

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
 Kenneth W. Galyean Interview Abstract
 February 13, 2020

Interviewee	Kenneth W. Galyean
Year of birth	1929
Place of birth	Hiwasse, Benton County, Arkansas
Interviewer	Barbara Knotts
Interview date	2020-02-13
Interview location	Apple Creek Health and Rehab; Centerton, Benton County, Arkansas
Keywords	Galyean, Kathy Galyean, Kenneth W. Diehl, Lou Walton, Alice Walton, Sam Knotts, Barbara Hiwasse, Benton County, Arkansas Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County, California Walterville, Lane County, Oregon Fullers Camp; Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County, California Grand Coulee Dam: Grand Coulee, Grant County, Washington Moffett Naval Air Station; Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County, California Cutting (Horsemanship) Depressions, economic Farming National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) Rodeos
Description	As a young man, Kenneth W. Galyean wanted a 'cowboy life'. He succeeded. And along the way he's also been a 'boy from the depression', proud family man, hall of famer, and long-time resident of Hiwasse. Galyean was born during the Great Depression (1929). Like other Northwest Arkansas families, the Galyean family was forced to move west in search of jobs. After working on the Coulee Dam in Washington state, they migrated south to Sunnyvale California. Galyean describes living in a cabin at Fullers Camp (migrant camp) not far from Moffett Field, picking apricots in Santa Clara Valley with his brother, and attending school. School presented challenges with classmates perceiving him as that 'Okie or Arkie'. While a teen, the Galyean family went to Walterville Oregon to work. Here he met Lou Diehl. Lou introduced Galyean to a love of horses and instructed him on breaking and selling them. With that came Galyean's dream of becoming a cowboy. Moving back to Hiwasse with his family, Galyean used land he acquired to continue the dream. He ran amateur rodeos, competing in bronc and bull riding. Winners might pocket twenty-five to thirty

dollars to offset their five-dollar entry fee. Galyean and his first wife began farming, raising cows and chickens. Sons Gil and Jody helped. Times remained hard. Milk did not sell for much more than what it took to produce. That's when his entry into the cutting horse business began. He was asked to take a horse and train it to be a cutting horse. A good cutting horse will separate cattle from its herd. Galyean found such a horse in Blue Spade and later Bandero. His reputation grew. Horsemen from near and far brought horses for Galyean to ride, train, and show in competitions. In Galyean's words "if you have a product and are decent enough, people will find you wherever you are."

Galyean describes participating in cutting horse competitions, and shares details on the Dallas Futurity. When his horse won the Futurity, the way for horses from outside Texas was opened. He and second wife, Kathy, traveled across the country for competitions. He credits Kathy's riding, horse handling, and business involvement. Both were willing 'to take off and go' to competitions, learning new techniques along the way. Galyean would be asked to judge some of those competitions. The University of Arkansas brought students to see his operation. He was inducted into the National Cutting Horse Association's Members Hall of Fame. Always humble, Galyean says "I fooled them"; others call it an honor he deserved. A proud father and grandfather, Galyean tells stories of the successes of his sons and grandsons in the cutting and pleasure horse business. Far different from the days when winnings were twenty-five to thirty dollars, today winners earn in the millions.

Working with horses, Galyean knows others from Northwest Arkansas with similar interests. Sam and Alice Walton are two. In the early 1960s, Galyean helped Alice take Tommy, her favorite horse, to shows. Galyean tells the story of the day Sam came and loaded Tommy in an old trailer, only to 'lose' Tommy on the drive to the Walton home. Galyean joined Sam to find Tommy. And then there was the time Tommy, grazing in the Walton's yard, kicked the window out.

Galyean believes the major changes in the Hiwasse area during his lifetime include the growing land values, influx of people, Hiwasse becoming part of Gravette, and increased traffic. Land that sold for \$100 per acre now can be \$15,000 per acre; most people want two-acre parcels, not large acreage.

Today's Hiwasse, like the community he remembers as a young man, is home to a few businesses and the Post Office. And that's good. His daughter and her son live near Hiwasse. Galyean believes that life here is better than one would be in Sunnyvale.

What has changed is the Bentonville he remembers. There is no longer a good hardware store. This cowboy always needs a hardware store.

Duration	57 minutes
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Questions or Comments	https://nwaoralhistory.org
Interview sidebar	"You milked the cow, then you took the milk and had a screen on the milk can...you poured it in that. When sold, if it would test 4% they paid you \$3 per one hundred for it. But if it didn't test 4% for butterfat, it would go down. Plus, it cost 60 cents per hundred to haul...meant you're getting \$2.40 per hundred...not making much money...you're starving to death" [00:32:15]