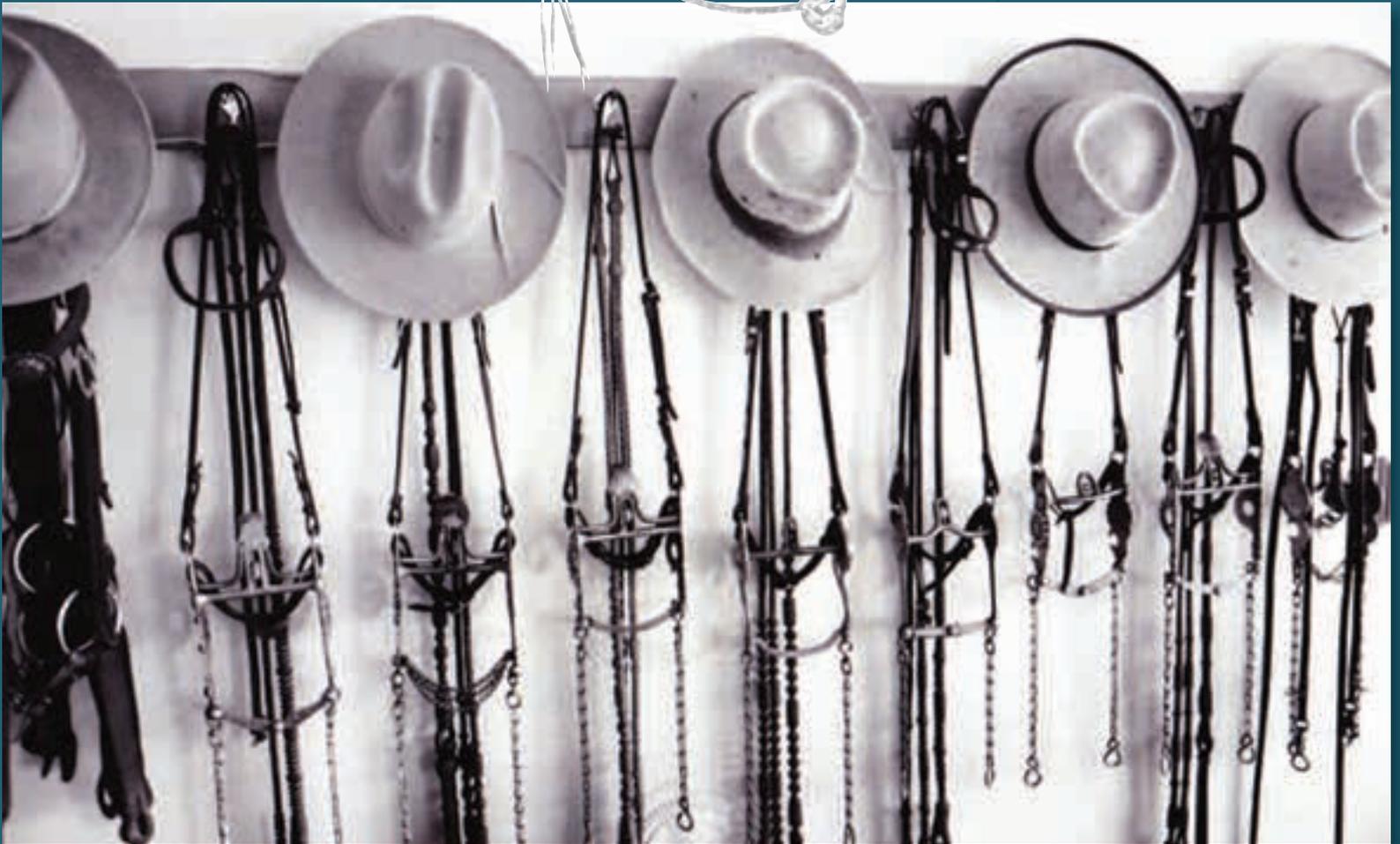


The Journal of the American West

Ranch & Reata

Vol. 1.1.2



The Photography of Con Haffmans

Remembering the Dorrances

Texas Ranch Life, with Amy Aufer

Lighting Out – Wyoming's Hole-in-the-Wall Country



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FRONT GATE

Eating Dust



Trailing Cows on a J.R. Simplot ranch, Idaho.
Photograph by Con Haffmans

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Good Starts

By A.J. Mangum

After a lengthy break for the Colorado winter, I saddled our 12-year-old mare on the first comfortable day of spring, expecting the ride to be marked by the kind of out-of-sync awkwardness that can sometimes afflict a horse coming out of a long layoff. Instead, the mare and I seemed to pick up where we left off when I pulled the saddle from her back last fall. She traveled comfortably, unbothered, and responded readily to my hands, legs and weight, working as if there had been no gap in our routine.

Her readiness to resume our regimen shouldn't have been a surprise, as a laid-back adaptability has long been characteristic of the mare. Much of it surely has to do with genetics; her dam has an identical disposition. I like to think, though, that the lack of drama surrounding the younger horse can be attributed, at least in part, to the way in which she was started under saddle.

These days, most young horses are started as two-year-olds. I opted to start this mare when she was three, giving her extra time to grow and mature. An injury

unrelated to her training – she hung a foot in the steel framework of a loafing shed – sidelined her, and we began again from scratch in her four-year-old year. The delay contributed to an even greater maturity; the mare learned eagerly, blossoming into a thoughtful, dependable horse both in the arena and in open country.

There was a time when colt starting, for many horse owners, was a process buried deep in their horses' backgrounds and rarely contemplated after the fact. Times have changed, though. Since the emergence of the contemporary horsemanship renaissance inspired by the likes of Tom Dorrance, Bill Dorrance and Ray Hunt, colt starting has become a subject of intense





photo by Coni Haffmans

study and fascination for mainstream horsemen equipped with newfound respect for the fundamentals of their discipline.

As time passes, though, new degrees of separation fall into place between modern riders and the original lessons of Hunt and the Dorrances. Unfortunately, the context of those lessons has, in some cases, become clouded, lost in translation, with marketers promoting an endless litany of step-by-step, one-size-fits-all approaches to colt-starting, formulas that purport to make a hard science, one defined by prescribed timelines and predicted outcomes, out of what is surely an art, one riddled with nuance, subjectivity and the endless variables created when two living things – rider and horse – test one another’s physical abilities, cognitive skills and dispositions.

The desire to commercially exploit this sacred phase of a young horse’s development has led to what is

potentially one of the equine industry’s most oxymoronic notions: colt-starting competitions, events complete with winners, losers, running clocks, and the potential for contestants to resort to unfortunate shortcuts with equally unfortunate consequences, both for colts’ fragile minds and for spectators’ expectations concerning any given horse’s progress under saddle.

Not every aspect of horsemanship, I would argue, needs to be turned into a competition.

Like children learning to read, colts progress at different paces. Some colts might require days to understand ideas other youngsters grasp within hours. And, while plenty of colts might be ready at 24 months of age to begin carrying riders, others would be better served if their handlers set aside their wristwatches and competitive urges, learned to see each colt as an individual, and exercised a horseman’s greatest tool: patience.





CLASSICS

The Winchester 94

The lever-action rifle is as much a part of the West's iconography as the cowboy hat or lariat. For generations, when a cowboy carried such a rifle in a saddle scabbard or in the rear window of a pickup, it was most likely a Winchester Model 94.

Designed by pioneering gunmaker John Browning in 1894, the gun was the first commercial repeating rifle made for use with then-new smokeless powder cartridges. The 94 went on to become the best-selling high-powered rifle in U.S. history. By the time production ceased in 2006, more than 7 million had been sold. Over its long lifetime, the 94 was offered in a variety of calibers, including .25-35 (shown here), .32-40, .38-55 and a variety of handgun rounds, but the rifle became most associated with the .30-30 cartridge. Model 94 rifles chambered in .30-30 remain ubiquitous throughout the West, with models produced prior to 1964, when Winchester began machining parts that had once been forged, considered highly collectible.

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photo by Carol Moates



Nicolette Larson

1952 – 1997

*Charm is deceitful, and beauty empty,
the woman who is wise is the one to praise.
Give her a share in what her hands have worked for,
and let her works tell her praises at the city gates.*

Proverbs 31:30



Nicolette Larson was a huge talent who left us too soon. She was born in Helena, Montana and dreamed of a music career since singing along to the radio as a child. She eventually settled in San Francisco where she worked in a record store; her volunteer work as support staff for the Golden Gate Country Bluegrass Festival brought encouragement for her vocal ambitions and she began performing in Bay Area showcases. In 1975 Larson auditioned for Hoyt Axton who was producing Commander Cody with the result that Larson also performed with “Hoyt Axton and The Banana Band” during their gig opening for Joan Baez on the 1975 *Diamonds and Rust* tour. Larson would also provide background vocals for Commander Cody albums in 1977 and 1978. Other early session singing credits for Larson were for Hoyt Axton and Guy Clark in 1976 and in 1977 for Mary Kay Place, Rodney Crowell, Billy Joe Shaver, Jesse Colin Young, Jesse Winchester and Gary Stewart. Her work with Emmylou Harris – the album *Luxury Liner* (1977) prominently showcased Larson on the cut “Hello Stranger” – led to her meeting Harris’ friend Linda Ronstadt, who became friends with Larson. In the spring of 1977 Larson



Late '70s press photo of Nicolette Larson

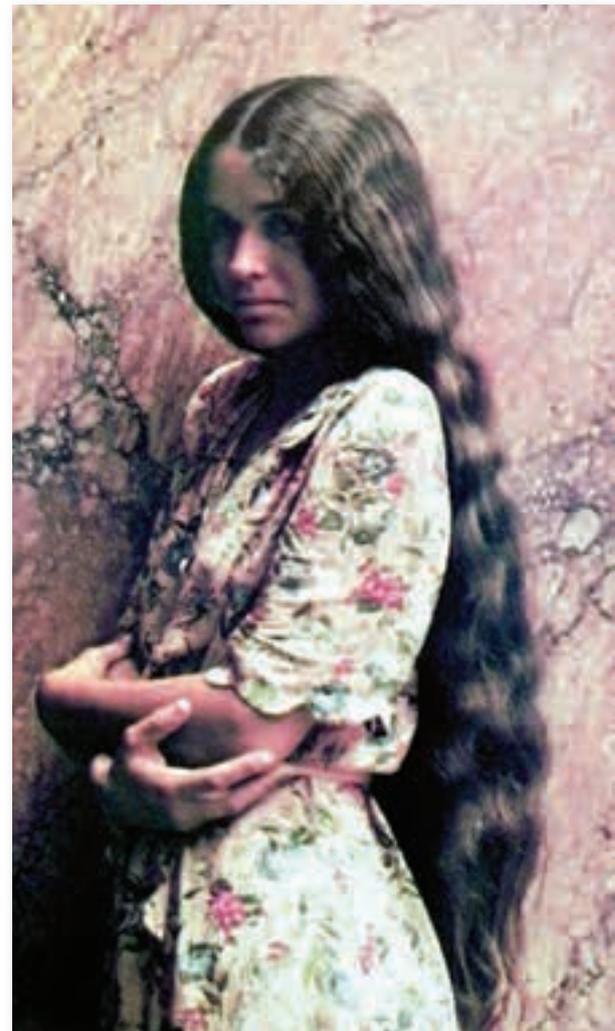


was at Ronstadt's Malibu home when neighbor Neil Young phoned to ask Ronstadt if she could recommend a female vocal accompanist, and Ronstadt suggested Larson, becoming the fifth person that day to put Larson's name forward to Young. The following week Ronstadt and Larson cut their vocals for Young's *American Stars 'n Bars* album at Young's La Honda, California ranch. The two women were billed on the album as the "Saddlebags" – and in November 1977 Young invited Larson to Nashville to sing on the sessions for his

Comes a Time album, an assignment which led to Larson being signed to Warner Brothers, an affiliate of Young's home label, Reprise. Larson continued her session singing career into 1978 accruing credit on recordings by Marcia Ball, Rodney Crowell, Emmylou Harris' *Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town* and Norton Buffalo. Larson also contributed vocals to the Doobie Brothers' *Minute by Minute* whose producer Ted Templeman would be responsible for Larson's debut album, *Nicolette*.

Nicolette Larson died as a result of complications

arising from cerebral edema triggered by liver failure. Her singing career brought her work with the most stellar musicians of her time. She had a unique gift for contributing her "rough-edged, down-home tone. Her two big albums, shown here, the self-titled *Nicolette* and her sophomore release, *In the Nick of Time* are true classics. But she will be best remembered for the backup she gave Neil Young on his 1978 release, *Comes A Time* and her breakout single, *Lotta Love*.



The West of Ralph Lauren

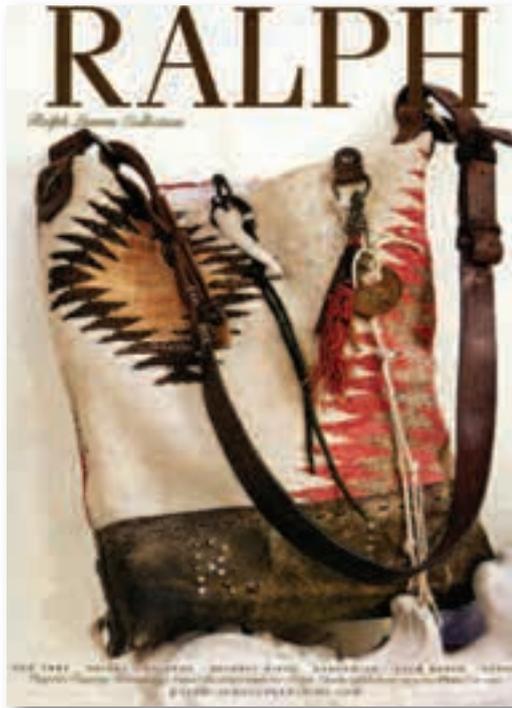
“It’s not fashion, it’s life.” That statement helped single-handedly start a revolution in what was to become “lifestyle advertising.” A Bronx-born New York designer said that back in 1978 in describing his new line of apparel that would celebrate the cowboy way of life for urban customer’s everywhere. Today Ralph Lauren continues to refine and create looks that blend American values with fashion. Western all the time? Nope. But timeless when it is. Of his western influence in the past he says, “I gave the style what I thought it should have. I did it because it’s what I believe in. The West. The look represents my way of being part of the world today. It reflects me.”

It also reflects a style that endures. In a 1978 *Esquire* interview he said of his line, “This is not Roy and Dale. It’s not a costume; I wanted to capture the classical, romantic look of Gary Cooper.” www.polo.com



Ralph Lauren and models in a 1978 ad image





Ralph Lauren ad and website imagery today





BY HAND AND HEART

Tapadero Vatalaro

California bit and spur maker Mike Vatalaro looks to the horse for inspiration in his work



By Jameson Parker

In “The Story of the Cowpuncher,” from the book *Trails Plowed Under*, Charlie Russell’s narrator, Rawhide Rawlins, describe a cowboy from his hat down to boots “...finished off with steel spurs of Spanish pattern.” He goes on to distinguish between California and Texas cowboys, describing the Californian as “...generally strong on pretty, usin’ plenty of hoss jewelry, silver-mounted spurs, bits, an’ conchas...”

However unknowingly, Rawlins described the work of Hopland, California, bit and spur maker Tap Vatalaro.

Californio is a 19th century word referring to a

person of Hispanic descent living in California; it has morphed into a more contemporary term to describe a highly refined way of riding, a specific way of working cattle, and a lifestyle that evolved out of the original Spanish vaqueros, known for their ornate tack and use of the reata. It is a way of life embraced by buckaroos from the Pacific Coast through the Great Basin and from Canada to Mexico. It is a way of life

Mike “Tapadero” Vatalaro has embraced.

Tap wasn’t born into the cowboy life. His father worked in the steel business in northern California and his mother was something that has now gone the way of



photos by Peggy Vatalaro

Mike “Tap” Vatalaro of Hopland, CA



the old *caballeros* and *vaqueros*, a stay-at-home mom. Tap's small-town middle-class life changed abruptly when he was 10.

"My mother took each of us kids to riding lessons,"



When it comes to rowels, Tap says, bigger is better. A larger rowel, he argues, allows for a more subtle cue.

he recalls, "and I guess I'm just a genetic throwback because I got completely hooked on horses."

He got hooked enough that, by 15, he was working on a ranch in California's Sonoma County, where the cowboy lifestyle seeped into his bloodstream.

"My mom and dad thought it was great," he says, "until I wanted to quit high school and cowboy full time."

