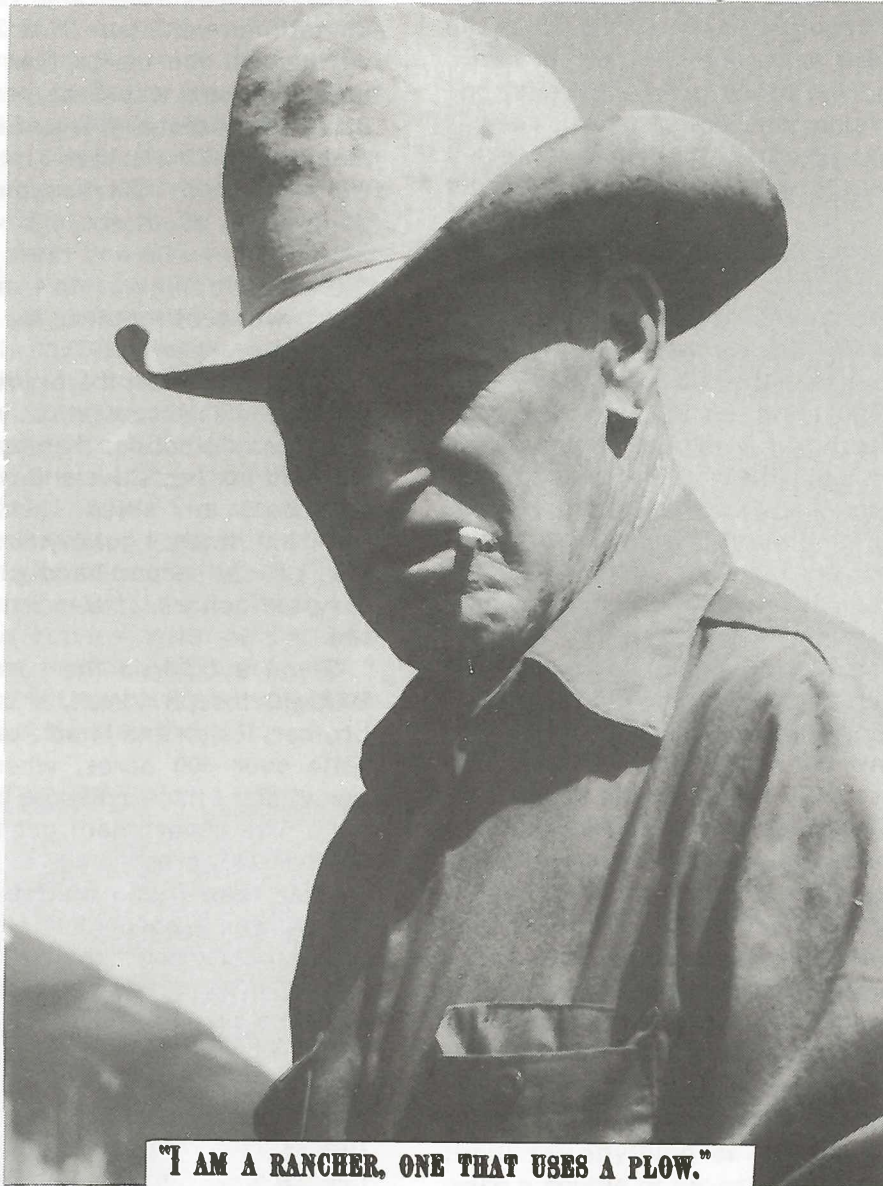


**"WE GOT ALONG ALL RIGHT WITH A LOT OF WORK
AND A LITTLE ENERGY." GLENN WERNER**



"I AM A RANCHER, ONE THAT USES A PLOW."

BY SCOT ANDERSON AND DANNY HORNE

After talking to Glenn Werner about the football championship of fifty years ago we, Danny and Scot, decided there was more to his life than being a football hero. As children we had known of his ranch and of his family name, and we knew that his assured manner and his years of ranching in the Yampa Valley would bring forth an interesting and informative story for **Three Wire Winter** readers.

"All four of my grandparents came straight from Germany, and that is about as German as you can get. I do not remember when my great grandparents came to this country, but it was a long time ago. My dad was born in Illinois, and

my mother was born in Hastings, Nebraska. I had an uncle on my dad's side that was here in Steamboat before we came. So we came out, and I helped him hay for two years. Then the family moved out here in the spring of 1930.

