

Verona Stocks (cont)

lings for Aunt Mame. Bob drove the car and he had to build some sort of pen at night to hold those young sheep.

While they were gone my two youngest sisters stayed with me. I had the sheep to look after and they tended Vee and watered the garden.

I had a few scary experiences when I was herding sheep but the one that happened in May just before Bob and Felix came home was the one I had nightmares over. There were hundreds of cows on the Flat and Bob told me to always ride when I was with the sheep. This day I did not take time to saddle my horse, the sheep went over the hill and I went after them. I turned them about half way from the point of the hill to the old airport. I walked fairly close to what I thought was a sleeping cow. I had gone a short distance when I heard a bellow, not a cow, a big mean bull. I was beside the Plat ranches irrigation ditch. I stood still, the dog lay down at my feet and never moved. There was no place to move to. That bull pawed the ground and bellowed. He kept taking a few steps toward me, then he would stop and paw the ground again, all the time that low, mean bellow. Finally a bull up at the point of the hill figured he was being challenged. He pawed the ground and bellowed for a bit, then he trotted right close by me to meet the other bull. I was never afraid of him; he had been around for quite awhile. I did not move, and neither did the dog. As soon as those two bulls met, we took away from there fast. When I got to the point of the hill I met Felicia, Josephine and Vee. Not knowing what the situation was, they were coming to meet me.

I rode after that.

We were looking for some place to graze our sheep that summer so we moved toward La Sal. My Uncle Victor Murphy and family were renting the Dill Hammond ranch. There were a lot of abandoned farms close by him. We thought we would visit him for a few days and ask around about different areas. When we got there Bob bedded the sheep down then he went to sleep and never woke up for two days, only to eat two meals. I visited with Ethel and Uncle Vick herded the sheep. When Bob was feeling better Uncle Vick introduced him to Jack Loomis who lived in Lisbon Valley. He thought it would be a good place for our sheep. Bob caught a ride to Moab and brought our car to La Sal and left it with Uncle Vick.

Our camp outfit was loaded on a wagon. I never did like to drive a team, but I drove. Bob had a mean little half broke horse he rode to drive the sheep. The first farm we came to in Lisbon Valley belonged to Mr. Wise. They were friendly and asked us to stay for dinner. Mrs. Wise came from Ireland. It was

interesting listening to her and Bob talk Irish. That is when I learned the Irish language was so different from the English. I could not understand a word they said.

We moved on and met Jack Loomis. He took us to his place and showed us a place to camp close by. While I herded the sheep Jack and Bob went for our car. There was lots of good grass. The sheep did not move around much so Mrs. Loomis and I did a lot of visiting. There were two or three children for Vee to play with.

In all of Lisbon Valley there was only three families. Wise's at the beginning, Loomis's in the middle and another family at the end a mile or two from Three Step Hill. We visited them all. They were friendly and lonesome, especially the women, because none of them had good cars. All had stock and when something was needed from the store the men went after it about every two or three weeks, often on horseback with a pack animal. Someone had to stay to milk the cows and feed the chickens and pigs.

When we moved it was toward a spring Jack Loomis had told Bob about, for in Lisbon Valley there is very little living water. The grass was good and that summer it rained often. Bob got up at daylight and left with the sheep. I harnessed up the horses, loaded the camp on the wagon and followed him. When I caught up I was going to cook breakfast.

I had gone about a mile when the wagon wheel hit a chuck hole. I was sit-

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ting on an empty water keg, it bounced up, I flew out of the wagon and under the front wheel. I still had the lines in my hand. The wagon wheel passed clear over my left arm and was on my stomach, but all I could think of was if it kept going it would run over my little girl too. I pulled on the lines, the horses backed up and stopped. The wheel had gone over me again. I passed out. The next thing I knew Vee was looking down at me and the sun was up. I was still where, if the horses had started up, that wagon wheel would have gone over me again. I crawled out and unhooked the horses from the wagon. I was so sick at my stomach. The next thing I remember Bob was there and so cross, he was hooking the horses back to the wagon. He told me to get in the wagon which I did. It was past eleven o'clock and he was both tired and hungry.

When we got to where he had left the sheep he fixed himself some breakfast. I asked him to get the baby out of the wagon, which he did. He got on his horse and started to leave, then he turned and asked me if I had broken anything. I told him only my gall bladder. He looked at me for a moment then said "Well you will be dead soon I guess". Then he turned and rode away. That made me so mad I dumped his coffee into a pan, put a towel in the hot coffee, then on my stomach which was hurting so bad.

Bob came back and told me he had a good camping place by the spring and we were moving there but could not take the wagon. It was a mile up the canyon. He put the packs on the horses except the one he told me to ride. I did not say anything but I was wondering. When he was ready to go he said "Well, are you coming?" I was still sitting in the wagon. I told him I did not think I could, so he helped me off the wagon and onto the horse, put our two year old baby girl in front of me, gathered up the lead ropes of the pack horses and I did ride that mile to the new camp.

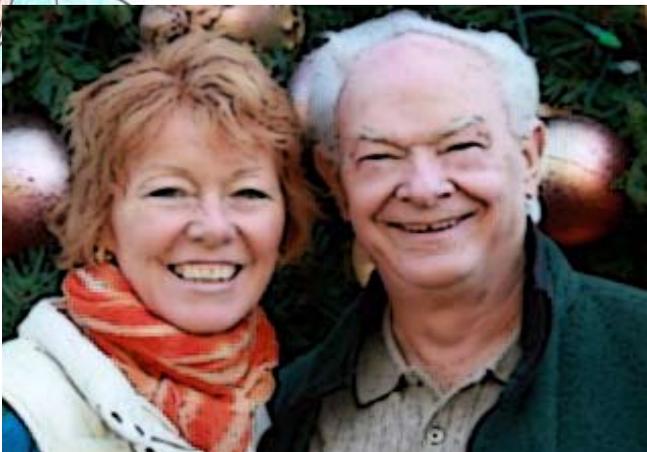
He set up the camp and I cooked supper, washed dishes, then went to bed. At daylight the sheep moved out to feed and Bob went with them. I did not want to move but I knew I had to. I got a fire going, heated some water, and put hot packs on my arm and stomach. I sat down close to the stove and anything not close to me Vee brought. I always marveled at her understanding.

I understood Bob's problem. He knew so little about range or where to camp that the sheep would like. Sheep are really very choosy about their bed grounds. He had to depend so much on me.

Verona's story continues next issue...



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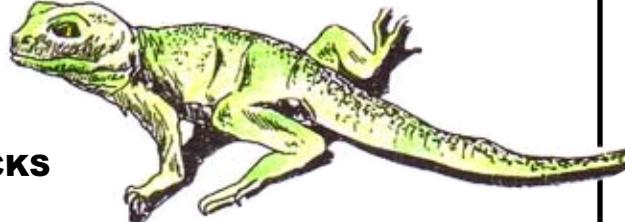
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