That plan was not greeted with enthusiasm, and Tap remained in school, college-bound. But when the time came for him to begin his higher education, he chose Sheridan College in Sheridan, Wyoming, where

he studied farm and ranch management. As soon as Tap graduated, he went to work as a cowboy.

"I worked on the Padlock, and on the MC in Oregon," he says, "but I was on the PK Ranch the longest, and ended up as cow boss there. I stayed in the Sheridan area for 18 years. That's where I got the nickname Tapadero. There's a lot of buckaroo influence in that part of Wyoming, and I guess I was just always drawn to the old traditional ways of doing things.

"We were always messing with different bits. None of us had any money, so we'd swap and trade. We weren't rocket scientists. We were just a bunch of cowboys trying to get by on what we had. The ranch would cut me out five horses I didn't know anything about, so I'd start with a snaffle and adjust from there. Mostly I rode a snaffle in the summer and a hackamore in the winter. Winters were pretty cold there, but one year it got down to 40 below, and you don't want to go putting a piece of metal in a horse's mouth when it's 40 below."

But after 26 years of cowboying, the wrecks began to catch up with Tap. A spinal injury in the early 1990s caused him to look for another line of work. He attended the Miller Bit and Spur School and began making bits and spurs in, naturally enough, the traditional, Spanish-influenced Californio style.



Tap marks points on a spur in his California shop.



In building a bit, Tap makes the process about the horse and its needs.

“I can make whatever a customer wants, as plain or fancy as he likes, but I prefer the old Californio style with chased steel and silver mounts and inlay,” Tap says. “And a big rowel. Bigger is better. Think about it. Which hurts more, a poke with a finger or a push with the whole hand?”

And, if you have good hands and timing, you can put almost anything in a horse’s mouth and get some kind of result, but a bit handmade by a skilled maker who knows, loves and understands horses transcends the status of a mere tool and becomes a work of art in the same way that a custom shotgun does. But more important than pleasing a customer, the right bit made by a great maker will please a horse.

To make a good bit, it is not enough to be a good metalworker. A master bit maker must understand equine anatomy, how a horse’s mind functions, and how the bit interacts with the horse.

“I try to keep traditions alive,” Tap says. “It’s all about the horse, not the person. We have to take care of these animals and be their friend. Don’t try to dominate them. Instead, try to understand them. I try to build a product that will help people go forward, not backward. Gimmick bits, to make a horse stop or set his head, never work. You’re doing something wrong if you rely on the bit. I spend a lot of time talking to the customer to figure out what will work best for his horse: what kind of spade or spoon or half-breed, the degree of tilt,

14

There is an intangible quality to anything made by human hands, a result of the brain and heart behind those hands. A Timex undoubtedly keeps better time than a Patek Phillippe, but one of them is much more than just a watch. A Remington 11-87 will bring down a quail just as well as a Purdey, but one of them will take your breath away when you look at it. A plain steel band with a decent rowel can make your horse move off your leg, but an engraved pair made to fit your boot and your leg length, with a custom rowel and maybe a pair of jingle bobs, will make your chest swell with pride every time you put them on.



Tap also makes jewelry, as well as saddle and bridle silver.



California's history and heritage emanates from much of Tap's work.

what kind of bend to put in the braces from cheek to spoon, all of it. It depends on how good the rider is, how good his hands are, and what's best for his horse."

Tap's twists on traditions include offset brass rollers that encourage the horse to work the bit, exquisite engraving on the outside and *inside* of the cheekpieces, and intricately braided rein chains and slobber chains, details that benefit the horse and transform a tool into a work of art.

The work is not only functional and beautiful, but speaks to California's heritage. When former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger wanted to present a uniquely Californian gift to Mexican President Vicente Fox, he had two pairs of spurs made by Tap. The spurs, a matching pair made in the traditional Californio style and featuring intricate high-relief floral engraving, inlaid silver, and the governor's seal, were such a success that when Schwarzenegger attended the annual Governor's Conference in Washington, D.C., he presented a third pair to then-president George W. Bush.

In keeping with Rawhide Rawlins' description of a California cowboy, Tap also makes saddle and bridle silver, buckle sets, scarf slides, and jewelry, all featuring the same exquisite hand-engraving that goes into his traditional bits and spurs.

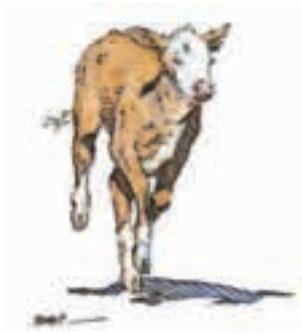
Rawhide Rawlins opens "The Story of the Cowpuncher" with an anecdote about an Eastern girl who "asks her mother, 'Ma,' says she, 'do cowboys eat grass?' 'No, dear,' says the old lady, 'they're part human,' and I don't know but the old gal had 'em sized up right. If they are human, they're a separate species."

Of course they're a separate species; they're part horse. For Tap Vatalaro, it's a trait that's proved a valuable asset in his craft.



California writer Jameson Parker is the author of the memoir *An Accidental Cowboy*.

Mike "Tap" Vatalaro can be reached at 707-744-8443 or at tapadaro@att.net.

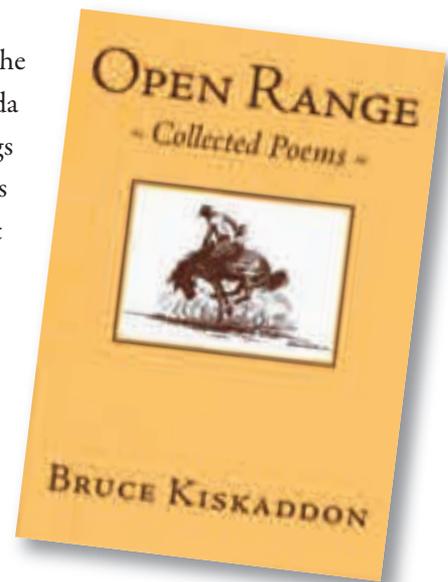


FROM OUT OF THE WEST

Books to Find

Open Range – The Collected Poems of Bruce Kiskaddon

I was initially introduced to the work of cowboy poets in the early 1980s. The first of many popular cowboy poetry gatherings was being held in Elko, Nevada and I attended to hear what all the hubbub was about. The early gatherings were very casual affairs and primarily populated by mostly, the real deals – cowboys and buckaroos straight from the surrounding sagebrush of Nevada’s high desert and surrounding mountain states. All sorts of poems and songs were recited but it became apparent that a favored source for these performers was the body of work by a deceased poet named Bruce Kiskaddon (1878 – 1950) – a Los Angeles bellhop who had been a real cowboy early in his life and who quietly and persistently wrote poetry – over 470 poems – until his death in 1950. He wrote of the authentic cowboy experience in a style and tone that was uniquely unromantic. His was a world of unflinching realism that held an artistic strength that still sets it apart making his work relevant for modern readers. He was described by a contemporary as, “an old cowhand who just naturally thinks in rhymes. He never took no poem lessons, nor for that matter not many of any other sort of lessons, but he’s got ‘em all tied to a snubbin’ post when it comes to building cowboy and range poetry.” Little was written about Kiskaddon although his poetry was published regularly in a variety of livestock publications including the *Western Livestock Journal*, a weekly Los Angeles periodical. There his poems were accompanied by charming pen and ink line drawings by a young, unknown illustrator, Katherine Field (1899 – 1951). Field was self-taught in her art, growing up on her family’s New Mexico ranch. Although a victim of polio, it did not stop her from being horseback as much as any ranch kid. Her artwork was so authentic it has been compared to the works of Will James and Edward Borein.





Bruce Kiskaddon, 1904



Bruce Kiskaddon, 1932



historic photos courtesy Bill Siems



Katherine Field

Over the years between 1919 – 1959, Kiskaddon’s poetry continued to be published in a variety of books and publications. In 1947, he self-published a volume entitled *Rhymes of the Ranges and Other Poems* which contained many previously unpublished writings. The book was re-published in 1987 through western publisher, Gibbs Smith and under the watchful editing of the folklorist and historian, Hal Cannon – a carrier of the flame of cowboy poetry and largely responsible for shining the spotlight on Kiskaddon’s work. While Kiskaddon’s poetry continued to be remembered and spoken, it wasn’t until 2007 that a true history and collection of Bruce Kiskaddon’s life work would become available. Enter Bill Siems.

The term “passionate collector” could aptly describe Mr. Siems. He is a true patron of the poetry and life of Bruce Kiskaddon. I learned of his efforts over a year ago, reading a rare book catalog from a dealer in San Francisco. It seemed



an extensive collection of fine western books was being sold to enable the Washington-state collector to pursue his next project – that of a major book on the life and range poetry of Bruce Kiskaddon – a project that literally took him all over the country in search of Kiskaddon’s trail. Here if ever there was one was a passion-based, publishing effort that could bring a broader and deserved voice to the poetry of an authentic westerner, who, as Hal Cannon described. “lived the last third of his life as a bellhop in Los Angeles. Every day he went to work at the Mayflower Hotel. Between calls, he sat in the corner of the lobby with a stubby pencil and opened up a world of memory – of cow camps, horses, and open land.” Siems’ homage to Kiskaddon – all 609 pages of it – entitled *Open Range*, features the first complete collection of the poetry of Bruce Kiskaddon ever seen, let alone published, 481 poems. The book includes 337 illustrations, most importantly 242 pen and ink line drawings by Katherine Field – all rejoined to the poems they were created for. Siems’ incredible achievement in bringing together Kiskaddon’s life work is underscored by the remarkable modern grass-roots revival and

artistic expansion of rangeland poetry that continues to thrive.

The poem that follows is classic example Kiskaddon. It is a favorite of those who know his work and has been recited at countless cowboy poetry gatherings and in the quiet of a ride down the trail. With Bill Siems’ – the help of his graphic designer wife, Dawn Holladay – the work of this important western poet will receive broader recognition some 61 years after his passing.



The Time To Decide

Did you ever stand on the ledges,
 On the brink of the great plateau,
And look from their jagged edges
 On the country that lay below?

When your vision met no resistance
 And nothing to stop your gaze,
Till the mountain peaks in the distance
 Stood wrapped in a purple haze.

On the winding water courses
 And the trails on the mountainsides,
Where you guided your patient horses
 On the long and lonesome rides.

When you saw Earth's open pages,
 And you seemed to understand
As you gazed on the work of ages
 Rugged and tough, but grand.

There, the things that you thought were strongest
 And the things that you thought were great,
And for which you had striven longest,
 Seemed to carry but little weight.

While the things that were always nearer,
 The things that you thought were small;
Seemed to stand out grander and clearer.
 As you looked from the mountain wall.

While you're gazing on such a vision
 And your outlook is clear and wide,
If you have to make a decision,
 That's the time and place to decide.

Although you return to the city
 And mingle again with the throng;
Though your heart may be softened by pity,
 Or bitter from strife and wrong.

Though others should laugh in derision,
 And the voice of the past grow dim;
Yet, stick to the cool decision
 That you made on the mountain rim.

For more information on Bruce Kiskaddon's poetry and the book, *Open Range* – a very limited edition volume as only 300 were printed in 2007. Some are still available, please visit www.oldnighthawkpress.com



Frontier Justice

A modern-day stock detective protects ranchers' herds and combats livestock theft in Big Sky Country

By A.J. Mangum

Pete Olsen has few workdays he'd call typical. A district investigator for Montana's Department of Livestock, he might begin the morning with a plan, a sequenced schedule of events he expects to play out over the next several hours, only to adjust course on the fly when he receives word of stolen or missing cattle, or a steer butchered by thieves in the night.

One of 18 investigators employed by the livestock department, Olsen is a modern-day stock detective. In addition to ensuring brand laws are followed in the three-county area for which he's responsible, he investigates livestock thefts and tracks down modern-day rustlers, occasionally engaging in interstate manhunts to trace stolen herds and ensure ranchers back home are compensated for their losses. Each district investigator is a graduate of the Montana Law Enforcement Academy, carries a sidearm on the job, and has powers of arrest on par with that of a deputy sheriff.

The job's roots go back to the mid-1800s, when cattlemen ran Montana. Five stock detectives were appointed to combat rustling and fraud within the state's livestock market. Olsen, a native Montanan who began working on Billings-area ranches as a teenager, joined the livestock department as a brand inspector in the late 1970s, after the rancher for whom he'd been cowboying lost his herd to brucellosis and laid off his ranch hands.

"I took the job thinking I'd stay with it until the rancher got back on his feet," Olsen says. "Here I am 33 years later."

Olsen first worked as a traditional brand inspector, sorting cattle and reading brands and earmarks at Billings' two stockyards. When an investigator's position opened in his district – which includes Carbon, Stillwater and Sweet Grass counties – he made a successful bid on the job.

District investigators oversee local brand inspectors within their regions. Day to day, the job involves the routine matters with which stockmen in the West associate with brand inspections: ensuring livestock entering the state have proper health papers and that rules are followed regarding documentation of ownership. Routines, though, are interrupted by the occasional crisis: during a brucellosis outbreak in his district in 2008 and 2009, Olsen spent many of his workdays coordinating testing of local cattle herds.

Much of Olsen's work is done on horseback, including inspections of cattle in vast, remote pastures, such as summer ranges within Montana's Pryor Mountains. State inspectors and investigators working "in the field" identify well over 2,000 strays each year. Any strays discovered often have to be roped in open country so they can be returned to their owners. For





photos by Casey Riffe

Each of Montana's 18 district investigators is a good hand on horseback, Olsen says. A 33-year-veteran on the job, Olsen does much of his work on horseback, and prefers to use his own saddle horses, typically Quarter Horse-Thoroughbred crosses.

such work, Olsen often partners with another investigator or inspector. "All the investigators are good hands," he says, "both with horses and working cattle."

Olsen also conducts what he calls "preventative riding" on isolated public ranges where cattle thieves might operate with less fear of being caught. "If we maintain a presence," Olsen says, "there are a lot fewer cattle missing by the time a herd goes home."

The state provides Olsen with a half-top livestock trailer. He uses his own horses. He recently sold the last of his broodmares, but for years he raised and

started saddle horses, preferring a Quarter Horse-Thoroughbred cross that offers both cow sense and stamina for long working days. "If they've got a little Thoroughbred in them," he says, "they can handle the miles and I don't have to feel sorry for them. It's a lot better than if I have to pedal."

When livestock are stolen in Montana, the state livestock department leads an investigation, or partners with the local sheriff's department. Cases can begin in any number of ways. A thief might butcher an animal overnight, leaving behind a discarded hide or gut pile.



A rancher might appropriate a cow from a neighboring outfit and raise a calf from her, or steal calves to put on cows who've lost their own. A cattle-feeding operation might brand stock with a mark other than those of the animals' owners, laying the groundwork for fraud when it comes time to sell. Investigations begin as local events, but can easily spread to other parts of Montana, or even extend beyond state lines.

"I've followed cattle that weren't paid for to other states and worked with local sheriff's offices to get the rancher his money back," Olsen says. "I was just out in Minnesota on an investigation last year. Cattle had been sold on a contract and the guy never paid for them. The job can take us all over."

Rustling suspects are often given felony notices to appear in court. When a suspect poses a flight risk, though, a district investigator makes an arrest. Olsen says the risks of the job aren't quite on par with that of a typical law-enforcement role, but are still significant. "You're not in danger daily," he says. "Just occasionally."

Modern-day cattle thieves can be shrewd when it comes to the law, Olsen says, as more offenders know how to use the legal system to their advantage, not only in defending themselves, but in clouding the fact that a crime has taken place.

"What we're seeing is people more knowledgeable about ways of going around the law," he says. "For instance, if you buy a horse from someone for \$3,000, give \$1,500 down and never pay another dime, the county and state won't see that as theft. In their eyes, you just haven't finished paying. People tie things up in



Pete Olsen is a Billings-based investigator for the Montana Department of Livestock.

civil court that way."

Another complicating factor offered by the modern age: the diminishing sizes of contemporary cattle brands. Olsen's detective work revolves around reading brands, thereby establishing points of origin for animals whose ownership is in question. Modern brands are often made with small irons akin in size to those once used exclusively for branding horses. The resulting marks are smaller in comparison to brands of past eras, making them harder to read. And, Olsen adds, not all ranchers brand as skillfully or as cleanly as their counterparts from earlier generations.

All in all, though, Olsen enjoys the work.

