

[Cattle Shipping and Trading Posts]

Interview

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On The Pecos, by J. F. Hinkle Published 1935, page 7 and personal knowledge of writer.

CATTLE AND SHIPPING AND TRADING POSTS

IN THE EARLY DAYS

From 1885, until the middle nineties Roswell was the cattle center for all the spring round-ups and spring drives to shipping points.

Round-up wagons and cattle and cowboys in their high-heeled boots, leather "chaps" and ten "gallon hats", would come in from the range from as far north as Fort Sumner, and

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south as Pecos City Texas a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles. Some of them often had not seen a woman, or a postoffice or store for as long as six months or more. Roswell the "blow-off-town" with its one adobe store lighted by two kerosene lamps with tin reflectors at the back, which were hung at each end of the store, one near the postoffice which was run in a corner of the store, and one hotel of the town also constructed of adobe, seemed a "City of Bright Lights" to the care-free cowboys so long away from civilization. C18 - 6/5/41 - N. Mex.

The ones who had not disposed of their monthly wage - from twenty-five to thirty dollars - would usually engage a "room" at the hotel, which would be a bed in the attic which was sleeping quarters for all guests. Cowboys, doctors, lawyers and an occasional Territorial Governor (George Curry) would share the conveniences or inconveniences, with no [favorites?] shown no matter what their social standing might be.

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If there were any church meetings during round up times in Roswell or "bailien", it made little difference which to the cowboys, they would be there literally "with bells on" (jingling spur) which they never removed for church service, or the dance. On one occasion, during the song service at church, when the organist (Miss Mabel Brown, or John Stone's little daughter [?], they took turns at the organ) started out in a beginning of the offertory a cowboy solemnly rose to his feet, nearly every one thought to sing but instead, much to the amusement of the congregation, he selected a clear space and began to jig, or danced the clog. Having had a little too much to drink, after seeing his dance was seemingly appreciated, it was a hard job to get him to [?], and a chance to "pass the hat". Needless to say, the hat was pretty well filled by the tipsy cowboy as well as his companions, who always contributed the lion's share of the collection.

On another occasion, during a revival meeting conducted by Evangelist Abe [?], which the writer of this article attended, in the spring of 1894, the cowboys gave liberally toward the collection for paying expenses of the meeting, then the cowboy who had danced in church

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some months before, seized the largest of the "ten gallon hats", and took up a collection for the church bell. It became known throughout Chaves County as, "The Cowboy Bell", and may be seen today occupying a place of honor on the lawn of the [??] Church South, on the high terraced corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Second Street.

When the round-up came to town, it was hailed so enthusiastically with shouts of joy from the young people - "The roundup's Coming!", as I remember shouting, when a child on the Mississippi River when a boat appeared "The steamboat's Coming!" for the "chuck" wagon dinners 3 or suppers, if one was fortunate enough to stand in favor with the cowboys, and knew they would receive invitations to then, were looked forward to eagerly by both young and old people of Roswell.

The round up wagon, "chuck", is served at the noon meal, on pioneers day at the end of the trail or parade, during the fall every year in Roswell, and the barbecued beef and mutton, "son-of-a-gun", ice cream and coffee, served to the "old timers" is hard to beat, but somehow it lacks something in the flavor - that can not be reproduced - of the old chuck-wagon meals of stews, prunes, frijoles and sour-dough biscuit cooked on a camp-fire, by a chuck-wagon cook.

"There was a [?] in the cattle business in 1887, and during the fall of that year the C A Bar Cattle Company", (J. [?]. Hinkle being manager) "drove a herd of cattle to [?] Texas and shipped them to Chicago and the didn't much more than pay the freight, and for the next few years it was almost impossible to sell cattle at any price", said James [?]. Hinkle.

"One party about that time shipped a train load of steers to market and they drew on him for the [?]. During those years we drove one and often two herds of around fifteen to twenty hundred head to market each year and the average price [was?] [?], eleven and fourteen dollars for one, [????] old steers".

Compared with the price in 1868 that John Chisum received, averaging eighteen dollars a head, it seems that the cattle business was not very promising and comparing John

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Chisum's average price per head with the twenty-five to thirty dollars per head paid at the present time, [?], the cattle industry has improved and far ahead of ahead of what it ever [???] in the Southeastern New Mexico.