I was born October 13, 1912, at what we used to call Stringtown. It was called that because there were six houses in a row on each side of the road. One could see them coming down off Rabbit Ears Pass, and it looked like a little string town. That was quite awhile ago.

"I went to a one room school at the Mesa schoolhouse until the eighth grade. Then I lived in town and boarded out for high school. We were

taught better than you guys are today, readin', writin', an' 'rithmetic. We had a number of kids, from five to fifteen in all eight grades, with one teacher. Sometimes the teacher lived in a little house near the school, and sometimes they boarded with residents. The Bartholomew's daughters who lived nearby taught over at the school, and I went to school with both of them. We never pulled too many pranks because the teachers knew who was doing them. Then if there was pranks going on, the teachers were a lot stricter. The kids respected the teachers a lot more then.

"We lived over on the Mesa, just six miles out of town then, but now it is four miles since they changed the city limits. We didn't go to town everyday, no way! Oh, we worked a lot. Kids worked a lot more than they do now in hay fields, grain fields, shoveling snow, and we went camping and fishing. My brother and I had a trap line that we ran in the winter."

Glenn grew up knowing how to work. "We were a working community, it wasn't all play. We had dances, card parties, and we put on plays. The schoolhouse was the center of community life, you might say.

"Just after the Depression, I graduated from high school. We had just bought this ranch and had it to pay for. There were a few odd jobs around in the fall, but no big jobs like today. The Depression was really rough. Cattle brought six cents a pound, and hay a dollar a ton. The best hired man in the world would work for a dollar a day, if we could afford to hire him. If we went to town with a nickel in our pocket, we were rich. Prices went down and stayed down. We always had enough to eat and clothes on our back; Mom made our shirts, and our overalls were bought in the store. There were no luxuries like today: no t.v., no picture shows, and no running to town every night. We got along all right with a lot of work and a little energy."



"THAT'S WHY THE BARNS ARE IN THE SHAPE THEY'RE IN."

We asked Glenn about how he met his wife, Thelma, and if it was love at first sight. "During the winter time we would hook four horses to a sled and take, the neighborhood to a dance. Men, women, children and babies, all would go in the sled. We put rugs and hay on the bottom. Sometimes we'd have 25 or 35, people, and away we'd go to the dance. Sometimes on the way home the sun would be coming up. We would drive six or seven miles with four horses. It was alot of fun. That's how I met my wife. She was working in town. Oh, heavens, there was a whole gang of us, about six or seven that ran around together. My wife and I just met and that was all there was to it. I wouldn't say it was love at first sight, we went together for two years or better until we married in 1937."

Glenn discussed the problems of living in the country. "Transportation was a problem. We had few automobiles then, and in the winter time we used horses, sleds and wagons. We also rode horseback and skied. I skied to town several different times. I got my first car in about '39. It was an old second-hand pickup that cost four hundred dollars. It was a major investment for me."

Glenn acquired the ranch from his father, William Joseph. "Well, at one time my dad, my brother, Ralph and I had a partnership. We had a little over 500 acres, when they both passed away, and I had to dispose of everything but my part. The government got most of it; now I'm down to 240 acres.

"The fellow who built this place, Art Gumphrey, was a carpenter. He didn't believe that you could use concrete in this country, so he dug a hole in the ground and put a flat rock down. Then he put whatever he needed to level the area. It could be a rock, or 2x4 2x6 or what have ya', then the ground settled and the rock tipped over, and the wood rotted out. Since all of us old timers used wood and coal stoves, that's all we had here, we had stove pipes running all over the place. We set the place on fire the first year we were over here, because the chimney got so hot. Immediately we dug a hole in the side of the house and started digging the basement. We jacked up the house and put it on blocks, and then we had to dig all the dirt out from underneath it. We did that with both houses. That's why the barns are in the shape that they are, twisted and everything. The barns were too big to jack up and put a foundation under them."

Glenn then told us a funny story about a room in his house. "Once Senator McWilliams went haywire and lost his mind. Because he was a Senator, he was a big shot, of course. The railroad was the only way he could visit here in the winter. The train would stop at the ranch, and he would board it there to go to all his

political stuff. At that time they didn't have institutions. Since he was mentally imbalanced, his family put him in the blue room here and boarded up the windows and doors. That was his jail.