"It's a fun job," he says. "Most brand inspectors might've taken the job for the benefits and retirement plan, which cowboying didn't offer. Of the 18 investigators in Montana, though, I'd say more than two-thirds are more than three decades into the job. When you're past that 30-year retirement mark, you must like what you're doing."





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THE WESTERN WEB

A look at all things cowboy on the information superhighway.

A non-profit based in Elko, Nevada, the Western Folklife Center documents the traditions and diverse culture of the American West. Best known as the host of the annual National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, the Center also produces numerous exhibitions and workshops in Elko, as well as a long lineup of video and audio programming.

In 2006, the Center launched a podcast, *Ranch Rhymes: Cowboy Poetry and Music from the Western Folklife Center*.



Production on the podcast is currently suspended due to budget constraints, but the Center's web site, www.westernfolklife.org, is home to a deep archive of material that can be enjoyed for free online. The lineup includes recordings of classic Gathering performances by poets and musicians, all captured live in front of audiences in Elko.

Some of the many highlights:

“Are You a Real Cowboy?” by poet John Doran

Doran, a veteran outfitter, muses on a child's innocent question as to his authenticity as a cowboy.

*Those of us who live that life
Like they did in years gone by,
Well, we've an obligation to uphold the past
And never let the legend die*





“Ghost of April, 1978” by poet Carolyn Dufurrena

A Nevada geologist turned teacher, Dufurrena presides over a one-room schoolhouse 75 miles from the nearest town. In a poem inspired by the discovery of some unusual artifacts on the Nevada landscape, she reflects on the motivations of those that come to the region, and what inspires them to stay.

*Next morning I climb most of the way up through sage and stunted juniper,
New boots, stiff and cold,
To a smooth, blonde ledge in the blustery dawn.
There, a woman’s fur coat, black caracol lamb,
As though she had shrugged out of it watching the moon last night.*

“A Cowboy Song for Elko” by singer-songwriter Mary McCaslin

Inspired by her past performances at Elko, McCaslin penned this song as a tribute to the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering.



*You can find me in a cowtown
On the high Nevada plain
I’ll be settled in by sundown
Where the old west lives again*

Browse through the Western Folklife Center’s podcast lineup, and you’ll find performances by Gathering legends such as Baxter Black, Don Edwards, Wallace McRae, Waddie Mitchell and many more. Listen online at the Center’s site, or download selections via iTunes. The site also features a link to the Center’s YouTube channel.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Gift of Tom, Bill and Ray

Reflecting on the influence of
Tom Dorrance, Bill Dorrance and Ray Hunt



By Joel Eliot

Horsemanship through feel, timing and balance – an ongoing, dynamic philosophy of communicating with horses. Perhaps this concept is what Tom and Bill Dorrance had in mind as they lived and worked with horses. They eventually shared their ideas and observations with Ray Hunt, a man that would bring this concept to the masses. When viewing the world of modern horsemanship, each of these men is inextricably linked to one another.

Bill and Tom grew up in the early 20th century on a ranch in northeastern Oregon. In those days, most of America was horse-drawn or horseback. The Dorrances lived and worked with horses on a daily basis. They were particularly intelligent young men and, along with their siblings, were encouraged by their parents to explore, experiment and think for themselves. While their father,

Church Dorrance, worked the family ranch, their mother was a schoolteacher. Both parents instilled in their children an ethic of personal progress.

According to Bill's son, Steve Dorrance, "Even from the time they were young, my dad and Uncle Tom would observe other people work with horses and learn from them." Tom, later in life, would often recommend that habit to students: "Observe, remember and compare."

Tom adjusted his approach to horses early in life. In Tom's words, "I was kind of a small fella as a child, and I'd watch the bigger guys work with their horses and I thought, 'I'm not big enough to do that so I'll have to figure out a different way.'" Tom often worked alone as a young man. Not seeing another human for a week or more was common. Consequently, and largely for



photos by Heather Huffleigh

Tom Dorrance, Ray Hunt and Bill Dorrance

safety's sake, he worked with horses from a quieter, less forceful position. Perhaps, even at this young age, Tom was considering the horse's thoughts and feelings.

Known to be a quiet, pensive man, Tom was certainly not one to seek attention. He enjoyed the company of horses and dogs when he was a child and

carried this affection for animals with him throughout his life. Steve remembers seeing Tom, who would visit Bill's ranch in California during the winter, spend long periods of time just quietly petting horses out in the corral or doing the same with dogs around the place.

Tom eventually married a woman named Margaret.

She shared his love of animals and riding and encouraged Tom to help people with their horses. Both Margaret and Ray Hunt, Tom's friend, had told Tom

conversational tactic for Tom. His story centered on a pig that kept escaping the pig pen.

"We had a pig pen with several young pigs in it and one day they all got out," Tom began. "We gathered them up and put them back in and then put an electric wire around the pen that they'd hit if they tried to get out again. The wire worked pretty well but, somehow, there was one pig that continued escaping. He'd end up in the shop or just any ol' place and was a real nuisance, and we'd catch him and put him back.

"This happened almost every day 'til we made a plan to just sit and watch that pen and see how that pig got out. We sat and waited for hours and were about to give up and just get on with our chores when we heard a terrible squealing come from the pen. We looked back at the pen while the squealing went on and there was that little pig, backed up and making a racket. Then he makes a run for the fence and wire, hits them and keeps going, still squealing away.

"Well, when I have to do a clinic, I feel just like that pig, squealing away before I even start."

Gradually, Margaret encouraged Tom to do more clinics and he complied. A big challenge for Tom was communicating what he saw, felt or sensed in a horse. Over time and with considerable effort, Tom was able to increase the awareness in many people of what their horses needed and thereby, help their horses. The experience changed the lives of some horse owners.

Bill Dorrance was also influenced by his younger brother. Over time, Bill became aware of the subtleties



photos by Julie Baldochi

Bill Dorrance was a rancher, horseman, rawhide braider and roper credited with elevating ranch roping to an art form.

that he should think about teaching horsemanship clinics, but Tom humbly declined at first.

Horseman and clinician Bryan Neubert, who grew up on a ranch neighboring Bill's outfit, tells a story of when he and Tom were fixing fence together; the subject of horsemanship clinics came up. "Tom told me that Ray told him he really should be out there doing clinics," Bryan recalls. "I asked Tom, 'What do you think about that?'"

Tom, who had conducted a couple of clinics by then, answered by telling a story – a common



Tom would speak of in relating to horses. He garnered a reputation for making bridle horses and went on to win awards in the show ring as well as help others with their horses.

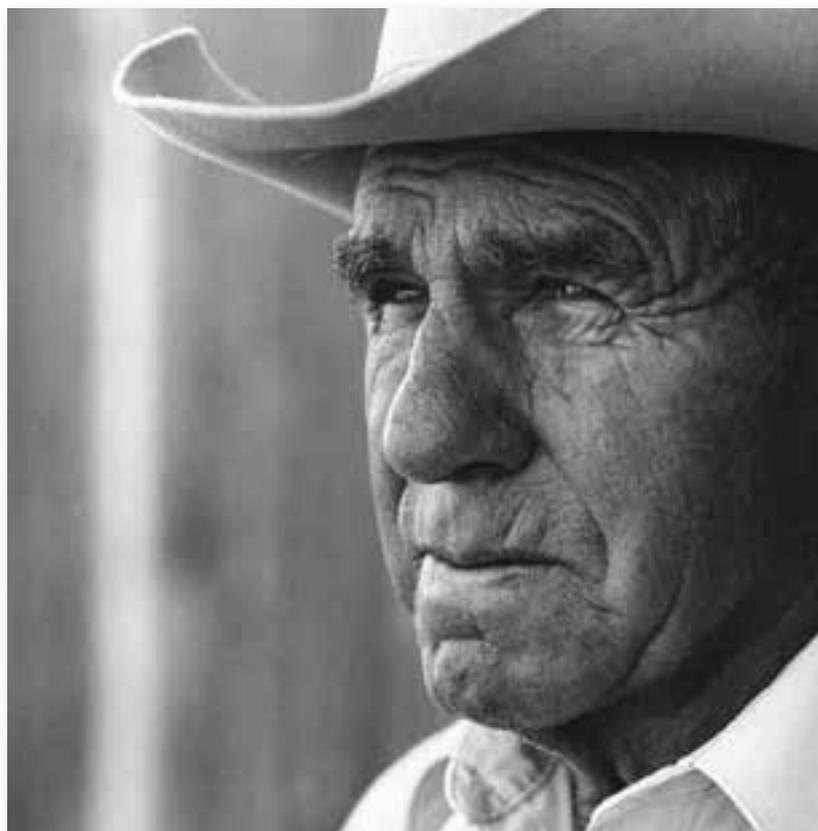
A rancher, horseman, talented rawhider and remarkable roper (he's said to have made ranch roping an art form) Bill led a quiet life on his ranch and couldn't devote a lot of time to working with outside horses. However, according to Neubert, "Bill happily gave his time to anyone looking for help with their horses or their roping. He was just a great guy and we became close friends even though there was almost 50 years between us."

Bill could see Bryan had a passion for horses and cowboying, and helped young Bryan with his horsemanship. He also taught Bryan to make and braid rawhide into beautiful, useful horse gear, a talent both Bill and Tom learned from their brother Fred, who drowned in 1940. Bill and Tom spoke highly of Fred and passed on stories of his athleticism and his talent for riding bucking horses. On separate occasions, they each told Bryan, "No one ever saw Fred buck off."

Fred, his brothers claimed, had a photographic memory; if he had seen a person doing something well, Fred would teach himself the skill in a short time. Fred set for Tom and Bill a high standard for which they both would strive.

Oddly enough, during Bill and Tom's lifetimes, many horse owners disregarded their approach to working with horses. It went against the long-held, widespread belief that horses were merely beasts of

burden and must be forced to perform their tasks and do our bidding. This attitude turned around in later years, but it took Ray Hunt to instigate the change.



photos by Julie Baldochi

Tom Dorrance adapted his approaches to horsemanship as a young man. Too small to use force against a horse, he began searching for gentler, non-confrontational methods.

Ray and Tom's relationship began through a horse named Hondo. The story surrounding Hondo could fill a book but, in short, Ray first approached Bill at the Elko Fair in 1960. Ray asked for Bill's advice on how to get this talented, athletic horse to stop bucking at inopportune moments. Bill told Ray that he should really talk to his brother Tom, who he described as "really good with horses." Ray, of course, went on to meet with Tom and Hondo, with Ray in the saddle,



photos by Bill Reynolds

Ray Hunt



eventually became a champion in working cow horse classes. Thus began the relationship that would change horsemanship worldwide, forever.

For Tom, Bill and Ray, horses and horsemanship were never about fame or fortune. Yes, Ray went on to become a world-renowned horseman and clinician, but that was not his goal. For all three men, “it was always about the horse,” a phrase so often used to describe the motivation behind their work.

For over 40 years, Hunt brought forth the message that force, coercion and bribery are not necessary when working with horses. As Ray would say, “The horse is a thinking, feeling, decision-making animal. He doesn’t need to be treated like a slave.” This was a shocking statement for many.

Now, in the early part of the 21st century, the Dorrance-Hunt message is widely presented and practiced. Several clinicians working today are worthy ambassadors for their message. Buck Brannaman is among them.

“[Tom, Bill and Ray] wanted us to work with horses as if the horse had a say in it,” he says. “A lot of people – trainers or clinicians – have the physical or mechanical part of what Tom and Ray were talking about, but they’re missing the *feel* and that’s the most important.”

Bill, Tom and Ray are no longer with us. They each passed away over the past dozen years and are profoundly missed.

“Ray changed my life,” says Maria Kastros, a longtime student of Hunt’s. “Everything he taught me applies to how I live my life.”

Brannaman, Neubert, Joe Wolter, Peter Campbell and Martin Black are among today’s widely known horsemen who spent a great deal of time with Tom, Bill

and Ray. They are considered the next generation of horsemen who adhere to the principles and philosophy of those three great men and purposefully continue to spread their message. Others, like Mike Thomas, a longtime friend and student of Ray’s, keep their memories alive in other ways. Mike maintains a web site dedicated to the men he calls, “The Trinity of Horsemen.” Mike’s site preserves the men’s stories and messages about working with horses.

After Ray’s passing in March 2009, Carolyn Hunt, Ray’s widow, organized an event to honor her legendary husband. The Ray Hunt Memorial Clinic was held in Fort Worth, Texas, in February 2010 and featured the talents of some of Ray’s finest students. The event was such a success that Carolyn, along with Buck Brannaman and Martin Black, wished to repeat it but with a slight twist. They wanted the event to focus not only on today’s horsemen, but also the horsemen of tomorrow. The result was, “A Legacy of Legends,” held last December. The event was another success and there has been talk of developing a scholarship program for young riders interested in pursuing the horsemanship that Tom, Bill and Ray shared with us.

Ray Hunt would occasionally speak of his hope for the future of horses and horsemanship: “My dream is that one day there might be a young boy or girl riding a horse and they are in perfect harmony together – the horse and rider turning, stopping, changing leads, all effortless as if they are one body, one mind. Someone watching might ask the youngster, ‘Where did you learn to ride like that?’ And he or she would answer, ‘Is there any other way?’”

Perhaps the realization of Ray’s dream is right around the corner.



Joel Eliot is a horseman, musician and cowboy poet living in Arizona. For their help in researching this article, he thanks Bryan Neubert, Steve Dorrance, Buck Brannaman, Maria Kastros, Mike Thomas, and Margaret Dorrance, who’s at work on a new book about her husband, Tom.



THE WESTERN HORSE

Once Wild

Wyoming's Mantle Ranch starts mustangs under saddle for the Bureau of Land Management's wild-horse adoption program



By A.J. Mangum

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It's a late afternoon at the Mantle Ranch and, inside the horse barn, a quiet drama is unfolding. Veteran horseman Steve Mantle rides a stout gelding – a buckskin paint called Dog – inside the perimeter of a small arena bordered by steel panels. He holds a lead rope, on the other end of which is an eye-catching blue roan, a mustang filly newly arrived from Wyoming's vast public ranges. She stands near the center of the pen, ears up and eyes wide, as Steve and Dog slowly orbit around her.

The filly is one of dozens of once-wild horses gathered from public ranges and brought here to the Mantle Ranch to be gentled and started under saddle in preparation for adoption by the public through the Bureau of Land Management's mustang-adoption program. Other than being haltered a time or two, the filly's had no handling. She's visibly unsure of what's

happening around her, but has so far been given no reason to panic at her environment or its confusing goings-on – endlessly fascinating events marked by men, horses under saddle, walls, fences, and foreign, if increasingly comfortable, routines.

Steve and Dog come parallel to the filly and she arcs her neck to watch their progress along the pen's perimeter. Steve applies light, even pressure to the lead rope and its slack disappears. The filly braces for a moment, then turns to stay square with Steve and his horse. The scene repeats several times and, soon, the youngster, having discovered that such pressure can be avoided altogether, falls in behind the two, the lead rope's slack hanging heavily between the filly's head and Steve's right hand.

Before long, Steve dismounts, leaving Dog ground-



photos by Christian Mardock

Nick Mantle works to teach a young mustang about achieving relief from the pressure of a lead rope. Nick works with Steve and Bryan, and runs his own horse operation in Wheatland.

tied in the pen's center. The filly has taken a position along the fenceline. Steve cautiously approaches her, one hand holding the lead rope, the other outstretched toward the young horse. As he walks, Steve motions gently with two fingers, lightly stroking the empty air several feet in front of the filly's face, as if petting an animal that isn't there. The distance between the two gradually diminishes until Steve's hand is just inches away from her forehead. The filly's still wide-eyed, but doesn't offer to flee. Steve at last makes contact, tentatively brushing the backs of two fingers against the filly's forehead. The touch is as light as it can be and lasts for the briefest of moments, just enough to register as

something real for the young horse. It's the first step in a process that will transform the rest of the filly's life.

The BLM estimates that the West's publicly owned ranges can support approximately 26,000 wild horses; the current on-the-range population is estimated at more than 33,000. As one means of relieving the pressure of overpopulation, the agency gathers mustangs from open ranges and offers them for adoption to the public. Since the adoption program's start in 1971, the BLM has placed more than 225,000 wild horses (and burros) with owners.

The Mantle Ranch is the only privately owned operation contracted by the BLM to gentle mustangs



Steve Mantle and his sons arrived at their Wheatland, Wyoming, ranch in 1996, and began work with the BLM's mustang program in 1998.

