

McMurtry Means Beef

By

Joe Heflin Smith

The number one cattle family in America could easily be the McMurtry brothers scattered throughout Texas from Archer City to Dalhart by way of Clarendon, Silverton, Vigo Park, and Muleshoe.

It is doubtful if there is a larger family of brothers in the United States who have been connected with the cattle business for a longer period of time, or who have produced more beef than the cattle-raising McMurtreys. There are eight living brothers and all are cattlemen—and good ones.

The ninth brother, Lawrence, now deceased, was a prominent grain man in Pampa, Texas, but, as one of the brothers put it, "Lawrence punched cows for the U's and could see a cow as far as any of us."

Cattle and horses come natural to the McMurtry boys. Their father, W.J. McMurtry, always ran cattle and horses and, at one time, broke horses in Denton County for Jerry Burnett, father of Texas oil man Burk Burnett.

W.J. McMurtry, with his wife, Louisa Frances Williams McMurtry, migrated from Warsaw, Benton County, Missouri in a covered wagon and settled in Denton County in the late seventies

The young couple had one son, Charley, but more children were to follow, and the McMurftrys moved into a log house and adopted North Texas as their home. Within a few years, Jerry Burnett told W.J. McMurtry of a better country to the southeast, and the newcomer to Texas moved his family to the TAX Springs in Southeastern Archer County, about halfway between Antelope in Jack County and Winterhorst in Archer County, arriving there in 1888.

Jerry Burnett built the house at TAX Springs, and W.J. McMurtry bought the place. TAX Springs were on the cattle drive-way from Buffalo Springs to Belknap, and all the little McMurtry boys watched big herds of cattle lumber over the trail. Cattle fascinated them, and they soon had their own herds in the form of grains of corn, sticks, and corn cobs. “We used to pull some mighty big deals among ourselves when we were little boys at home,” Johnny McMurtry said.

Although Mr and Mrs. McMurtry worked hard and were ambitious, there was not enough room on the place in Archer County for the boys to get a start. By the time the McMurtrys reached Archer County in 1888 there were six sons, and it was only natural that as soon as a boy was old enough, he started on his own. All the boys went to West Texas, but one returned to make his home in Archer County. “As soon as a McMurtry was old enough

to wean, he was sent to West Texas," Charley McMurtry laughed. And Johnny McMurtry went on to add, "That cotton patch had its influence on we boys coming out west."

The McMurtry boys had little money when they left home, but they had something more important—the encouragement of their parents to work hard and become good citizens. "We certainly had the blessings of our mother," Jeff McMurtry said. "Whatever drive and push we have today is certainly due largely to her. She instilled in us at an early age that if we were honest, hard working, and ambitious that we could do anything under the sun we wanted to do. There was no stopping her."

Charley was the first McMurtry boy to try his luck out west. An uncle of the boys, Joe Williams, had been in West Texas for some years, and the McMurtry boys got the western fever from him when he returned to Archer County for visits.

One day Charley McMurtry borrowed fifteen dollars from Newt Jones, well known cattleman of Antelope, put his saddle in a sack, boarded the train at Henrietta, and arrived in Clarendon in 1896.

Clarendon was a booming cow town in '96. Big outfits operated out of it. The ROs were northeast, the JA's west, and the Shoe-Bar nearby.

Charley went to work for Joe Williams and George Stephens, where George Sitter's headquarters are located today. He batched in a half dug-out and carried water from a gyp spring on horseback a half mile in a gallon syrup bucket to cook and wash with. "But I didn't wash anymore than I had to," he laughed. "It was a tough life, but I came west to stay, and I stayed."

McMurtry drew twenty dollars per month looking after a ten section pasture for Williams and Stephens. And most of his first month's pay went straight back to Newt Jones at Antelope to repay his loan.

"That place of Williams and Stephens,' he says, "was a real cow country. There were big open flats with lots of grass." After a short while with Williams and Stephens, Charley McMurtry went with Alfred Rowe on the famed RO's. Rowe was the noted English rancher that went down on the Titanic in the early 1900's. McMurtry became straw boss on the RO's and as he put it, "I did everything the boss didn't want to do."

