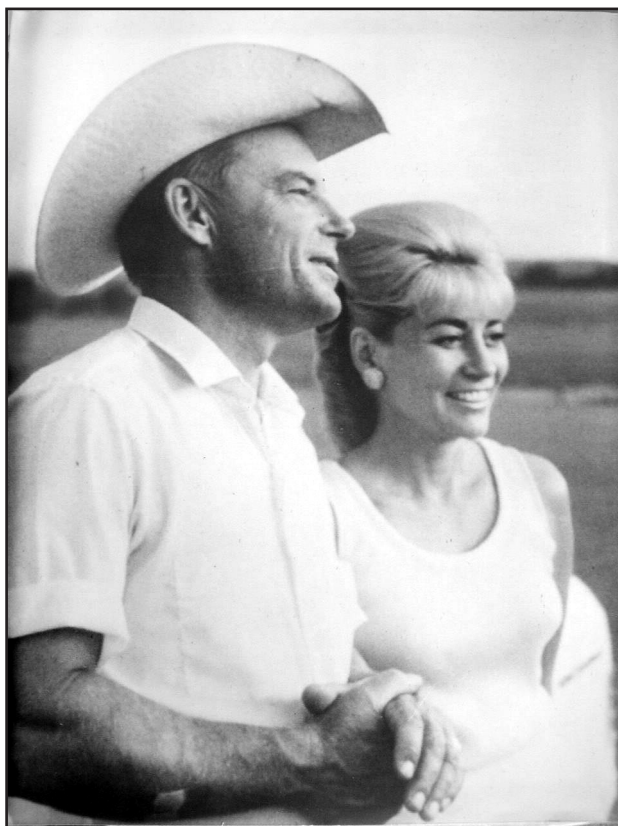
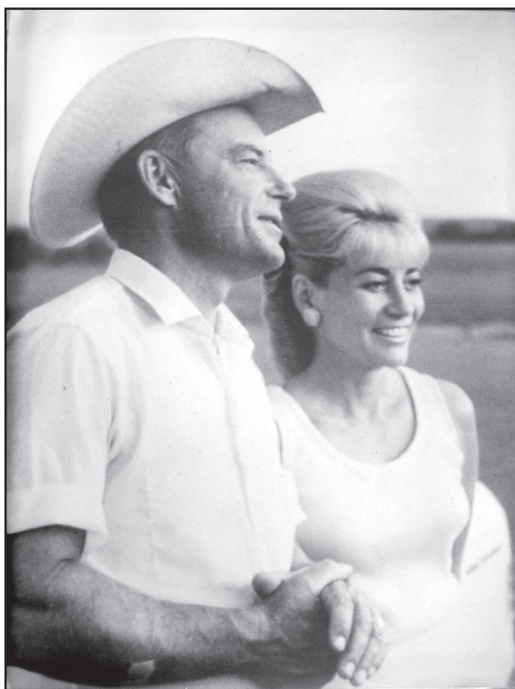


