



THE CYCLONE



2013 Conference at Wichita Falls



Dr. Clint Chambers presents his paper at the 2012 conference.

The 90th Annual Meeting of the West Texas Historical Association will be April 5-6, 2013 at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls. Close to

fifty papers and two panel discussions will be presented in sessions that begin Friday at 9:00 a.m. and continue through noon on Saturday at the Clark Student Center. President Marisue Potts has established the theme for this year's conference as *Tracking the Trail of History*. The entire schedule of papers is posted online at <www.wtha.org>.

The Friday evening banquet features keynote speaker, John Miller Morris, highly regarded scholar, historical geographer, and Texas Panhandle native. A professor of Geography at the University of Texas at San Antonio, Morris will discuss "The Trouble with Trails: When Geography and History 'Hit the Road' Together." The conference will conclude on Saturday with a 12:30 p.m. business meeting and luncheon in the student center. Following the luncheon there will be a tour into Oklahoma to visit Medicine Park, the Old Plantation, Wichita Mountain Wildlife Refuge and Mount Scott.

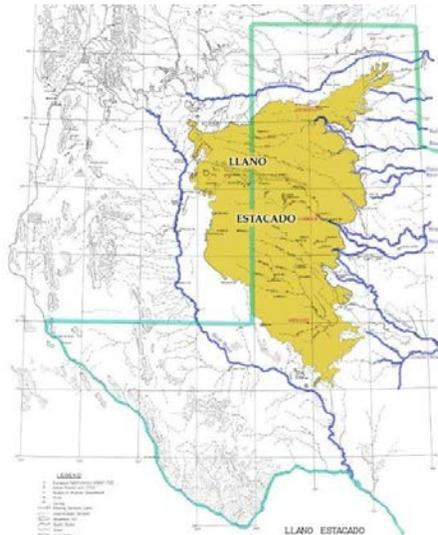
Exhibitors interested in displaying items at the conference or those wishing to donate anything to the silent auction should contact Freedonia Paschall at (806) 742-3749 or e-mail Freedonia.Paschall@ttu.edu. Please consult our website for further conference information.

The Llano Estacado's *La Pista de Agua Vida*

By Sami Simpson and Paul Carlson

La Pista de Agua Vida, or the Trail of Living Water, was a Spanish phrase used from the seventeenth century to near the present-day to describe important water routes across the Llano Estacado of western Texas and eastern New Mexico. Mainly the term referred to such water courses as 1) the Canadian River Valley, 2) the Tierra Blanca Creek-Red River route through Palo Duro Canyon, 3) Running Water Draw and White River through Blanco Canyon, and 4) Blackwater and Yellow House draws that merge in modern Lubbock as part of the Upper Brazos River system.

Less often humans used additional trails to cross the flat, featureless Llano Estacado, especially in the region's deeper past. Such routes included the upper Colorado River drainage system's Sulphur Draw plus the upper Concho River (which enters the Colorado at the O. H. Ivie Reservoir near Paint Rock) with its Sulphur Springs, Mackenzie, Seminole, and Monument draws. Sulphur Springs and Seminole draws are



prominent cuts in the Llano and as late as the second half of the nineteenth century American Indians, soldiers, and others followed them, for at different places by digging into the draws' bottoms, humans could find water. In 1875, for example, Lt. Col. William R. Shafter leading black troops of his command found five large wells in one of the draws northeast of modern Andrews.

Nonetheless, for Spanish and American travelers the northern trails represented the significant routes. Water, of course, and its availability were the keys to such use. The more-northern trails provided living water or cut close to permanent sources. Plus, playa lakes, large circular depressions that often contained water, could be found in some abundance toward the north.

American Indians used *La Pista de Agua Vida*—probably well before Spanish explorers and missionaries crossed the Llano. Apaches were using such water courses, especially in the southern sections, until the mid to late nineteenth century, and as they entered the region Comanches followed well-worn trails through the high tableland. After the 1786 treaty between Comanches and Spaniards, comancheros, traders from New Mexico villages, and ciboleros, bison hunters, followed the familiar northern routes from New Mexico onto and across the Llano Estacado. Comanchero trading sites existed in most of the canyons on the (cont. on page 2)



From the President

Dear members and friends of the West Texas Historical Association,

For the past year I have served as your president, representing the West Texas Historical Association as I have traveled throughout Texas to conferences. The friendliness I discovered among historians was refreshing. Although I might arrive at a session or a table not knowing anyone, I quickly became acquainted and found common areas of interest. Cards were exchanged and friendships were in the making. A few times I even crossed the line over into New Mexico and Oklahoma where a Texan is sure to take a little razzing for our reputation of trying to enlarge our territory. Since I was never confined to visiting with history buffs just in West Texas, I soon found my personal boundaries to be enlarged and stretched beyond

my interest in grassroots history. What sometimes seemed to be a rabbit trail leading off from my area of research often became a key piece to a puzzle, as I networked with association members, eager to share expertise and knowledge.

The boundaries of West Texas are vague and ill defined, as Tom Crum reminded us recently at a Fort Worth conference. Although some have used Interstate 35 as our most eastern line and the New Mexico border as our western limit, I see WTHA members spill over as board members of other regional organizations. For example, Bruce Glasrud, retired WTHA president, serves as president of the East Texas Historical Association, and our own vice president (and soon to be president), J. T. Tillapaugh, is president of the Permian Basin Historical Association.