"We have shown the blue room to others with the nail holes in the casings and doors where it was boarded up. One night at 2:00 A.M. someone came up stomping on the porch. I got up and hollered out the window to ask what they wanted. I slipped on my robe and went down to the door and opened it. While I was talking to the people my son-in-law's dad was listening. We had told him about the blue room upstairs and a ghost that appeared at night. I guess he heard us talking and just about went through the wall. He turned on the flashlight and watched the closet door for a ghost. If there would have been a way to open the closet doors, I would have done it in a minute.

"The room was white when we moved into this house, so we redecoreated it. I don't know why we painted it blue, it just happened that way, and that's how it got it's name. We put in a blue rug and called it the blue room."

We talked more with Glenn about how ranching and living in the country has affected his life. "Horses, horses, we always used horses for everything. We didn't have our own thrashing machine, but there was a great big steam outfit that all of us used. Everyone had various acres of grain, and the thrashing machine would start at the end of the valley and come across. Everybody would come with teams, bundle wagons, spike pitchers, and spike scoopers. Once all the neighbors knew about the thrasher all would come and help. I worked with the big steam outfit for three years after I got out of high school.

"Land at that time was considerably cheaper than it is nowadays, depending on how good the soil and the buildings were. The prices were nothing compared to what they are now. I don't know how much I paid for this ranch; it was in the family estate. By the time we worked, some of it was more expensive than other parts. Dad bought it, and I bought it from him several years later.

"I am a rancher, one that has used a plow. I have used a plow to plant a lot of grain. I ranch by running cattle and haying. The ranch was built in 1910, the buildings, corrals, and sheds belonged to Senator McWilliams, so we had the buildings when we moved here in the fall of 1930.

"The principle of ranching is the same, but the method is different. We never had tractors, everything we done was with horses. We never had a tractor on the place till 1937. Then, at one time, we had eight of those damn tractors, and we still got four of them around."



"WE DIDN'T HAVE A TRACTOR ON THE PLACE UNTIL '37."

Glenn continued to tell us about ranch life and his experience with branding, "A brand is recorded with the state annually, and that is yours for as long as you pay the assesment. Anything with your brand on it is yours, regardless of whose herd it's in. One of my neighbors shipped one of my steers out this fall. The brand inspector at the stockyards caught the brand and I got the check for the steer. Our brand is called three quarter box J or broken box J. It has two sides and a bottom which makes it a pretty good brand. Any brand that doesn't have a bunch of a curlycues is a good brand.

"The best brand in the country used to belong to this place. It was a big long slash down the front shoulder, and you could always see it. With some of the brands they're getting now, why, when you get them on a calf they're just a great big blob. A brand will burn across whether you think it will or not. I've had my brand for about forty years I suppose. My dad's brand was WJW. Now they have named a lift on the ski hill that. My brother, Ed's brand is (BAR) UE.

"I keep my irons down at the vet hospital. I use a wood fire and I've always made my own irons. It only takes about 15 to 20 minutes. We start to brand around the first of June. We herd the cattle into corrals, separate the cows from the calves. Then we hire a couple of boys like "you two" to help. They drag the cows out to us and about the time they grab onto a leg they get kicked in the face. So it's a big mess. Now I have a calf table that we put them in and it tilts so we can castorate, dehorn, vaccinate and brand.

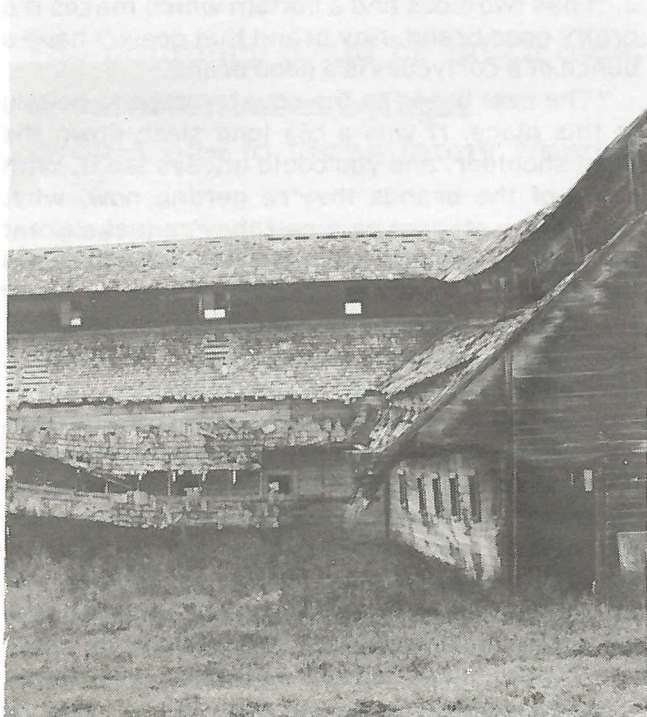
"I had a good big team of Belgium mares, a matched team. Once one of them rolled over on