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and start them under saddle; similar programs exist inside prisons, where inmates are enlisted to work with the horses. Steve and his sons, Bryan and Nick, work with around a hundred wild horses each year, readying them for new lives off the range and under saddle as trail companions, ranch mounts and competitive horses.

Located southwest of the small ranching town of Wheatland, Wyoming, the ranch headquarters consist of a house and collection of barns and corrals – a tightly grouped enclave deep within the outfit's boundaries and surrounded by the kind of open, windswept range that defines much of Wyoming.

Steve, a veteran horseman, arrived with his sons at the ranch in 1996 and, soon after, attended a BLM mustang adoption, where he learned the agency was on the verge of soliciting bids for contracts to start wild horses and ready them for adoption. Steve made a successful bid on the contract; he and his sons began working full-time with mustangs in 1998.

“Our contract is for everything from weanlings to five-year-olds,” Steve says. “We work mainly with two- and three-year-olds.” Older horses, he explains, require more work to start, and typically need to be kept busy by adopters so that ground isn't lost in the horses' training progression. Few adopters have that volume of work to offer a horse. “Twos and threes can stand more prosperity,” Steve says. “If they're idle for a few days at a time, they'll be fine.”

The Mantles work mustangs in stages, bringing in around 15 head for training at any given time. Colts are brought into stalls and initially worked lightly, with early training consisting simply of getting them accustomed to going into and out of a round pen. The next phase involves a fundamental principle of horsemanship: getting the colts to “hook on” to a handler positioned inside the round pen.

“When a horse chooses to move away from me,” Steve says, “I'll encourage that decision.” In essence, a handler positions himself at the pen's center and applies pressure through his body positioning, encouraging the horse to stay on the move. When the horse chooses to be with the handler – stopping to turn inward toward the center of the pen, for instance – the handler relieves that pressure and allows the horse to relax.

“All colts are looking for the relief of pressure,” Steve explains. “We're getting the horse to shut down his feet, lock onto us mentally and physically, and find out that, when he's with us, that's when he gets that relief.”

Gradually, the distance between a mustang and his handler diminishes, until the horse can be touched and



readily haltered. A first saddling might be attempted three to four days into training, but the Mantles point out that, in their program, a horse always dictates the pace at which he's worked. Saddling too soon confuses and frightens colts that aren't mentally prepared; such information overload guarantees bucking or otherwise violent reactions to saddling. By contrast, a horse that's confident he won't be hurt by a saddle or rider has fewer reasons to buck.

"You can't have a set of rules for working with wild horses," Bryan says. "With wild horses, you're better off to focus on small things, moving from one small step to the next. All you can do is take experiences that worked with one horse and try them again on other horses."

How willingly a mustang accepts handling can often

depend on his geographic origin or, more accurately, the specific gene pool that developed in his home region as domestic horses escaped or were turned loose – particularly during the Great Depression – by ranchers, farmers and miners who could no longer afford them. For example, many Wyoming mustangs show a heavy draft influence and generally accept training readily. Nevada horses, by contrast, descend from smaller, more fiery stock, and tend to be tougher to start.

"Nevada horses' tendency to fight and defend themselves," Bryan says, "is twice as high as these Salt Wells [Wyoming] horses that have more draft blood."

Once a mustang is under saddle, the training process revolves around consistency and routine, with gradual



Bryan Mantle, aboard "Dog," works a group of mustangs. The Mantle Ranch contracts with the BLM to start wild horses under saddle and ready them for adoption.

additions to each horse's skill set. They become more accustomed to being around people, to being haltered and saddled, and to carrying a rider. They gradually tune in to signals to move out, stop, back up and travel freely at any gait. When a colt seems to need more time to process his surroundings or regimen, he gets it.

Generally, the mustangs are ready for adoption after 60 to 90 days of work. The Mantles supply horses for adoptions in the region, and host their own annual adoption event the third week of June. Adopters pay a minimum fee of \$125. Many adopted mustangs go on to new lives as "backyard" horses and trail mounts. Others are put to work on ranches or in outfitting strings. Still others are ridden competitively in open horse shows or mustang-only events.

"You can do almost anything with them," Bryan says. "Their limitations are defined by the limitations of the people who adopt them."

Horsemen with an affinity for mustangs extol the horses' virtues, believing their feral roots give them certain advantages over domestic horses. According to the Mantles, the horses' strengths are not exaggerated.

"They're hardy, they've got good feet, and they're easy keepers," Nick says. "And they'll eat just about anything."

Mustangs are thought by many to develop with their handlers especially tight bonds, connections stronger than those forged by domestic horses. Bryan says this is no myth. "If a Quarter Horse is friendly, he's friendly to everybody," he says. "But if I work with a mustang for several days, then Dad works with him, it's a new person, a new smell, new movements. The horse won't be as trusting as he was with me."

Back in the Mantles' horse barn, the blue roan filly relaxes in one of several stalls. Steve leads Dog down the barn's wide aisle and ties him to a steel panel. There are more horses to work, so the gelding's day isn't quite finished.

For Steve, Dog is the embodiment of a mustang's

potential as a saddle horse. The 12-year-old gelding – the kind of aged horse that seems willing to do anything asked of him, but would likely prefer to spend the day relaxing with a hind foot cocked – came to the Mantles as a mustang colt fresh from the open ranges of northwestern Colorado. Steve started him under saddle and, in the process, recognized something special, the makings of a solid, dependable ranch horse. Years later, Steve purchased Dog (as in "gentle as a ...") from his adoptive owner. Any signs that the horse might've once been a hard-to-handle mustang have long since faded; his dependability makes him a go-to horse in the Mantles' saddle string. In addition to starting colts aboard Dog, Steve uses him for roping and other ranch work.

"He's rock solid," Steve says. "I can rope on him, sort cattle on him, drag hay bales. I can take him to the neighbors' brandings and not worry about him kicking somebody. We raise a pretty good crop of prairie dogs. I can take that old horse, hit a trot across a prairie dog town and never look at the ground. I can look where I'm going because he's watching every dog hole, and he'll never step in one. He knows how to take care of himself. That's bred into him."

Recognizing the strengths and unique needs of each horse is key to Steve's approach as a trainer. He counts among his mentors California horseman Bryan Neubert, himself a protégé of Tom Dorrance, Bill Dorrance and Ray Hunt, three men who made popular the philosophy of horse-handling that's come to be called by many "natural horsemanship." The school of thought offers the premise that each horse is an individual, embodies a new experience for a handler, and is capable of not just learning, but teaching.

"We might run through a hundred of these horses a year," Steve says. "So, we have a hundred different 'trainers' working with us, telling how things should be done, as long as we're willing to listen to what each horse is telling us."





Upcoming Clinics

Buck Brannaman

June 10-13, Sheridan, Wyoming; 307-672-5876
July 20-22, Libby, Montana; 406-293-5000
July 25-27, Libby, Montana; 406-293-5000
July 29-August 1, Dayton, Washington; 509-382-4528

Peter Campbell

June 3-6, Cochrane, Alberta; 403-246-6205
June 10-13, Grand Prairie, Alberta; 780-933-2347
June 17-20, Leroy, Saskatchewan; 306-287-3389
June 24-27, Russell, Manitoba; 204-773-3371
July 1-4, Ann Arbor, Michigan; 734-663-0126
July 8-10, Calgary, Alberta; 403-830-2996
July 15-18, Powell River, BC; 604-487-9062
July 22-24, Bitterroot, Montana; 406-369-5564

Tom Curtin

June 3-5, Thurman, New York; 518-623-9967
June 7-13, Pembroke, New Hampshire; 603-225-7024
June 17-19, Marion, Massachusetts; 508-946-9971
June 24-26, Erin, Ontario; 519-833-9704
July 1-3, Bridgewater, Virginia; 540-828-2742
July 8-10, Lexington, Kentucky; 318-840-7905
July 15-18, Durango, Colorado; 970-946-5975
July 29-31, Bozeman, Montana; 406-580-3979



Dave Weaver will teach riders at summer clinics throughout Montana.

Greg Eliel

June 3-7, Lancaster, Massachusetts; 978-840-4100
June 24-28, Durham, Maine; 207-926-5789

Jon Ensign

July 18-22, Bozeman, Montana; 406-570-9779

Buster McLaury

June 3-6, Bristol, Wisconsin; 815-703-4959
June 9-12, Lebanon, Tennessee; 615-269-3808
June 16-19, Wellborn, Florida; 386-963-1555
June 24-26, Jefferson, Georgia; 706-367-8634
July 7-10, Glouster, Ohio; 800-292-1732
July 14-17, Pittstown, New Jersey; 908-482-0892

Bryan Neubert

June 2-13, Alturas, California; 530-233-3582
June 17-20, Penn Valley, California; 530-432-0519
June 24-26, Lexington, Nebraska; 308-293-0514
July 21-24, Medora, North Dakota; 701-260-2108
July 29-31, Sheridan, Wyoming; 307-751-3938

Ricky Quinn

June 16-18, Hillspring, Alberta; 403-593-8889
July 21-24, Indianapolis, Indiana; 317-752-3759

Dave & Gwynn Weaver

June 22-26, Alder, Montana; 406-842-5349
June 29-July 5, Stevensville, Montana; 406-777-3424
July 6-7, Helena, Montana; 406-227-9114

Joe Wolter

June 10-12, Benton, Kansas; 316-778-1630
June 16-19, Pittstown, New Jersey; 908-482-0892
July 15-17, North Plains, Oregon; 503-819-4344
July 29-31, Waterbury Center, Vermont; 802-244-7763



The Pryor Mountains Wild Horse Sanctuary

In September 1968 then US Secretary of State Stewart Udall announced the creation of the Wild Horse Refuge in the Pryor Mountains at the border of Wyoming and Montana near the Big Horn River. Through efforts of various groups and concerned citizens, the area was ultimately set aside to help preserve the unique band of wild horses found here. Spotted by Native Americans long before the arrival of European settlers; descendants of these first wild horses can still be seen by visitors today. These photos were taken in the mid-1970s but the horses living there today show the same characteristics.



photos by William C. Reynolds - 1972





To learn more about the horses of the Pryor Mountains, visit www.pryormustangs.org





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The Frontier Project

New offerings from an independent documentary series celebrating North America's cowboy culture.



By A.J. Mangum

Launched in December 2010, *The Frontier Project* (www.thefrontierproject.net) is a short-subject documentary series chronicling the cowboy culture through filmed interviews with the horsemen, craftsmen and artists defining today's American West. Each episode blends lively, insightful conversations with footage of subjects in their work environments – arenas, workshops and art studios. In *Ranch & Reata's* debut issue, readers discovered the series' origins. Here, you'll learn about the latest episode, and view a lineup of clips from *The Frontier Project's* earlier offerings.

Episode 4





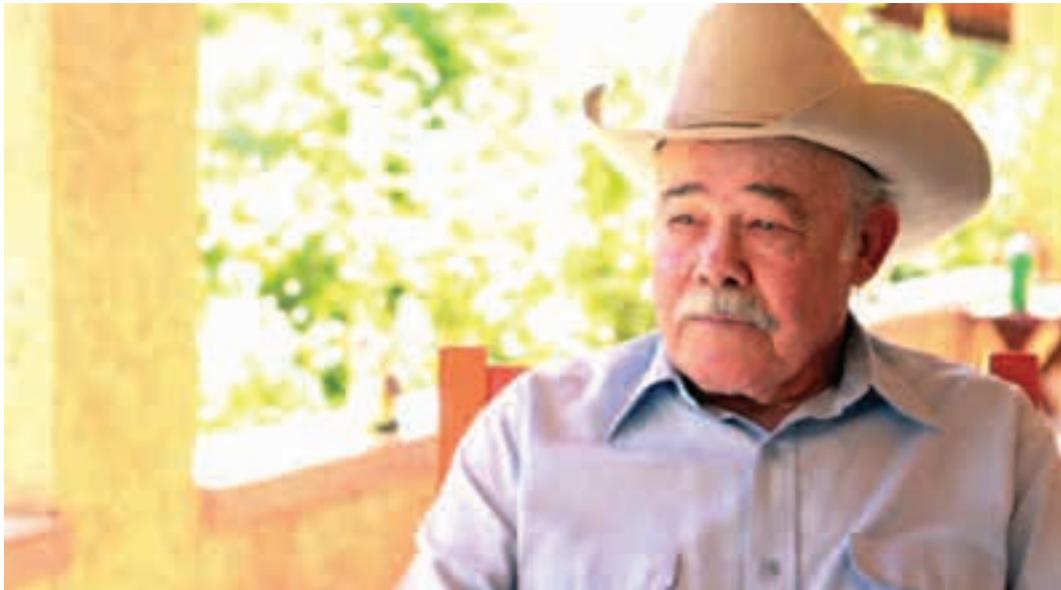
The most recent episode includes three segments:

- New Mexico's Clint Mortenson explains the career path that took him from training horses in South Dakota to performing in Euro Disney's Wild West Show to becoming one of the West's most sought after makers of cowboy gear; Clint also offers insight on saddle construction, debunking some mainstream myths about fit, style and design.
- Artists and gearmakers at the 25th annual Trappings of Texas show, held in Alpine, Texas, offer commentary on the inspirations behind their work.
- And, Colorado performance-horse trainer Jason Patrick explains the origins of Rescued to Ride, an effort to give much-needed second chances to our country's overpopulation of rescue horses.

Selected Clips from Episodes 1-4

J.P.S. Brown

In Episode 1, novelist J.P.S. Brown shares the origins of his writing career and the genesis of his best-known characters. Here, he explains the struggles confronting ranchers in Mexico's Sierra Madre region; such conflicts inspired Brown's latest novel, *Wolves at Our Door*.





Herb Mignery

Loveland, Colorado sculptor Herb Mignery brings viewers into his studio in Episode 2. An emeritus member of the Cowboy Artists of America, Mignery shares his thoughts on his ranch upbringing, the meaning behind his work, and the influence of Charlie Russell and cartooning on his sculpting career.





Spur Construction

In Episode 3, craftsman Russell Yates discusses the artistry behind some of today's best bits and spurs, and explains emerging trends in the market. Here, he shares the techniques behind part of the spur-construction process.





Saddle Measurement

And, in this clip from Episode 4, craftsman Clint Mortenson dispels some myths regarding saddle measurement. View more clips, as well as full trailers for each episode of *The Frontier Project*, at www.thefrontierproject.net.



A.J. Mangum is the editor of *Ranch & Reata* and a contributing editor for *The Cowboy Way*.

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LIGHTING OUT

The Hole in the Wall Ride

Western history buffs ride in Butch Cassidy's hoof tracks.

By Guy de Galard

For the past hour, we've been riding leisurely through a scenic canyon, following a small creek meandering along its bottom. Sheer cliffs rise on each side. Deer bounce away at our approach. The June sun is quickly warming up the canyon but the rustling creek makes it a green, lush oasis of grass and trees. Riding in the lead, Barry Crago, manager of the Willow Creek Ranch, points to the sky, where two eagles soar high above us. This is the first ride of the summer organized by Steve Shaw, owner of Great American Adventures, an organization that takes Western history aficionados on historical rides.

"I always loved the Old West. I am a history buff," he says. Shaw is a member of the Western Writers of America. In 2003, he and his wife, Marcie, went on a Civil War-themed

Mississippi cruise. The couple decided to dress in period attire. Steve Alexander, a Custer impersonator and Little Big Horn re-enactor, was the historian on board. The

two men struck a friendship and Alexander proposed that Shaw organize a "Custer Ride." The ride, the first for Great American Adventures, took place in 2004 at the Little Big Horn in Montana, with Shaw adding 21 participants to Alexander's 18 re-enactors. Other historical rides, usually with six to eight participants, soon followed, the most popular being the Vendetta Ride, held each October in Tombstone, Arizona.

Last year, Shaw chose the Willow Creek Ranch to host his Hole in the Wall Ride. The 57,000-acre cattle and horse outfit lies well off the beaten path west of Kaycee, Wyoming, along



Marcie and Steve Shaw



photos by Marcie Shaw

Ready to hit the trail. From left to right: Colleen and Rob Rich, Steve and Marcie Shaw, John Rankin.

the old Outlaw Trail that ran from Mexico to Canada. The ranch is nestled at the foot of a massive 50-mile red wall shielding an expansive valley, striking both for its beauty and vastness. Very little has changed on the ranch since its foundation in 1882 by sheep rancher Kenneth MacDonald. The log barn and the cookhouse, which boasts four guest rooms, date back to the 1890s. This remote and rugged territory in north-central Wyoming is known as the Hole in the Wall Country and served as one of the foremost strongholds along the Outlaw Trail for desperadoes such as Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch. Shaw's interest in Butch Cassidy and the captivating history surrounding the Hole in the Wall isn't new. "My college best friend and I loved Paul Newman and Robert Redford's film so much that we filmed our

own version called *Butch and the Kid*," he says. Shaw, a former B-52 navigation instructor, showed the 30-minute, 8mm movie at his going-away party for officer training school.

