

# Verona Stocks

## (continued)

and beds, had a Doctor and sick bay in camp. It was like the army. They built dams, roads and trails; anything that would help the country.

We worked hard, had some problems, but fun, too. We went to dances in the La Sal school house. Wesley and Minnie Newman played for them. Pete and Flora rode over from Old La Sal, stayed at our place, and went to the dances with us. There were also dances at Old La Sal which we went to.

Felix was camped at Trough Springs herding the sheep. Sometimes Nick and sometimes Dad would stay with him. But he was alone one evening when he brought the sheep to camp, I should say to the bed ground because the camp had burned down. There was no bed and no food, so he rode to the school house. There was a dance that night. Him and Nick went to the ranch, rounded up a camp outfit, and after the dance, they went to the sheep herd. It was cold with no shelter, just a campfire. We bought a tent and camp stove for them as soon as possible.

February 10, 1933 we consigned our wool to the Utah Wool Market. We received an advance of \$155. That was enough to get shearing supplies, pay wages to the shearers. We gave them room and board.



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The sheep were brought to the ranch. Young Felix, Uncle Felix, Jack and Pete Stocks did the shearing. Pete and young Felix were learning and they learned fast. Dad had 193 ewes, I had 666, and 10 bucks, Larsons had 265 ewes and 5 bucks. We finished shearing April 10 and the weather turned cold.

Pete and Jack got the job of shearing sheep for the ranchers in Paradox and Gateway. Most everyone had a few head of sheep. Pete wanted to earn enough money to buy a suit.

I wanted to move to Pack Creek to lamb, but Dad would not loan me his mules and I had only one work horse left. We went down East Coyote Wash, no place to lamb sheep. We needed a corral to put the ewes in that had not lambed. In a thin bunch of trees, we cut young cedar and pine trees down and wove them in and out of the bigger trees to make a brush fence. We needed a shelter but the sheep were already lambing and we had no time to make one, and not enough strength either.

It snowed for a week. We saw lambs freeze to death before the mother could clean them. Many of the older ewes died as soon as the lamb was born. Some of the ewes had twins but could only take care of one. Sometimes if I got to them in time I could get a ewe to take a lamb whose mother had died.

Felix was herding the lambing herd. I followed after him with the herd that had lambs so I could pick up all the ewes with new born lambs. Felicia kept track of both of us to help out whoever needed help the most. She always rode a horse. My horse got crippled so I had to walk. Felix really needed a horse more than anyone, but he walked a lot to rest his horse as we were short on hay and grain.

One day I came around the sheep in time to see a coyote stop on the bank of a wash. It was watching something below. I hurried as fast as I could toward it. As I came closer I saw it was too big for a coyote. I had not heard of any wolves being in this part of the country. I did wish I was some place else. The animal watched me but did not leave. I kept going toward it anyway. What a relief when I heard Felicia behind me. I was about 50 feet from that darned animal. It looked like a coyote but not like one, either. It turned and trotted away and then I was standing where it had been looking down at 2 of the cutest little Angora kids. The mother goat was a good milk goat.

One night we came to camp cold, hungry and discouraged. We were losing far too many lambs and old ewes. Felix or I picked up a piece of pine wood that was very pitchy and chopped it up. That night one of us put some of it in the stove, then closed the damper so it would burn a long time. Later that night I woke up. It was hard to breathe, so I lit the lantern, open the tent flaps to let the smoke out. Felix and Felicia woke up. When we looked at one another we could hardly stop laughing. The only thing white about us was the white of our eyes. Even negroes have red lips, but not us; we were black. There were stringers of soot all over the inside of that tent.

It was a sheep camp stove and easy to handle. We took it outside and cleaned the soot out of it and the stove pipe. We rebuilt the fire and warmed up some water and cleaned up as best we could.

Felix's bed was at the back of the tent. Felicia and I were close enough to the stove so I could reach out and put wood in it without getting up. Felicia and I got the worst of the soot. Everything needed washing but we had to go herd sheep. Oh well, it would have to wait for a sunny day, or so we thought.

The very next day, Lynn and Dora Day walked from their homestead, about two miles down Coyote Wash from us. They got to the sheep camp about dark with their beautiful clean baby. They wanted to stay the night with us. We told them about the soot and showed them the inside of the tent. We even tried to loan them a horse to go the rest of the way to Dora's mother's home. It was cold. Dora was tired, so they stayed. We were embarrassed, but what could we do?

I had sent word to the government trapper about that coyote that was too large to be a coyote. He came and looked at the tracks and told me it was a cross between a German Shepherd and a coyote. He had caught several that had been bothering other herds.

My lambing came to an end and so did the bad weather. I do not think Felix or I could have taken much more. I worried about Felix being so young and overworked. I could do no more than I was, but he was only 17. He was bouncing around like normal before too long. I know it took me much longer to feel less than 60 and that was only 1933. There were a lot of years for both of us to go yet and a lot of things to do.

I should give Dad's reasons for not letting us move to Pack Creek. It would have been much easier for us and we would not have lost so many sheep. But Dad was sick; how sick only he knew. He was afraid for both himself and the younger kids.

Nick and Josephine had plenty to do also. Nick tended the stock, cows, horses, pigs and chickens. The plowing had to be done too, so he was a very busy boy. Josephine cooked, kept house; she was a neat housekeeper too. She did the family washings on a scrub board, only not for the sheep camp. Then she took care of Ray, a younger brother, and my two children, Vee and Bob, besides she rode the four miles to school and back. Bob was not old enough to go to school, so she cared for him while the others were in school.

When the weather warmed up Dad would hitch the mules to the wagon and bring all the kids to the sheep camp for the day. Felix and Nick would herd the sheep and the other children would explore the creek. I stayed in camp and cooked for us all and Dad would talk to me about his early life and his good business relationships with his father, the work they had done building up the Murphy ranch and cow herd. Jack and Tom built up their own herds. Dad built up his parents' herd before he did his own. His brothers were not stockmen and the only cattle they had was what Dad and Grandpa gave them, except Uncle Felix who did not want cattle.

Dad was a well read man and had a lot of knowledge about many things. Dad's kids were all growing up and he was lonesome. Those were very pleasant afternoons.

*NEXT ISSUE: Pete and Verona take up mining.*

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### From the DESERT RAT COMMANDO



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