull and Pinto made my mind up for me. When that renegade bull saw that the horse was going to get to the path before he did, he turned on a dime. Pinto seemed to sink onto his front knees, then springing up, he too changed direction. As I pulled him to a stop, that stupid bull led the whole herd headlong into a barbed, five wire fence.

Those strong barbed wires went boi-i-ing, and flipped that half a ton of bull meat backwards and end over end. Some of the cows hit the fence too, and within seconds there was a great big, heaving pile up of potential hamburger and steaks trying to get untangled and back on their hooves. Pinto and I just stood there and watched the show. When all of the animals were up, we drove them back to where my uncles and cousins were waiting.

When they were safely in the corral, and we were taking the saddles off our horses, Uncle Joad said, "Jiggs, you scared me to death. I guess I didn't tell you Pinto is a cutting horse. He's trained to cut an animal out of a herd. If the animal turns, Pinto turns with it. When Pinto turned, I thought you were going to go flying into the rocks, but you stayed with him. That was good riding. Something else, Pinto isn't limping. I'd say he's completely healed."

Pinto was in good shape. His leg had healed, and in the afternoon of the Third of July, Ray, Allan, and I rode our horses to town. We put them in the corral at Grandpa Maloney's place, then we went over to see my mother. My dad was home too, and I told them about Pinto, and how I wanted to enter him in the kid's race. Of course my mother said, "Now Tim, your not that good of a rider. I don't want you breaking your neck in a horse race."

So, Ray had to tell them about Pinto and me racing a bull and a herd of cows and steers down the road, and how Pinto turned them, and how I brought the herd back up the road all by myself. However, he didn't tell them how it was the fence that had humbled that bull and those cows, not me and Pinto. Anyway, after listening to the story, my mother and dad said I could ride Pinto in the race.

Early the next morning, the whole town was waked up by Bluford Beames' dynamite blasts on the town square. Uncle Bluf, as everyone called him, got a little bit high from drinking too much wine on the night of the Third of July. He didn't go to bed, so when he thought daylight was beginning to break, he went to the town square and set up twelve dynamite charges.

He was an old powder monkey, so he knew just how much fuse to use on each charge, so that they would blow one at a time. The problem was, when that first blast went off, everyone in town came up off their beds, and every window facing the blast in the two-room school and the one room church house were shattered.

Every year before the twelfth boom rocked the town, the town's mayor and marshal pulled on their pants, jumped into their tin lizzys, and raced to the square. There, they would find Uncle Bluf and half a dozen boys revelling over the big bangs, and yelling "Happy Fourth of July." If the town had had a jail, they would have tossed Uncle Bluf into it and thrown away the key, but with no jail, all they could do was have the justice of the peace levy a fine. It took the culprit all summer to payoff the fine, but the next Fourth of July, he would do it allover again.

I wonder now why they didn't police the town square on the morning of the Fourth and keep Uncle Bluf away from it. Perhaps they thought, as Uncle Bluf did, that that twelve gun salute was a patriotic way to get people out of their beds and ready for the big day.

Anyway, after the foot races, three legged races, and sack races, bottles of soda pop, and some minor explosions created by our firecrackers, we were ready for the horse races. The potluck picnic and the dreary speeches would come in the late afternoon after the day had cooled down a bit, and just before the big dance began.

The first race was a bit of a novelty. After the horse I had named Star had been gentled, and Anna Matthews had started to ride her, Ed Cornelius, Russell's older brother, had teased her about the horse's short legs. Anna was the same age as Ed, and everyone thought Ed liked her more than a little bit.

Ed had bragged, "We have a work plug that can run faster than that Pansy horse of yours."

Of course Anna said, "I'll bet Pansy can outrun any work horse."

Well, the townspeople became intrigued. Could a short-legged mustang outrun a big Belgian plow horse? Everyone in town was eager to find out, and many bets were placed.

No one had a saddle that would fit on the Belgian's broad back, so Ed had to straddle him bare back. Ed and Anna lined their horses up on the road at the top of the sand hill. Of course when the starter's gun went off, little Pansy took the lead. It took Ed half of the course before he could get the Belgian up to full speed. That race was something to see. Pansy didn't weigh over 800 pounds, and the plow horse weighed over a ton. No one could hear Pansy's small hooves hit the ground, but those hooves of the workhorse, as big as dinner plates, made the ground shake just like Uncle Bluf's twelve dynamite blasts.

Ed sat on the back of that enormous horse like a cocklebur on a saddle blanket, but like I said, he had a hard time getting the horse to moving.

Ordinarily a little kick in the ribs would do the job, but Ed's legs were spraddle so far apart he couldn't get any power in his kick. However, after Ed slapped him on the rump a few times, that Belgian entered into the spirit of the race, and he pounded up behind Pansy like a battleship overtaking a PT boat. They were almost neck and neck when they crossed the finish line, but Anna and Pansy had won the race. I told my friends, "If the race had gone another hundred yards, Ed and the Belgian would have won." That huge horse was just beginning to roll when the race was over.

The kids' race was next. As we rode our horses beyond the top of the sand hill where the race was to start, I prayed that Pinto would not come up lame. I was concerned because the people in charge of the horse races had made our distance about 300 yards longer than what Pansy and the Belgian had run, and I didn't want Pinto to get hurt.

Only Ray, Allan, Russell, Jay and I had entered our horses in the kids' race. Giant didn't enter because he didn't think his horn could possibly win.

The five of us lined up, and the Mayor, acting as the starter, fired his big Colt 45 in the air, and we were off. Ray, on Old Sorrel, took the lead. He and his horse had run in Fourth of July races before. Russell's Brat was slow getting started, but Jay, Allan and I moved right up behind Ray. As we came over the sand hill, Old Sorrel was still in lead, but Brat had decided to run and he was moving up fast.

I was leaning over the saddle talking to Pinto. I was saying, "Come or Pinto. We can do it. Let's let them eat our dust." I touched that beautiful horse with my heels, and it was like the race with the bull on the ranch mad. Pinto passed Old Sorrel just like he had breezed past the bull. We crossed the finish line a full length ahead of Old Sorrel and Brat. Allan's Rowdy, and Jay's Ginger tied for last.

I turned Pinto back to the finish line and found my dad and mother. Mom seemed to be real happy. She said, "I'm proud of you Jiggs, not just for winning the race, but also how you took care of Pinto. He doesn't even limp." I think that was the first time she had ever called me Jiggs.

Then dad made me real proud when he added, "You keep going, Jiggs, and you'll be a real cowboy." At that time, that's exactly what I wanted to be, a cowboy with a good

horse, and a few cows on a ranch under the rimrocks of southern Utah. I had the horse, and some years later I would have the ranch. I named it Rimrock.

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LaVarr B. Webb (called "Jiggs") 10/94