THE
COWBOY



We Have Come a Long Way From the Horse And Buggy

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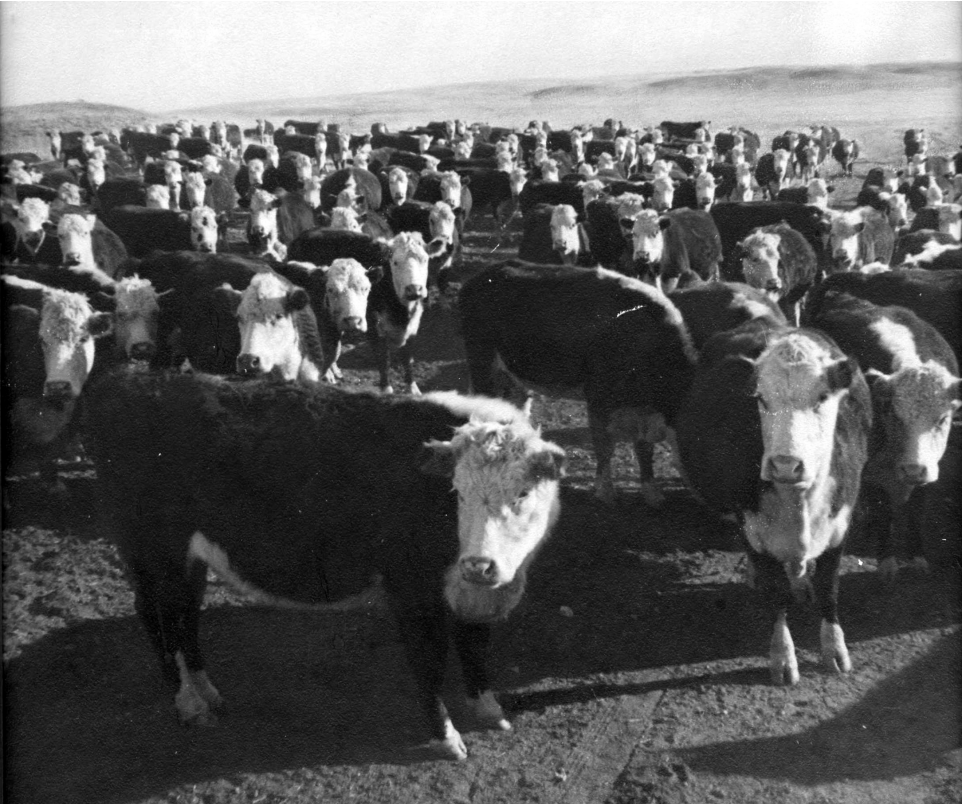


ROOD MENTER

We Have Come a Long Way From the Horse And Buggy



Outskirts Press, Inc.
Denver, Colorado



Part of the original cow herd

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Acknowledgment And Salutations

To my daughter, Kim Schneider, who ranches south of Paxton, Nebraska -- a really outstanding individual. I'm extremely proud of her many accomplishments. She has raised and college educated four children and is the glue that holds that ranch together regardless of how tough the times get. To make sure ends meet, she is also a conductor on the Union Pacific RR. Two people operate a train. They are the conductor and engineer. She is training to be an engineer also so she can handle both jobs.

Her ranch isn't one of these little outfits or the poor farm along the side of the road, she has 8,000 acres of deeded farm and ranch land right in the center of middle America. What it does is show us how little money there is in agriculture, the backbone of our nation. It also proves she is a chip off of the old block. Where there is a will, there is a way.

To my son, Wade, who was killed in his V tailed Bonanza airplane at age twenty nine. That was ironic, after being a jet pilot in the United States Marine Corps. Plus the fact that he was seemingly winning his fight with melanoma cancer. The shock was so great I couldn't talk for a week.

To Dick Dudden, of Ogallala, Nebraska the only sincerely honest attorney I ever knew. When I sold the south ranch, nine different buyers and sellers who knew him by reputation only trusted him to represent them. We all had one attorney and no realtors. It worked great.

To my three uncles: Dr John Menter DVM of Los Banos, Calif., Walt and Harry Haythorn who each had ranches in the Nebraska Sand Hills. All contributed to my education.

To the Mayo clinic: for smoothing out the wrinkles in our socks on several different occasions. They gave me three major operations and my wife the ability to hear again.

To Don and Charles Coddings of Foraker, Oklahoma, and the Osage Chief who made me an honorary member of the Osage Indian Tribe, with the name of Komoho, or Face The Wind.

To Rick Edmonds, Brent, Alabama, the restaurant and resort owner, who caught me on a rerun of the TV program, "What's My Line," and sent me a DVD of it.

To: Wentworth Military Academy of Lexington, Missouri where I received a high school diploma and my private pilot's license. Later on they backed me with one of the nominations for Outstanding Man of America.

To Danny Rousus, Jack Hughes, John Gover, Cal Baker, Al Talbot, Fum McGraw, Powhatan Carter, and Bill Chandler -- for being my roommates.

To all of our grand children including the ones we have never met.