"Alfred Rowe," McMurtry explained, "was a rugged and unusual man. He would put on enough clothes to keep warm and get out in the weather. He went and led the way. He would darn near fire a man for keeping a fat horse in the wintertime. He would say, 'Your horse sure looks good, must not be riding him much.'"

Rowe was a first class cattleman, according to Charley McMurtry but overlooked the value of Panhandle land. "I wanted land," Charley McMurtry emphasized. "I knew that everything good comes from the soil, and I wanted soil"

Charley McMurtry saved his twenty dollars a month and went into the cattle business for himself. "I vaccinated the first calf in the Panhandle for black-leg," he said. "I asked an O.M. Franklin man to come down from Manhattan, Kansas. I met him at Clarendon and took him out to the ranch. He vaccinated five hundred head at fifty cents per dose. Now a dose costs about nine cents. I was losing about three head a week, but I didn't lose any more. So you can see it made a believer out of me."

Though at first a cow man, Charley McMurtry gradually worked into the calf and steer. Today, he runs around five thousand head on some fifty thousand acres of ranch land.

Every cattleman in West Texas knows that Charley McMurtry is one of the best steer men in the business. He keeps his pastures small, well watered, and never tries to starve a profit into a beef animal. He attributes close personal supervision and many years of close study of cattle to his success as a cattleman. He buys good cattle and keeps them that way.

McMurtry has been a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association for thirty-five or forty years and a director for twenty. "I had rather belong to the Association than any organization there is," he said emphatically. "It has many fine men in it. The Association keeps down stealing, it keeps a group of men in Washington to keep us informed as to what is going on. At our conventions, we exchange ideas with cattlemen from other parts of the country. And through the pages of the CATTLEMEN we learn what's going on in other parts of the country."

Charley McMurtry has been in Clarendon for over fifty years and says the town and country is still good enough for him.

R.L. (Bob) McMurtry drove a bunch of horses from Archer County to Greer County, Indian Territory in 1899. When the horses were delivered, he rode on to Clarendon and arrived there on April 10th. Bob McMurtry rode out to the RO headquarters and went to work for Alfred Rowe under range boss Jim Crystal.

On September 11, 1900, Bob McMurtry went to work for the JA ranch as horse wrangler for the Tule wagon under Tom McFarland. Bob left the JA's in 1906 but not before he had formed some definite opinions of the ranch and its management.

“Dick Walsh,” he said, “was general manager of the JA’s, and I cannot be too big in my praise of Walsh. I look back on my experiences with the JA’s with much pride. I worked with some of the best men that ever lived. Dick Walsh was a great leader of men. He weeded out the toughs and weak characters quickly and was the best friend to the little man that ever managed a big outfit. He moved settlers in the ranch to the outside and gave them much the best deal and he did it with little trouble.”

Bob McMurtry left the JA’s to fill out the unexpired term of sheriff and tax collector Harry Braidfoot in Briscoe County. Then he was elected for two succeeding terms to become one of the youngest sheriffs to ever hold office in Texas.

As a young sheriff at the turn of the century, Bob McMurtry had all sorts of experiences. “I have seen all sorts of life, bar none,” he said, “and there wasn’t a single thing that I wasn’t exposed to.”

“I recall one time that the Commissioners Court instructed me to go into Eastern Briscoe county and collect some taxes from a rather large rancher, instructing me to get the money or bring back some cattle which would be sold for taxes. They told me in no uncertain terms to get the money or else.

“I rode to the ranch and found the rancher riding through his herd with a shotgun across his saddle. I had seen some correspondence in the office to

the effect that the rancher did not believe that the taxes were properly assessed and refused to pay until proper assessment was made. Something told me that the rancher had his rights, but I told him my business and said I would have to have the tax money or drive away some cattle in lieu of it. He was very stern in his reply but pointed out some cattle and said, 'Go ahead if you want to, but I'll kill you when you turn the first cow.'"

"I kept thinking how I could bump into his horse and get his gun, but he was too smart for that. He cocked both barrels of that shotgun and pointed them straight at me. Mister, those barrels looked six inches in diameter. I quickly decided to talk the matter over with the rancher and see his point of view. I returned to Silverton and the Judge changed the assessment. The next day I went back and collected the taxes, and the rancher and I became fast friends."

