



Bud and Donna Humphrey

ACACHOF Honorary Director

Bull and Bareback Rider

1995 Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame



Bud Humphrey's career on the rodeo circuit spanned twenty five years and the question was asked Bud, can you feel all of those years now? "Boy I sure can!" There are not too many rough stock riders that can last that long in

full time travels. Bud was born in Belton, Texas to Paul and Alice Humphrey. His mother was a homemaker and dad bought and sold cattle and had a cattle truck to haul his and other's cattle. His dad also had a hay baler and a mounted portable grinder and they would travel to the different ranches and farms to bale and grind hay for others. Bud had quit attending school at around the sixth grade so he helped his dad for quite a few years doing the hay baling and grinding.

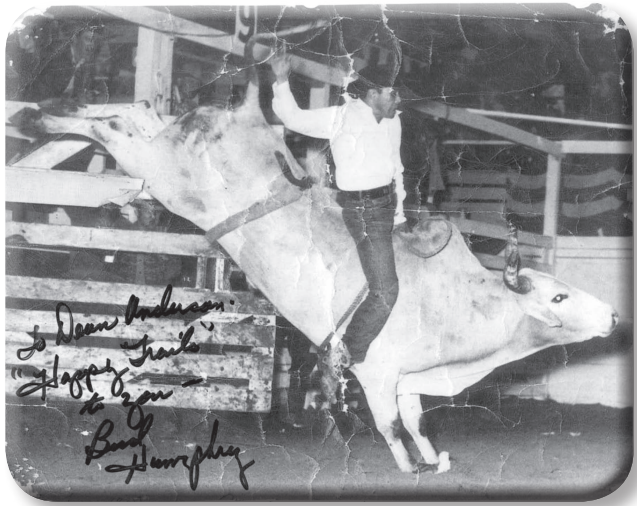
His dad had one of the first gasoline balers that came out but they still had to put the loose hay into the hopper by hay forks. Two men would feed the hopper with forks and then when a bale was made they would put a wooden block in the slot in order to make



another bale. The blocks had little slits in them and Bud's job was to tie the wires on the opposite side after the men on the other side of the baler had punched the haywire through the slits. (If you've ever worked around a hay baler you know that it is a hot dusty job). After Bud did that hard dusty work a few years, he decided there must be a better way to make a living.

Mr. Humphrey had a lot of friends who were rodeoing and he heard that you could make some money—if you could ride! He started riding at some of the junior events and rode any thing he could get on to get some practice on. “We would ride a lot of people's milk cows at night to get some practice,” said Bud with a chuckle.

“I started riding bulls at about age 16 and finally got to riding them pretty good. After about three years I started riding bareback horses.” A friend, Harold Watson, started hauling him and told Bud he



should start riding bareback horses because he would have a better chance to win money if he was in two events. “I did and actually won more money in the bareback event than I did in the bullriding.” Donna, Bud's wife, told of the first big show that Bud entered, “Harold Watson picked him up and they got in at Crawford, Texas. He won the bullriding there and a whopping \$17.00.

I quit riding bulls full time around 1960 but not quick enough said Bud with a grin, meaning of course it takes a toll on your body. “I had stepped off a bull after I rode him and thought I had just sprained my ankle. Later, I found out it had broken and had healed back crooked. After that accident I just wasn't winning consistently anymore on the bulls. I kinda dreaded getting on one after the ankle injury.” Donna said he had his whole rigging, including

spurs and all stolen at Wimberly, Texas in 1965. "I figured that's probably a good time to quit and did." That was about twenty five years on the rodeo circuit for Bud Humphrey. He did enter the bullriding one more time at an Old Timers Rodeo in 1975 just for the fun of it.

He related his most memorable win was at Chicago in 1947. "G.K. Lewellen helped me on my first and I won the go around on him. The bull was an outstanding bull and I rode him pretty well. Won a third on my second but fell off on the third one," he said with a chuckle. "Didn't win the show but winning a go-round was big at that kind of show." Esque had the stock at Chicago in 1947. Mr. Humphrey also won the bareback riding title in the Southwest Rodeo Association in 1950 and 1951.

His most 'embarrassing' ride came at the Ft. Worth rodeo. "I drew a big bull and he got rid of me but I hung up to him and he had me slinging in the air going round and round and somehow got his foot in the rear of my pants. The bulls foot ripped my pants



open and I lost them as I crawled away and up onto the chute. As I went over the chute all you could see was my rear and underwear. Of course, the crowd got a big laugh out of that and I got a standing ovation." (The writer asked Bud if he was asked to be a clown/ bullfighter after that wreck and he laughed big and said no!)

Big Shot incident: "We had a new convertible and had our satin clothes on and it went to raining, we stopped and put the top up but didn't get to far and the wind ripped the top off. When we got to the rodeo we were black from all of the dye in the satin."

Mexico incident: Billy Bridges, Charlie Horton, Gene Webster and Clay Crawford went to Monterey. Clay Crawford ended up dogging fighting bulls and we got on one Mexican pony after an-

other to make more money. They paid us in Mexican money so we thought we were rich. There was a big pile of the Mexican money and Bridges was running his hands through it and he said, "Boys, look at all this money, we'll never see another poor day," and they all got a big laugh out of it. Jo Bishop was one of the girl bronc riders who went on the trip to Mexico.