Perhaps West Texas is a state of mind, not a geographical location, as Crum suggests, with legendary characters, off-road pickups, more acres than people, a scarcity of rainfall, and a hard work ethic born out of necessity. Certainly our conference theme, "Tracking the Trails of History," is not confined to West Texas, with conference sessions outlining the Great Western Trail from Mexico to Canada, the Jones-Plummer Trail through Oklahoma, the Navaho/Spanish connection in New Mexico, and the Southern Comanche homeland, among others.

As we approach the annual conference held this year at Mid-Western University in Wichita Falls, our hosts are preparing a wide variety of pre-tours and post-tours to enhance the conference sessions covering some fifty titles. In addition, John Miller Morris, our banquet speaker, will explore "The Trouble with Trails, When Geography and History Hit the Road Together." So, come and join us on April 4-6, 2013, as we continue to search for the boundaries of West Texas history.

Marisue Potts, Matador

La Pista de Agua Vida

(cont. from page 1) eastern side of the Llano, plus the colorful traders maintained sites at such established landmarks as Casas Amarillas along Yellow House Draw and Muchaque Peak on the divide between the Colorado and Brazos rivers in modern Borden County. Comancheros continued to ply their trade along routes of *La Pista de Agua Vida* until well after Comanches, Cheyennes, and Kiowas moved onto reservations and began receiving goods from the federal government.

But Spanish explorers had followed *La Pista de Agua Vida* long before comancheros or ciboleros. Francisco Coronado in 1541 was the first when he crossed from New Mexico to Blanco Canyon. Most of his men returned along a route that probably took them up Blackwater Draw. Some scholars suggest that Spanish Christian missionaries in the 1630s and afterward crossed the Llano along one of the water courses to minister to the spiritual needs of Jumano groups in the modern Ballinger-San Angelo area. With greater certainty, however, Spanish military officers Jose Mares in 1787-88 and an aging Francisco Amangual in 1808 used *La Pista de Agua Vida* as they searched for shorter routes between San Antonio and Santa Fe.

Americans likewise followed *La Pista de Agua Vida* when they hazarded a crossing of the High Plains. Such crossings included the 1841 Texan-Santa Fe Expedition, an ill-fated effort to establish the jurisdiction of Texas over Santa Fe. Capt. Randolph B. Marcy of the United States Army crossed and recrossed the Llano Estacado along different routes in 1849, and in 1852 he examined the headstreams of the Red River. In 1856

he explored the upper Brazos River through modern Lubbock. In 1855, Capt. John Pope, later to win fame in the Civil War, visited the Llano in its southern reaches, and Col. Ranald Mackenzie of the army in 1872 crossed the northern portions to Forts Sumner and Bascom in New Mexico.

Such activity suggests that routes of *La Pista de Agua Vida* were busy. Indeed, some were. In 1832, for example, Bill Williams, an ornery and grizzled old mountain man, and Albert Pike, an adventure-loving Yankee who during the Civil War became a Confederate diplomat, led a party of forty-five fur trappers eastward from New Mexico down Blackwater Draw and Canyon del Rescate (now lower Yellow House Canyon) to the rolling plains below the Llano Estacado. They had little success in finding beaver dams, but the Blackwater route they followed spread some fourteen horse trails wide.

Clearly, American Indians, Spanish explorers, comancheros, and American soldiers and traders crossed the Llano Estacado's remarkable flatness along routes of *La Pista de Agua Vida*. The routes provided water necessary for traversing the grass-dominated but often desert-like plains, and, moreover, over time some of the trails became wide and well-marked. *La Pista de Agua Vida* as its name implies was for centuries an indispensable trail of living water.

"Original map by John Michael Harter and used with his permission with additions by Mary Anne Dingus and created for the Sibley Nature Center."

The Romance of the Range

By Edward Everett Dale

[Condensed from the 1929 Year Book. Edward Everett Dale (1879-1972) was born near Keller in Tarrant County. He worked as a cowboy and teacher before earning a PhD in history, with a dissertation directed by Frederick Jackson Turner. Dale was a professor at the University of Oklahoma from 1924-1942, and is credited with helping train some of Oklahoma's finest historians, including Angie Debo.]

The business of herding or live stock raising is one of the most ancient and honorable of all industries. The Bible is filled with allusions to pastoral life, and the strife of Cain and Abel has been characterized as the first example of warfare between range and grange.

Not only is herding one of the earliest pursuits of mankind, but there has ever clustered about the business and those engaged in it something of the glamour of romance, of daring deeds and high adventure. Badger Clark in his poem "From Town" has expressed this in picturesque fashion when he says:

"Since the days when Lot and Abram
Split the Jordon range in halves
Just to fix it so their punchers wouldn't fight.
Since old Jacob skinned his dad-in-law of six
year's crop of calves
Then hit the trail for Canaan in the night,
There has been a taste for battle
Mongst the men who follow cattle
And a love of doing things that's wild and
strange,
And the warmth of Laban's words
When he minded his speckled herds
Still is useful in the language of the range."¹

Since that time many rival ranchmen have "split the range in halves" to keep down strife among their punchers; more than one enterprising young man has "skinned his dad-in-law" of a liberal share of various crops of calves, the taste for battle has manifested itself in many places resulting in "wild and strange doings," while not a few men who have missed a portion of their "speckled herds" have resorted to language even more forceful and picturesque than was included in the vocabulary of the ancient Laban.