"Forty years ago, I believe a cow thief was the toughest man on the turf, rum runners on the border came second; either would take your life, and, sometimes, on even keel."

Bob McMurtry left the sheriff's office in 1912 and went with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association in 1913, but he always had a bunch of cattle on the side and has owned cattle or an interest in cattle since he came west.

At present he is running five hundred 3-D cows on his thirty section ranch in Dallam County, and, in 1951, farmed over ten thousand acres, some under irrigation. Soon, he hopes to have six thousand acres under irrigation. He runs the best bulls that he can find with the Domino strain. This fall he will cut his cow herd fifty percent and keep the best and he said, "In ten years I'll have a cow herd that's second to one"

"Small pastures are the thing today," Bob McMurtry explained. "In the old days, we let cattle run in big pastures and didn't watch the grass closely enough. I have found that I can increase the carrying capacity of my ranch thirty-five percent by cutting it up into small pastures. I have learned that it pays to handle cattle easier. We, more or less, let the cattle handle us, rather than us handling the cattle. I watch my water closer than I once did. Cattle are too high and expensive to neglect any aspect of the business. We use mechanical devices more than formerly, trucks, pick-ups, and post hole diggers. With grass as high as it is today, a man must study his country. I will increase my range by studying it closely and learning what it will actually do."

In the term often used out west, Bob McMurtry has been a "wheeler and a dealer." He's been up and down, but a close friend said of him, "Bob may be down, but he's never out, and he's one of the best men in Texas."

"I have pulled a few good deals in my life," he said, 'but the best one, by far, was when I married Miss Mary Polk. That association has meant more to me than all the deals I've ever pulled, or ever will pull."

Mr. and Mrs. McMurtry have three daughters: Mrs. Robert LeMond, who lives out of Amarillo, and Carol and Rosemary, students in Amarillo High School Mr. McMurtry has two children by a former marriage: Mrs. Frances Crass of Silverton, Texas and Lee Helvey McMurtry of Dallam County.

Bob McMurtry has been a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association since 1013. "It's a high principled organization that is keeping the cattlemen together, and it does more for them every day."

J.L. (Jim) McMurtry arrived in Clarendon from TAX Springs on the last day of January 1900, and went to work immediately for his uncle, Jim Williams, near Lefors, Texas for twenty dollars a month. He remained with his uncle for the balance of the year. Early in 1901, he went with the RO's as chuck wagon cook.

When the wagon pulled in, Jim McMurtry went with Bill Lewis of Clarendon to the Bell Ranch, northwest of Tucumcari, New Mexico, to receive 3,500 head of cows. "There was some salty cowpunchin' on that trip, I can tell you that," he recalled. "There were several twenty-four hour

cold rains, long night guards, and not a single teepee or chuck wagon fly in the outfit.”

Early in 1902, Mr. McMurtry went with the JA wagon as cowhand, under Harry Weatherly, wagon boss. “There were twenty-two men to the two wagons in those days,” he remembered. “Harry Weatherly ran the JA wagon, and Tom McFarland ran the Tule wagon.”

Jim McMurtry is also high in his praise of Dick Walsh, JA Ranch manager. “Walsh was the finest man I have ever known. He wanted to prosper, and he wanted all the men under him to prosper. At that time, the JA Ranch was the cleanest in this country. Walsh saw to it that it was. We didn’t know what guns were on the ranch. I saw cowboys wear guns when I went with Lewis to the Bell Ranch, but we certainly didn’t use them on the JA.”

Dick Walsh allowed each cowboy to run up to one hundred head of cattle on the ranch free—all over that cost of a dollar per head per season, and Jim McMurtry availed himself of the opportunity to buy some cattle of his own. He bought a hundred head of steers from a man named Cowart east of Silverton for \$19.60 per head and drove them to the JA Ranch farm and branded them. He wintered during the fall and winter of 1904 and 1905

and sold them in the summer for a \$16.00 profit per head. Jim McMurtry was on his way.

