

A Winning Team for a Ranch

Gretchen Sammis

The Chase Ranch, located 4 miles northeast of Cimarron, N. Mex., in an area once populated by Jicarilla Apaches and Moache Utes, was founded by Manly and Theresa Chase in the late 1860's. They were one of the first "white" families to settle on the huge Maxwell Land Grant in northeastern New Mexico.

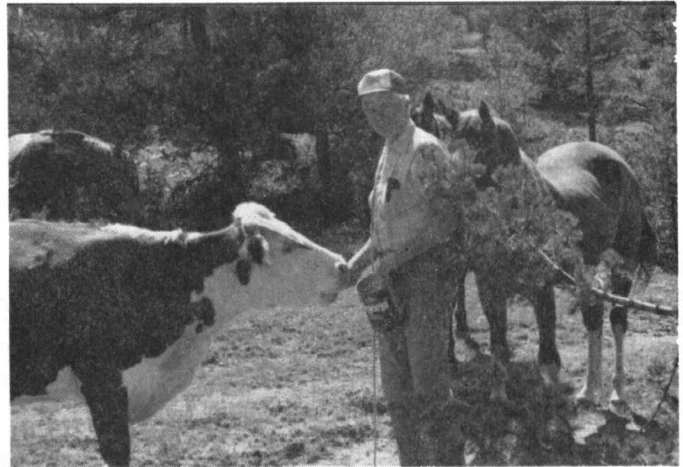
Mr. Chase went into the sheep business near Cimarron and then near Roswell, N. Mex. However, by the middle of the 1870's, Chase had also moved into the cattle business. The cattle operation was started with Texas Longhorns and Mexican cattle. Herefords were introduced into the herds around 1883. As the cattle business grew, so did the reputation of the Chase Ranch. Governor Lew Wallace was a frequent visitor; in fact, he wrote part of the last chapter of *Ben Hur* while visiting in 1880. By 1886, Manly Chase was said to be running more cattle in New Mexico than anyone else. At this time he was involved in 14 different livestock companies. Some of these were the Cimarron Cattle Company north of Ft. Sumner, the Red River Cattle Company near Wagon Mound, The Maxwell Cattle Company on the Land Grant, and the Luera Cattle Company on the San Augustine Plains in Socorro County.

Manly Chase planted an apple orchard (known as Chase's folly) in the late 1880's which is still producing. He was also instrumental in the formation of the Northern New Mexico Stockgrowers Association that was the forerunner to the present Livestock Board.

The Chases' 6 children were raised on the ranch and were indoctrinated into ranching almost from birth. As the family grew, so did the ranch house. The original 4 rooms were added on to until today the house consists of 14 rooms.

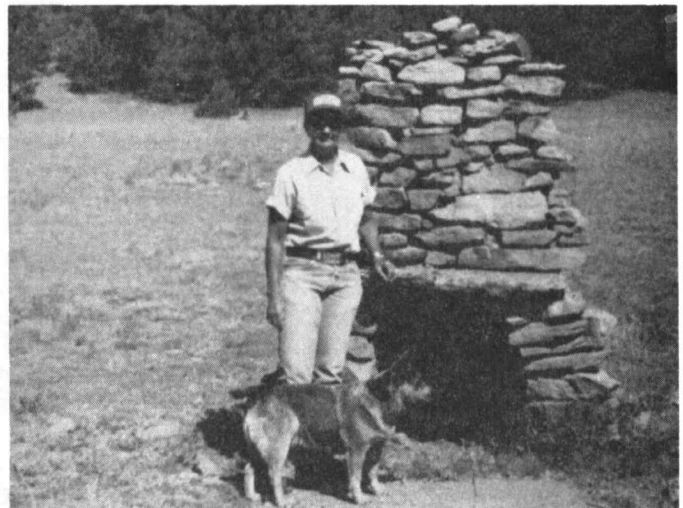
Today the Chase Ranch is owned and operated by Gretchen Sammis, who is Manly and Theresa's great-granddaughter. She grew up on the ranch and learned the cattle business from her grandfather, Stan Chase. She was sent off to college in hopes that she would find that there were better things to do than ranch. However, after teaching for many years, mostly in Cimarron, and running the ranch on the side, she retired from teaching and now devotes all of her time to the Chase Ranch. Talking with any of her former pupils, one is impressed by their assessment of a tough minded, generous teacher who is still missed. Gretchen continues to be involved in education and the community. She is the secretary of the Cimarron School Board, Chairman of the Colfax Soil and Water Conservation District Board, a member of the Society for Range Management, the New Mexico Cattle Growers, and the National Cattlemen's Association. She has also served on the Agriculture, Stabilization and Conserva-

tion Service County Committee and the Executive Committee of the University of New Mexico's Alumni Board of Directors.



