

Frank Miller

"Where The Old Western Spirit Lingers"

Borden County Round-Up

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The cowboy has had his interpreters, plenty of them, yet today he is a very much misunderstood and misrepresented character. Borrowing a lot of material for this story from that rare and excellent book, "Prose and Poetry of the Livestock Industry," published in 1905, at a time when cowboys were still working the open ranges of Texas, we are here giving the reader an insight into his real character and appearance.

Among the old time cowboys the Texians and those of Texian antecedents were the most efficient for all around work on the range and on the trail. Nearly all of them lived and moved as if they had been born in the saddle and seldom been out of it since. They hesitated about doing anything out-doors on foot, and if they had to go but a few yards they would mount their horse for the journey—a habit, however, that was but little less fixed among the entire fraternity. While all cowboys had to be good horsemen, the Texian was, it would seem, as skilled and daring a rider as he could have been were he and his pony grown together. Of him Sweet and Knox, in their book, "On a Mexican Mustang Through Texas," published in 1883 say: The cowboy is a man attached to a gigantic pair of spurs. He inhabits the prairies of Texas, and is successfully raised as far north as the 30th degree of latitude. He is in season all the year around, and is generally found on the back of a small mustang pony "wild and savage as a colt of the Ukraine."

Between the cowboy's riding and that of the Eastern man who exhibits himself on horseback in city parks or 'follows the hounds', no comparison can be made. It is only to be contrasted. It would seem that a better man of the plains never lived and certainly his ease, litheness, and gracefulness in the saddle contrasted with the usual trussed-up, apprehensive, and sometimes simian-like attitude of the park horsemen, made the latter appear about as ridiculous as some of the rigged out 'dude cowboys' who are frequently seen on the streets in these times. While the Texas cowboy had an elaborate vocabulary of forceful adjectives at his command he found himself unable fully to express the disdain with which he regarded the little pad-saddle—or "postage stamp saddle"—and the short hitched stirrups of the conventional rider. He would have none but the "real saddle," and his stirrups hung just enough above the length of his legs to afford his feet a firm hold in them. When riding he did not perch in his stirrups, but rested his body on the saddle and kept it there without letting daylight show under him; and it may be remarked here, this continues to be the ranchman's mode of riding, as well as that of all Western men who have occasion to mount a horse. In his large and comfortable saddle with its long-hitched stirrups the cowboy could do with ease and grace all that is possible to the conventional horseman, beside a multitude of things the latter would not dare attempt.

The cowboy's garb added much to their "picturesqueness" in the eyes of those who came from afar; and, indeed it was picturesque. As individual tastes among them varied only as to details, their working costume was about the same in every part of the cattle country. In the trail driving period and open range days the cowboys in the main were young

Texas Cowboys And Borden County Still Has Plenty

men, grizzled plainmen only, occasionally appearing among them. But consideration of the picturesque had nothing to do with fixing the characteristic dress of the cowboy. This, like its wearer, was an evolution, a product of conditions that was adapted to the service it had to render; and its wearer had no thought of real or imaginary theatrical effects the combination might produce. The broad-brimmed, soft felt hat, with the brim turned up in front, was to him the most serviceable known form of headgear; and this and his leather chaps were the most conspicuous features in the make-up of his working costume. His other clothing was such as he found "ready-made" in the clothing stores of the country towns. He wore a heavy, loose-fitting flannel shirt, with a handy pocket or two in it, and a large handkerchief, usually a red or blue bandana, tied around his neck. His trousers, which were kept in place by a belt, were tucked into the tops of his boots. His body covering was easy-fitting and free, but that of his feet were quite different. He would wear nothing but tight-fitting boots—the tighter the better in his estimation, and these boots must have very high heels. Their tightness and their lofty heel had a sort of crippling effect when he was upon the ground, and in walking he went sometimes with a kind of toddling gait. However, as the cowboys seldom walked and never very far, his foot-gear, uncomfortable as it would seem to have been, never troubled him much.

It has been said that the high heel of the cowboy's boot was for the purpose of keeping his foot from slipping through the stirrup, and thus putting him in an ugly predicament, should he be thrown by some mishap. But as many of them had "toe-fenders," or leather hoods, attached to the front of their stirrups that would prevent this, this explanation seems hardly to fit the case.

However, their clothing, including

their favorite boots, was satisfactory to them and, as a whole, was perfectly suited to their business in life. Their chaps were taken over from the Mexicans, but the rest of their apparel was developed by them along the lines of "natural selection."

The cowboy's strictly personal outfit, in the 1870s, was completed by the addition of a trustworthy revolver, usually of heavy calibre, that could be depended on in emergencies to open a way for daylight through the bodies of hostile creatures he encountered, including those of his own species; and a pair of huge spurs that rarely were used up to their full capacity for stirring up a horse or for punishing him. In the times when the Indians made the cowboy's life that of a soldier in war, as well as that of a herdsman, a carbine, or a short-barreled rifle, also was carried, slung to the saddle, and in those times he often had use for this weapon of longer range.