McMurtry did all sorts of ranch work on the JA, and according to old timers was an expert horseman. "Jim," an old timer said, "was a natural horseman, and one of the best riders that ever hit this country. He understood them and rode like an Indian."

One time Dick Walsh approached Jim McMurtry and asked him if he would like to take up a claim on Dry Creek in the Palo Duro Canyon. When the original settler moved off, McMurtry moved in and finished proving up on the place. Then Wash offered him a good plains section of land for his equity in the Dry Creek place. Jim took it and within a few years sold the upland section for \$12.00 per acre. "That was the first real money I ever had," he said.

Sometime after 1908, Jim and Charley McMurtry went into partnership as McMurtry Brothers and started operating on a larger scale. Their business prospered. They bought, sold, raised, and handled many cattle. Later they sold out to each other for the most part, but there was a continuous McMurtry Brothers partnership until 1949.

In 1906, Jim McMurtry became financially interested in the newly organized Donley County State Bank and has been connected with it from

that day on. Today, he is vice-president but does not stay in the bank, but he is always available when needed. He also has banking interests in McLean, Texas, serving as president of the American National Bank of that town.

On January 4, 1911, Jim McMurtry was married to Miss Beulah Dodson. They have three children: Alfred McMurtry, partner with his father in the cattle and land business, Mrs. J.W. Collins of Amarillo, and Mrs. Ray Palmer of Clarendon.

Jim and Alfred McMurtry are mostly steer men, although Jim said, "We'll buy anything wrapped up in raw hide." They run around fifteen hundred head of steers and calves on twenty sections of good grass land that is so well watered that an animal never walks farther than a mile for a drink. The McMurtrys now gain steers three hundred to three hundred twenty-five pounds per season by watching their grass closely and supplementing it with cotton seed cake when the grass starts to fail. Time was when it took Jim McMurtry two years to gain a steer three hundred pounds.

Jim McMurtry has increased the carrying capacity of his range by closely studying his grass. He knows just what it will do in certain seasons under all conditions.

It is doubtful that there is a man in the country that studies his business more than Jim McMurtry, or knows any more about the cattle business in the Texas Panhandle. A person needs to talk to him for only a moment to tell that he never ceases to think about the business he loves the best, cattle.

He became a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association in about 1910 and has been a member since, serving as a director for several years prior to 1935, but he retired from the board because of health and business reasons.

Jim McMurtry believes that the Association has done more for the cattleman than any single factor. "The Association," he said, "is highly valuable when it comes to making contacts. And it works constantly for the betterment of the cattle industry."

E.D. (Ed) McMurtry arrived in Clarendon from the old home place in Archer County in 1902 and went straight to Miami, Texas to work on the ranch of Henry Gill and Judge Carter. Ed McMurtry took care of a bunch of cattle in the summer of 1902 but that fall taught school at Bronco Springs in Wheeler County. The Witter, Oller, and Wright children were some of his pupils. In late summer of 1903, Ed taught a little school at Skillet Creek, and some of his students were the children of Jasper Stevens, and the Thompson children, Hattie and Raymond.

In the summer of 1904, Ed McMurtry went to Rapid City, South Dakota with twenty-nine cars of 6666 cattle, the buyer of the cattle was A. Deriquels. The steers were branded in Denver.

Charley Jowell was with McMurtry on the cattle train. When the train arrived in South Dakota, Jowell returned to Texas, but Ed McMurtry went to work on a ranch some thirteen miles south of Rapid City. Ed left the ranch in 1904 and went to work for the railroad at Quincy, Illinois. Four years later, McMurtry decided that land and cattle were more to his liking than railroading, and he returned to Silverton and entered the abstract business with his brother Bob, who was sheriff of Briscoe County. Ed was elected Tax Assessor of Briscoe County in 1912 and held the office until 1916. At the time he was Tax Assessor of Briscoe County, Ed McMurtry had a few cattle on the side, and has been in the cattle business from that time on.

In 1911 he married Miss Mae Smithee of Silverton, and they have three children: Edward N. McMurtry, an architect in Lubbock, Texas, Mrs. Betty McMurtry Devin of Vigo Park, Texas, and Merle D. McMurtry who is in partnership with his father in the northwest corner of Briscoe County.

