



Introduction

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Interview With

R. M. “Red” Arnold

Texas Ranger, Retired

Project:
Texas Rangers

Interview Conducted At The
Texas Ranger Hall of Fame & Museum
Waco, Texas
Thursday—May 25, 1978

Interviewed By:
Ty Lockridge
Waco, Texas

Present At Interview: R. M. “Red” Arnold and Ty Lockridge

Transcript: Mr. R. M. "Red" Arnold
Interviewer: Ty Lockridge

Date: May 25, 1978

Today is May 25, 1978. This interview is taking place in the Homer Garrison Memorial Texas Ranger Museum in Waco, Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. R. A. Arnold, and the narrator is Ty Lockridge. The video tape camera man is Phil Mathis. This interview is being sponsored by the Moody Texas Memorial Library and is being conducted at the 1978 Retired Texas Ranger Museum. Mr. Arnold, the first question is where and when were you born?

Arnold: Longview, Texas, June 6, 1915.

Lockridge: Who were your parents?

Arnold: James Arnold and Betsy Arnold.

Lockridge: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Arnold: Five brothers, no sisters.

Lockridge: What were their names?

Arnold: Ah, Eugene, Milford, James E. Jr., Carol and Frank.

Lockridge: You still keep in touch with them?

Arnold: Yeah, they're all, they're all, still living down, yeah we do, ah, associate.

Lockridge: Do they live in parts, different parts of the United States, or do they still live in Texas?

Arnold: There's ah, two that live in Longview, Texas, one lives in ah, Louisiana, one lives in

Tucson, Arizona, and one lives in Newport, West Virginia.

Lockridge: Going back to your home life, do you remember some activities or hobbies that you engaged in?

Arnold: Uh, We, we like to ride ah, horses and ah, and ah, cowboys-ropes.

Lockridge: Cowboys, more or less.

Arnold: Yeah, ah, ride gurnings and all that kind of stuff, yeah we-

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: We were about half rodeo clowns when we were kids.

Lockridge: When did you marry, and what is your wife's name?

Arnold: My wife's name is Ilene Bell, and we married in ah, April 1939.

Lockridge: Do you have any children?

Arnold: Have two.

Lockridge: What are their names?

Arnold: Robert Jr., and Joanne.

Lockridge: Where are they located?

Arnold: Robert Jr. is in Houston, Joanne is in Paris.

Lockridge: I see. Do they have any children?

Arnold: Each one of them has a boy and girl, so we have four grandchildren--two boys and two girls.

Lockridge: Do ah, any of the boy grandchildren aspire to be a Texas Ranger, some day, maybe?

Arnold: Well, they're not that old, ah,

Lockridge: To think about it really?

Arnold: No.

Lockridge: Ok. How and why did you decide to become a Texas Ranger?

Arnold: Well, that's a-a strange question to answer, I was a Highway Patrolman for 16 years.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: And ah, eventually ah, that's where the Ranger Service got ah, most of their people from the Highway Patrol.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: So, it just fell in line.

Lockridge: Was it any particular person or any particular experience, or did you just want to go in on your own?

Arnold: Well ah, we worked a lot of criminal work even as Highway Patrolmen and when ah, eventually ah, sometimes you feel like you gonna wear out ah, on the road ya know.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: Because, at that time we didn't have radar.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: We had to run them down, literally so ah, eventually you gonna, it's gonna get tiring, and course criminal investigation is interesting, intriguing to say the least.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: And ah, the manners of a police officer, he's kind of like a cat-he's got a lot of curiosity and that ah, your gonna to have some curiosity about ah, or your ah, not gonna make a good police officer.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. Do you remember how old you were when you became a Texas Ranger?

Arnold: Hum. (pause)

Lockridge: Were you thirty?

Arnold: Thirty-nine.

Lockridge: Thirty-nine. Do you remember what company you served for? Did you serve for one or did you serve for several?

Arnold: Two. Company "F".

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: Which was at that time located in Austin.

Lockridge: Uh, huh.

Arnold: And then moved at that time it was called Headquarters Company.

Lockridge: Do you remember some of the men that you served under, or served with?

Arnold: Well, of course, Captain Peoples was the captain of the company.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: Course I moved to Company "B", with headquarters in Dallas. Worked under ah, Bob Crowder, Jay Banks.

Lockridge: Uh-hum. What was the typical day like whenever you were a Texas Ranger?

Arnold: Hum.

Lockridge: Course every day was probably different, but were they any ah, unusual stuff that you did?

Arnold: Well, that's kind of a hard question to answer. In, in-a a a general way, ah, you, you go to work with local officers, and ah, they call you, to ah, to assist, them in working criminal

investigations.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: Ah, trying to locate fugitives and ah, of course investigating the major crime, and ah, ah, not really ah, a routine situation, because you maybe on an assignment ah, four days at a time. So really you don't ah, you don't work like a...