The cowboy's saddle was generally the pride of his heart and his willingness to spend his hard-earned money for what he regarded as a fine saddle usually ran into rank extravagance. For one that struck deep into his fancy he would eagerly give up his pay of several months. The old time cowboy's saddle was a heavy, strongly made affair, with both cantel and pommel very high, and with large skirts. Many of the saddles were provided with pockets or small bags for odds and ends of things. About the bridle there was nothing especially noteworthy excepting the heavy curb bit, which appeared to be rather cruel contrivance, but which was necessary in most cases in controlling the kind of horses used on the trail and the open range.

Those cowboys were absolutely fearless riders, and the breaking in and management of their half-wild and, at the start wholly rebellious steeds was a job that called for skill and courage. Riding broncs was only

one of the things he had to do, and he did it without thinking much about it. There were horses in every old range outfit that were as ugly and vicious when saddled up as any that ever have been seen in present day "rodeos," and some that were even more so—that became habitual fighters and pitched and plunged and bucked every time they were put under the saddle. But the cowboy of that period regarded an encounter with one of these merely as an incidental duty in a day's work.

In the days of the open and free range the cowboy often slept on the bare ground wrapped in his blankets, taking philosophically whatever sort of treatment the elements might see fit to bestow upon him. He ate his meals sitting on the ground, at the tail end of the chuck wagon that followed the herd, and his utensils in this service consisted of a tin plate, a tin cup, and sometimes a spoon and fork. His fare was as plain as his mode of life, but he found compensation for its lack of variety and the crudeness of his surroundings when "at table" in an appetite that had few equals and no superiors. Although he had thousands of cattle in his keeping, milk, cream, and butter were unknown to his commissariat. Of the range country in the old times it was said that "there are more cows and less butter, more rivers and less water, and you can see further and see less than in any country in the world."

In recent times the story writers have been turning to the cattle ranges of the West for their "material," and their "romances of the range" have become very popular. But the conditions in which the characters in many of these tales, and in the movies, are represented as living and moving are far from those which surrounded the cowboy of the old open range days. No matter how much there may be of "romance" in the present day description of it, there was precious little in the experience of the cowboy of half a century ago. Emerson Hough, in his book, "Story of the Cowboy,"—the old time cowboy—a story written in 1896, says: "The West has changed. The old days are gone. The house-dog sits on the hill where yesterday the coyote sang. The fences are short and small, and within them grow green things instead of gray. There are many smokes rising over the prairie, and they are wide and black instead of thin and blue. As we look out in the evening light from where we stand, we may see long parallels of the iron trail reaching out into the sunset. A little busy town lies near, framed with fields of grain ready for the harvesting. There are cattle; but not those of 'deformed aspect' which Coronado saw when he walked across this country in the gray of other days, but sleek, round beasts, which stand deep in crops their ancestors never saw. In the little town is the hurry and bustle of modern life, even here, upon the extreme edge of the well settled lands. For this is the West, or what is now known as the West. It is far out upon what may now, as well as any place, be called the frontier, though really the frontier is gone."

And with it has gone the old time cowboy, with his "ten dollar hoss and forty dollar saddle." Gone, too, are the old Texas long-horns, the old chuck wagon, the round-ups, and the long, dry drives on the trail.

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Short Hills, N. J. — A unique and practical charity is conducted by 40 women here. They collect thousands of unwanted eyeglasses from all over the country to provide better sight for the poor. Valuable metal is melted down and sold to buy new glasses usable plastic-rimmed glasses are tagged for the condition they correct and sent to overseas missions. Sunglasses are given to colonies of light sensitive lepers. So far, they've helped 150,000 people all over the world.

A kindergarten teacher is a smart gal who knows how to make little things count.

There used to be a time when a fool and his money soon parted. Now it happens to everybody.

They are happily married to the one who finally goes to answer the phone doesn't glare at the other.

Christmas was duly observed in Gail and throughout Borden county, with the usual fine Christmas dinners.

Mr. and Mrs. Leland Jones of Beaumont were recent guests of Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Hamilton.

Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Harrison were among those attending the recent Christmas party at Ennis Creek.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Neal were recent business visitors in Stanton.

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Sealy were recent guests of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Sealy.

Mesdames John Stephens, J. C. Chorn and John Dennis were among recent Borden county shoppers in Lubbock.

After spending several weeks recently in Fort Worth and Glen Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Orson have returned home.

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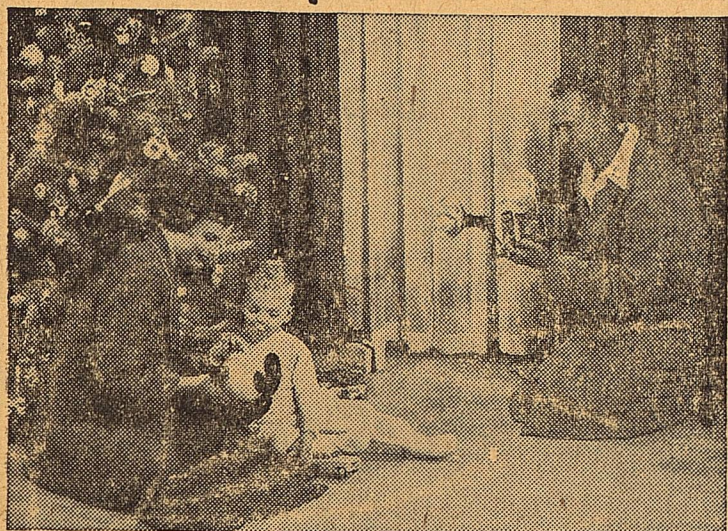
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Scenes like this prove the importance of having your movie camera—be it old or new this Christmas—ready for action throughout the holiday season.