Ed McMurtry moved to his present ranch in 1918. Ed and son Merle operate a six section spread of cattle and farming land. They run about two hundred cows on their place and follow a good solid pattern of feeding,

breeding, and grazing. McMurtry runs the best bulls that he can get of the Lamplighter strain. Each year, the McMurtrys set aside so much for feed and so much for wheat. Two one-thousand ton trench silos store Atlas Sargo insilage for use with wheat pasturage when wheat pasturage is available.

“ We feed more cake than we used to,” Ed McMurtry explained. “We now run a cow on twelve acres. Of course, we watch carefully and graze everything we can. I watch my grass more closely now than in former years and don’t depend on it as much as I have in the past.”

“We rotate our grazing and chisel our land to hold what moisture there is. Rotating and chiseling helps to re-seed our range land. I think it’s important to keep range land in a state to re-seed.”

“We have eight windmills on our six sections and plenty of water is available to our cattle at all times. We never cut a mill off. Fact is we throw away the cut-off wire when we put up a mill.”

Ed McMurtry became a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association in 1925 and believes that it is the greatest thing in existence for the cattleman. “The Association” he said, “helps the cattleman with his freight, tax, and price control problems. It did more than any other

group to fight the Hoof and Mouth disease, and the Association is helping to keep down cattle rustling.

Ed McMurtry has seen the Panhandle of Texas undergo a great change. He believes that the high plains region will be a better country when its owners learn more about their land

A.L. (Roy) McMurtry arrived in Clarendon in 1906 from Archer and went to work immediately for the JA Ranch under wagon boss Walter Burrus. He first wrangled horses and later worked through with the wagon. For two years he broke horses for the JA Ranch and then worked up to wagon boss.

Roy McMurtry stayed with the JA Ranch until 1916 when he went into the cattle business for himself. In 1915 and 1916 he ran his cattle near Vigo Park, Texas, but in 1917 moved into the Muleshoe-Friona section with his brother Johnny. The brothers bought twelve hundred cows from F.W. Jersig and leased a ranch southwest of Muleshoe. Later, they bought five thousand acres of grass land in Bailey County.

Roy McMurtry was in the Friona country during the big blizzard of 1918 but came through it in good shape, However, he helped many neighboring cattlemen by loaning feed that was shipped to him from out of the country. An old time cattleman in the area remarked that Roy McMurtry helped

every rancher that he could in that blizzard, and that his help kept several men from going under.

In 1921, Roy McMurtry returned to the Silverton country and started getting together a fine cow. He brands around 450 calves from a twenty-one section ranch, and he operates a ten-thousand acre farm in connection with his ranch.

Roy McMurtry started building up his herd of cattle twenty-five years ago by buying his first registered bull from Tom Ivey of Hereford, Texas. The bull was from the Timberline strain and Roy said, "My cattle are Timberline all the way. I haven't bought an outside bull in years." For several years, Roy McMurtry raised registered cattle but recently has gone to pure bred stuff which is called one of the best cow herds in West Texas.

He turns his bulls with the cows around May 1st and takes them away in six months. His pastures are well watered and he spends all his time looking after his cattle. He feeds some during breeding season if his grass isn't what he thinks it should be and always expects a one hundred percent calf crop. "Naturally," he said, "we lose some calves each year by freezing and castration, but we expect every cow to have a calf every year." He feeds both cottonseed cake and thirty-two percent sweet rations and likes them both.

McMurtry has been a member of the Texas and Southwestern cattle Raisers Association since 1918. "The Association," he said, "has done a great deal for the cattleman. It helped to keep this Hoof and Mouth disease out of the country. Fact is, the Association sent men into Mexico to study the disease long before the Government did. Also, the Association did a great deal toward keeping this price roll-back from going into effect some time ago."

Roy McMurtry married in 1915 to Miss Dorn Burleson of Silverton and their three children are: Mrs. L.D. Griffin and Mrs. D.C. Bonar of Silverton, and one son, Wayne, a student at New Mexico Military Institute, Roswell.

J.S. (Johnny) McMurtry went to work for his brothers Charley and Jim, arriving in Clarendon in 1910 after riding a little bay horse called "Snapshot" to the high plains.

