

American Cowboy

HISTORY OF THE
RODEO COWGIRL

Style • Travel • People

The Joy of Ranching

Horses, cowboy
poetry, guns,
grub, and living
out West!

America's Horse

How the Quarter
Horse changed
the U.S.A.

Saddle Up Horseback in Montana

+
Visit
Little Big
Horn

NEW GUNS
TESTED &
REVIEWED

THE
PIONEER
WOMAN'S
BEST
RECIPES

HOT SPRINGS
Relax in
Wyoming

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2012

\$4.99 US \$6.99 CAN

09>



AMERICANCOWBOY.COM

DISPLAY UNTIL SEPTEMBER 3, 2012

RANCHER DARRIC KNIGHT
STANDS BEFORE A 100
YEAR-OLD BARN IN
APACHE COUNTY, ARIZ.

Cowboys



At Home With...

GUY (LEFT) AND
PIPP GILLETTE
OUTSIDE THE CAMP
STREET CAFE IN
CROCKETT, TEXAS.

The Gillette Brothers

Rancher musicians Guy, 66, and Pipp Gillette, 62, own and operate the Camp Street Café listening room in Crockett, Texas, and recently released a new album, *Leaving Cheyenne*, their eighth recording of traditional cowboy music. **Tom Wilmes** visits with the brothers from their family's ranch.

YOUR RANCH HAS A LONG HISTORY, CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT IT?

Pipp: Our grandparents started ranching here in 1912, and this year we're celebrating the 100th anniversary of the ranch. Houston County, which includes Crockett, was the first county in the Republic of Texas, and it was incorporated in 1837. So our grandparents started ranching here only 75 years after Texas began! It seems like such an extraordinarily brief span of time, and the older we get it doesn't seem

like that much time at all. We've always been amazed at the relative brevity of [American] history. To think that the year before Houston County was incorporated David Crockett was at the Alamo.

WERE YOU RAISED ON THE RANCH?

Pipp: Our mother was from here. Her mother owned a general store in Lovelady [Texas] that sold all kinds of notions and millinery and things that you would need to make your own clothing. She used to

keep *Vogue* magazine around the store, and our mother saw an ad for a fashion-design school in New York City and off she went. That's where she met our father, who was studying acting at the time, and they got married. When Guy was about to be born, they came back to Texas and Guy was born in Crockett, and then they moved back to New York State, and I was born on Staten Island.

We would spend our summers in Texas working with our grandfather—nothing was more exciting for us than to work on the ranch. We used to drive to Texas in the summers if we could—in those pre-Interstate days where you drove through

every town and every stop sign along the way. If our dad couldn't drive us, we'd take the train. You used to be able to get on a train at Penn Station in Manhattan and get off at the depot in Lovelady, where our grandmother would be waiting. Then we would come back to New York for school and spend our winters reading Will James novels and listening to cowboy music.

WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN COWBOY SONGS?

Pipp: Our parents gave us a wonderful background in traditional folk music. They played everything from Lead Belly to traditional Irish music and sea-faring songs, so we had a bedrock introduction to the traditional folk music that was the roots of cowboy music. All this music really enhanced our interest and excitement for our wonderful summers in Texas. The more authentic the songs, the more interested we were. The music we play is really our attempt to keep these songs alive.

WHEN DID YOU START PLAYING INSTRUMENTS?

Guy: The Beatles influenced millions of people, and we were no exception. Strangely enough, the night the Ed Sullivan Show had The Beatles on I was in Texas and about to go to work for Watt Matthews on the famous Lamshead Ranch. He put me up at a motel in Albany, Texas, that Sunday night, and that's where I saw the show. Pipp was watching in New York, and we both got so excited that, by the time I got back that fall, I wanted to learn the guitar, and he was already playing the drums. That was the beginning for us.

DID YOU GUYS BOTH WORK AS RANCH HANDS OFF AND ON?

Pipp: Guy worked for Watt Matthews for six months and, especially later when we moved back to the ranch in 1983, we continued to go over and help with spring and fall work when they needed some extra people. If you got to know Watt, you were a life-long friend. And anyone who spent any time at the Lamshead couldn't wait to have an opportunity to come back. I think if you looked up "Western hospitality" in the dictionary, there'd be a picture of Watt.



It was great to learn some new songs and play them for Watt and hear his response.

Guy: His mother wrote a famous book, *Interwoven*, which is a great pioneer document of her growing up and the intermarrying of the Reynolds and the Matthews families. The Reynolds brothers started the Long X Ranch out in West Texas in the Davis Mountains, and the combined families had ranches all over the state.

Pipp: In fact one of Watt's uncles, Joe Reynolds, is the cowboy roping the grizzly bear's foot in the famous Charlie Russell painting [*Loops and Swift Horses are Surer than Lead*]. Watt was a wonderful preserver of history, and he kept the ranch very much like it had been when his parents had it. It was the most classic, historic, wonderful ranch and kept so simply. The whole place had a great feel.

Watt lived an amazingly long life. He was born in 1899, and I think passed away in 1997 at age 98. He was branding calves up until just a few years before that.

It's amazing how one human being's life can span the changes that he saw, and that's certainly one of the things that we find exciting about singing these old

songs. They're such colorful songs and the people who wrote them had such an interesting sense of humor and outlook about some of the hardships they faced. There's a lot to be learned from these songs, and many people can still relate to them.

WHEN DID YOU OPEN THE CAMP STREET CAFÉ AND STORE?

Pipp: We opened it 14 years ago this November. It's in an old, false-fronted Western-looking building that was built in 1931. It's all wooden inside with a tin roof and has wonderful acoustics. Lightnin' Hopkins used to come in here and play when it was a barbershop. As musicians, we were trying to create a place that would be the most fun to hear and see somebody and also the most fun to actually play, because of its intimacy. We can seat about 140 people.

Guy: We used to go down to Greenwich Village in New York and listen to music in coffee houses where, as a teenager, you could go in and have a soda and see Muddy Waters and people like that. When we decided to open this place, we thought a lot about the places in the Village that we used to frequent.