It is not in the old world alone, however, that the herding industry has been crowned by a halo of romance. The business in America has not been lacking in that respect, and the rise and fall of the range cattle industry on the western plains constitutes one of the most remarkable epochs in all American history.

Ranching has existed in the United States as a frontier pursuit since very early times. In its long westward march, the final phase is even more startling and has no parallel in the economic history of any other nation in the world. Soon after the Civil War this comparatively narrow belt of grazing hitherto fairly constant as to width and area, suddenly



shot out into the wilderness and spread with amazing rapidity until it covered a region larger than all that part of the United States devoted to crop raising. This region became the so-called "cow country" where ranching was carried on for several years upon a scale vastly greater than ever before until the homesteaders advancing slowly but steadily westward had at last invaded nearly every portion of it and taken over all of the lands suitable for cultivation.

A number of factors influenced this sudden rise of the "cow country." The close of the Civil War released from the armies many young men who came west in search of adventure and fortune. Over the western plains roamed countless herds of buffalo, a potential source of food, clothing and shelter for the fierce Indian tribes that occupied that region. Buffalo hunting became at once a popular and profitable pursuit. Within two decades the great herds had been exterminated, and the Indians finding their food supply cut off, removed to reservations. The plains were thus left open to occupation by herds of the cattlemen and the latter were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity presented to them.

Even so, ranching could not have spread so rapidly had there not existed a great reservoir from which animals might be drawn to stock these western plains. That reservoir was the great state of Texas. Even from earliest times everything in Texas seemed to promote live stock raising. Range, climate, and the land system were all distinctly favorable to grazing. The early Spanish settlers brought with them cattle of the lean, long horned type that the Moors had raised on the plains of Andalusia for a thousand years. These increased rapidly and American settlers coming into Texas brought with them cattle of the North European breeds. These crossed with the original Spanish type to produce animals that were larger and heavier than the Spanish cattle, and yet with the endurance and ability to take care of themselves so necessary on the open range.

The Civil War came and the Texans, "ever eager for a fight or a frolic," and sometimes willing to regard the fight as a frolic, hurried

away to join the armies of the Confederacy. For four years they fought bravely for the Lost Cause proving their mettle upon many a bloody field. During all this time Texas was less touched than any other state of the Confederacy by the ravages of war. While the South continued to suffer, the cattle on the broad plains of Texas grew fat and sleek and increased rapidly under the favorable conditions of range and climate. The result was that when the war closed and the Texans returned to their homes they found their ranges fairly overflowing with the fine, fat cattle for which there was no market, though cattle and beef were selling at high prices in the north. Stock cattle could be bought on the Texas prairies in 1866 from one to three dollars a head while fat beeves sold at five to seven dollars. Even in 1867 three year old steers were quoted as having an average value of \$86.00 in Massachusetts, \$68.57 in New York, \$70.58 in New Jersey, \$40.19 in Illinois, \$38.40 in Kansas, \$46.32 in Nebraska, and \$9.46 in Texas.²

Out of this condition grew the so-called "northern drive." The Texas soldiers from the Confederate armies mostly reached home in the summer of 1865, too late to attempt to drive their cattle to market that year. In the spring of 1866, however, large herds were collected preparatory to starting north as soon as spring was sufficiently advanced to make the venture practical. Most of these herds belonged to Texas ranchmen who were themselves driving them to market, though in some cases northern men came to Texas and purchased herds to drive up the trail.

Just how many cattle were started north from Texas in the spring and summer of 1866 is uncertain, but estimates made a few years later place the number at 260,000 head. The drive proved on the whole disastrous in the extreme. Inured as the Texans were to privation and hardship and accustomed as they were to handling cattle, few had at this time much experience in driving herds for long distances on the trail. Accounts left by some of these early drovers are little better than one long wail of trouble and misery. Rain, mud, swollen

rivers, stampedes, hunger and dissatisfied men are but a few of the difficulties of which they complained before Red River was reached. Beyond that stream there was added to all these miseries endless annoyance from Indians who demanded payment for grass consumed by the cattle, stampeded herds at night in order to collect money for helping gather them again, and in other ways proved a constant source of worry and vexation. The war had but recently ended and conditions along the border and in the Indian Territory were lawless and unsettled. Whites, thieves and outlaws, together with pilfering Indians, stole horses, mules, and cattle making it necessary to be watchful at all times.

When the drovers reached the Kansas or Missouri line, they found themselves confronted by fresh difficulties. The settlers along the border of these states had suffered losses from Texas fever when some small herds had been driven up from the south just before the war, and were determined not to risk a repetition of such loss. Armed bands of farmers met the drovers at the border and warned them that they would not be permitted to proceed, at least until cold weather had come to lessen the danger.