Unlike many of his brothers, Johnny McMurtry went to work for the Matadors in 1913 after leaving McMurtry Brothers in Clarendon. "Big John" Southworth was wagon boss for the Matador Land and Cattle Company when McMurtry went to work there, but was later replaced by Willie Drace, who was in turn replaced by Bob Alley. Johnny worked for all three wagon bosses during his stay on the ranch.

I punched cows with some of the best cowboys that ever forked a horse while with the Matadors," Johnny McMurtry said. "There was Rang Thornton, Pelada Vivian, Horace Roberson, a special agent for the Matadors later killed at Seminole, Texas, Rolly Harkey, Tom Nichols, and the Pitchfork Kid. Mister, they were cowboys!"

"Although Horace Roberson was a special agent, he was a real cowhand. He could do anything there was to do around a wagon and he'd pitch in and do anything there was to do"

Johnny McMurtry left the Matadors in 1915 and went with Roy McMurtry in the cattle business, operating in and around Silverton. The two went together to Bailey and Parmer Counties in 1917 and after operating there as partners, Johnny bought Roy out and has been in her Muleshoe country since.

Johnny McMurtry runs around 650 head of breeding stock on his fifteen thousand acre ranch in Bailey County. He's strictly a cow man. "I tried that steer business. I stayed broke all the time and decided to raise cattle. "

Every cattleman in West Texas knows that Johnny McMurtry runs good cattle. He has been improving his herd constantly for many years. He uses bulls of the Lamplighter strain from Roy McMurtry's herd, Lamplighter strain from Mousel Brothers, and Banning-Lewis bulls of the Domino

strain. Johnny McMurtry buys bulls according to confirmation of the animal. When he sees a quality in a bull that he thinks will improve his cattle, he buys him.

Johnny McMurtry has constantly improved his ranching methods. "I have smaller pastures," he said "than I used in former years. I watch my cattle closer and feed when necessary, regardless of what season it is. I have increased my calf crop from sixty-five to ninety-five percent by feeding when I think a cow needs it. I've learned that a hungry cow won't breed. In the early days we quit feeding too soon. To my way of thinking, the man who first formulated cottonseed cake did more for the cattleman in this country than any man who ever lived."

"Today, my calves weigh seventy-five pounds more than they did when I started ranching. That is because I use good bulls, closer cutting of breeding stock to hold over. I run more bulls than I once did. Today, I run a bull to every twenty cows.

"I see to it that my windmills pump straight into the watering tanks, thus assuring warm water for cattle. They sure stretch that old hide when they walk up to a tank of warm water.

"I use more motor vehicles on the ranch now than in former years. They get me around faster, but so far as I'm concerned, nothing will ever replace

a good horse on a cow outfit. I have a good car, but I had much rather ride that yellow horse over there than to drive it.”

Johnny McMurtry joined the Association in 1915 and has been an ardent member every moment since. “There have been times,” he recalls, “when I had to dig deep to find money for my dues, but I consider it the best money I ever spent. If a man has cattle, he should feel it his duty to belong to the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. The Association has men in Washington that tells we fellows on the ranchers what is going on, and they tell us in language we can understand. They put the facts before us.

“Also, the inspectors have done a lion's share in keeping down rustling. If I need an inspector, I can get one quickly.”

J.H. (Jo) McMurtry, the seventh brother in a row to streak toward the waving grass of West Texas, landed in Clarendon in 1916. His brothers, Charley and Jim, were operating the McMurtry Brothers partnership out of Clarendon, and Jo went to work for them. McMurtry Brothers were handling lots of cattle, and Jo had plenty of work to do.

Jo remained with his brothers until 1925 when he went on a lease south of Ashtola with a bunch of cattle of his own. He has been in and around

Clarendon for the most part since, at one time operating a nice spread of country in the Antelope Flat country.

Jo McMurtry is mostly a calf and yearling man. He runs around a thousand head of cattle on some ten thousand acres of range country. Most of his wintering is done around Clarendon, or, as he put it, "I winter more around here than any other place."

