

HOW I MET NICK MANSFIELD

Andrew K. Steen

Nick Mansfield worked for many years the Bell-Hop at the Mapes Hotel in downtown Reno, but the first time I met Nick was in the middle of the desert 15 miles north of Virginia City and 30 from his 102 Ranch. We were riding on the same an old mining road while practicing for the 1962 Tevis Cup Ride. I was mounted on my mustang, Piute, but coming from the opposite direction, our Dayton, Nevada, cattle ranch. It was a totally chance encounter in the middle of nowhere.

Over the next few years we rode (sometimes together) on several Tevis Cup Rides. Later, in 1968, I kept my endurance mare Good Trip at Nick's ranch most of that year, so that I would have someone share the trails with and break the monotony of conditioning my mare alone. Together, Nick and I would ride 20 to 25 miles in the evening, four times each week.



Nick Mansfield - (1895-1999), riding Buffalo Bill (AERC Hall of Fame Horse Inductee 1977), photo taken at Bonanza Ox-Trail 102 Mile Ride in Nevada, started in 1967. Nick was one of the original 5 riders who started on the first Western States Trail Ride (WSTR Tevis Cup) in 1955.

In 1968, I traded a purebred Arabian colt for Nick's 1941 Packard "Woody" station-wagon (which is now probably worth a fortune), that he kept in his old barn under a canvas tarp.

Nick Mansfield also served on the Reno Rodeo Commission, with my father who was the "Chairman" of that organization for a number of years. Nick's son Lincoln "Pinkie," was in the Nevada Air-National Guard and took mile-high photographs of our ranch. Nick was one of the early riders that taught me about conditioning horses for long-distance rides. Endurance riding forms very special bonds and friendships. Nick Mansfield was a true western horseman and an authentic endurance ride legend even at the time. He was also one hell of a fine person!

Andrew K. Steen:

Nick rode all over Storey County. Virginia City was only six miles directly up the road from our Daton ranch. I usually rode to Silver Springs or Fort Churchill and back, but George Blair told me to ride more in the high country, so that's what I did and ran into Nick and Pinkie that day.

Connie Creech:

Yes, didn't he did run his cattle and ranch horses with the mustangs all through that country?

Andrew K. Steen:

*There were plenty of mustangs on our range lands. My Tevis horse Piute was caught near Silver Springs. He starred in John Houston's film *The Misfits* which was filmed on our ranch with George Blair's horses*

Andrew K. Steen:

I don't remember much about Nick's cattle. He didn't own a very large herd. Nick was a hard working honest man who had to work at the Mapes Hotel to make ends meet throughout much of his life.

Connie Creech:

That is so cool! I didn't know George Blair was from Nevada. He finished Tevis over 10 times too!

Andrew K. Steen:

Nick's Cafe made him a good living until they built I-40, then the traffic had to take an off ramp to get to his gas station and cafe and his business didn't do very well. Or so he often told me.

Andrew K. Steen:

Yes. George Blair was the first to earn his 1000 mile Tevis buckle. He was our ranch manager, but not the most honest man I ever knew. But we won't go into that here.

TEVIS CUP ENDURANCE RIDE LEGEND NICK MANSFIELD'S BOX OF FEATHERS

Andrew K. Steen

Endurance Ride Legend Nick Mansfield was one of the "original five" riders of the first (1955) Tevis Cup Ride and the first person to win the Tevis Cup when it came into being a few years later, riding "Buffalo Bill," his famous dark-brown Mustang. Aside from cattle and horses, Nick kept a small flock of 10 or 12 peacocks at his 102 Ranch-Café, which was situated next to the Truckee River, a mile east of Mustang, Nevada, some 15 miles from Reno.

Nick was a good family friend and often came to the ranch. One time when he stopped by the house for a cup of coffee, my mother, M.L. asked Nick about his birds and mentioned that she always wanted to own a peacock. About a week later, Donna our housekeeper, went to my mother's studio at the other end of the house and said, "Nick Mansfield is at the front door with a box of feathers for you."

Lo and behold, Nick had brought M.L. a pair (male and female) of his beautiful peacocks as a present. They were in a large cardboard box, with only their tails sticking out of the side folds of the package! M.L. like many Texans had a good sense of humor. She took a peek in the box and told Nick that she planned to call them "Pee" and "Cock" respectively. Then she and Nick walked to the front lawn. When the box was opened the two birds instantaneously flew high up into the Ponderosa Pine trees, where they stayed completely out of sight, hidden in the thick foliage for the next several days.

After a few days M.L. got worried about her fine feathered new friends. She broke-out a pair of binoculars, then drove up and down Hi-Way 395 asking everyone in Washoe Valley that she chanced to meet, "Have you seen Cock and Pee?" "I've lost my Peacocks. They flew away and can't find them anywhere!" Later she laughed at herself and said, "Now everyone is saying M.L. Steen has finally completely cracked-up. She has not only lost her marbles, she's also lost her Peacocks!"

It turned out that Cock and Pee had been in the trees all along. Occasionally, when the two birds got hungry, they would glide down to the lawn to feed, but most of the time they preferred to stay high up in the pine trees, pretending to be eagles.

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