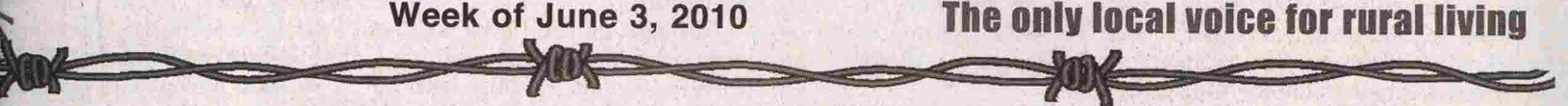


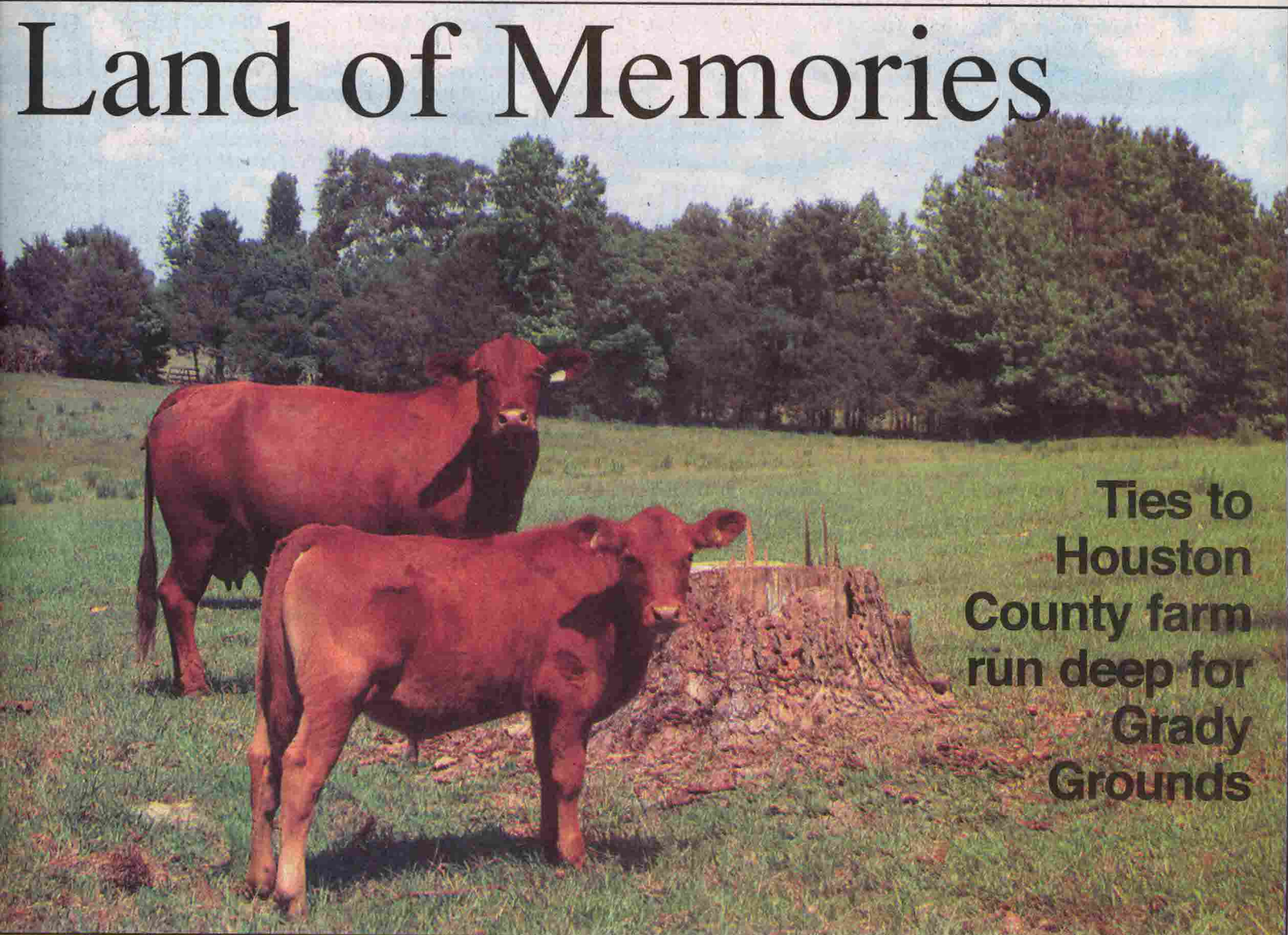
FARM & RANCH NEWS

Week of June 3, 2010

The only local voice for rural living



Land of Memories



**Ties to
Houston
County farm
run deep for
Grady
Grounds**



“I live in Porter Springs but I still call this place home. Even though I only lived here for 10 years, you never get it out of you.”