McMurtry summers cattle in the Flint Hills of Kansas and has been highly satisfied with the way his cattle have fattened in that country, but went on to say, "I have just learned that Flint Hill grazing will cost upward of \$30 per head per season. I don't know just what that will mean."

A neighbor said of Jo McMurtry, "Jo is a good calf man. He sorts his calves according to quality and weight and takes good care of them. He likes them and is first class when it comes to handling them."

Jo McMurtry has seen the cattle business change since he arrived in West Texas thirty-six years ago. Motor vehicles have speeded up the production of beef he knows, but he wonders if a lot of cattle work that is done today in trucks, cars, and pick-ups shouldn't be done on horses.

He has been a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association for thirty years. He is high in his praise of it. "The work that the Association did in preventing the recent attempted price rollbacks in beef

was worth everything to the cattleman. I don't know how a person can afford not to be a member."

Jo McMurtry was married in 1919 in Clarendon to Miss Archer Van Eaton, and the family home is seven miles southwest of Clarendon.

W.J. (Jeff) McMurtry, youngest of the cattle raising McMurtrys, has done all his ranching in his native Archer County. He attended Clarendon College and after graduating from it in 1921 went with his brother Lawrence in the grain business in Pampa. But the cattle business was too deeply engrained in him to remain out of it and, in 1925, he returned to Archer County and went into the cattle business with his father.

He tries to buy native calves to carry over, but he has bought calves from his brothers in West Texas. When asked if the brothers traded much among themselves, he laughed and said, "Yes, we trade a great deal among ourselves and I had just as soon beat a McMurtry in a trade as anyone else, if he were looking."

Jeff McMurtry is strictly a stock man. When asked if he did any farming, he replied, "Not a bit. I think that God left the side up he wanted in the first place, and I do not plan to change my part of it."

McMurtry studies his Archer County range carefully and is getting the maximum grazing from it. "We are bothered with mesquite and

prickly-pear in this country,” he explained, “and I wage a constant fight against it. One has to keep after it all the time.”

“Modern tank building equipment has done more for cattlemen in this section of the country than anything else. In former years, we did the best we could for water, but now we can have a big tank dug within a short length of time. As a result, we have more tanks than in years gone by. I have tanks all over my ranch and water is not the problem it once was.”

“Chemical companies have done a great deal for cattlemen in this section of the country. In the old days, we let the flies take the cattle. There is no way of knowing how many pounds of beef has been run off by flies. Today, I spray my cattle and consider that it is just adding fat to them. I wouldn’t be without a spray outfit.”

“I am not a trough man. I think that I make good money by taking the feed to my cattle rather than making them come to troughs to feed. In my experience, when one feeds in a certain place, the cattle spend too much grazing time around the troughs waiting to feed. Motor vehicles have helped the cattle industry a great deal. Take me, for example. My pastures are scattered over several miles. I can attend to my cattle in a truck or car, feed them, and see about them. I couldn’t have done it years ago.

“I wouldn’t think of putting my cattle in a pasture without seeing to it that they have the proper minerals to supplement what they do not get in the grass. A closer study of my grass has convinced me of this. It pays big.”

Jeff McMurtry has been a member of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association for twenty five years and has this to say about it. “Any man with ten head of cattle who is not a member is taking a free ride. The Association works constantly for the cattleman. The fight it put up in Washington on this price control business was enough to convince any man of the value of the Association. Every man who has cattle benefitted by the fight the Association put up. Not only that, but it helps in dozens of other ways.”

Jeff McMurtry was married, as he said, “In 1934, the year the world came to an end.” They have four children: Larry, Charley, Sue Ellen, and Judy. Jeff operates from his home in Archer City.

The cattle trail has been up and down for the McMurtry brothers. Starting out at twenty dollars a month and grub and employing hard work, careful study of their business, and a sense of fair play, they have established themselves as cattlemen second to none in a cattle country second to none.

Any young man seeking to learn the cattle business could do no better than work for the McMurtry brothers—any of them—free if necessary, and observe how they do it. It will be an education hard to duplicate.

Science says that the cattleman is busy remodeling the beef animal so that the American housewife can have the cuts of beef she wants; and the McMurtry brothers are doing their best to see to it that that same housewife gets the kind of beef she wants, when she wants it.