

CONFESSIONS OF RED MEAT SURVIVORS

Some of ranching's old-timers admit to ignoring the problems of cholesterol and other unnamed and often unsubstantiated handicaps. They believe that red meat is good, which is proven here, simply by age and attitude.

OREGON Denny Jones, 98

Never a quitter.

Denzil "Denny" Jones' life has mostly been lived on the east of the Cascade Mountains, the dry side of Oregon.

Born on the first day of the first Pendleton Roundup, Sept. 29, 1910, on a wheat ranch in Morrow County, his early life was not easy. His mother died when he was five and the family moved around from ranch to ranch in the Spray area. There was not a lot of money. They eventually moved to Prineville where Denny finished the 10th grade, and his life took a different turn. He was small and hungry, and caught the eye of people in the horse-racing business.

"My dad let me sign a contract for three years. That was not a smart thing to do," he says. Denny raced in Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. He finished the summer season in Canada, then took three racehorses down down south in a boxcar. It took seven days to



PHOTOS COURTESY DENNY JONES

get to Tijuana for the winter racing season and he slept and cooked in the boxcar.

"I raced one more season in Canada but I gained too much weight and that was the end of my jockey days, after 18 months," Denny says. He never got paid, despite the contract.

Denny returned to central Oregon and joined up with relative Billy Jones and his family. While working on a

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Denny continues to work in his Ontario, Ore., office.

■ **Riding horseback into Portland's Sheraton Hotel to register for the Oregon cattlemen's convention, 1957.**
■ **Mildred and Denny.** ■ **Denny, right, with his siblings Harland and Mae.**

ranch near Beulah, he met the lady who would become his wife, Mildred Altnow. They had two children, Eugene and Karen.

There were a lot of Irish in the Juntura area. "Half of Ireland was there," Denny laughs.

About 1939, Jones went into business with cousin Jim

Jones, a partnership that lasted 10 years. Denny operated the ranch at Jonesboro and Jim ran the operation close to Juntura. When they split up, each took 400 head of cattle and divided a third group of 400. Denny got the Jonesboro ranch.

"We did real well," Denny says. He received \$55,000 from his part of the 400 head they split. The ranch eventually ended up with more than 20,000 acres of private and federal land.

Denny was very active in cattlemen's groups, holding offices in the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. He served as president twice. At one state convention, he was talked into riding a horse into Portland's Sheraton Hotel lobby to register and his picture was printed in a local newspaper.

After Eugene was married, Denny and Mildred built a house across the road

from the original ranch in 1960 and moved to Ontario in 1972. After that move, some Ontario businessmen came to Denny and asked him to run for Oregon's 60th District House seat held by Bob Smith of Burns. Denny won.

He held that seat for 26 years and served on the powerful Joint Ways and Means Committee. That led to a position on the Emergency Board, which handles fiscal matters when the Legislature is not in session.

"I never went back on my word one time," Denny says. "They didn't like my answers a

lot but they respected my positions.”

When term limits took him out, Denny returned to the ranch, which was in financial difficulty. He had nearly paid it off when Mildred died in 1999, after which he sold it.

At age 97, Denny was still considered one of the best ropers at Fred Otley’s branding but he hurt his shoulder and had to quit throwing ropes on calves.

“I’m older than the hills and my joints are giving out but my doctor is going to replace both knees this summer. If he then fixes my shoulder, I’ll be able to rope again for Fred!”—Larry Meyer

OKLAHOMA Guy Schickedanz, 95

Ready to go anywhere.

On a typical winter day in northwest Oklahoma, Guy Schickedanz slowly opens the gate and drives the feed truck into the pasture. He honks the horn, and the cows start coming to the feed troughs. He trips the cake-feeder switch and drives along the troughs. After unloading a big round bale, he checks the cows with an experienced eye and remarks that there will be a couple of new calves in a day or so.

A few years ago, when dropping off hay before a snowstorm, he said that his dad told him when he was young that “it’s the hay that cows lay on that makes them fat, not the hay they eat.” So he unloads an extra bale, chops a hole in the ice for the cattle to water, and heads back home.

His father, August Schickedanz, came to America from Germany in 1882 with his two older brothers, Wilhelm and Thomas. They worked their way west to Kansas, and Wilhelm made the run into the Cherokee

Strip, Indian Territory, in 1893. Later he told his brothers that there was free land out West and August and Thomas both homesteaded near Fargo, Oklahoma Territory, in 1901. Both homesteads are still in the family name.

Guy was born in 1913 and grew up on the Oklahoma plains. He prefers talking about what is going on today rather than living in the past. He has always liked to see what is over the next hill.

When work was scarce in the early 1930s, he and a friend drove a Model-T Ford to California. He found work on a lemon ranch near Ventura.

“That first day of picking lemons was the hardest day of work I had ever done,” he says. “I had to carry a wooden ladder, wooden boxes and a picking sack.” He soon moved up to being a teamster because the boss found out he could handle ornery mules, so work got easier.

In 1935, Guy returned to Oklahoma to marry his one and only girlfriend, Faye Schneider, who was also from homesteader stock. Together they raised three boys and a

girl. He let the boys have a few cows, which helped them with expenses in college.

“How come your cows all have calves and all of mine never do?” he once asked with a smile, as he wrote them a check for the average selling price for steers and heifers times the number of cows the boys owned.

Guy made a living for his family and sent all his kids to college by farming wheat and raising cattle in Oklahoma and western South Dakota.

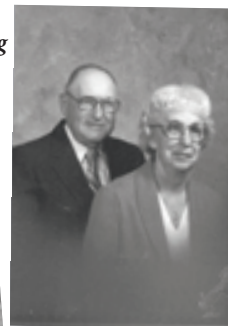
His father gave him advice that he lives by: “Whatever you do, make your word and your name good.”

Faye died in 1985, a few days before their 50th wedding anniversary. Guy continues to live on the farm they purchased in 1946.

He never meets a stranger and still loves to visit and travel. A truck-driving friend picks him up yearly and they travel



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Guy and his 1926 Fordsen tractor haul water (for the tractor) in a wagon. The two teams behind have been pulling disk plows all day and are going home to the barn. ■ Guy with Faye, his only girlfriend. ■ Guy unloads a big round bale to feed his cattle. ■ Today, Guy is still ready to travel anywhere, anytime.



somewhere in the United States for a week or two. A few

years ago, Guy said the only state he had not been to was Alaska. He was afraid he would never get there. One of his sons heard that comment and took him on a 30-day driving trip to Alaska and back.

When Guy got home, he said, “When I was 82, you took me on a horse-packing trip into the Gila Wilderness for a week. Now that I’m 92, you took me to Alaska. When I’m 102, I will be ready to go to the moon!”

Guy still lives by himself, taking care of a few cows, checking water and grass. But he still looks down the road to see if someone is driving in to visit or to ask him to come along on a trip to look at the countryside.

If you should stop by, he is ready to visit anytime about the price of cattle. Or the offer of a trip anywhere is even better.—Jerry Schickedanz