

(Copyright 2001. Not for sale or for reprint in any other form. Reprinted by permission, for the exclusive use of the Worth Ranch Staff, for distribution to the Worth Ranch Staff. All rights reserved.)

THE WORTH RANCH SONG

*If you've had the smell of cedar in your nose,
If you've hiked the trail with very little clothes,
If you've baked in wind and sun,
Till you're very nearly done,
And you've grinned and come back for more:*

*If you've ever felt that spirit, wild and strange,
Than calls you to that old Kyle Mountain range,
If you've ever felt the grip*

*Of that Worth Ranch fellowship,
Then you'll wear that Worth Ranch brand
forevermore.*

--by W. Faust Nobles
Cheerleader,
1929 Worth Ranch Staff

The Worth Ranch Song was written by W. Faust Nobles, a member of the first Worth Ranch camp staff. Written to describe the indelible mark left in the hearts and minds of many Worth Ranch Scouts, it speaks to all who have felt "the grip of that Worth Ranch fellowship." As such, it belongs to all Worth Ranch Scouts. It belongs as much to the first-year camper and his first experiences at Worth Ranch as it does to the seasoned former camp staff member who has many years of memories at Worth Ranch.

In my early years at Worth Ranch, both as a camper and as a member of the camp staff, I observed and learned a few traditions about singing *The Worth Ranch Song*. Many

of these traditions I took for granted and assumed that they were accepted by everyone. Then, in later years, when I returned to Worth Ranch, I discovered that some of these old traditions had fallen into disuse. Perhaps there had been some leadership at camp that did not know or understand the Worth Ranch spirit and what it means.

Whatever the reason, I observed that new Worth Ranch Scouts weren't being taught the song and they were going home from a week at camp without knowing the song! The few times *The Worth Ranch Song* was sung, the Scouts weren't included in the singing. It was sung to them, but they were expected to just sit and listen!

I am grateful to Bruce Unger, former WR Camp Director, for asking me to set down some simple rules for the singing of *The Worth Ranch Song*.

1) SING IT STANDING: As the official anthem of Worth Ranch, *The Worth Ranch Song* should ALWAYS be sung standing, as a mark of respect.

The dictionary defines "anthem" as a "hymn of loyalty." No one would ever consider singing the *Star Spangled Banner*, or *Texas: Our Texas*, while seated. The Worth Ranch Song is no different.

One of the amazing things about *The Worth Ranch Song* is the lasting effect it seems to have on those who have shared the experiences expressed in the song, and who have made the words of the song part of their Scouting experience. The feeling of fellowship is never stronger than when Worth Ranch Scouts sing the song together. For that reason, they usually join hands, often crossing right arms over left, or sometimes they will stand together with their arms crossed over each others' shoulders.

2) SING IT TOGETHER: Many songs are sung purely for their entertainment

value. As such they are often sung by one group to another larger audience for the audience's entertainment. *The Worth Ranch Song* is not one of these.

If it is sung in the presence of those who are not Worth Ranch Scouts, such as family members or other visitors, they may sit and enjoy the song, or they may stand and watch the singing, or, if they know the words, they may also join in. But, all Worth Ranch Scouts who are present should stand and join in when *The Worth Ranch Song* is being sung.

Whoever is leading the singing should ask all Worth Ranch Scouts to stand and join in. Worth Ranch Scouts should never be asked to sit quietly, or turn their backs and leave, while another group sings *The Worth Ranch Song* to them. Never, never, never exclude other Worth Ranch Scouts from standing and joining in the singing of *The Worth Ranch Song*.

3) MAKE IT SPECIAL: By standing together and singing the song together you will make it special. You will give everyone a special feeling about the song. You may want to reserve the song for a special place at a special campfire or at a special event.

4) TEACH THE SONG: During summer camp, the camp staff should teach *The Worth Ranch Song* to new Worth Ranch Scouts at every opportunity, especially early in the week. The first song that everyone should learn is *The Worth Ranch Song*. You will have the rest of the week to teach other new songs to the Scouts, but Scouts should learn *The Worth Ranch Song* early in the week so they are not numbing their way through it at the Thursday night campfire. It should be introduced at the Sunday evening meal or at the Sunday evening campfire. Maybe a song leader should repeat the

words to the new Scouts, and then everyone who knows it should be invited to join in. Never have one group sing it to everyone else. Always ask everyone to join in. Sing it at every meal if necessary. Every Scout in camp should know the song by Monday evening. It should be a part of their unfolding Worth Ranch experience.

5) SING IT OFTEN: If you sang *The Worth Ranch Song* at every meal and at every campfire that would not be too often, especially early in the week when a lot of the younger Scouts are still learning it.

6) SING IT LOUD AND STRONG: Sing it like a man! This is not a song for sissies! This is a song that has been sung by many generations of young men who have experienced the harsh elements of a summer in West Texas!

Although the song only mentions "wind and sun," the Worth Ranch experience includes climbing up endless rocky trails in the blazing heat of summer, capsizing heavy boats and canoes in the freezing waters of the Brazos River, and living alongside rattlesnakes and a half dozen varieties of cactus.

Although you may be a bit weary from the demands of the day — you may be sunburned, and your knees and elbows may be a bit scraped or bruised, you should be feeling the glow of pride from a job well done and a day well spent in the most beautiful place on earth.

Visitors may not see what fascinates you and your fellow Scouts about living in this harsh landscape, but the song is not for them. *The Worth Ranch Song* is for us and our fellow Worth Ranch Scouts. So sing it like a man. Sing it like you mean it. Sing it loud and sing it strong.

--by Pete Normand
P. O. Box 10434
College Station, TX 77842