Lockridge: Typical eight to five job.

Arnold: Eight to five job.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. How did the town's people treat you went into a town to stop a disturbance or to get a criminal or something? Did they treat you friendly or did they respect you?

Arnold: Hu-I didn't have any problems.

Lockridge: Really?

Arnold: No problems whatsoever.

Lockridge: Well that's good. Now that you're out of the ah, Ranger Force, what did you do whenever you got out of the Rangers?

Arnold: I've only been out three weeks.

Lockridge: Oh, really? What have you been doing, just resting?

Arnold: Yeah! Well, I live out on a farm, and have cattle and so forth, and a lot of things to do out there, that ah, that's probably-

Lockridge: So you're looking to your farm now, taking care of that.

Arnold: Yeah.

Lockridge: Do you have any ah, future plans?

Arnold: Well, to probably work some private investigations on a small scale, not get too

involved in something like that, you know, Pick out what you want to do, because as far as ah, ah, I don't have any money problems, or trying to keep bread on the table if that's what you, huh.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. No, is there just any particular business you might go into just, stay with your farm?

Arnold: No, I don't have any—don't have inspirations for ah, entering ah, some inspiration, their business right at the present time. My only inspirations, that for doing some work would probably be in the private investigation field.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. Ok. Mr. Arnold, in looking back over your history as a Texas Ranger, your career, do you remember any ah, outstanding cases that you worked upon?

Arnold: Many.

Lockridge: Would you like to elaborate maybe on a particular one?

Arnold: Well, it's ah, really hard to pick one out in particular. I haven't even thought of that. Ah, worked lots of murder cases, Worked lots of burglaries, worked lots of robberies. Ah. .

Lockridge: Do you remember any ah, notorious outlaws on criminals that you helped to track down or got involved with?

Arnold: A lot of them. A lot of ah, chasing fugitives, people that are wanted for ah, major crimes. It's real interesting.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: And to go into specifics, details ah, could involve some people who are still living.

Lockridge: I see.

Arnold: And I would be a little bit reluctant to go into specific details. For instance ah, we have some people that are on death row. Ah, the cases may ah, may involve some-some mitigation

later on and to elaborate on some of it now may have some effect on them, on the case itself.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. I can understand.

Arnold: Because ah, you understand the ah, field courts have the final say so, and ah, if you ha, get involved in the, in the, in the names and so forth, it could have some bearing later on.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: I would be a little reluctant to, of course, Ah, record speaks for itself. Ah, I've been involved in some gun powder if you want to call it that way, but I wouldn't ah, wouldn't-

Lockridge: Wouldn't want to elaborate on it?

Arnold: I wouldn't want to get into specifics so ah, ah, it's not something that I would want to ah, stand up and beat on my chest and say well, ah, look what a tough son-of-a-bitch I am.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: Ah, but ah, I have been involved in a number of those incidents, which involved ah, some gunfights. And I would just kind of rather leave it, just ah. .

Lockridge: Ok.

Arnold: It's unfortunate ah, in some incidents that you, you wear that badge, you can expect it.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. Did you mainly work in the area of Texas or did you happen to travel around alot in different other states?

Arnold: I've been all over the United States, not necessarily in investigations, but where you work in crime committed by people who moved, well, if you get them picked up you-you go get them.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: But, ordinarily it's-it's localized in Texas where-you where these crimes happen. I've

been all over the United States to take possession of criminals who were charged in my area where I work.

Lockridge: Yes, sir.

Arnold: You know, kind of like a-old boy robbed a bank and ah, tomorrow he may be in Los Angeles.

Lockridge: And you go after him?

Arnold: And if you can get him arrested you go get him.

Lockridge: In Los Angeles even though he may be innocent in Texas?

Arnold: Oh, yeah sure. Sometimes ah, we have to get ah, expedition papers, but ah, not too often. That's a matter of form you know when you gotta old boy charged with some crime. First the governors have an agreement with one another that they will grant expedition, so as not to create not-too-big of a problem.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. In looking back over your career, do you think that you've made any ah, significant contributions or accomplishments that you've done?

Arnold: Uh. (laughs)

Lockridge: I know you've kept law and order.

Arnold: Well, I would say this, ah, the pen records down there will reflect that.

Arnold: Ah, lots of folks went to the penitentiary, served time for crimes they committed that I assisted local officers working. I wouldn't attempt to say that I'm the total responsible for, you know, all that stuff, but officers work together. That proves that one man is not ordinarily smarter than the other's, sit down and divide up your information.

Lockridge: Yes, sir. Ok, I believe that's all the questions I have. Thank you.