

## Worth Ranch History

### Interview with CPT. Kidd, June 19, 1972



Q. What year did you first become associated with WR?

A. I went to WR in middle April 1935.

Q. What had been your experience in Scouting prior to this?

A. I had been in several different positions. I started in Scouting as a "Hikemaster", which was about the same as Assistant Scoutmaster. That was in Lawton Oklahoma under J.E. Persham and that was in 1911. Then I started out as a Scout Executive at Gainesville and Denton and Cook and Wise Counties. I had that four county area. Then I went over to Dallas as Assistant Executive for close to two

years.

Q. Were you the first Ranger at WR?

A. No. Joe Taylor was the first. They didn't call them Rangers, they called them caretakers. He lived there in the house and at summer camp one of the district men came out and at that time they only had one.

Q. Where did the name Worth Ranch come from? Was that the name of the people who owned the land before the Scouts?

A. No. the land was purchased outright as an old water grant and they didn't pay for it all then. I think they finished paying for it in about 1940. Worth came from the city of Fort Worth. We were called the Fort Worth Area Council then.

Q. What year did the Scouts get this land?

A. The deal was finished up in 1929 and there was some camping there in 1929. Gillespie and Harry Male of Fort Worth brought some boys out that year. Gillespie was of Troop 32 and Male of Troop 17. I think that Pop Lewis of Troops 4 and 52 also camped there in 1929. In 1930 there was some construction started and a lot of rock work.

Q. Which building was built first?

A. The Rangers house was the first and the Trading Post was built about the same time and I don't know the order of the others.

Q. What year did they have the first "organized" summer camp program?

A. 1930. I don't know how many came out.

Q. Who were some of the men that were instrumental in getting WR started?

A. Bert Rose, Clyde Penry, Sam Collier, and a little bit later Herb Hilderbrant. All of these were on the committee that purchased the property.

Q. Who was Fulkerson?

A. He was the Scout Executive and it was really his dream and he was the one that put the pressure and impetus and did a masterful bit of planning in the days when they didn't have anything or any money and it served Fort Worth well for twenty five years. They did a good job. Fulkerson was a wonderful man. He was hard to get to know but once you knew him you loved him.

Q. About some of those other names out there like Todd and so forth.

A. Todd was a Council Commissioner. That all happened in 1940. They made another effort to make the place better. They paid off the loan on the property and got it clear and then went ahead with the swimming pool and the camping units. They were not dormitories. Probably 65% of the camping was done by troops doing their own cooking and the war stamp program came along and the SM's couldn't get enough food and I could get most all I needed so we changed. The buildings were set up on a full troop basis of 32 boys and three men. They had a seating arrangement for this size troop and had a stove, dishwashing, and so forth for the troop and were used on this basis for about two years before vandalism and so forth started ruining them and they degenerated into about what they are now, We had a dream of making dormitories out of them but we never did have enough money out there to do any of the things we wanted to do so most of our dreams just went up in smoke and never came about.

Q. What was the first drinking water, from the river?

A. They had a well out there but the water was awful and so we used some of it and a lot of river water until they build Possum Kingdom and they were able to set up a filtration system and got some pretty good water.

Q. Where did the name Captain Kidd come from?

A. I don't know. It started early. Most people named Kidd usually wind up being called CPT. I went to work as a professional Scouter in 1923 and I remember I was called CPT then. I started out in NE Okla and then to Texas.

Q. What was the first year of the CPT. Kidd patch?

A. I don't remember but it was about 1938. I had a dream of opening up the ground down below the hill and we didn't have any money to do anything, so I got the boys to take over projects and do work and from that came the CPT Kidd award for six hours of work. There were no forms to fill out or anything of that nature. When the boys did six hours work, they got the patch and we sure got a lot of work done, more than we would ever have been able to get if we had had to pay for it. And it gave the boys a working interest in what went on at WR and they could come back and say that we did this or we did that and they had a part in building the tradition of the camp.

Q. Do you know of any scout while at WR, for any reason, accident or snake bite that was killed at WR?

A. No. There was one boy who was shot and killed there. It was an accident. It happened in the cook shack. There is quite a story about it. There were two boys there that came out. I didn't search them and didn't know they had a rifle. Saturday came and their folks hadn't come and I told them they would have to leave and they were getting ready to go and a shell stuck or something and they were trying to pry it out with a pocket knife or something and it exploded and killed one of them. The boy killed was the son of Council Commissioner, Roy Smith.

Q. When was the chapel built?

A. Probably 1941 or 42. I don't know. I can't remember dates.

Q. Mr Gillespie was among the first men to camp there. Is that correct?

A. No, I wouldn't say he was the first. He had troop 32 and then there was 4 and 52 and there was a troop 105 from the north side somewhere and troop 17. I don't know who was first, but he was among the first.

Q. You said the land was water grant land. Was it in use for anything?

A. It was under lease to the McClure family and Henry and his wife still live there. It was Henry's father who lived there when they got the land and had to go through his land to get there and there was some ill feelings at first but it finally wore off.

Q. Do you have any idea who named Split Rock?

A. I don't know but I imagine it was Pop Lewis, at least I gave him credit for it. He was SM of 4 and 52, quite a wonderful fellow, and he named Hugo's crack, I know that, that was that split up there on the east end of Kyle Mountain.

Q. Was there really a hermit out there?

A. Yes, that is not fiction. He lived in various places, such as a cave part of the time or in a shelter in the bend of the river up there near Eagle Creek. He was there, I don't know how long. He was there when they got the camp. He moved around from one place to the other and then moved to a place up near the Dark Valley Bridge. A bunch of us got together and got him a six dollar a month pension. His name was George Harrison. Nobody knows where he came from and he was called George the Hermit. He was killed about 1960. Somebody knocked him in the head.

Q. Do you have any favorite legend about WR?

A. No, we were busy making them. My greatest interest was a Wednesday night program we called a river campfire and we tried to make it about the Indians who lived there at one time, and that part of it was true because on the hills just south of camp there was a whole row of Indian mounds and we had this river campfire program with the Indians coming down in canoes and the fire on the other side of the river. Flaming arrows were shot up in the air and I told a story. I kept this going until I left and it was never held again.

Q. Is there anyone man that you feel most important in the history of WR?

A. Fulkerson. He is the man who is responsible for the entire thing. It was his idea, his dream, and nothing should be written about WR without giving him the majority of the credit for getting it started.

Q. You went there in 1935. When did you retire?

A. In June of 1957, but I didn't get away until October. I have been back a few times but not too much