Mule and the suitcase: At one of the rodeos they had a good bucking mule so Bud told them he could ride that mule with a suitcase in his free hand. "That mule took a run at me, stopped cold and went into a quick spin and the suitcase came open and spilled stuff everywhere. Billy Willis was clowning and he grabbed the suitcase and ran into the stands using the suitcase for a collection bag and the crowd pitched in. That mule threw me alright." Bud Humphrey was inducted into the Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1995 and is also a member of the 'Ring of Honor' at Belton. The 'Ring of Honor' honors the Belton area rodeo cowboys who have competed for many years. He said that there were seventeen people who were rodeoing from there at the same time he was. He tried dogging but was too small (5'6"-130 pounds) and saddle broncs but,"Just couldn't hack it".

Paul Humphrey was the oldest of the three Humphrey brothers, Bud next, then Bill. Even though Paul was the oldest, Bud was the one who started on the rodeo trail, then Paul followed, then Bill. All three made top hands even though Bud had the longest and most illustrious career. Bud idolized Paul but Paul's life was cut short while he was in his early twenties. Paul and Bud were both Turtle Association members and both in the RCA. Bud also was a member of the Southwestern Rodeo Association in 1950. Bud won over 18 buckles during his career.

Lesley Mueller of Yorktown, owner of M. M. Rodeo Stock of Yorktown, Texas named a bucking horse after Bud because Bud was the first to ever try the horse out. Bud bucked off the horse the first time but after that won lots of places on him. Mr. Mueller named the horse 'Texas Bud'. Bud was in a couple of books and on post cards, also had his picture coming out of a chute at the Belton rodeo on the front of a Texas road map.

After Bud retired from the rodeo profession, he started driving trucks for the U.S. Mail and Miller Brewing. He and wife Donna married in 1960 and moved to China Spring, Texas in 1980 and built the home they are now living in. Donna's roots are at Temple, Texas. Donna informed the writer that she was 'Mrs. Texas Bud'

Humphrey as one day Bud asked her if she knew he was 'Mr. Texas Bud' Humphrey. She promptly replied,"Well, do you know that this is 'Mrs. Texas Bud' Humphrey", and they all got a big laugh out of that. Donna was the 'historian' in both of the interviews with the Humphrey boys.

Bud joined the Turtle Association in 1943-The R.C.A.- then Southwestern Association in 1950. Went to Madison Square Garden in 1954. He won buckles while in R.C.A. at the following:

R.C.A.

Belton, Texas-All Around Bareback and Bull

Belton, Texas-Split Bullriding with Ed Bore

Alice, Texas-Bull 1947

Bastrop, Texas-Bull ?

Big Springs, Texas-Bull 1946

Brady, Texas-Bareback 1947

Midway, Texas Bareback 1947 (Buckle and Saddle)

Austin, Texas-Bareback 1948

Amateur

Hallettsville, Texas-Bareback ?year

San Antonio, Texas Bareback (?yr. 4 buckles)

Warton, Tx-All-Around 1950 Bareback Bulls Saddlebronc

Gatesville, Texas Bareback 1960

Most money made at one rodeo, was at Chicago in 1947-\$1700.00.

Bareback and Bulls-won 1st go round in bull riding and split 2nd and 3rd in one go round in bareback.

His best year was 1947, went to more shows that year.

Rodeoed all over U.S. also rode in old Mexico. Was asked to go to France and ride when Bobby Estes took a rodeo troop abroad and Bud said that was a little to far from home for him.

Harold Watson of Belton took Bud to his first rodeo that he competed in steer riding and bull riding in 1940. He won both events paid him \$17.00-He was hooked from then on.

Last rodeo he was in and rode bareback-Wimberly, Tx. July 1965 Don Mueller Stock.

Last bull he was on was Wimberly, Tx. 1961 or 62, Pop Rackers stock.

Very last time was at Temple, Texas. "Old Timers Rodeo" in 1975. He got in bullriding just for fun.

When Bud went to Monterrey, Mexico they were paid \$25.00 a

head for 3 days, plus \$725.00, plus their trip down, room and food. There were 4 bull riders-Bud Humphrey, Billy Bridges, Gene Webster and Clay Crawford 4 Bareback riders, 3 girl bronc riders-one was Jo Bishop , 1 steer dogger-Clay Crawford.

The R.C.A. shows he followed most were Dub Spence and Johnny Mellon, Triangle Bell and Buck Steiner, of course there were many more like Ernest Coleman-Lesley and Don Mueller-Pop Racker-Nesbet and Elliot and etc.

Lesley Mueller of Yorktown, Texas owners of M.M rodeo stock named a horse "Texas Bud" after Bud because Bud was the first one to ever try him out and he bucked off. Mr. Mueller was tickled to death. However Bud won several 1st places on him after that.

Most people called Bud "Texas" or "Mexican" since he had such a dark complexion, or "Tejas". Depended what part of the Country he was in.

He's been mentioned in a couple of books*-Had his picture coming out of a chute at Belton Rodeo that was on the front of a Texas Road map.

*Books - Readers Digest and Prairie Queen and the Choo-Choo Train. Was pictured on post cards - These were mostly in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Dates are forgotten.

Bud's not one to talk about his rodeo accomplishments. In fact it's like pulling teeth to find out anything from him.