Don't Hide the Movie Camera in Christmas Wrappings

Should your house be one in which a movie camera will be among the family's Christmas gifts—forget all about "Don't open 'til Christmas." This is fine advice to follow most of the time—but not when there's a movie camera ready to roll right within arm's length! The days before Christmas are usually the best part of the holidays—the time when excitement reigns amid a flurry of packages and preparations, decorating and doorbell-ringing.

We think you'll agree that the coming weeks are the most exciting and pleasurable of the entire year. The children have Christmas stars in their eyes, Mother is handling expected and unexpected crises with her usual skill, while Father's doing "as well as can be expected" with boughs and branches and a few trial runs of the new electric train.

Yes, these are days when everybody's in a gay, busy whirl of activity—perfect days for movie making in every home across the country. A famous author once observed that "Christmas is everyone's birthday, with the party

going on all over the world." And like any party, the preparations are half the fun—and more than half the story of Christmas at your house.

That's why we suggest you use your movie camera long before the actual day of Christmas dawns. By not waiting to open this special gift package, you may lose a bit of the "surprise" element. But the whole family will gain much added pleasure from capturing all the high points of the holiday preparations—the only way you can really get the complete Christmas '56 story from start to finish.

If you haven't yet seen the new line of movie cameras currently on display, we recommend that you do so very soon. For there's a tremendous surprise in store for you these days at your neighborhood camera shop. Imagine—you can now get a compact, easy-to-operate movie camera for just under \$30! And that should dispel the notion many people have about a movie camera's being quite an expensive piece of equipment.

—John Van Guilder

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Politics Also Problem In Days of Romans

LOS ANGELES—Financing political campaigns is a problem almost as old as civilization, says a scholar of antiquity.

But, adds, Dr. Arthur Patch McKinlay, professor emeritus of Latin, at the University of California, we are fortunate that the Democrats and Republicans have sounder methods for soliciting campaign contributions than did the Romans.

In those days, he points out, it was common practice for enterprising five-percenters to pick out a likely young man and back him through a series of political offices, leading hopefully to the governorship of a province.

Once the backer's protege became province governor, it was the established practice for him to reimburse the stock company for its expenses by looting residents of the province with heavy taxation.

Homeowner Wants No Yellow-Hued Fireplug

CHARLOTTE, N. C.—Mrs. O. Z. Russell, 74, a retired schoolteacher, thinks yellow is a horrible color, unless it happens to be the color of a flower.

When a yellow fire hydrant was installed in front of her home she telephoned her objection to City Manager Henry Yancey.

Yancey asked Mrs. Russell what color she preferred to have the hydrant.

"White," she replies.

So the only white hydrant in the city of Charlotte is now to be found in front of the Russell residence.

Holiday Treat

BONN, Germany—Residents of West Germany will eat their first American-raised Christmas turkeys this year, the Food Ministry has announced. It said \$1,190,000 worth of turkeys, chickens, ducks, and chicken livers have been bought in the United States.

This is the first time Germany has imported American fowl for the holidays.

Atomic Reactor Plant Demonstrates Power

WASHINGTON—The successful conclusion of an unprecedented power demonstration by an atomic ship propulsion reactor was recently announced by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

The nation's first practical reactor power plant—land-based prototype of the Nautilus at the Commission's National Reactor Testing Station in Idaho—was routinely shut down at the end of what is believed to have been the longest full power run ever completed by any type of propulsion plant—land, sea or air.

On a single charge of uranium fuel (and using only part of that charge) the nuclear reactor operated at an average power of 100 per cent for more than 66 days and 66 nights. The test was designed to prove the reliability and stamina or pressurized water reactors for ship propulsion. The prototype of the reactor now in the Nautilus met the most demanding requirements which could be placed upon it.

Leaves of Earliest Palm Are Discovered

WASHINGTON—There were flowering plants on earth at least 160,000,000 years ago.

Finding of fossil leaves of an apparently quite primitive palm the earliest yet known, has been announced by Dr. Roland W. Brown, paleontologist of the Geological Survey.

The fossil imprints of palmlike leaves were found in a geological formation in southwestern Colorado dating from the so-called Triassic period of geological time.

Spuds, After All

PITTSBURGH—Prisoner in the Allegheny County jail are getting potatoes in their Irish stew after all.

County officials, alarmed at the high cost of potatoes recently considered making Irish stew with rice. But, after considering what Irish stew would taste like without Irish potatoes, they decided to pay the price after all.

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