Gretchen Sammis

Sharing Gretchen's love of the ranch is Ruby Gobble. She is the foreman of the Chase Ranch and has been with the ranch since 1963. Ruby can do anything that needs to be done on a ranch. She is the heavy equipment operator, welder, mechanic, veterinarian, and chief cook and bottle washer. Ruby has been a cowgirl since she was 3. She learned to ride on burros caught on the desert close to



Ruby Gobble

Wickenburg, Ariz. By the time she was 12, Ruby was training her horse, Tony, to do tricks. Soon they were performing in rodeos all over Arizona and doing benefit shows for the children in the Phoenix area. After Tony's premature death, Ruby trained another horse, Taffy. Between the ages of 18 and 19, Ruby was queen of the World's Championship Rodeo at Glendale, Ariz., and appeared in the film "Trigger Gold" as the daughter of the Kane family. She was offered a place in Monty Montana's Wild West Show but declined because she was too busy roping. Her friends and teachers were Frank Macias and Everett Bowman. As a member of the Girl's Rodeo Association, she was the World's Champion Team Roper in 1951, 1952, and 1953, and the World's Champion Ribbon Roper of 1953 and runner-up World's Champion calf roper in 1953 and 1954. Ruby was inducted into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in 1982. The Hall of Fame recognizes the spirit, strength, courage and stamina of western women. Miss Gobble is also a quarter-horse breeder and an accomplished guitar player. Her rendition of "Careless Love" could send anyone into stitches.

Between 1954 and 1966, Gretchen acquired full possession of the 11,000 deeded acres. For 20 years Gretchen and Ruby have worked to improve the entire operation. The cattle operation consists of Hereford cows and calves and some pasture yearlings. They are on a strict herd health program

with their veterinarian as to pregnancy testing and inoculations. All calves are weighed individually and records kept on calves, cows, and bulls. Any cow or bull that does not produce the quality of animal expected goes to slaughter. The bulls are all top of the line registered Herefords and are health and semen evaluated each spring before going to their specific bunch of cows. Artificial insemination and synchronization has been used with qualified success. The goal in the cattle operation is to wean calves in October that will average over 600 pounds. Bulls are turned in with the cows April 15th and come out June 15th. Ruby and Gretchen are sold on the Savory Grazing Method but have not yet solved all the problems in implementing it on the Chase Ranch. The other operations included in the management picture are improving the irrigation systems, putting in more alfalfa, oats, and trying hay grazer (new forage variety). Last summer they raised enough hay to keep them all year. That was the first time in many years they had not purchased hay.

Being cattle ranchers in New Mexico or anywhere else takes some book-learning, a lot of hard work and a desire for excellence. Gretchen and Ruby have combined these factors with their commitment to the history of the area and their love for the land to have a ranch worthy of its heritage. They have proven themselves to be intelligent, independent women who strive for that intricate balance between man and nature.

Solar Power Used to Deliver Water

David P. Stevens

Some range areas produce good forage but are waterless. This is especially true of the pinyon-juniper type around Grand Junction, Colo.

Many P-J ridges and mesas on the Gibbler Allotment were chained and reseeded during the early 1970's. Lush stands of crested wheatgrass, needle grass, Indian ricegrass, western wheatgrass, and Junegrass now occupy areas that were once covered with pinyon and juniper and had little or no understory vegetation.

The Gibbler Allotment contains 45,500 acres, of which 10 to 12% had been chained, and in order to use the reseeded areas water had to be developed. This water was developed by constructing stock ponds, usually a dam across a drainage to catch the intermittent rainfall or spring snowmelt. In an area of 14- to 16-inch precipitation, rainfall is very intermittent; and so these ponds are not that reliable.

A more reliable source of permanent water was needed in order to use the forage available. Gibbler Spring, located on the edge of the chained area, was the best source of water.

Problems encountered with the use of Gibbler Spring were:

1. The spring is located 10 miles from the nearest electrical source.
2. The spring is 240 feet down a steep canyon face.
3. The spring is next to a wilderness study area which would pose a problem if a gas generator were used, because of noise pollution.
4. Noise from a generator would lead to discovery and possible theft or vandalism.

A solar-powered pump was designed to handle the above-mentioned problems and deliver water from the spring to the top of the canyon. The whole system consists of a sump, solar panels, pump, pipeline, and catchment.

Water Source (Sump)

The seep was dug out to a 5' x 10' x 2' dimension. The hole was lined with Hypalon rubber. A 2-foot section of a 4-foot culvert was used to hold the water. Gravel was packed around the culvert to allow water to filter into the punctured culvert. A 1/2-inch steel plate was fabricated to be used as a cover for the culvert and as a platform for the pump and transformer.

Author is range conservationist with the Bureau of Land Management Grand Junction Resource Area, Grand Junction, Colorado.