The question was complicated by the mysterious and subtle nature of the disease, Texas fever, which the northerners professed to fear. We know now that it is a malady to which southern cattle are immune, but which they carry to northern cattle by means of the fever ticks which drop from their bodies and attach themselves to other animals. The Texans asserted that their cattle were perfectly healthy and that it was absurd that they could bring disease to others. The Kansans declared that absurd or not when Texas cattle came near their own animals, the latter sickened and died, though they were forced to admit they did not understand why.

Yet numerous theories were evolved. It was declared that a shrub of Texas wounded the feet of the animals and made sores from which pus exuded to poison the grass. Others asserted that the breath of Texas cattle upon the grass brought disease to other animals, a kind of bovine halitosis which no scruples of delicacy prevented the Kansans mentioning in no uncertain terms. Some felt that cattle ticks might be responsible, but most people ridiculed such a theory.³

The northerners did not, however, concern themselves much with theories. It was enough that their cattle had died in the past and might die in the future. They were fixed in their determination to take no chances.

There were conflicts in some cases. Sharp conflicts in which the Texans far from home and the support of their friends and kindred were foredoomed to failure. Drovers were assaulted and beaten, some were killed and in a few cases small herds of animals were shot down and killed to the last animal. Some turned back into the Indian Territory and moved westward until far beyond all agricultural settlements, then turned north and continued until opposite their destination in Iowa or St.

Joseph. Some of these succeeded in some measure, but the long drive and heavy losses seldom left them with enough animals to make the venture profitable. Of the 260,000 head of cattle driven north in the summer of 1866 very few reached a profitable market.⁴

The Texas ranchmen were almost in despair, but the following year was to see a solution of their problem. At this time the Kansas Pacific Railway was building west up the valley of the Kaw and had reached the town of Salina. In the spring of 1867 Joseph G. McCoy, a prominent and wealthy cattle feeder of Illinois, came to Kansas City and journeying westward in their railway to Abilene in Dickenson County, decided to establish there a great cattle depot and shipping point.

Abilene was far west of all agricultural settlements. Here McCoy built a hotel and large shipping pens. He made with the railway contract by which he was to have a share of the freight receipts from Texas cattle shipped to Kansas City and then a rider south to seek out herds on the trail and tell the owners to bring them to Abilene. From Abilene they might be shipped to Kansas City, and thence to Chicago or any other market that seemed desirable.



Photos courtesy of the Southwest Collection.

The advantages of this plan of reaching market were soon apparent. The route followed was far to the west of the old trail to Baxter Springs, and so avoided the wooded and mountainous areas of eastern Oklahoma as well as most of the Indians, and above all the hostile agricultural population of eastern Kansas. Late in the season as the project was started, 35,000 head of cattle were shipped from Abilene in 1867, while the following year of 1868, 75,000 head were brought up the trail. By 1869 the number had risen to 350,000 and in 1871 the best estimates indicate that 600,000 head were driven from Texas to the cow towns of Kansas.⁵

Abilene was only temporarily the great Texas shipping point. As the settlers began to come in to take homesteads near it, the cattle trade shifted farther west. New railroads were building and new cow towns sprang up. Among these were Newton, Ellsworth, Wichita, Caldwell, and especially Dodge City.

Most important of all the 'cow towns' was Dodge City which for ten years was the greatest cattle market in the world. To it flocked the gamblers, saloon keepers and lawless riff-raff of the underworld to meet and prey upon the Texas cowboys who arrived with the summer's wages in their pockets and a thirst accumulated during the months of toil on the hot and dusty trail.

Dodge City's first jail was a well fifteen feet deep, into which drunks were lowered and left until sober and ready to leave town. Two grave yards were early established, "Boot Hill" on one side of town where were buried those men who died with their boots on, and another cemetery on the opposite side for those who died peacefully in bed. The latter cemetery remained small, but "Boot Hill" soon came to have a large and constantly growing population.

The first trail drivers who took herds from Texas to the cow towns of Kansas or to the northern Indian agencies to fill beef contracts frequently knew little of the region to be traversed and had little to guide them. Yet no trail boss ever turned back. He merely set his wagon each night with the tongue pointing to the north star and the next morning pushed on with a grim determination to make his ten or fifteen miles that day. In a real sense he "hitched his wagon to a star," and did not shrink from difficulties and dangers.

In time, however, certain well defined trails were established. Prominent among these was the Western Trail crossing Red River at Doans' Store and extending north past Fort Supply to Dodge City. East of this was the famous Chisholm Trail. Still farther east was the West Shawnee Trail and beyond that the East Shawnee Trail that crossed into Kansas near Baxter Springs.

