



“RIDIN’!”

RODEO & RANGE

BY

EDDIE D. WILCOXEN



Photo by Fly Thomas

EIGHT SECONDS

He eases himself down onto a mountain top,
a volcano of muscle, blood and bone,
and there's only room for one up there;
he's up there all alone!

The chute sides clank and clatter
as the beast pulses wild within.
He pulls the rigging tight and thinks,
"Here we go again!"

When the mountain briefly settles,
the chute gate belches open - open wide,
and the cowboy high atop yells out,
"COME ON BOYS, LET'S RIDE!"

Two thousand pounds explodes out into the open air,
bellowing and snorting, mad as Hell at the burden way up there!
Two quick steps and a whirlwind spin,
but the cowboy's still up there, settled in!

Then a mighty bawling leap, and the bull crashes to the earth,
four feet planted firmly, aghast at this thing around his girth.
He spins again, and yet again, a tornado born in Hell;
and holding tight, and straining hard, the cowboy fights the well -

that vortex in the center where all the sirens call,
"Let go! Get off! Be done, before he makes you fall!",
where you'll crash among the crushing hooves and vainly try to crawl,
seeking safety from those hooking horns, by scrambling for the wall!

But the instant passes quickly and he's in control again.
"Come on old boy, I'm still here, so spin, and spin, and spin!"

And joyous laughter fills his mind as he hears the buzzer call!
8 SECONDS! IT'S ETERNITY! 8 SECONDS - MAN, IT'S ALL!



When we asked permission to use this photo of Clem McSpadden, his wife Donna replied that Clem would have been pleased, and would say, "Anything I can do to help? This is a good idea!" The photo is of Clem on his own horse, 'Clem Horse' at the Calgary Stampede Rodeo where he initiated the concept of a Rodeo Announcer on horseback. He will always be remembered as a strong, Christian man, who was extremely patriotic.

CLEM MCSPADDEN

A few months ago we lost a great one -
Clem McSpadden was his name.
It's always tough to lose a man like this,
but you're so very glad he came.

With a booming voice, and a gentle heart,
and a strong rock steady hand,
he helped make the laws, and turn the dirt,
and tell the tale of Rodeo all across this land!

He was a friend in good times;
he was a comfort in the bad,
and whatever the task at hand,
Clem gave it all he had!

A cowboy by chance, a cowboy by choice.
A cowboy in every way!
Clem McSpadden *was* Rodeo,
and we miss him every day.

Goodbye to Clem McSpadden,
announcer extraordinaire!
Let me tell you son,
that man sure had a pair.

With that low bass rumble
he'd tell you about it all,
"Come on! Let's give that cowboy a hand,
even though he took a fall!"

Now Clem has gone to Heaven,
with the best broncs of them all,
and when they let those cowboys ride,
I'll bet it's Clem that makes the call!

Store Owner Mr. Walcott and Cowboys in front of Olustee, OK Post Office circa 1900. Photo courtesy Museum of the Western Prairie, Altus OK.



THE COWBOY

Rough talk, soft hearts for those in need.
“Tough ways – but fairness always” is his creed.

Hard working, but ready for the dance.
Hard loving, if he ever gets the chance!

The cowboy spends his days with horses, trucks and cows,
building fences, baling hay - sometimes he even plows.

He’s a jack of all trades, finds a way somehow.
Out on the ranch you’ve got to have the “know how”!

He’s a hard working fellow - doesn’t hold with complainin’ -
least not so you could hear; he’s even got a saying:

“Complaining won’t get the work done – it only makes it tough.
So shut up, buckle down, and smile! You’ll be finished soon enough!”

If he tells you that’s the way it is – then that’s the way it is!
Lying sure ain’t his way, nor is poking in your biz.

Just let him be, and treat him square, that’s all that he demands.
You know, he’s the steward of this country. It’s the cowboy tends this land!



Photo by Joan Wilcoxon

BOOT HILL

Leather creaks, the iron leaps,
gun smoke rises high.

Somebody falls; that says it all.
It's time to say good bye!

Six feet deep, that's what you reap,
a home up on the hill,

that hill of boots, filled by those who shoot,
and by the men who kill.