the ground up against a fence post on her back. She couldn't roll back over, so she died. That left me with one horse, and one horse is no good. To buy another team at my age and break them in is not the best thing in the world, so I just bought a Thiokol. That was three years ago, and this will be the fourth winter to use it.

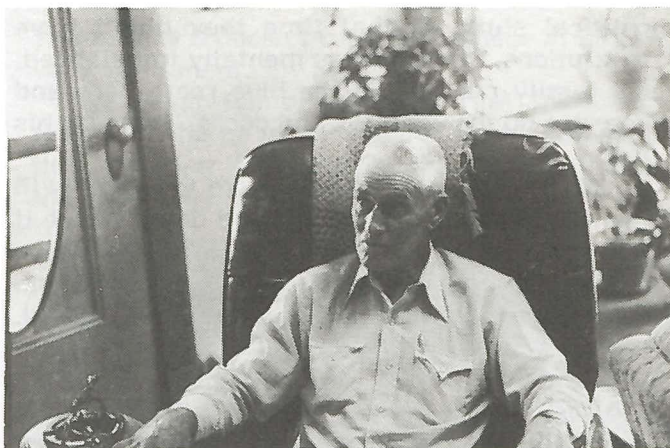
"New farmers buying big ranches are nuts! Well, what else can I say? There's no way they can pay the prices they've got to pay for this land and ever hope to make the interest on the loans, and make a living income off the farm. No, there's no way they can profit!"

We noticed a mounted elk and a deer on one of Glenn's walls so asked him to tell us some hunting stories. Pointing to different trophies, he explained, "I got that elk in the fall of 1930, the first they had here, on what was called Storm Mountain. Now it's called Mt. Werner. I was riding for cattle, and I always carry a gun when riding. I ran into him, or he ran into me rather, and we brought him home. I put two bullet holes in the neck, only about 50 yards away. It was just lucky, we weren't hunting for him. We were riding for cattle.

I haven't hunted anything for years. I suppose the hills are too steep and my legs are too short. There are too many hunters now, and I don't like turning around and looking down a gun barrel. I used to keep all my deer horns here on the ranch but they got to cluttering up the place so bad that I had to get rid of all of them. I shot that deer in the Brown's Park area. There was a bunch of us that went down there 13 years straight. I came



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"THE HILLS ARE TOO STEEP AND MY LEGS ARE TOO SHORT."

back with a deer all but one year. I've killed five or six elk. I've still got the gun I killed that elk with, but my boy has it now. It's an old long barrel 30-30."

Glenn reflected about Sidney, Colorado. He added some thoughts that Vernon Summers had not told us about in issue #6. A fellow by the name of Iacovetto owned Sidney, as long as I can remember. Sidney had a general store that sold everything from chewing tobacco to horse shoeing nails... It had a creamery, a boarding house, a section house for the railroad, and two or three homes. The prices at the general store were very comparable... All the goods were shipped in on the railroad, and they all pretty much had the same freight rate. It was easier to go to Steamboat, with cars and there was more of a selection. They had stock yards over there. At one time more livestock was shipped out of there than on any point of the railroad. That was the only way of getting live stock out, especially November during the winter. Most of the shipping was done after the first of November to the first of Christmas. It didn't matter how much your cattle got a pound the railroad still got their full pay. Then trucks came along.

"Eventually Sidney went out of business. Now there isn't a store or anything just foundatiouns. I've been there when you couldn't see the end of the cattle. When we had to wait for the brand inspection they couldn't do it on the road because it was a three way road, we had to wait our turn for the corrals."

After talking with Glenn several times we learned about him and his philosophy of living. We enjoyed hearing his antics and especially we enjoyed his humor. He had a special sparkle in his eye when he said, "I've always been a rancher, and I'll probably always be one!"

UE
WJW