During the two decades following the Civil War a vast stream of Texas cattle poured southward over these trails. The drive to the Kansas cowtowns, moreover, frequently became but the first half of a drive from Texas to ranges on the northern plains. The possibilities of that region for ranching became apparent to many men very soon after the close of the war. Some men with small herds established themselves along the line of the newly constructed Union Pacific Railway. Others living near the overland trail established small herds through the purchase of lame and foot sore cattle from emigrants. The development of mining camps in the Rocky Mountains brought in men with cattle to furnish beef to the miners while the government made contracts with cattlemen to supply beef to the Indians on northern reservations and large herds were driven up the trail for that purpose. As the buffalo disappeared from the plains, however, leaving large areas of attractive pasture lands without animals to consume the grass, many men began to establish ranches in various parts of Wyoming, Colorado, Dakota, and Montana, and these frequently purchased herds in the Kansas cow towns to stock their new ranges. The cattle industry was spreading with marvelous rapidity. It was found that the animals grew fatter and heavier on the northern plains than they did in Texas. As a result the mature animals from that state were shipped to market for slaughter, but ten of thousands of younger cattle were sold to northern buyers to stock rangers on the north plains. Eventually the drives came to consist largely of young steers for this purpose. A



division of labor was growing up. Texas, because of its low altitude and warm climate came to be regarded as a great breeding ground, while the high plains of the north became a great feeding and maturing ground. Cattle feeders from the corn belt began to purchase western steers for their feed pens. Profits grew and the ranch cattle business grew proportionately.

By the last 70's an interest in the range cattle of the United States had extended itself to Europe. In 1875 Timothy C. Eastman of New York began the shipment of dressed beef to England. Eastman had purchased outright the patent for the new "Bate Process" of refrigeration, by which beef was hung in refrigerator rooms and kept at a temperature of about 38 degrees Fahrenheit by means of cold air circulated by fans.

The first shipment by Eastman was in October 1875. In that month he sent 36,000 pounds of beef to England to be followed by the same quantity in November, and by 134,000 pounds in December. By April, 1876, his shipments had risen to over a million pounds a month; by September to over two million, and in December to more than three million.⁶ Other men in New York as well as some in Philadelphia, took up the business. In 1877 the shipments of dressed beef to Europe, mostly to England, was nearly fifty million pounds. In 1880 this had risen to eighty-four million and in 1881 to a hundred and six million pounds.⁷ This trade was accompanied by the annual shipment of many thousand head of live cattle.

As the trade grew, markets for American beef were established in many British cities and as the supply grew in volume the English and Scotch cattle raisers became alarmed as they saw their business threatened by this competition of American meat.

In 1877 the *Scotsman*, a Scotch newspaper devoted largely to the agricultural interests of North Britain, sent to America James McDonald, a prominent writer on its staff, with instructions to investigate the live stock business of the United States, and make reports in the form of a series of articles for publication. These articles described the great ranches of the West, and told in flowing terms the great profits of the industry which it was stated averaged in most cases as much as 25% annually.⁸

Canny Scotch and British business men had already seen the possibilities of ranching in America as a field for investment. In 1870 the

Scottish American Investment Company had been founded by W. J. Menzies. It financed a number of cattle companies in the Great Plains area including the Wyoming Cattle Ranch Company and Western Ranches Limited. Another great Scottish syndicate formed early was the Scottish American Mortgage Company, which established the Prairie Cattle Company, one of the largest enterprises in the West.

During the next three or four years many companies were formed and a vast stream of Scotch and British capital was poured into the West to promote the range cattle industry. Besides the cattle companies previously mentioned Scottish capital founded numerous other ranch enterprises. Prominent among these were the Matador, the Hansford Land and Cattle Company, the Texas Land and Cattle Company, the Swan Land and Cattle Company, and numerous others.

By 1882 it was asserted that not less than thirty million dollars of English and Scotch capital had been invested in ranching on the western plains.⁹ Not a few of the investors came over to give their personal attention to the business, and with them came others from the continent of Europe. Prominent among the latter were the Marquis de Mores, a French nobleman, and Baron von Richthofen, ancestor of the famous German ace. Among the English and the Scotch were the Adairs, Murdo McKenzie, John Clay and a host of others.

Along with the foreigners there came to the western plains an ever increasing swarm of enterprising young men from the eastern part of the United States. Young college men, among whom Theodore Roosevelt may be mentioned as a conspicuous example, hastened west to engage in the cattle business.

An enthusiasm for ranching amounting almost to a craze swept over the country. United States senators, representatives, and judges were financially interested in range cattle, as were bankers, lawyers and manufacturers. A machinery was built up for financing the business. Great cattle exchange banks and loan companies were established. The great stream of Texas cattle flowed steadily northward in spite of quarantine regulations and fluctuations in prices, and spread itself over the northern plains until the most remote ranges had been occupied. By the middle 80's the cattle business had reached its zenith and the vast cow country reached from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border, and from the western edge of agricultural settlements to the Rocky Mountains and far beyond.

So came into existence the "cow country." A pastoral empire greater than any of its kind the world had ever seen, on whose broad plains grazed millions of cattle cared for by men

whose lives and deeds will be heralded in song and story so long as the American nation shall endure.

Throughout the whole vast region conditions of life and work were somewhat similar, yet the industry rose so rapidly and suffered such a speedy decline that it never became entirely standardized. As a result generalizations are always difficult and are never more than approximately correct. An extremely technical business that was little understood except by those actually engaged in it, myths and misunderstandings with respect to ranching have been all too common.