Quick or slow, you'll reap just what you sow,
out here in the West.

Because no matter how fast, no man can last -
no one is always best!



Photo by Joan Wilcoxon



“On the ashes of my campfire, this city is built!” Photo by Michael Hitz

STATUE ON THE HILL

At the top of Boot Hill in Dodge City, stands an old statue.
It's of a cowboy, and he's drawing his gun right at you!

But it's frozen half in the holster - been that way for years,
and I swear on his face you can read all the fears

of what happens when you can't finish what you start.
Somehow, that old cowboy statue always breaks my heart!

I don't suppose Dad ever said, "Cowboy up!" in his life. It would have seemed pretentious, but he wore his cowboy boots and cowboy suits and a bolo tie! He considered himself a farmer, but he worked cattle all his life. I've still got his old cowboy hat hanging up in my garage. So forgive me if his words were different – the attitude is real!

.....Eddie D. Wilcoxen

COWBOY DAD

"Cowboy up!" he said,
"Straighten out your head.
If you ain't dead,
then you're just doing fine!"

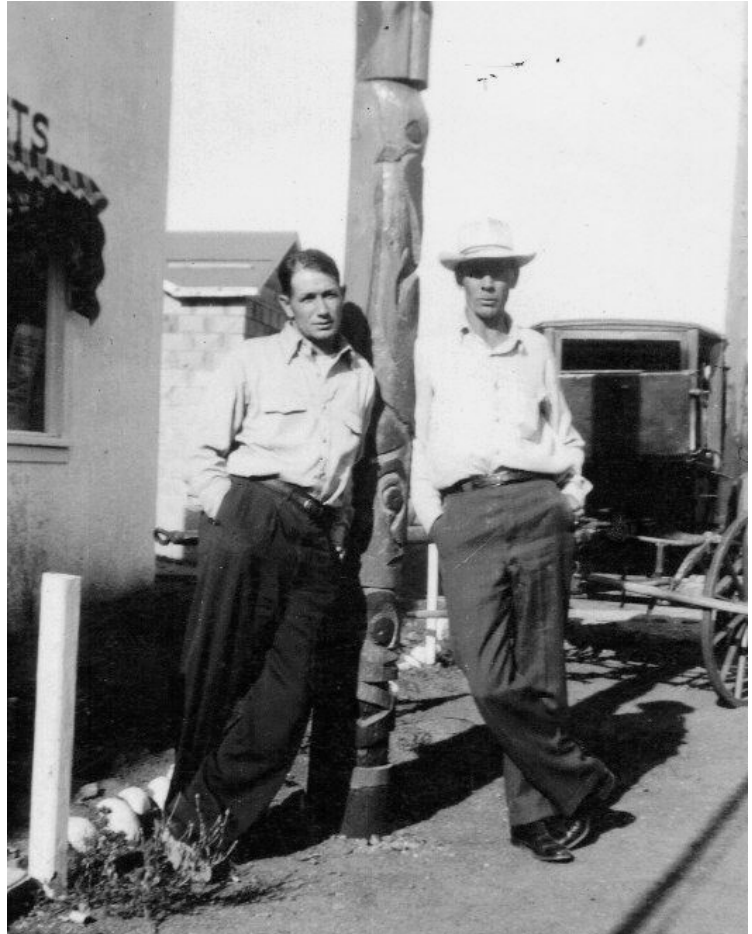
"Get back up on that horse
and try a different course.
Go back to the source
and find a better way this time!"

I was young
and I was dumb,
but he saw what I could become.
He helped me draw the lines.

Taught me right from wrong,
how to stand up strong,
and how to carry on
even when things aren't going fine.

He worked day and night,
raised us kids right.
Gave us dreams to excite,
then sent us out to shine!

