

THE WHITE HAIRD COWBOY

The Navajos called Papa a Navajo name that translated to: "The white haired cowboy that made the Indians take the ties back." Here is how he got that name: This happened during the time they were building up the ranch in Navajo. Interstate 40 was being built and the government purchased the right of way through the ranch. Interstate 40 replaced old Highway 66. On Highway 66 there were bridges over the washes that would no longer be used. Part of the compensation Papa received for the land was the lumber those bridges were made of. Those huge timbers could be very useful around the ranch.

One time some Navajo men come on to the ranch and helped themselves to some of those huge timbers. Papa went out on the Reservation, found the timbers and made those men bring them back to the ranch. Thus the name.

That may not seem remarkable to you until you realize how huge that reservation is and how hard it might be to find them. Papa had such a good handle on everything going on that he was able to do that. He didn't call the sheriff or complain to the neighbors he just DID IT!

That was typical of Papa and shows some of the qualities that he had that made him successful.

EDWARD DIXON

Edward Dixon was a Navajo man whose allotted range on the Navajo reservation bordered our ranch north of Joseph City that we called "The Humpy" (Legend had it that an old hunch backed prospector lived there in years past and looked for gold and silver.)

This memory of Papa's dealings with Edward Dixon show how these men respected each other and cooperated for their mutual benefit.

We lived in Joe City at the time. I was between 6 and 10 years old. I remember that at least once a year Edward Dixon, a tall, fine looking, well spoken, well dressed Navajo man would visit us in our home and bring gifts. He gave us fine Navajo saddle blankets, 100 lb sacks of pinons and I remember one year he measured the feet of all the children and later we each got a fine pair of hand made, authentic Navajo moccasins.

I was grown before I found out why he did this. The Navajo tribe gave allotments of land to the tribal members and they had restrictions on the number of sheep, cattle and horses they could graze on that allotment. The land bordering The Humpy was very good range land (Otherwise Papa would not have been there!) and it could support many more animals than the Tribe allowed so when it came time for the inspectors to come around Edward Dixon's property, he would lower the fence and run the excess cattle over on the Spurlock property. He was an honest man and this was his way of paying Papa for grazing privileges.