Democratic as were the men of the cow country, that region nevertheless presented the picture of a curious kind of "American feudalism," in many ways not unlike that of medieval Europe. The great ranchman built his ranch house or headquarters which might be compared to the baronial castle, his cattle roamed over an area larger than that of many a principality of Europe; his bold riders were as numerous as were the men of arms of many a petty German princeling. The brand of XIT, the Spur, Frying Pan or JA were more widely known perhaps than were the bleeding heart of the Douglas, the clenched hand and dagger of the Kilpatricks, or the white lion of the Howards. The raids of Indians, or white cattle thieves, strife with fence cutters or episodes like the Lincoln County War, furnished quite as much excitement as did the forays of the moss troopers along the Scottish border. The live stock associations bore some resemblance to the federations entered into by groups of old world nobles, and while the tilt or tournament did not exist, the rodeo or roping contest furnished a very fair substitute.

Yet with all of these similarities to feudal Europe, there were striking differences. There was little of show, formality or ceremony and complete democracy was the universal rule. Cattle baron, cowpuncher, cook and horse wrangler rode, ate, worked and played together upon terms of absolute equality. Circumstances had made one the boss and the other, the "hand" today, but tomorrow or next month or next year, the situation might be reversed.

Little has been written about the great leaders of the cow country and yet their influence upon American history has been enormous. They were men of vision and had the energy and strength of purpose to be willing to endure all manner of privations and dangers in order to make their dreams come true.

As for the cowboy, the most picturesque figure among all the children of the Great West, he has received better or at least more voluminous treatment at the hands of writers. Yet it must be admitted that much which has been written about the cowboy is untrue. He is sometimes pictured as a sort of modern Sir Galahad, a knight without stain and a champion without reproach, who rode about slaying villains and rescuing damsels in distress. By others he is described as a rough, wild, and

lawless creature, crude and uncouth in speech and manner. Both views are equally distorted and incorrect.

"Just folks," remarked an old cowboy. "Just common every day bow-legged humans! That's cowpunchers." The description fits. The cowboy was after all not unlike any other young man who lived an active and at times a somewhat hard and adventurous life in the open. For while his work sometimes brought long periods of comparative ease and leisure, it also brought periods of terrific exertion, of hardship and privation, of exposure to cold and rain the "bright face of danger." Such being the case he learned to take life as it came. Complaints could not change conditions, so why complain? Unconsciously he became a philosopher. He ate thankfully the flaky sour dough biscuit and juicy beef steak in time of plenty and tightened his belt with a grin in time of famine.

Happy-go-lucky and full of the joy of living, he sang and whistled at his work and play whether it was a bright morning in spring when he cantered over the green flower spangled prairies to make a friendly visit or a cold, rainy November night when he must crawl from between his wet blankets at the glad hour of two a. m. and circle slowly around a restless herd until daylight.

The cowboy was light hearted and frivolous at times, and he was often lonely. He was religious, too, after a fashion and according to his own way. He lived in the open air in God's big out of doors. He had seen men die with their boots on in most unpleasant fashion, and the thought of death and the world beyond grows strongly familiar when one lives close to it for so many years. This deeply religious nature is expressed in a little poem written by a Texas cowpuncher:

"Oh, Lord, I never lived where churches grow
I like Creation better as it stood
That day you finished it so long ago
Then looked upon your work and called it good.
I known that others find You in the light
That's sifted down through tinted window panes,
And yet I seem to feel you near to-night
In the dim, quiet starlight of the Plains."

The words of but few cowboy rhymes rise to such heights of poetic grandeur as this. Many of them deal with the life and work of the rough riders. Some men formulated tunes as well as words; they improvised, they sang parodies on the then popular songs of the day. Carrying still further the comparison of feudal Europe it may be noted that some men with good voices and a great repertoire of songs became almost famous throughout large sections of the cow country. They were welcomed gladly at every camp and round up wagon because of their ability as entertainers. They were troubadours, wandering minstrels, and their songs were of wide variety. Many were of the type just described; some were ballads dealing with certain individuals that had lived beyond the law, but who had possessed personal qualities much admired by some of these wild riders of the prairies:

"Jesse left a wife
To mourn all her life
Three children they were brave
But a dirty little coward
Shot Mr. Howard
And laid Jesse James in his grave."

Outlaws as they were heroes of these songs, had many admirers. Legends not unlike those that cluster about the names Robin Hood, Rob Roy, and Captain Kidd were associated with them.

Picturesque as was the life of the cow country of the middle eighties, it was doomed to a speedy passing. Its rise had been spectacular but its decline was hardly less spectacular, and certainly was much more tragic. The year of 1885 is the high water mark of the business. During the summer of that year President Cleveland issued a proclamation ordering all cattle to be removed within forty days from the lands of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Indians in what is now Oklahoma. These 210,000 head from the great reservation were thrown upon already over-stocked ranges nearby and the following winter saw heavy losses. Prices were still high in the spring, however, and the drive north out of Texas was heavy. Ten of thousands of head were moved up the trail and spread out in the most reckless fashion imaginable over the already heavily stocked ranges of Wyoming, Montana and Dakota.

Winter came early and laid his icy hand upon the northern prairies. A terrific blizzard bringing sleet and snow came roaring out of the north and the thermometer went down as though it would never stop. The cattle drifted before the bitter winds into ravines and coulees where they died by thousands. Heavy snowfall and intense cold continued throughout the winter. Hunger maddened cattle gathered along the little streams and gnawed the bark from the willows as high as they could reach before they at last gave up the struggle and lay down to die.¹⁰

Spring came to find every cattle man on the northern plains flat broke. Swan, Sturgis, Kohrs, Granville Stuart, and a host of others either failed or were in the shakiest possible condition. Theodore Roosevelt quit the cattle business leaving his range strewn with bones.