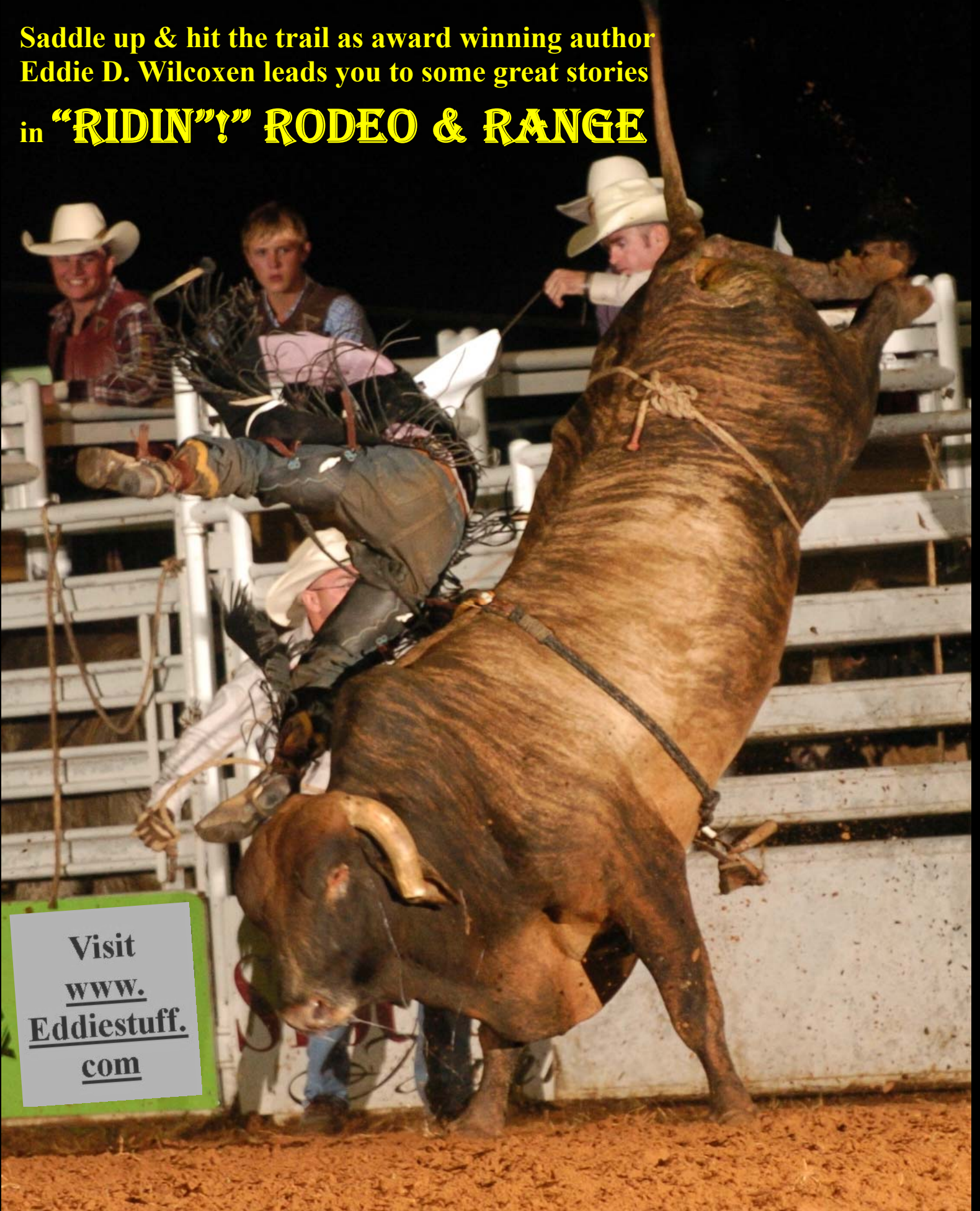
I called him "Dad",
the best you could have,
and I'm mighty glad
that he was mine!



*This was always one of my favorite pictures of my Dad (on the left).
He and his best friend Glen Hitz were on vacation in Albuquerque,
New Mexico. They do look relaxed...
Turn the page for a story about Glen.*

**From the book, "Ridin'! Rodeo & Range" by Eddie D. Wilcoxen
Please visit www.eddiestuff.com**

Saddle up & hit the trail as award winning author
Eddie D. Wilcoxon leads you to some great stories
in **“RIDIN’!” RODEO & RANGE**



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