To Jim Lang of Greeley, CO., Greg Bamford of Gilbert, AZ., Jack Kent of Boone, CO., Lloyd Hodges of Julesburg, CO. four longtime friends not mentioned in this book.

I'm not recognizing the people who purposely tried to do me harm. I still persevered. In this book I'm going by the old standard, "If you can't say something good about another person, don't say anything."

I asked the Lord to walk with me. He said he would see me through.

Rood Menter

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Foreword

We now live in the lower desert country of Arizona. In the desert, the weather is constant. There are only a few high and low pressure systems going through the area at any given time. That means no wind, snow, or cold weather. That also means you live longer. Just think how short and irritable you can become just because of a never-ending high wind. The stress is mental and physical. We would come to the desert area for a month and rent a condo on a golf course that stays green all year round, just to get out of our stressful climate. Our hired help was not keen enough to where we could stay longer than thirty days, but what a welcome relief.

It seems everyone here is a transplant. People come for the weather, even though it climbs into the triple digits during the three months of summer. It's a dry heat—somewhat bearable—not that ghastly hot humidity that is prevalent throughout the middle and eastern United States. The weather certainly contributes to the reason Phoenix is the third largest city in the United States. Our fellow desert dwellers ask where we came from. With tongues in cheeks, we say, "From the eastern plains of Colorado, out where the earth falls off." Most people think of Colorado as a beautiful paradise full of mountain scenery, but where we lived, it was

anything but that. We experienced all the ravages of nature: the floods, droughts, hail, blizzards and tornadoes -- you name it.

Looking back from my retirement, it's scary. How did we survive in a climate like that? It was not only the weather. We had to use herbicides for weed control, insecticides for parasites, and vaccine for viruses. (One time, Baby planted a garden with four potatoes plants in it. Here we live out in the middle of nowhere, where there was not one single hill a potatoes being raised for untold miles, and sure enough there were potato bugs eating up her plants.) The bugs just drop out of the sky. That's the way farmers got lady bugs which are a God Send to a corn field. They are natural enemies to mites and spiders and aphids. They just follow the wind currents from coast to coast and drop down on a growing corn field and save the grower's life.

We were lucky not to lose our crops once every ten years from hail. Droughts ran in ten-year cycles as well as the commodity markets. Three times during the 35 years we were in business, the cattle market just literally fell out of bed. We could expect a tornado to ravage our outbuildings, windmills, and pivot sprinklers every ten years. It was the blizzards, however, that were most devastating. It finally dawns on you that running cattle and farming in a semiarid area is one hell of a gamble. Don't let your son or daughter grow up to be a cowboy or a farmer.

Let's say you are going to plant corn. First, you need to find a variety that has a history of making 200 bushels to the acre and matures in the growing season of your area. Next, you need to set a planter to drop a seed every five to eight inches apart. Seed population per acre is a must. Then, you mix a fungicide with your seed to ward off seed deterioration. Then, you put down a stream of starter fertilizer within two inches of but not touching the seed, to make sure the seed gets a quick start, with enough power to break through the soil crust in the event of a rain, or you had to irrigate the crop up. When we prepared the seed bed, we put the required amount of phosphate on, since it clogs up a sprinkler if you administer it through the irrigation water. Then, comes the sulfur and tons of nitrogen to feed the plants enough nutrients to

produce a 200-bushel crop.

In the sand country we lived in, where we used pivot irrigation, the next step is to ring the circle with either rye or oats laced with strychnine. The kangaroo rats will be arriving as soon as the sun goes down to eat up all your seeds. Somehow, they can tell where each seed is planted and only bore down directly over the seed. They have to be controlled as they enter the field, because they've been patiently waiting all year for some dumb farmer to plant corn. I guess the cotton farmers and the boll weevils have the same problem. According to the old song, "The boll weevil has all his family waiting there".