We soon come approach the remains of an old log cabin, tucked away in a bend of the canyon. Besides his managerial duties on the ranch, Crago doubles on this ride as wrangler and local western historian. We learn that the homesteader who once lived here lowered a piano down the canyon's towering, 300-foot cliff just to please his music-loving wife. "When she played, the sound would echo throughout the canyon," Crago says. We break for lunch by a cascading waterfall before resuming our ride, following the narrow trail that repeatedly crosses the creek.

It's late afternoon by the time we reach the other end of the 12-mile canyon, but Crago has timed it perfectly. The mouth of the canyon opens to a stunning view of the red wall. A glorious sunset paints shades of vibrant orange, red and purple on the sandstone cliff. A camp of wall tents and cowboy teepees is set up in a scenic and grassy opening along the creek. Most of Shaw's clientele appreciates the comfort of a room and shower, but they don't mind roughing it once in a while. This is Rob Rich's third ride with Shaw. Growing up in the 1950s and '60s, his passion for frontier history was sparked by the TV Westerns he watched as a kid. "Steve and I share this love for the Old West," he says. "It's the most fascinating part of our history. Being part of such a ride grounds you and makes you realize how hard ranchers work for us. I am hooked."

The camp is set up at the spot where Butch Cassidy's cabin once stood. A few feet from the fire pit,

where juicy steaks sizzle, Crago points at two flat, white rocks – some of the cabin's foundation stones – embedded into the ground.

We wake to a glorious morning. After a hearty breakfast served chuckwagon-style, we're ready to hit the trail. Our first stop is the Smith Hill where a stone monument commemorates a gunfight between CY Ranch cowboys, U.S. deputy marshal Joe Lefors, and another group of cowboys, presumed to be cattle rustlers led by one Bob Smith. When the smoke cleared, one horse was dead, two of the CY men were wounded, and Smith was fatally shot. He was taken to the Butch Cassidy cabin, where he eventually died.

We make a slight detour by the remains of the Ghent cabin. A horseman, Alex Ghent raised Thoroughbreds for his outlaw clientele in need of fresh mounts. Unfortunately, unbeknownst to him, the spring he used for drinking water was contaminated and



The camp is set up where Butch Cassidy's cabin once stood. The foundation stones of the cabin can still be seen.



Steve Shaw enjoys his morning coffee.



With the ride's namesake as a backdrop, Hole in the Wall Ride participants enjoy a gallop across Willow Creek Ranch's wide open spaces.

eventually poisoned him. He became so ill that he left the area and returned to his hometown in Arkansas.

As Crago rides, he points at some rocks positioned in a large circle on the ground. "Those are teepee rings left by the Arapahoe and Cheyenne who lived in the area," he says. "The rocks kept their teepees anchored to the ground in bad weather or strong winds."

We continue to work our way to the infamous Hole in the Wall, riding at the base of the red wall and following the same trail outlaws probably once rode. "The outlaws held hundreds, maybe thousands of stolen cattle here," Crago says. "The valley is prime pasture. There's plenty of grass and water." On a grassy flat, we decide to re-create a skirmish between outlaws and lawmen. Two riders take off at a gallop while the rest of the group takes chase.

The Hole in the Wall is, in fact, a V-shaped crevice that breaches the seemingly impenetrable cliff face. A narrow, steep trail, over which the outlaws drove their rustled livestock, winds upwards to the top. "It used to be the valley's only entrance for 20 miles in each direction," Crago explains. "If outlaws were chased by a posse, it was easy for just one man with a rifle to stop

anybody from going down that trail." Over the years, however, erosion has taken its toll. Big boulders collapsed, blocking the trail and making it impassable on horseback. While Barry keeps an eye on the horses, a few of us decide to make the steep, 15-minute hike. From the top, we enjoy a magnificent view of the sprawling valley. Looking down, it's easy to understand why outlaws like Cassidy saw this area as the perfect hideout. The terrain, a maze of red mesas, deep gorges and deadly cut banks provided a safe haven and would be enough to deter even the most determined posse.

As we ride back to the ranch, we imagine herds of stolen cattle grazing across the fertile valley and watched by armed men. In the distance, flocks of antelope dart across the green prairie. The sun is casting long shadows on the blazing red wall by the time we unsaddle our horses. After two long days on the trail, everyone welcomes a hot shower and a soft bed, but tomorrow, we'll be back in the saddle to continue to explore this vast territory where Butch Cassidy and his gang rode into legend.



Guy de Galard is a writer and photographer living in Wyoming. Learn more about the Hole in the Wall Ride at www.great-american-adventures.com.

The Michelangelo of the Western Saloon

By Tom Russell

*"I was once a painter, boys,
Not one who daubed on bricks and wood,
But an artist! And for my age was rated pretty good...
And then I met a woman...now comes the funny part.
Come, boys, who'll buy me a drink?
And I'll draw here a picture of the face that drove me mad...."*

The Face on the Barroom Floor
Hugh Antoine D'Arcy, 1887

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There's a rusted-out pickup truck filled with art supplies and cowboy gear, parked in a back alley in Calexico in 1932. A man is passed out across the front seat, grabbing a few hours of shut-eye. Dawn is coming on. The heat rises. The truck's cab is filled with empty beer bottles, rags, and paint brushes. Our man is a cowboy artist, and he stirs and snores and dreams in full color. His hands are stained with tobacco, charcoal, chalk, and red and yellow paint. A wasp is chasing a fly around the rear view mirror. The border cantina, a few yards away, is opening up for the day. "Volver, Volver" is whistled and sung and howled by an old Mexican cook in the kitchen.

The sun rises higher and shines through the back window of the barroom, illuminating a half-finished cowboy mural on the white-washed adobe wall. The painting depicts



"Two Crows" by Tom Russell



“Chief Old Crow” by Tom Russell

cowboys spurring bony broncs and Mexican vaqueros throwing loops over skeletal wild cows, against a landscape of saguaros and prickly-pear cactus. On an opposite wall there's a panorama of covered wagons attacked by Sioux Indians. *The West of the imagination*. Our cowboy painter jerks awake as the wasp lands on his cheek. The movie begins. *Fade on scene one*.

Here's the back story: Our cowboy Michelangelo, waking up in his truck, plies his trade in the border saloons, cantinas, cowboy bars, and whore houses – from the Mexican border up to the Canadian medicine line. He's a wandering cowboy muralist. One of the last of a breed of travelling folk artists, cowboy sign painters, carnival Botticelli's, and vagabond portrait sketchers. When his chips are low, and the cash runs out, he trades drawings for drinks, or offers to paint a sign or a mural in exchange for a meal and a place to park his truck.

Back to the movie. In the next scene, *let's say*, he rolls out of the truck, squeezes his eyes open, and yanks on a sweat stained cowboy hat. He staggers inside for a cup of coffee and a little hair of the dog.

Maybe he's feeling healthy enough to tackle the *huevos rancheros*. Red salsa and *Asadero* cheese running over the top of egg yolks and corn tortillas. Once the artist is feeling human he goes to work, mixing up a concoction of shoe polish, coffee, chalk, Epsom salts and fish glue. It becomes a thick black tint.

He squints up at one of the bare spots on the wall, grabs a charcoal stick and begins to sketch the famous *Strawberry Roan* horse of song and folklore. The ballad about the bronc who *could never be rode* encountering the cowboy who *could never be throw'd*. The renegade *cayuse* with spavined legs, pigeon toes, little pin ears, and a big roman nose. The u-necked, rank old sun fishin' son-of-a-gun who *only lacks wings for the be on the fly*. Yes, that very horse. The *Strawberry Roan* is probably the most descriptive bronc song ever written. The *Roan* deserves to be painted.

The cowboy muralist likes the look of the horse's anatomy lines and traces them again with the shoe polish concoction. Then he begins to fill the Roan in with a red tint made from crayon wax, pink ink and pigeon blood. The Mexican bar owner walks over and admires the bronc. *Es un caballo muy bravo!* The old man goes back to the bar and brings the artist a bottle of cold Mexican beer. The work day has begun in earnest. The cook in the kitchen is now singing *Siete Leguas*, the song about Pancho Villa's horse. The beers arrive in regular half hour intervals as the *Strawberry Roan* comes to life on the old adobe wall. The cantina fills up with charros and vaqueros and gringo tourists, as the morning

fades into afternoon border light. Our artist begins to sway back and forth from the beer and the loud mariachichi *corridos* on the radio. *Fade on scene two.*

Roll the film title across the screen: *The Michelangelo of the Western Saloon.*



“Chief Joseph” by Tom Russell

Consider the history of art and drink. Pablo Picasso was known to doodle on bar napkins and sign them. Then he’d tear them up and laugh. *There goes a million dollars, boys.* Van Gogh must have tried the bar-sketching ruse to handle his wine and absinthe tab in Arles. The poverty stricken impressionists, expressionists, and cubists were known to coin their drink money with pencil and pen on the boulevards and in the bistros of Paris. Ragged and thirsty bohemians, drawing for drinks. It’s a tradition which goes back to the cave men, who painted bulls and horses on ancient walls. They needed their grog. An artist has to eat and drink. Exchanging art for booze and grub eliminates needless middlemen and agents.

Trading art for drinks is also a notable tradition the American West. The young maestro, Charles M. Russell, swapped early drawings for drink and grub. Ed Borein, Will James, Maynard Dixon, and the best of ’em, were not beneath doodling on napkins in local watering holes. I’m assuming this, of course. I imagine Will James left hundreds of bronc scribbles on Hollywood cocktail napkins. Will was known to imbibe on occasion.

Then there was Pete Martinez, an itinerant bronc rider and cowhand who hung out at the *Tap Room Bar* in the Congress Hotel in Tucson, circa 1939. Pete drew bucking horses, wild cows, vaqueros, and desert scenes. He traded drawings for drinks. Pete’s paintings and western drawings are still there, in the coffee shop and *Tap Room Bar* of the old Congress Hotel, long after Pete has drawn and drunk himself into the big railroad hotel up yonder. I’d recommend a stop at the Congress and a drink in the Tap Room. Beer, whiskey, tequila, coffee: *your call, amigo.* My favorite is the fresh lime juice Margaritas with 100% agave tequila. Pete’s drawings look better with every round. They come alive, as bronc dust rolls off the pictures.

The Congress sits across from the train station in Tucson. It’s one of the fine historic hotels of the Southwest, and the Tap Room is *vintage outlaw*. John Dillinger was caught outside the Congress during a hotel fire in the ’30s. He’d bribed a fireman to go back up to his room and retrieve a suitcase. The fireman fetched the bag, which broke open, and Tommy Guns and revolvers fell out and rattled down the fire escape. Dillinger was busted. He was reported to have muttered: *“Well, I’ll be damned.”* They say he broke out of jail with a gun carved out of soap. Another folk artist gone wrong. I used to sit in the Tap Room and ruminate over all of this history, right beneath the bucking horse art of Pete Martinez. *The cowboy who drew for drinks.*

That leads us back to the story of our cowboy artist in Calexico; Guy Welch. It’s a *western* movie, sure enough. Guy Welch damn sure drew and painted for food and drinks. *The Michelangelo of the western saloon*, that’s how Guy’s daughter



described her father's life. I'll tell you how I stumbled upon Guy's work. Seven years ago I was driving through the outback of Alberta, forty miles away from Ian Tyson's ranch. I'd been co-writing songs with Ian and needed a break. Those long cowboy ballads like *Claude Dallas* take a lot of energy to compose, face to face, *mano a mano*, with the legendary Tyson. He's a master writer. I needed to clear my head and think about a few verses. Near the town of Nanton I saw a worn sign that heralded a "Ranch Antique Store," five miles outside of town. Figuring I might unearth something like an old Navajo rug, I drove down the gravel road.

The store stood on high ground near the main house of an old horse and cow operation. Two women ran the place, and they were quite knowledgeable about the West of yesteryear. We chatted and I perused the stock. Lots of first editions of Will James books. I thought of Will, or whatever his real name was, drinking himself to death in a Hollywood hotel bar. A French Canadian who had re-invented his destiny in the West, as did many more western artists, novelists, and ranch hands. One of the appeals of the far west was that a man could walk away from his past, concoct a new name, and cowboy, *paint*, or write himself into history. Will James could sure enough write yarns and draw bucking horses, and his illustrations inspired Ian Tyson to write the great cowboy song "*Will James*."

I was thinking of Will's story and those old Hollywood hotels, when I spied an odd piece of art hanging from the back wall of the store. It was a crayon drawing on newspaper. Black crayon, with reds and blues. Wild scrawls set against newsprint and yellowing paper. A cowboy on a saddle bronc. The bronc rider was a rather toothy, cartoonish looking buckaroo with pop-eyes and a red bandana. He was waving his hat and fanning the bronc, like the *top hands* used to do on old postcards, when their horses were *going some*.

The bronc is coming directly toward the viewer, jumping off that yellow want-ad page of long ago. The horse's tongue is hanging out and, with hundreds of wild crayon lines, the artist has done a fine job of creating action. It's almost as good as a Borein or a Charles Russell sketch. Welch's work was not as controlled as these masters, but the picture's essence shimmers with that gut knowledge of western life. The drawing is signed "*Guy Welch '49*." Beneath the bronc the artist wrote: "*They sure go in for horseback ridin' down this way!*"

I loved it. The ladies hauled it down from the wall. I took a closer look. The newspaper which served as a "canvas," was a June 5, 1949 page from the want ads of the *Los Angeles Times*. A nice co-incidence, since I was born in Los Angeles around that year. As I looked closer, the real estate ads declared that houses near Wilshire Boulevard, in West L.A., were going for twelve thousand dollars in 1949. *Helluva deal*.

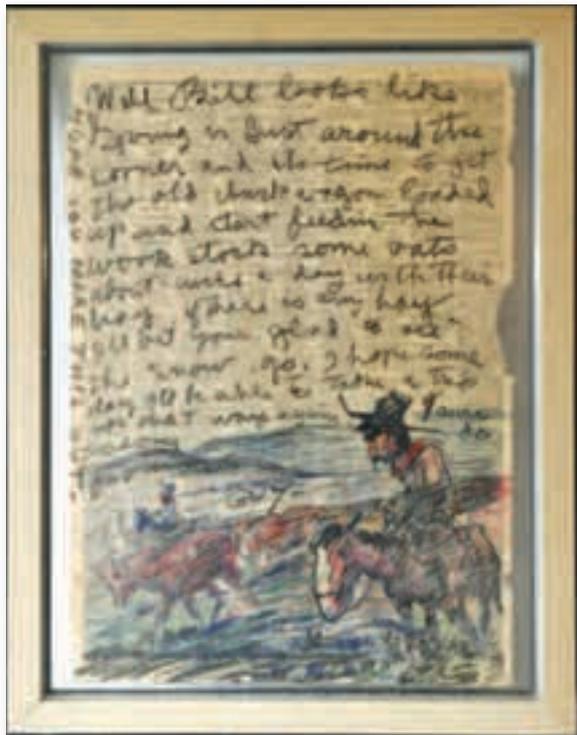


Guy Welch

There was a letter written in crayon on the backside of the drawing, from Guy Welch to a friend named “Bill.”

Dear Bill: this is a sample of what I can sell for \$1.00. Will send postpaid to anyone six of this size. All of different scenes of the old west. Cowboys, Indians, covered wagons, Buffalo, Long Horn steers and etc. So long for now, Guy

The other newsprint drawing was dated *April 6, 1949, North Hollywood*. On the front it said: “Dear Friend Bill: How’s every little thing up in the old cow country? Okay I hope.” Below is a drawing of mounted cowboy leading his packhorse away from a saloon. On the backside was another letter and a crayon drawing of two cowboys herding longhorns. Crayons are limited as to possibilities for shading line and color, but Welch was a *crayola maestro*. He pushed kids’ coloring sticks to their limits. The letter read:



“Well, Bill, looks like spring is just around the corner and it’s time to get the old chuck wagon loaded and start feedin’ the work stock some oats about twice a day with their hay. *If there is any hay*. I’ll bet you’re glad to see the snow go. I hope someday I’ll be able to take a trip up that way again. I sure do. So long for now. Guy.”

