

"MY ELDORADO DAYS"

By Alvin A. Bush

Alvin A. Bush was born in Denton County, Texas, January 22, 1889, the son of William Harve Bush and Sally Hunsaker Bush. The family moved to Wellington, Texas, in Collingsworth County in 1890 in a covered wagon and settled on two sections of school land and lived in a dugout home. My father taught school in a dirt floor log cabin school house. This was the Fresno School located on a section of land adjoining ours.

After battling the dry weather, winds and cold winters for several years, father gave up, traded his equity in the two sections for thirty head of wild ponies and moved back to Denton County.

I went to school at Double Oak, Little Elm and Salt Branch schools in Denton County. Father died in 1898. I graduated from Denton High School in 1910, worked in the Exchange National Bank at Denton until 1918. Joined the Army on July 25, 1918 and served in the A.E.F. in England. After the end of World War I, I moved to Schleicher County.

Before leaving Denton County, Ruby Strickland, a girl I had known since High School days, decided we would get married after she finished her school year in June. She was teaching in Beaumont. Ruby was born August 25, 1894 in Collin County, Texas. We were married June 11, 1919 in Sherman, Texas. We had only one child, Sarah Frances Bush born June 25, 1925 in Eldorado, Texas. Ruby and I were divorced in 1929. Ruby died in October 1940.

Sarah Frances Bush married George B. Spence April 7, 1948. They now live in Berea, Ohio and have three children: David Wendel Spence (born Oct. 23, 1951), Trudy Lynn Spence (born May 28, 1954) and

Christopher G. Spence (born March 17, 1956).

The move to Schleicher County in 1919 was for the purpose of joining Fred G. Smith, a long time friend, in forming a partnership to acquire the Eldorado Water Works and the Ford Garage. We operated the water works, which furnished water to the citizens of Eldorado for two or three years then traded it for a Section of land (Section 140 Block A). We operated the Ford Dealership under the name of Bush-Smith Company and established dealership garages in Eldorado, Mertzon, Barnhart, Big Lake and Rankin until 1924. Then divided the partnership with Bush taking the Eldorado Garage and Fred Smith taking the Mertzon Garage and disposing of the others.

While operating the Bush Motor Company in Schleicher County, I had many interesting experiences. On one occasion I was driving an old Model T Ford from Mertzon to Eldorado. The low gear went out and the car stalled in the water at Dove Creek. I had only high and low gears. The car could not pull it in high so I had to back out, turn around and back across the creek and up a hill high enough so it could get up enough speed in rolling down grade to take off in high. After maneuvering several gates in a similar manner, I finally made it home in high gear. You did not dare leave a gate open. That's one of the first things I learned in the West--you must not leave a gate open.

All the time we were operating the Ford Dealership in Schleicher County, Frank M. Bradley was the manager of all operations. A Friendship was formed when I first met him that lasted as long as he lived. One Christmas I gave Frank a new Ford Car. When he drove it home and told the family, the first thing young Bob Bradley did was to take a

and scratched his initials on the door of the car. He then told his Dad that he fixed it so Mr. Bush could not sell it.

The Bush Ford Garage, on several occasions, provided accommodations for dances for the public. These dances provided a meeting place for the gathering of friends for the whole county and were well attended. No admission was charged and the music was provided by passing the hat. Our "best customer" was Mr. C. M. McWhorter, who came early and stayed late just to enjoy the music but never danced and was the biggest contributor.

Another interesting experience I remember was the first Rodeo I attended after arriving in Schleicher County. I was told that I was supposed to take some part in the performance. I couldn't rope. I couldn't throw a steer. I couldn't ride a wild horse. The only thing left was to try to ride a calf. I promised to ride as a special event. At the proper time, astraddle a calf, with a rope tied around his belly to hold to, the gate was thrown open and I hit the ground about the time the calf did on the first jump. Then a couple of cowboys on horses roped me and dragged me out in front of the grandstand. I did not get a prize but I got a "Big Hand" !

It is impossible to write all of my memories of the ten most happy years of the first 88 years of my life.

I left Eldorado in 1929, married Hattie Mae Wood August 8, 1948 and live at 3215 Bowie Street, Amarillo, Texas.