If we haven't incorporated a herbicide in the soil when we prepared the seed bed, we'll hire an aerial sprayer to fly one in to control weeds. Sometimes we had to do both. Next, came the army worms, spider mites, wilt, and, worst of all, the corn borers. The corn borers lay worms in the shank of the ear where it attaches to the stalk and cuts the ear off, allowing it to fall to the ground before the corn can be harvested. Some of the insecticides we used on bad infestations of corn bores were so lethal that humans couldn't enter the field without a gas mask for the first 24 to 36 hours after the planes sprayed.

So, when you walk into a grocery store and they advertise organic food, you about got to admit those growers have some special liaison with Mother Nature that we never knew about. Organic livestock production is another phenomenon. We had to vaccinate unweaned calves against shipping fever and pneumonia. Then, when we weaned them, we had to have antibiotics available to keep these weaned calves from dying like flies. I could wean 4,000 head of calves with a death loss of under ten head year after year, as long as I had antibiotics.

Without the medicine and the vaccines, the virus spreads through the cattle and makes them all sick practically overnight. It's hard for me to visualize how growing crops or livestock without using manufactured chemicals can successfully be accomplished. Especially, if your total production must be large enough to support a man and his wife.

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We in the cattle business have always felt that we have a wholesome and healthy product to sell to the consumer -- simply because every carcass is federally inspected and graded. We did feed growth stimulants and hormones, which help gain ability, but we were required by law to take cattle off of these supplements 48 hours before slaughter, so there was no residue in the meat. I make this point for the benefit of the animal activist, the vegetarian, and the environmentalist.

Eating beef is not like eating a salad that could be laced with *ecol* or a fish full of nitrates and mercury. Since I have Type O blood, and Type O's do not require a vegetarian type diet, I have not eaten salad for years. Remember: Admiral Byrd took a team of men to the North Pole, and all they ate was meat. They returned home in excellent health. I can find all the vitamins and trace minerals in beef that other people are looking for in salad.

Lots of people have gone through hurricanes, floods, hail, and so forth and had to start all over again. None of us can control weather or markets. We finally faced why we lived in an area that could be so severe. This is what this book is about. This is what we did to survive. However, this narrative is not all blood and guts. This is also a love story. Out in those wide open spaces, I just happened to stumble on to the love of my life, one of the 28 neighbors on the border fence of the north ranch I had never met. It was love at first sight for both of us. It was so written.

You know a lot of times when a person from the city meets you, one of his first two questions are: how big is your ranch or how many cattle do you have? They don't know that's bad manners on their part. It's like me walking up to them and asking how much money they have in the bank or what's the value of their house. I guess we all get carried away with our own importance or talk when we should be listening. It brings to my mind the Texan cattleman that was down in old Mexico looking for cheaper priced *corriente* cattle. The Texan says to the Mexican rancher, "My ranch is so big that I get up in the morning, get in my pickup, drive all day and never get off of my ranch." The Mexican says, "Yes senior I once had pickup like that too."

About The Author

At the age of 13, city born, Rood Menter became the manager of a 15,000-acre ranch. The largest cattle ranch in his county. He was one of the first ranchers to mechanize horse-drawn haying equipment, introduced crossbreeding of cattle on a commercial basis, and is the grandfather of artificial insemination of range cattle. A survivor of front line duty in Korea. Menter was included in the 1965 edition of *Outstanding Young Men of America* and was named by Armour (BCI) as the leading cattle rancher in the nation. He made an appearance on the television program *What's My Line?*, Articles were written about him in the following magazines: *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, *Farm Journal*, *Successful Farming*, *R. F. D.*, *Feed Illustrated*, *Healthways*, *Armour*, and *Western Livestock Journal*, as well as numerous newspapers. He suffered the loss of 3,000 head of cattle in one blizzard and was one of two survivors when they pulled the charter on his bank. At the height of Menter's career, he ran 12,000 head of cattle and owned three ranches.

Of his ranching career, Rood Menter comments, "There were really two of us. When the visibility got down to zero, my woman was always by my side. We faced every situation head

on, even though my wife was deaf for thirty four years. Ours is the perfect marriage. We are nonchalant about friends and relatives, are happy enjoying each other. Our intimacy has let us live in Utopia.



My Grandmother