Once again this letter was drawn on the *Los Angeles Times* real estate section. April 3, 1949. I peered closer at the ads, and saw a 20 acre horse ranch listed, with barns, ranch house, and a half-mile racetrack, going for \$135,000. The house had four fireplaces. The ranch was *30 minutes from downtown Hollywood*. Looked like a race horse operation gone belly-up. I



“Red Desert” by Tom Russell

wondered if my father might have been involved. Listed beneath this was a two acre chicken ranch with houses and barn for \$17,000. The price included “500 laying hens.” The headline of another ad read: “*Famous Singer Making European Tour Forced to Sell His Home:*” featuring three bedrooms, three bathes, a patio, badminton court, and gorgeous swimming pool. *Frank Sinatra? Nat King Cole? Gene Autry?* Who knew? I couldn’t read the price, because Guy Welch had drawn a longhorn steer over that portion of the ad.

I kept perusing his curious form of art and I imagined old Guy Welch holed up in a North Hollywood apartment with a pile of newspapers stacked beside his easy chair. I imagined him smoking a hand-rolled cigarette and tossing back beers, as he sketched his letter-art, destined for his old cowboy drinking buddies back down the painterly trail.

I bought two of the newspaper drawings and eventually framed them. Then I began digging around for any further information about Guy Welch. He’d evidently been living in that L.A./Hollywood era of stockyards, horse and mule auctions, rodeos at Crash Corrigan’s ranch, movie-horse stables near Griffith Park, and cowboy bars near the “river bottoms” in Glendale. These were cowboy watering holes where Casey Tibbs hung out, and cowboy stunt men drank and used the public phones as their business contact numbers with the film studios. The territory my father came from. The old cowboy edge of Hollywood. Welch always returned to this area.

I kept digging for more facts on Guy Welch. The Glenbow Museum in Calgary had a file on Guy because he’d painted murals in Calgary back in the 1940s. There were a few biographical facts and letters. Fragments of a roving



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artist's life. Welch was born in Valentine, Nebraska in 1886 and died in Vallejo, California in 1958. He grew up near the Rosebud Indian reservation and eventually married and fathered five children. He learned to sketch. He gathered up art supplies and hit the trail. *The lean years.* A man had to feed his family.

Welch took off during the depression and made a hand-to-mouth living as painter of barroom walls. His range extended from the Mexican desert and the border towns, up to the Rockies. He established his own migratory trail. He made a few bucks here and there, or traded art murals for food, drink, and tobacco. He sent the extra money home. I don't wish to create the picture of a dissolute old cowboy bum drawing and drinking up his life. It seems Guy tried to take care of his family in the best way he knew how.

There are rumors of Guy Welch murals in Arizona, Mexicali, and the Morongo Valley of California, but I've never seen one. Time erodes mural art. I'd bet if you scraped off the walls of a dozen old cowboy bars in Salinas or Bisbee or Calexico, you might unearth interesting bucking horse frescoes by Welch. Or at least a covered wagon or a longhorn steer, or maybe faded chips of black coffee paint and a bronc head. I keep my eyes open in the old bars. I sometimes

think that an extra strong Margarita might make one of those Guy Welch bucking horse scenes magically appear, like the image of our Lady of Guadalupe on the cape of Juan Diego.

The western saloon mural faced a curious shelf life. The art wasn't made to last forever. It was designed as a colorful backdrop for beer drinking and boozy contemplation over ranch palaver and a beer and a brisket sandwich, or a trio of *carne asada* tacos. Guy Welch, living dollar to dollar, beer to beer, and sleeping in his truck, was inventing his own art materials as he



conjured up his personal vision of the west. He painted on burlap, newspaper print, cardboard and whitewashed adobe saloon walls. His paint was an odd concoction of chalk and fish glue; Epsom salts, beer, and ground-up crayon chunks. He alchemized his colors and filled in the pencil and charcoal lines with homemade hues.

The fish-glue tints would fade with time, dust, cigar smoke, and afternoon sunlight. The murals went the way of the saloon and cantina west, and Guy Welch's painterly road slowed to a stall somewhere near North Hollywood, and finally Vallejo. He sent off his newspaper letters and occasionally sold his crayon bucking horses and western scenes. A dollar bought you six. They were probably mailed off in manila legal size envelopes which had drawings on front and back. That was in an era when people actually *wrote* letters and drew on them. These days not many of us can't hand-write a page without having our hand seize up.

I came across more pieces of Guy's art in a Bakersfield antique store. I bought two more paintings. They were fashioned with crayon, watercolor and ink on cardboard. The frames were handmade out of old fence slats tacked together with nails and wood glue. The corners were whittled down with a pocket knife. *True folk art*. These were scenes of cowboys and cattle drives. On the backside of one of the paintings were more little studies of horses and cattle. Wonderful little unfinished renderings in the tradition of Russell and Borein.

The Glenbow Museum unearthed even more fragments of Welch's life and sent me files. There was an odd newspaper column from Alberta about the discovery of a large Guy Welch painting on a canvas tarp that had been thrown over a

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Farmer's haystack. Guy might have enjoyed that particular ending. There were also pictures of a few bars in which Guy painted murals. One was the *Rodeo Card Room* in Salinas. Another was the *Morongo Valley Inn* in California. Finally, there were tell-tale letters and anecdotes from Welch's daughter about her father's creative process:

*My father was sort of a Michelangelo of the Western
Saloon...when he painted, he forgot to eat. He drank beer
all day, because it was offered to him by the bar owners...
during the great depression he slept in his car in the alley
behind saloons...when he ran out of paint he painted with
a concoction of shoe polish, beer and Epsom salts...*

I have an affinity for Guy Welch's story. I've dabbled with the brush myself. And I've drawn for drinks. A few years ago I painted a six foot painting of two Mexican vaqueros with jars of *pulque* in their hands. Pulque is the fermented sap of the *maguay* plant and a traditional native beverage in Mexico. It was my first large, rudimentary oil. I called it "*The Pulque Drinkers*," and hung it in our laundry room out here in El Paso. I'd always imagined it would look good in the right Mexican bar. Eventually my wife hauled it over to a famous cantina in Austin, Texas, and traded it for a voucher for 500 bucks in dinners and drinks. *Homage to Guy Welch*. Those Margaritas and taco plates, enjoyed over span of a year or two, have tasted great, since they were bartered for with art. As I drank up the voucher I sometimes lifted a glass to Will James, Pete Martinez and Guy Welch. The Western brotherhood of all those who've drawn and painted for drinks.

Guy Welch's life is worthy of a movie, or at least a cowboy ballad. He stepped right out of the classic cowboy verse: "*The Face on the Barroom Floor*." I first heard that poem recited by my tobacco-chewing cowboy brother Pat, who'd packed mules into the Sierra Nevada's in the 1950s. I think Pat might have learned the poem from an old muleteer named Rayburn Crane. I heard the poem again, in different variation, on an old Tex Ritter 78 record. Whenever I hear it now I close my eyes and see a beat up truck parked in an alley down in a Mexican border town. This old cowboy painter is sleeping on the front seat, you see. He wakes up and staggers into the cantina, and right into our poem and movie:

"And as the songs and witty stories came through the open door
A vagabond crept slowly in and posed upon the floor...
"Say, boys, if you give me another whiskey I'll be glad
To draw right here a picture of the face that drove me mad..."

He draws a woman's face. Then maybe a bucking horse. A long horn steer. A blood-red sunset over giant saguaros. The true west of the spirit, rendered in tints of shoe polish, beer, fish glue and Epsom salts. Art conjured up by a wayfaring cowboy artist living hand to mouth. Beer to beer. Guy Welch. The Michelangelo of the western saloon. Roll the credits, boys.



A book of Tom Russell's art: *Blue Horse/Red Desert* will be published this fall by Bangtail Press. Tom Russell's new record "Mesabi" will also be released on Shout! Factory Records in September 2011. See www.tomrussell.com
Russell's paintings are available from The Rainbow Man in Santa Fe: www.rainbowman.com

The Photography of Con Haffmans

Born and raised in the Netherlands, photographer Con Haffmans emigrated to the United States at the age of 19 to take a job working for a Swiss trainer of Thoroughbred hunter-jumpers. After six years on the job, he took up a career as a television cameraman, learning the trade through internships and on-the-job training.

In 1990, Con began traveling throughout the American West, visiting ranches and photographing the cowboys who worked them. His black-and-white images of Great Basin buckaroos have come to be one of the most important photographic records depicting the culture. “My mission has always been not to ever

pose anything,” he says, “and to shoot documentary-style photos so the viewer could get a glimpse of the real working cowboy life.”

Con still works as a cameraman, filming the Thoroughbred Triple Crown races (the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes), the Breeders Cup, and major races in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. He now bases his photography career in southern Utah, where he relocated in 1998. When he isn’t filming or shooting photos, he often day works on area ranches.

To view more of his images, visit www.conhaffmansphotography.com.



Sam Brown throwing a nice heel loop. Texas Panhandle



Nevada Cow Boss. Brent Smith, Fallon, Nevada



Starting a young horse at the old Porter Rockwell corrals near Eureka, Utah



Buckaroo cleaning his spade. Three Creek Ranch near Rogerson, Idaho



Cowboy Coffee. Jeff Wolf and Bill Boswell at the Wolf family ranch camp near Goshen, Utah



Deahl Rooks saddling his favorite horse on the family ranch. Buena Vista, Colorado





Jeff Wolf getting a drink alongside the horses at the Wood Ranch near Cedar City, Utah



Working the Irons. Branding at the Quien Sabe Ranch, Texas Panhandle



End of a Long Day

Bringing in a herd of yearlings, trailing them just the way they're supposed to. Wood Ranch near Cedar City, Utah

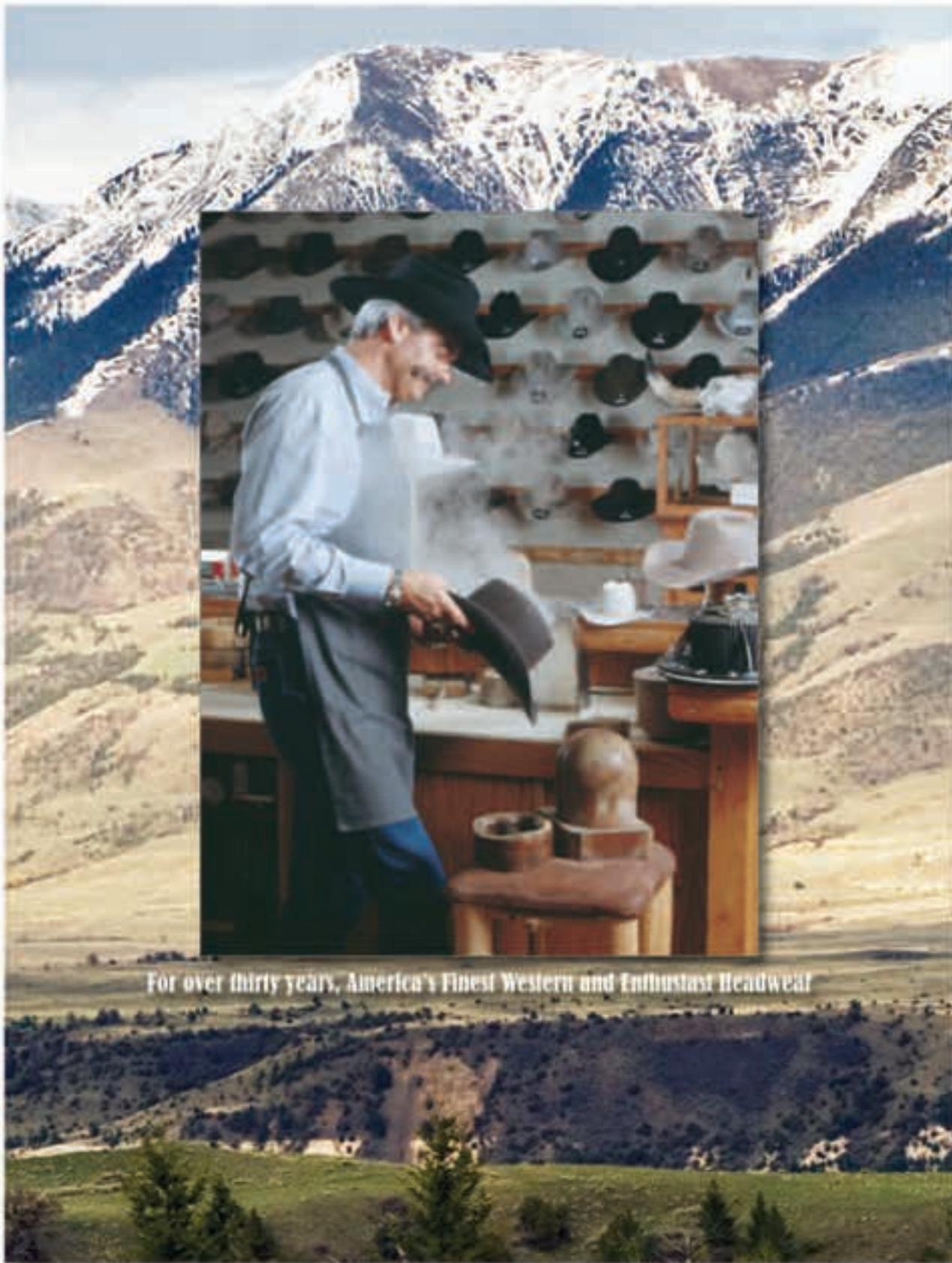


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WESTERN READS

Hidden Water

By Dane Coolidge

Publisher's Note: Western writer and photographer Dane Coolidge (1873-1940), cousin of our 30th President, Calvin Coolidge, grew up on a small citrus ranch in Riverside County, California. His was a life filled with the knowledge of knowing old-time cowboys first-hand and wrote over forty western novels and non-fiction books.

This book was published in 1910 and is a thrilling story of the Arizona cattle country, told by a writer who knew the country and understood the real spirit of its life. The story concerns the classic strife between cattle and sheep men for the possession of the great grazing ranges, and is told honestly and authentically without exaggeration. We will be serializing the story I several issues. Here are Chapters Two and Three.



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CHAPTER 2

THE MAN FROM CHERRYCOW

After lashing the desert to a frazzle and finding the Aleaks in the Hotel Bender, the wind from Papaguería went howling out over the mesa, still big with rain for the Four Peaks country, and the sun came out gloriously from behind the clouds. Already the thirsty sands had sucked up the muddy pools of water, and the board walk which extended the length of the street, connecting saloon with saloon and ending with the New York Store, smoked with the steam of drying.

Along the edge of the walk, drying out their boots in the sun, the casual residents of the town—many of them held up there by the storm—sat in pairs and groups, talking and smoking in friendly silence. A little apart from the rest, for such as he are a long time making friends in Arizona, Rufus Hardy sat leaning against a post, gazing gloomily out across the desert. For a quiet, retiring young man, interested in good literature and bearing malice toward no one, his day in the Bender

barroom had been eventful out of all proportion to his deserts and wishes, and he was deep in somber meditation when the door opened and Judge Ware stepped out into the sunshine.

In outward appearance the judge looked more like a large fresh-faced boy in glasses than one of San Francisco's eminent jurists, and the similarity was enhanced by the troubled and deprecating glances with which he regarded his foreman, who towered above him like a mentor. There was a momentary conference between them at the doorway, and then, as Creede stumped away down the board walk, the judge turned and reluctantly approached Hardy.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he began, as the young man in some confusion rose to meet him, "but I should like a few words with you, on a matter of business. I am Mr. Ware, the owner of the Dos S Ranch—perhaps you may have heard of it—over in the Four Peaks country. Well—I hardly know how to begin—but my foreman, Mr. Creede, was highly impressed with your conduct a short time ago in the—er—affray with the barkeeper. I—er—really know very little as to the rights of the matter, but you showed a high degree of moral courage, I'm sure. Would you mind telling me what your business is in these parts, Mr.—er—"

"Hardy," supplied the young man quietly, "Rufus Hardy. I am—"

"Er—*what?*!" exclaimed the judge, hastily focussing his glasses. "Hardy—Hardy—where have I heard that name before?"

"I suppose from your daughter, Miss Lucy," replied the young man, smiling at his confusion. "Unless," he added hastily, "she has forgotten about me."

"Why, Rufus Hardy!" exclaimed the judge, reaching out his hand. "Why, bless my heart—to be sure. Why, where have you been for this last year and more? I am sure your father has been quite worried about you."