— Grady Grounds, referring to his family land near Latexo.

TOP: A Red Brangus cow and calf are among the many Red Brangus cows and Red Angus cows on the ranch of Grady Grounds, who lives in Porter Springs but has property near Latexo. **LEFT: Mr. Grounds** holds up the cross-cut saw he and his dad used to clear trees for a new county road shown in the background. It took Mr. Grounds and his father 10 years to clear the trees. **BELOW: A dog-trot house** still stands that was built by Mr. Grounds' grandfather, George Grounds.

By **WAYNE STEWART**
Farm & Ranch News

When Grady Grounds walks across his family land every step reminds him where he came from and deepens his connection with his place, and the people who carved it out of the East Texas forests.

In 1876 George Grounds bought the land Grady Grounds now calls the old homeplace, a part of the Texas Family Land Heritage Program, where he lived until he was 18.

Memories of growing up in rural Houston County run deep as Mr. Grounds remembers the work involved on a working farm.

“I live in Porter Springs,” Mr. Grounds said, referring to a community on the opposite side of Houston County, “but I still call this place home. Even



though I only lived here for 18 years, you never get it out of you.”

Back in the days before the road was paved from FM 2022 to Latexo, folks traveled a dirt road from the old Rusk Road through the Grounds land. When the road would get bad, Mr. Grounds said they would

just move the road over. “After a while we ended up with three gates where the road kept moving,” Mr. Grounds recalled.

After talking with their county commissioner, Sharp McLeod, the Grounds were told if they cleared the trees the county would put a road in to

alleviate the problems with the old road.

“It took Daddy and me 10 years to clear those trees with a 6-foot Simon Saw,” Grounds recalled, while holding up the crosscut saw used to clear the right of way. “After we got the trees cut Mr. Sharp gave us some dynamite we used to get rid of the stumps — that’s how we had us a road.”

The work was hard but the memories are sweet.

A dog-trot home built by Grounds’ grandfather still stands and on occasion Grounds will sit on the porch of the old homeplace where he was raised and look out across the land.

He can look out and see the old crossroads near the house and the small hill where the old barn sat in front of the house.

Memories

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Mr. Grounds' father used to row crop farm 60 acres with just two mules — never a tractor. Now that same land plus more gets grazed by the Red Brangus and Red Angus cattle Mr. Grounds raises.

After finishing high school Mr. Grounds spent four years in the Air Force and then seven years running a store in Indiana — where his wife called home.

“My parents got in bad health so we came back here to help them,” Mr. Grounds said. “We got a place in Porter Springs and started raising chickens to sell the eggs — we almost starved to death eating eggs three meals a day.”

One of the things most folks around Houston County remembers Mr. Grounds for was his locker plant. Began in 1973, Mr. Grounds butchered livestock for folks.

“I enjoyed it,” Mr. Grounds said. “We tried to take care of the people and we always worked to keep our prices down.”

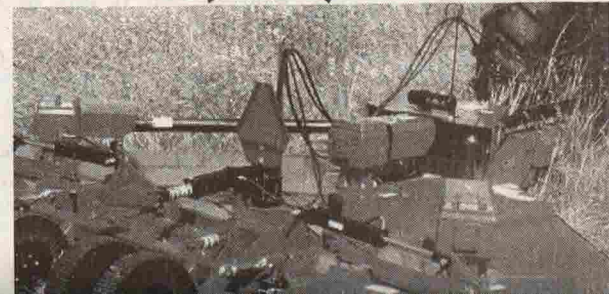
The locker plant was sold several years ago and now Mr. Grounds focuses on his cattle and the stocker program he runs with them. Over the years he also has worked closely with the Extension program, soil and water conservation and with Capital Farm Credit.



LEFT: Pictured is George Austin Grounds and Nannie Elizabeth Allen, the grandparents of Grady Grounds. ABOVE: Pictured is Grady Grounds Sr. and Belle Christian, the parents of Grady Grounds. In 1876 George Grounds bought the land Grady Grounds now calls the old homeplace.



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Now, at 80 years old, he focuses mostly on cattle. He runs Red Brangus cows and Red Angus bulls.

"I talked with the folks in Overton, at A&M and at Corpus Christi," Mr. Grounds said. "And they all said those red cows will handle the heat and do better down here than the black ones."

Most of the cattle he sells are sold on video auction, so every once in a while Mr. Grounds can be seen selling his cattle on RFD-TV.

When he's not running and working with cows, he's busy leading the

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