



Kenneth Harper

Jeweler, Musician, Guitar Repair & Manufacture



In 1956 at the age of six I began working with my dad, Kenneth Harper in his jewelry manufacturing shop in San Francisco, CA. We made gold & platinum diamond jewelry for stores such as Shrieve's, Tiffany's, Granat Bros as well as private customers. During this same period, I developed an interest in guitar music and asked my dad if I could have a guitar and after a lot of pleading, he got me one. I have dabbled

with the instrument ever since.

Around 1963 dear old Dad got me involved with horses in hopes of deterring my overly mischievous ways. The horses became an obsession that led me to the sport of rodeo. I wasn't much good at it, I never won any money in my chosen event of bull riding, but I did win \$100.00 in the "Wild Horse Stampede" at the Clovis Rodeo in Clovis, CA. In 1968. I was drawn to the Town of Clovis after reading an article in The Western Horseman Magazine about Bob Robinson's continuous rodeo school where one could get on bucking stock 7 days a week. When I read it, I packed my bag & headed for Clovis.

There was a western shop there called "The Rodeo Shop" run by Buck Brumley & Dave Pineda. Both Dave & Buck were talented saddle makers & leather craftsmen. When they found out I did silver work they hired me to make buckles and saddle ornaments for them. Soon I ventured out on my own and opened a small western



silver shop in Clovis. I was contracted by a group of investors in Fresno, Ca. to make a buckle for then president, Richard M Nixon which they presented to him at some sort of presidential affair. The town of Clovis made a pretty big deal out of it.

There were other craftsmen in the area who would come to my shop and create artwork. To name a few, Buck Brumley, saddle maker, cowboy, bull rider, western sculptor. Robert Berg, silver-smith, jeweler, western bootmaker, World Champion Cowboy, jackeroo & bushman and entrepreneur. Ray Rogers, western painter, artist, champion saddle bronc rider & world's foremost expert on mountain trout fishing. Garland Weeks, western sculptor, rodeo cowboy and all around good guy. All of them outstanding in their particular fields of endeavor.

Around 1973 I left Clovis and returned to California's Bay Area. I met a very nice young lady & after a short engagement we were married. Silver work was not generating enough income at that period in time. I began driving a taxicab and playing guitar in night clubs and bars to make ends meet. I also took classes in luthiery from the famous Ervin Somogyi. In 1976 I went to work in a music store in San Francisco, "Stars Guitars". It was there I began learning guitar repair and worked on instruments for many famous guitarists and musicians that include, Tom Fogarty of Creedence Clearwater Revival, Rory Gallagher, Mahogany Rush, Jack Cassidy and several others.

It was in 1983 I decided to move with my family to Vacaville, Ca. & teach guitar in a much quieter setting than the big city. It's now 2024 and I've cut down on guitar building & repairs and I'm more involved in teaching guitar.

Kenneth G Harper