"Oh, I hope not," answered Hardy, shifting his gaze. "I guess he knows I can take care of myself by this time—

if I do write poetry," he added, with a shade of bitterness.

"Well, well," said the judge, diplomatically changing the subject, "Lucy will be glad to hear of you, at any rate. I believe she—er—wrote you once, some time ago, at your Berkeley address, and the letter was returned as uncalled for."

He gazed over the rims of his glasses inquiringly, and with a suggestion of asperity, but the young man unabashed.

"I hope you will tell Miss Lucy," he said deferentially, "that on account of my unsettled life I have not ordered my mail forwarded for some time." He paused and for the moment seemed to be considering some further explanation; then his manner changed abruptly.

"I believe you mentioned a matter of business," he remarked bluffly, and the judge came back to earth with a start. His mind had wandered back a year or more to the mysterious disappearance of this same self-contained young man from his father's house, not three blocks from his own comfortable home. There had been a servant's rumor that he had sent back a letter or two postmarked "Bowie, Arizona" — but old Colonel Hardy had said never a word.

"Er—yes," he assented absently, "but—well, I declare," he exclaimed helplessly, "I've quite forgotten what it was about."

"Won't you sit down, then?" suggested Hardy, indicating the edge of the board walk with a courtly sweep of the hand. "This rain will make good feed for you up around the Four Peaks—I believe it was your ranch there that you wished to speak."

Judge Ware settled down against a convenient post and caught his breath, meanwhile regarding his companion curiously.

"Yes, that's it," he said. "I wanted to talk with you about my ranch, but I swear I'll have to wait till Creede comes back, now."

"Very well," answered Hardy easily; "we can talk about home, then. How is Miss Lucy succeeding with



her art—is she still working at the Institute?”

“Yes, indeed!” exclaimed the judge, quite mollified by the inquiry. “Indeed she is, and doing as well as any of them. She had a landscape hung at the last exhibit, that was very highly praised, even by Mathers, and you know how hard he is to please. Tupper Browne won the prize, but I think Lucy’s was twice the picture—kind of soft and sunshiny, you know—it made you think of home, just to look at it.”

“Well, I’m glad to hear that,” said Hardy, looking up the ragged street a little wistfully. “I kind of lose track of things down here, knocking around from place to place.” He seated himself wearily on the edge of the sidewalk and drummed with his sinewy white hands against a boot leg. “But it’s a great life, sure,” he observed, half to himself. “And by the way, Mr. Ware,” he continued, “if it’s all the same to you I wish you wouldn’t say anything to your foreman about my past life. Not that there is anything disgraceful about it, but there isn’t much demand for college graduates in this country, you know, and I might want to strike him for a job.”

Judge Ware nodded, a little distantly; he did not approve of this careless young man in all his moods. For a man of good family he was hardly presentable, for one thing, and he spoke at times like an ordinary working man. So he awaited the lumbering approach of his foreman in sulky silence, resolved to leave the matter entirely in his hands.

Jefferson Creede bore down upon them slowly, sizing up the situation as he came, or trying to, for everything seemed to be at a standstill.

“Well?” he remarked, looking inquiringly from the judge to Hardy. “How about it?”

There was something big and dominating about him as he loomed above them, and the judge’s schoolboy state of mind instantly returned.

“I—I really haven’t done anything about the matter, Jefferson,” he stammered apologetically. “Perhaps you

will explain our circumstances to Mr. Hardy here, so that we can discuss the matter intelligently.” He looked away as he spoke, and the tall foreman grunted audibly.

“Well,” he drawled, “they ain’t much to explain. The sheepmen have been gittin’ so free up on our range that I’ve had a little trouble with ‘em—and if I was the boss they’d be more trouble, you can bet your life on that. But the judge here seems to think we can kinder suck the hind teat and baby things along until they git that Forest Reserve act through, and make our winnin’ later. He wants to make friends with these sheepmen and git ‘em to kinder go around a little and give us half a chanst. Well, maybe it can be done—but not by me. So I told him either to get a superintendent to handle the sheep end of it or rustle up a new foreman, because I see red every time I hear a sheep-blat.

“Then come the question,” continued the cowman, throwing out his broad hand as if indicating the kernel of the matter, “of *gittin’* such a man, and while we was talkin’ it over you called old Tex down so good and proper that there wasn’t any doubt in *my* mind—providin’ you want the job, of course.”

He paused and fixed his compelling eyes upon Hardy with such a mixture of admiration and good humor that the young man was won over at once, although he made no outward sign. It was Judge Ware who was to pass upon the matter finally, and he waited deferentially for him to speak.

“Well—er—Jefferson,” began the judge a little weakly, “do you think that Mr. Hardy possesses the other qualities which would be called for in such a man?”

“W’y, sure,” responded Creede, waving the matter aside impatiently. “Go ahead and hire him before he changes his mind.”

“Very well then, Mr. Hardy,” said the judge resignedly, “the first requisite in such a man is that he shall please Mr. Creede. And since he commends you so warmly I hope that you will accept the position. Let me

see—um—would seventy-five dollars a month seem a reasonable figure? Well, call it seventy-five, then—that’s what I pay Mr. Creede, and I want you to be upon an equality in such matters.

“Now as to your duties. Jefferson will have charge of the cattle, as usual; and I want you, Mr. Hardy, to devote your time and attention to this matter of the sheep. Our ranch house at Hidden Water lies almost directly across the river from one of the principal sheep crossings, and a little hospitality shown to the shepherds in passing might be like bread cast upon the waters which comes back an hundred fold after many days. We cannot hope to get rid of them entirely, but if the sheep owners would kindly respect our rights to the upper range, which Mr. Creede will point out to you, I am sure we should take it very kindly. Now that is your whole problem, Rufus, and I leave the details entirely in your hands. But whatever you do, be friendly and see if you can’t appeal to their better nature.”

He delivered these last instructions seriously and they were so taken by Hardy, but Creede laughed silently, showing all his white teeth, yet without attracting the unfavorable attention of the judge, who was a little purblind. Then there was a brief discussion of details, an introduction to Mr. Einstein of the New York Store, where Hardy was given *carte blanche* for supplies, and Judge Ware swung up on the west-bound limited and went flying away toward home, leaving his neighbor’s son—now his own superintendent and sheep expert—standing composedly upon the platform.

“Well,” remarked Creede, smiling genially as he turned back to the hotel, “the Old Man’s all right, eh, if he does have fits! He’s a good-hearted—and that goes a long ways in this country—but actually, I believe he knows less about the cattle business than any man in Arizona. He can’t tell a steer from a stag—honest! And I can lose him a half-mile from camp any day.”

The tall cattleman clumped along in silence for

a while, smiling over some untold weakness of his boss—then he looked down upon Hardy and chuckled to himself.

“I’m glad you’re going to be along this trip,” he said confidentially. “Of course I’m lonely as a lost dog out there, but that ain’t it; the fact is, I need somebody to watch me. W’y, boy, I could beat the old judge out of a thousand dollars’ worth of cattle and he’d never know it in a lifetime. Did ye ever live all alone out on a ranch for a month or so? Well, you know how lawless and pisen-mean a man can git, then, associatin’ with himself. I’d ‘ve had the old man robbed forty times over if he wasn’t such a goodhearted old boy, between fightin’ sheepmen and keepin’ tab on a passel of brand experts up on the Tonto I’m gittin’ so ornery I don’t dare trust myself. Have a smoke? Oh, I forgot—”

He laughed awkwardly and rolled a cigarette.

“Got a match?” he demanded austere. “Um, much obliged—be kinder handy to have you along now.” He knit his brows fiercely as he fired up, regarding Hardy with a furtive grin.

“Say,” he said abruptly, “I’ve got to make friends with you some way. You *eat*, don’t you? All right then, you come along with me over to the Chink’s. I’m going to treat you to somethin’, if it’s only ham ‘n’ eggs.”

They dined largely at Charley’s and then drifted out to the feed corral. Creede threw down some hay to a ponderous iron-scarred roan, more like a war horse than a cow pony, and when he came back he found Hardy doing as much for a cleaned-limbed sorrel, over by the gate.

“Yourn?” he inquired, surveying it with the keen concentrated gaze which stamps every point on a cowboy’s memory for life.

“Sure,” returned Hardy, patting his pony carefully upon the shoulder.

“Kinder high-headed, ain’t he?” ventured Creede, as the sorrel rolled his eyes and snorted.

“That’s right,” assented Hardy, “he’s only been





broke about a month. I got him over in the Sulphur Springs Valley.”

“I knowed it,” said the cowboy sagely, “one of them wire-grass horses, an’ I bet he can travel, too. Did you ride him all the way here?”

“Clean from the Chiricahuas,” replied the young man, and Jefferson Creede looked up, startled.

“What did you say you was doin’ over there?” he

inquired slowly, and Hardy smiled quietly as he answered:

“Riding for the Cherrycow outfit.”

“The hell you say!” exclaimed Creede explosively, and for a long time he stood silent, smoking as if in deep meditation.

“Well,” he said at last, “I might as well say it—I took you for a tenderfoot.”

CHAPTER 3

THE TRAIL OF THE SHEEP

The morning dawned as clear on Bender as if there had never been storm nor clouds, and the waxy green heads of the greasewood, dotting the level plain with the regularity of a vineyard, sparkled with a thousand dewdrops. Ecstatic meadow larks, undismayed by the utter lack of meadows, sang love songs from the tops of the telegraph poles; and the little Mexican ground doves that always go in pairs tracked amiably about together in the wet litter of the corral, picking up the grain which the storm had laid bare. Before the early sun had cleared the top of the eastern mountains Jefferson Creede and Hardy had risen and fed their horses well, and while the air was yet chill they loaded their blankets and supplies upon the ranch wagon, driven by a shivering Mexican, and went out to saddle up.

Since his confession of the evening before Creede had put aside his air of friendly patronage and, lacking another pose, had taken to smoking in silence; for there is many a boastful cowboy in Arizona who has done his riding for the Cherrycow outfit on the chuck wagon, swamping for the cook. At breakfast he jollied the Chinaman into giving him two orders of everything, from coffee to hot cakes, paid for the same at the end, and rose up like a giant refreshed—but beneath this jovial

exterior he masked a divided mind. Although he had come down handsomely, he still had his reservations about the white-handed little man from Cherrycow, and when they entered the corral he saddled his iron-scarred charger by feeling, gazing craftily over his back to see how Hardy would show up in action.

Now, first the little man took a rope, and shaking it out the loop dropped it carelessly against his horse’s fore-feet—and that looked well, for the sorrel stood stiffly in his tracks, as if he had been anchored. Then the man from Cherrycow picked up his bridle, rubbed something on the bit, and offered it to the horse, who graciously bowed his head to receive it. This was a new one on Creede and in the excitement of the moment he inadvertently cinched his roan up two holes too tight and got nipped for it, for old Bat Wings had a mind of his own in such matters, and the cold air made him ugly.

“Here, quit that,” muttered the cowboy, striking back at him; but when he looked up, the sorrel had already taken his bit, and while he was champing on it Hardy had slipped the headstall over his ears. There was a broad leather blind on the hacamore, which was of the best plaited rawhide with a horsehair tie rope, but the little man did not take advantage of it to subdue his

mount. Instead he reached down for his gaudy Navajo saddle blanket, offered it to the sorrel to smell, and then slid it gently upon his back. But when he stooped for his saddle the high-headed horse rebelled. With ears pricked suspiciously forward and eyes protruding he glared at the clattering thing in horror, snorting deep at every breath. But, though he was free-footed, by some obsession of the mind, cunningly inculcated in his breaking, the sorrel pony was afraid to move.

As the saddle was drawn toward him and he saw that he could not escape its hateful embrace he leaned slowly back upon his haunches, grunting as if his forefeet, wreathed in the loose rope, were stuck in some terrible quicksands from which he tried in vain to extricate them; but with a low murmur of indifferent words his master moved the saddle resolutely toward him, the stirrups carefully snapped up over the horn, and ignoring his loud snorts and frenzied shakings of the head laid it surely down upon his back. This done, he suddenly spoke sharply to him, and with a final groan the beautiful creature rose up and consented to his fate.

Hardy worked quickly now, tightening the cinch, lowering the stirrups, and gathering up the reins. He picked up the rope, coiled it deftly and tied it to the saddle—and now, relieved of the idea that he was noosed, the pony began to lift his feet and prance, softly, like a swift runner on the mark. At these signs of an early break Creede mounted hurriedly and edged in, to be ready in case the sorrel, like most half-broken broncos, tried to scrape his rider off against the fence; but Hardy needed no wrangler to shunt him out the gate. Standing by his shoulder and facing the rear he patted the sorrel's neck with the hand that held the reins, while with his right hand he twisted the heavy stirrup toward him stealthily, raising his boot to meet it. Then like a flash he clapped in his foot and, catching the horn as his fiery pony shot forward, he snapped up into the saddle like a jumping jack and went flying out the gate.

“Well, the son of a gun!” muttered Creede, as he thundered down the trail after him. “Durned if he can’t ride!”

There are men in every cow camp who can rope and shoot, but the man who can ride a wild horse can hold up his head with the best of them. No matter what his race or station if he will crawl a “snake” and stay with him there is always room on the wagon for his blankets; his fame will spread quickly from camp to camp, and the boss will offer to raise him when he shows up for his time. Jefferson Creede’s face was all aglow when he finally rode up beside Hardy; he grinned triumphantly upon horse and man as if they had won money for him in a race; and Hardy, roused at last from his reserve, laughed back out of pure joy in his possessions.

“How’s that for a horse!” he cried, raising his voice above the thud of hoofs. “I have to turn him loose at first—’fraid he’ll learn to pitch if I hold him in—he’s never bucked with me yet!”

“You bet—he’s a snake!” yelled Creede, hammering along on his broad-chested roan. “Where’d you git ‘im?”

“Tom Fulton’s ranch,” responded Hardy, reining his horse in and patting him on the neck. “Turned in three months’ pay and broke him myself, to boot. I’ll let you try him some day, when he’s gentled.”

“Well, if I wasn’t so big ‘n’ heavy I’d take you up on that,” said Creede, “but I’m just as much obliged, all the same. I don’t claim to be no bronco-buster now, but I used to ride some myself when I was a kid. But say, the old judge has got some good horses runnin’ on the upper range,—if you want to keep your hand in,—thirty or forty head of ‘em, and wild as hawks. There’s some sure-enough wild horses too, over on the Peaks, that belong to any man that can git his rope onto ‘em—how would that strike you? We’ve been tryin’ for years to catch the black stallion that leads ‘em.”

Try as he would to minimize this exaggerated estimate of his prowess as a horse-tamer Hardy was unable to make his partner admit that he was anything





short of a real “buster,” and before they had been on the trail an hour Creede had made all the plans for a big gather of wild horses after the round-up.

“I had you spotted for a sport from the start,” he said, puffing out his chest at the memory of his acumen, “but, by jingo, I never thought I was drawin’ a bronco-twister. Well, now, I saw you crawl that horse this mornin’, and I guess I know the real thing by this time. Say,” he said, turning confidentially in his saddle, “if it’s none of my business you can say so, but what did you do to that bit?”

Hardy smiled, like a juggler detected in his trick. “You must have been watching me,” he said, “but I don’t mind telling you—it’s simply passing a good thing along. I learned it off of a Yaqui Mayo Indian that had been riding for Bill Greene on the Turkey-track—I rubbed it with a little salt.”

“Well, I’m a son of a gun!” exclaimed Creede incredulously. “Here we’ve been gittin’ our fingers bit off for forty years and never thought of a little thing like that. Got any more tricks?”

“Nope,” said Hardy, “I’ve only been in the Territory a little over a year, this trip, and I’m learning, myself. Funny how much you can pick up from some of these Indians and Mexicans that can’t write their own names, isn’t it?”

“Umm, may be so,” assented Creede doubtfully, “but I’d rather go to a white man myself. Say,” he exclaimed, changing the subject abruptly, “what was that name the old man called you by when he was makin’ that talk about sheep—Roofer, or Rough House—or something like that?”

“Oh, that’s my front name—Rufus. Why? What’s the matter with it?”

“Nothin’, I reckon,” replied Creede absently, “never happened to hear it before, ‘s all. I was wonderin’ how he knowed it,” he added, glancing shrewdly sideways.

Thought maybe you might have met him up in California, or somewheres.”

“Oh, that’s easy,” responded Hardy unblinkingly. “The first thing he did was to ask me my full name. I

notice he calls you Jefferson,” he added, shiftily changing the subject.