No such winter had ever before been known in the history of the cow country. Charlie Russell, the cowboy artist, was in charge of a herd of five thousand head belonging to a group of eastern capitalists. Toward spring his employers wrote him a letter asking how the cattle were doing. Russell's painting which he sent as a reply has become famous. It is a picture of a gaunt and lonely old cow in the midst of great snow drifts, standing with drooping head like a bovine peri at the gate of Paradise, and in the corner Russell had written the legend, "The Last of Five Thousand."

Most of the northern ranchmen never recovered from the effects of that frightful winter. Losses of fifty and sixty per cent were common. Eighty and ninety were hardly exceptional. Many lenders who had been financing the industry were panic stricken. In a desperate attempt to pay interest and to liquidate a part of their loans, ranchmen poured a stream of lean and unmerchantable cattle into the markets. Prices went down until cattle would hardly be accepted as a gift, especially since the summer of 1887 was very dry and crops on the corn belt almost a failure. There was no demand for feeders and the range cattle were too thin for slaughter. A great industry was prostrate and recovery was slow and uncertain.

As a matter of fact the range cattle business never again rose to the heights it had attained in the middle eighties. Its glory had departed forever.

The cow country was changing. Trunk lines of railroads heading out from the great markets had penetrated Texas making it possible to ship cattle to market by rail. The great drives began to lessen in volume. A realization that the northern ranges had been over stocked, the competition of the railroads, the stringent quarantine laws of Kansas, and the general depression of the industry all served to check the northern drive.

Pioneer settlers in prairie schooners were moreover drifting westward in large numbers and taking up homesteads in the range cattle area. Their little dugouts and sod houses appeared almost overnight on the more fertile lands in various parts of the cow country. Thus Indian lands of western Oklahoma were opened to settlement and a great area changed from grazing to crop growing.

Brief periods of prosperity came again to the ranching industry at times, but the magnitude of the earlier operations steadily declined. Some of the big ranches began to sub-divide their holdings and sell out lands in tracts to suit the purchaser. Fenced pastures, winter feeding and small scale production became the rule.

The range was shrinking, cattle disappeared from many regions, and farmers armed with hoe and spade sprang up on all sides as though an unseen hand had planted dragon's teeth on every hill and in every valley. Steadily the ranchmen were forced out of the agricultural lands and pushed back into the barren deserts, the hills and mountains, or onto forest reserves and Indian reservations. Here the business still exists though large scale operations are about gone, and the life at its best or worst, depending upon the view point, is only a faded and washed out copy of the life of the earlier days.

The men who once rode the boundless ranges of the Great Plains, or who followed the long herds up the dusty trail are with few exceptions no more. Gone with the things of long ago they have, to quote their own language, "passed up the dim narrow trail to that new range which never fails, and where quarantine regulations do not exist"¹¹

The period of the range cattle industry constitutes in a sense the heroic age of the great West. Those of us who know something of it at first hand look back upon its passing with a tinge of regret. Yet we realize that society is never static, never still. The cowboy has given place to the settler, the city builder, the manufacturer, the merchant, the scholar. The tale of their rise in the West is another story, but there, too, lies romance.

¹ Badger Clark, *Sun and Saddle Leather*.

² Monthly reports of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1867, pp.108-109.

³ Second Annual Report of Missouri State Board of Agriculture, pp 16-18.

⁴ Joseph Nemo, *The Range and Cattle Business of the United States*. (Washington 1885) p. 28.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶ Report of the Commission of Agriculture, 1876, p. 314.

⁷ Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture, 1876, p. 320.

⁸ McDonald, *Food from the Far West*.

⁹ Report Wyoming Stock Growers Association, 1882, p. 19.

¹⁰ John Clay, *My Life on the Range*, pp.177-178.

¹¹ Minutes of the Texas and Southwest Cattle Raiser's Association.

NEWS AROUND WEST TEXAS

Jean Stuntz, Professor of History at West Texas A&M University was recently approved to become Chair of the Department of History. Stuntz is a long-time member of the West Texas Historical Association, and has served as both board member and Book Review Editor .

Books by three of our members were recently reviewed in local newspapers. **Patrick Dearen's** *To Hell or the Pecos* was featured in the October 22nd issue of the *Midland Reporter-Telegram*. **Bill O'Neal's** *The Johnson-Sims Feud: Romeo and Juliet, West Texas Style*, a tale about a feud between ranching families right before the Civil War was featured in the October 28th issue of the *Brazosport Facts*. **Peter R. Rose's** book, *The Reckoning: the Triumph on the Texas Outlaw Frontier* was featured in Ross McSwain's October 6th article in the *San Angelo Standard-Times*.

Scott White's latest book, *Getting By in Hard Time: Letters from the Pitchfork Ranch*, gives a rare view on the running of the Pitchfork Ranch in the late 1930s during a time of economic depression and drought. His other recent publication, *Viento*, centers around interviews conducted about ranching and wind energy.

