

A Texas Cowboy

or fifteen years on the hurricane deck of a Spanish pony.

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THE AUTHOR,
IN COW BOY UNIFORM.

Every now and then I would play dog by sticking my snoot down in the hole to smell. But I rammed it down once too often. Mr. Crab was nearer the surface than I thought for. He was laying for me. I gave a Comanche yell, jumped ten feet in the air and lit out for home at a 2:40 gait. One of his claws was fastened to my upper lip while the other clamped my nose with an iron-like grip.

I met Mr. William Berge coming out to the beach after a load of wood, and he relieved me of my uncomfortable burden. He had to break the crab's claws off to get him loose.

I arrived at school just as Mr. Hale was ringing the bell after recess. He called me up and wanted to know what was the matter with my face, it was so bloody. Being a little George W., minus the hatchet, I told him the truth. Suffice to say he laid me across his knee and made me think a nest of bumble bees were having a dance in the seat of my breeches—or at least where the seat should have been. I never had a pair of pants on up to that time. Had worn nothing but a long white shirt made of a flour sack after some of the "big bugs" in Matagorda had eaten the flour out.

The fall of 1861 Mr. Hale broke up school and left for Yankeedom to join the blue coats. And from that time on I had a regular picnic, doing nothing and studying mischief. Billy Williams was my particular chum; we were constantly together doing some kind of devilment. The old women used to say we were the meanest little imps in the settlement, and that we would be hung before we were twenty-one. Our three favorite pastimes were riding the milk calves, coon hunting and sailing play-boats down on the bay shore.

Shortly after school broke up I wore my first pair of breeches. Uncle Nick and aunt Mary, mothers' brother and sister who lived in Galveston, sent us a trunk full of clothes and among them was a pair of white canvas breeches for me.