On September 29, 2012, as part of the Adobe Walls Trek event, **Paul Carlson** gave a talk on the book he co-authored with **Tom Crum** called *Myth, Memory and Massacre* about the recapture of Cynthia Ann Parker, mother of Comanche Chief Quannah Parker, and **Holle Humphries**, who is a Quannah Parker Trail Steering Committee member, spoke about the Quannah Parker Trail and the trail of arrows throughout the region. Afterwards, there was a trip to the Adobe Walls sites accompanied by presentations by Dr. Jeff Indek, Curator of Archeology at Panhandle-Plains Museum, and Mr. Alvin Lynn, renowned West Texas history researcher.

UPCOMING:

April 18-20, 2013 - the **Historical Society of New Mexico History Conference** in Las Cruces, New Mexico. A gathering of several hundred historians, history buffs, students and teachers at the Arizona/New Mexico Joint History Conference. This will be an exciting event for all those interested in the two states' histories and that of the greater Southwest. The

Conference is presented by the Arizona History Convention and the Historical Society of New Mexico, along with several local partners. Conference program sessions will include four concurrent tracks and a total of about 75 presentations.

May 22-25, 2013 - Annual meeting of the **Society of Southwest Archivists** in Austin, Texas.

August 11-17, 2013 - Joint annual meeting of the **Council of State Archivists** and the **Society of American Archivists** in New Orleans, Louisiana.

September 26-28, 2013 - the 51st annual meeting of the **East Texas Historical Association** in Nacogdoches, Texas at the Fredonia Hotel, downtown in the "Oldest Town in Texas." For more information visit our website at easttexashistorical.org or phone at 936-468-2407.

October 9-12, 2013 - the annual **Western Historical Association Meeting** in Tucson, Arizona. "Vital Signs: Earth, Power, Lives," will take place at the Westin La Paloma Resort and Spa. Conference registration will open in July 2013. Registration prices are TBD in the coming months.

November 8-9, 2013 - **Center for Big Bend Studies** annual meeting at Sul Ross University in Alpine.



Vice President J. Tillapaugh presides over the WTHA session at the Center for Big Bend Studies conference.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

The **East Texas Historical Association** invites proposals for papers and sessions for its annual fall meeting to be held in Nacogdoches, TX from September 26-28, 2013. Deadline for Submission: May 1, 2013. Presenters will be notified of acceptance by June 3, 2013. Electronic submissions are highly preferred. Send proposals to: Program Chairs Gene Preuss at PreussG@uhd.edu or Perky Beisel at

pbeisel@sfasu.edu or by mail to: East Texas Historical Association, PO Box 6223, SFA Station, Nacogdoches, TX 75962.

Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences is soliciting manuscripts for publication. Great Plains Research publishes original research and scholarly reviews of important advances in the natural and social sciences with relevance to and special emphases on environmental, economic and social issues in the Great Plains. It includes reviews of books and reports on symposia and conferences that included sessions on topics pertaining to the Great Plains. Papers must be comprehensible to a multidisciplinary community of scholars and lay readers who share interest in the region. Stimulating review and synthesis articles will be published if they inform, educate, and highlight both current status and further research directions. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>.

In memory...

Ross McSwain passed away at the age of 82. Ross wrote a weekly column, "Out Yonder" that ran in the *San Angelo Standard-Times* for more than 30 years, published eight books of nonfiction and was a well-known historian. McSwain was a friend and mentor to many West Texas writers. He was a long time member of the West Texas Historical Association and a member of the executive board. He left behind wife, Jean, and about 20 members of his extended family.

Robert M. Burton, 58, was found dead at his home in Snyder. Burton, a native of Hamlin, graduated from Texas Tech. He was known wherever rail fans gathered for his articles and research on the Santa Fe railroad. He presented many papers to the West Texas Historical Association and is listed in many railroad history books as a valued contributor.

WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Looking Back. . .

“Introductory” to the 1929 *Year Book*:

The interest of Southwestern students in Texas history has been augmented in recent years as the result of bringing to light many important facts relating to West Texas history. From the time of the bold Spanish conquerors to the disappearance of the Southwestern frontier, the colorful changes which have taken place in this part of the state have been such as to astonish research students. The battling of the forces of civilization against those of the wild West contributed much to the historical lore of West Texas. Much of this has been recorded by the historians of the Southwest, but much yet remains to be written. It is the purpose of the West Texas Historical Association in its *Year Book* to blaze the way and reveal the many possibilities in connection with that yet to be done. To this end the Publication Committee is happy to present to the lovers of Texas history the in the 1929 *Year Book*.

May we continue to “blaze the way” and “reveal the many possibilities” yet to be discussed regarding West Texas history.

THE CYCLONE

*A Newsletter for members of the West
Texas Historical Association*

Editors: Jim & Becky Matthews

Published twice a year by the West Texas Historical Association, Lubbock, Texas. Members also receive the *Year Book*, published each fall, containing articles, news notes, and book reviews about West Texas history. Annual membership fees are \$10 for students, \$30 regular, \$35 family, \$50 sustaining, \$25 institutional/library. All back issues of the *Year Book*, published since 1925, are available for \$15 each.

Browse back issues of the Cyclone at our website <www.wtha.org> maintained by webmaster Lynn Whitfield.