“Sure thing,” agreed Creede, now quite satisfied, “he calls everybody that way. If your name is Jim you’re James, John you’re Jonathan, Jeff you’re Jefferson Davis—but say, ain’t they any f’r short to your name? We’re gittin’ too far out of town for this Mister business. My name’s Jeff, you know,” he suggested.

“Why, sure,” exclaimed Hardy, brushing aside any college-bred scruples, “only don’t call me Rough House—they might get the idea that I was on the fight. But you don’t need to get scared of Rufus—it’s just another way of saying Red. I had a red-headed ancestor away back there somewhere and they called him Rufus, and then they passed the name down in the family until it got to me, and I’m no more red-headed than you are.”

“No—is that straight?” ejaculated the cowboy, with enthusiasm, “same as we call ‘em Reddy now, eh? But say, I’d choke if I tried to call you Rufus. Will you stand for Reddy? Aw, that’s no good—what’s the matter with Rufe? Well, shake then, pardner, I’m dam’ glad I met up with you.”

They pulled their horses down to a Spanish trot—that easy, limping shuffle that eats up its forty miles a day—and rode on together like brothers, heading for a distant pass in the mountains where the painted cliffs of the Bulldog break away and leave a gap down to the river. To the east rose Superstition Mountain, that huge buttress upon which, since the day that a war party of Pimas disappeared within the shadow of its pinnacles, hot upon the trail of the Apaches, and never returned again, the Indians of the valley have always looked with superstitious dread.

Creede told the story carelessly, smiling at the pride of the Pimas who refused to admit that the Apaches alone, devils and bad medicine barred, could have conquered so many of their warriors. To the west in a long fringe of green loomed the cottonwoods of Moroni, where the hard-working Mormons turned the

Salagua from its course and irrigated the fertile plain, and there on their barren reservation dwelt the remnant of those warlike Pimas, the unrequited friends of the white men, now held by them as of no account.

As he heard the history of its people—how the Apaches had wiped out the Toltecs, and the white men had killed off the Apaches, and then, after pushing aside the Pimas and the Mexicans, closed in a death struggle for the mastery of the range—Hardy began to perceive the grim humor of the land. He glanced across at his companion, tall, stalwart, with mighty arms and legs and features rugged as a mountain crag, and his heart leaped up within him at the thought of the battles to come, battles in which sheepmen and cattlemen, defiant of the law, would match their strength and cunning in a fight for the open range.

As they rode along mile after mile toward the north the road mounted gently; hills rose up one by one out of the desert floor, crowned with towering *sahuaros*, and in the dip of the pass ahead a mighty forest of their misshapen stalks was thrust up like giant fingers against the horizon. The trail would in among them, where they rose like fluted columns above the lesser cactus—great skin-covered tanks, gorged fat with water too bitter to quench the fieriest thirst, yet guarded jealously by poison-barbed spines. Gilded woodpeckers, with hearts red as blood painted upon their breasts, dipped in uneven flight from *sahuaro* to *sahuaro*, dodged into holes of their own making, dug deep into the solid flesh; sparrow hawks sailed forth from their summits, with quick eyes turned to the earth for lizards; and the brown mocking bird, leaping for joy from the ironwood tree where his mate was nesting, whistled the praise of the desert in the ecstatic notes of love. In all that land which some say God forgot, there was naught but life and happiness, for God had sent the rain.

The sun was high in the heavens when, as they neared the summit of the broad pass, a sudden taint

came down the wind, whose only burden had been the fragrance of resinous plants, of wetted earth, and of green things growing. A distant clamor, like the babble of many voices or the surf-beats of a mighty sea, echoed dimly between the *chuck-a-chuck* of their horses' feet, and as Hardy glanced up inquiringly his companion's lip curled and he muttered:

“Sheep!”

They rode on in silence. The ground, which before had been furred with Indian wheat and sprouting six weeks' grass, now showed the imprints of many tiny feet glozed over by the rain, and Hardy noticed vaguely that something was missing—the grass was gone. Even where a minute before it had covered the level flats in a promise of maturity, rising up in ranker growth beneath the thorny trees and cactus, its place was now swept bare and all the earth trampled into narrow, hard-tamped trail. Then as a brush shed and corrals, with a cook tent and a couple of water wagons in the rear, came into view, the ground went suddenly stone bare, stripped naked and trampled smooth as a floor. Never before had Hardy seen the earth so laid waste and desolate, the very cactus trimmed down to its woody stump and every spear of root grass searched out from the shelter of the spiny *chollas*. He glanced once more at his companion, whose face was sullen and unresponsive; there was a well-defined bristle to his short mustache and he rowelled his horse cruelly when he shied at the blating horde.

The shearing was in full blast, every man working with such feverish industry that not one of them stopped to look up. From the receiving corral three Mexicans in slouched hats and jumpers drove the sheep into a broad chute, yelling and hurling battered oil cans at the hindmost; by the chute an American punched them vigorously forward with a prod, and yet another thrust them into the pens behind the shearers, who bent to their work with a sullen, backbreaking stoop. Each man held between his knees a sheep, gripped relentlessly, that



flinched and kicked at times when the shears clipped off patches of flesh; and there in the clamor of a thousand voices they shuttled their keen blades unceasingly, stripping off a fleece, throwing it aside, and seizing a fresh victim by the foot, toiling and sweating grimly. By another chute a man stood with a paint pot, stamping a fresh brand upon every new-shorn sheep, and in a last corral the naked ones, their white hides spotted with blood from their cuts, blatted frantically for their lambs. These were herded in a small inclosure, some large and browned with the grime of the flock, others white and wobbly, newborn from mothers frightened in the shearing; and always that tremendous wailing chorus—*Ba-a-a, ba-a-a, ba-a-a*—and men in greasy clothes wrestling with the wool.

To a man used to the noise and turmoil of the round-up and branding pen and accustomed to the necessary cruelties of stock raising there was nothing in the scene to attract attention. But Hardy was of gentler blood, inured to the hardships of frontier life but not to its unthinking brutality, and as he beheld for the first time the waste, the hurry, the greed of it all, his heart turned sick and his eyes glowed with pity, like a woman's. By his side the sunburned swarthy giant who had taken him willy-nilly for a friend sat unmoved, his lip curled, not at the pity of it, but because they were sheep; and because, among the men who rushed about driving them with clubs and sacks, he saw more than one who had eaten at his table and then sheeped out his upper range. His saturnine mood grew upon him as he waited and, turning to Hardy, he shouted harshly:

"There's some of your friends over yonder," he said, jerking his thumb toward a group of men who were weighing the long sacks of wool. "Want to go over and get acquainted?"

Hardy woke from his dream abruptly and shook his head.

"No, let's not stop," he said, and Creede laughed silently as he reined Bat Wings into the trail. But just as

they started to go one of the men by the scales hailed them, motioning with his hand and, still laughing cynically, the foreman of the Dos S turned back again.

"That's Jim Swope," he said, "one of our big sheep men—nice feller—you'll like him."

He led the way to the weighing scales, where two sweating Mexicans tumbled the eight-foot bags upon the platform, and a burly man with a Scotch turn to his tongue called off the weights defiantly. At his elbow stood two men, the man who had called them and a wool buyer,—each keeping tally of the count.

Jim Swope glanced quickly up from his work. He was a man not over forty but bent and haggard, with a face wrinkled deep with hard lines, yet lighted by blue eyes that still held a twinkle of grim humor.

"Hello, Jeff," he said, jotting down a number in his tally book, "goin' by without stoppin', was ye? Better ask the cook for somethin' to eat. Say, you're goin' up the river, ain't ye? Well, tell Pablo Moreno and them Mexicans I lost a cut of two hundred sheep up there somewhere. That son of a—of a herder of mine was too lazy to make a corral and count 'em, so I don't know where they are lost, but I'll give two bits a head for 'em, delivered here. Tell the old man that, will you?"

He paused to enter another weight in his book, then stepped away from the scales and came out to meet them.

"How's the feed up your way?" he inquired, smiling grimly.

"Dam' pore," replied Creede, carrying on the jest, "and it'll be poorer still if you come in on me, so keep away. Mr. Swope, I'll make you acquainted with Mr. Hardy—my new boss. Judge Ware has sent him out to be superintendent for the Dos S."

"Glad to meet you, sit," said Swope, offering a greasy hand that smelled of sheep dip. "Nice man, the old judge—here, *umbre*, put that bag on straight! Three hundred and *fifteen*? Well, I know a dam' site better—excuse me, boys—here, put that bag on again, and weight it right!"



“Well,” observed Creede, glancing at his friend as the combat raged unremittingly, “I guess we might as well pull. His busy day, you understand. Nice feller, though—you’ll like ‘im.” Once more the glint of quiet devilry came into his eyes, but he finished out the jest soberly. “Comes from a nice Mormon family down in Moroni—six brothers—all sheepmen. You’ll see the rest of the boys when they come through next month—but Jim’s the best.”

There was something in the sardonic smile that accompanied this encomium which set Hardy thinking. Creede must have been thinking too, for he rode past the kitchen without stopping, cocking his head up at the sun as if estimating the length of their journey.

“Oh, did you want to git somethin’ to eat?” he inquired innocently. “No? That’s good. That sheep smell kinder turns my stomach.” And throwing the spurs into Bat Wings he loped rapidly toward the summit, scowling forbiddingly in passing at a small boy who was shepherding the stray herd. For a mile or two he said nothing, swinging his head to scan the sides of the mountains with eyes as keen as an eagle’s; then, on the top of the last roll, he halted and threw his hand out grandly at the panorama which lay before them.

“There she lays,” he said, as if delivering a funeral oration, “as good a cow country as God ever made—and now even the jack rabbits have left it. D ‘ye see that big mesa down there?” he continued, pointing to a broad stretch of level land, dotted here and there with giant cactus, which extended along the river. “I’ve seen a thousand head of cattle, fat as butter, feedin’ where you see them *sahuaros*, now look at it!”

He threw out his hand again in passionate appeal, and Hardy saw that the mesa was empty.

“There was grass a foot high,” cried Creede in a hushed, sustained voice, as if he saw it again, “and flowers. Me and my brothers and sisters used to run out there about now and pick all kinds, big yaller poppies

and daisies, and these here little pansies—and ferget-memots. God! I wish I could ferget ‘em—but I’ve been fightin’ these sheep so long and gittin’ so mean and ugly them flowers would n’t mean no more to me now than a bunch of jimson weeds and stink squashes. But hell, what’s the use?” He threw out his hands once more, palms up, and dropped them limply.

“That’s old Pablo Moreno’s place down there,” he said, falling back abruptly into his old way. “We’ll get stop there overnight—I want to help git that wagon across the river when Rafael comes in bymeby, and we’ll go up by trail in the mornin’.”

Once more he fell into his brooding silence, looking up at the naked hills from habit, for there were no cattle there. And Rufus Hardy, quick to understand, gazed also at the arid slopes, where once the grama had waved like tawny hair in the soft winds and the cattle of Jeff Creede’s father had stood knee-high in flowers.

Now at last the secret of Arizona-the-Lawless and Arizona-the-Desert lay before him: the feed was there for those who could take it, and the sheep were taking it all. It was government land, only there was no government; anybody’s land, to strip, to lay waste, to desolate, to hog for and fight over forever—and no law of right; only this, that the best fighter won. Thoughts came up into his mind, as thoughts will in the silence of the desert; memories of other times and places, a word here, a scene there, having no relation to the matter in hand; and then one flashed up like the premonitions of the superstitious—a verse from the Bible that he had learned at his mother’s knee many years before:

“Crying, Peace, Peace, when there is no peace.”

But he put it aside lightly, as a man should, for if one followed every vagrant fancy and intuition, taking account of signs and omens, he would slue and waver in his course like a toy boat in a mill pond, which after great labor and adventure comes, in the end, to nothing.



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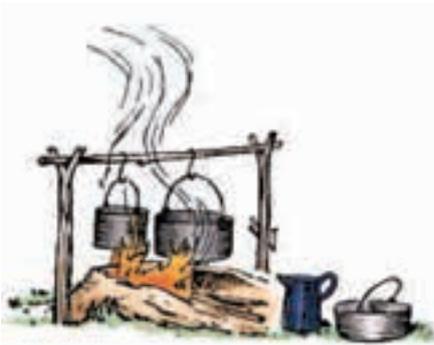
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THE COOK HOUSE

Mary Ann Wilber's Ginger Peach Pie



By Kathy McCraine

It was early April when I called my friend Mary Ann Wilber in Meeker, Colorado.

“What are you up to Mary Ann?”

Her voice crackled in exasperation over the cell phone.

“I’m fixing a flat tire on my horse trailer,” she said. “We had four inches of snow yesterday, and now it’s melted and we have mud. The kid that was helping me calve out my heifers fell out of the truck and broke his back. It’s just been one of those winters.”

Like most ranchers in the region, Mary Ann lives in Carhartts and long underwear



Mary Ann Wilber

from October to June. At 65, she’s hanging on to the lifestyle she loves, while most of the ranches in her mountain valley on the White River are being sold for recreation.

Mary Ann has ranching in her blood, though. Her great-grandparents came to Colorado by wagon train in the late 1880s, and her grandparents homesteaded, putting together an outfit that once ran over 800 cattle. Mary Ann came home in 2003 to help her ailing parents on the ranch and stayed on after they passed away.

Today, she runs about 50 cows on the 80-acre hay pasture – all that’s left of the original place –



and on another 2,300 acres that she leases nearby. She still lives in the small frame house in Meeker that her great-great grandfather built so that the kids could go to school. Every morning she gets up early, loads her Border Collie, Dee, into her Dodge pickup and heads out to check her cattle.

Despite their dwindling numbers, the ranch people in the area, both cattle and sheep producers, have a strong sense of community. Neighbors get together to brand calves or ship lambs, and families gather to put on picnics or barbecues at their cabins or cow camps. As in most communities, the cooking falls on a few willing volunteers, and Mary Ann does her share. She even has a traveling barbecue grill she carries with her to brandings to grill steaks at the end of the day. Her brownies and peach pie are legendary.

Every summer she also puts on a luncheon for the Rio Blanco Cattle Women's Association, of which she is a member. And then there are the funerals, where tables laden with food are obligatory. "I think my main recreation is going to funerals," Mary Ann says wryly.

Calving is on her mind right now though.

"Everything was going fine," she says. "I had 20 calves without a hitch, and then all of a sudden, within three days, I had three heifers with problems. It's been absolutely crazy. I had circles under my eyes from lack of sleep, but it's going to be better today. The sun is shining."

And spring is just around the corner. As the mountain snows melt and the days warm up, Mary Ann will be cranking up her grill, and neighbors will gather again for meals around the branding fire.

Mary Ann's ginger peach pie, which she makes in the summer when the peaches ripen in the lush river valleys around nearby Grand Junction, is a favorite with everybody.

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Ginger Peach Pie

Pie Dough:

2 cups flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 2/3 cup chilled vegetable shortening or lard
 2 tablespoons chilled unsalted butter
 4-5 tablespoons water

Filling:

7 cups sliced, peeled fresh peaches
 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
 3 tablespoons cornstarch
 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
 1 teaspoon minced lemon rind
 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
 4 tablespoons finely crushed ginger snaps
 2 tablespoons whipping cream
 1 tablespoon sugar



For the filling, heat oven to 425 degrees. In a large bowl, mix sliced peaches, granulated sugar, brown sugar, cornstarch, lemon juice, lemon rind, ground ginger, and cinnamon. Transfer to dough-lined pan, mounding the peaches slightly in the center. Roll out second piece of dough to 1/8-inch thickness and fit over peaches. Seal bottom and top crusts together and flute edges. Cut several small slits in top crust to allow steam to escape. Brush crust with whipping cream and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon sugar. Put pie on baking sheet and bake for 15-20 minutes until crust edge begins to brown. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees and continue baking until crust is golden brown, about 30-40 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.



For the pie dough, mix flour and salt in a large bowl. Cut in shortening and butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in water until mixture gathers easily into a ball. Refrigerate, covered, at least 30 minutes. Halve the pie dough with one half slightly larger than the other. Roll out the larger piece on a lightly floured surface to 1/8-inch thickness. Fit into a deep 9-inch pie pan and trim edge. Sprinkle bottom with the ginger snap crumbs.

Kathy McCraine is the author of *Cow Country Cooking: Recipes and Tales from Northern Arizona's Historic Ranches*, available at www.kathymccraine.com.

“The older the violin, the sweeter the music.”

Remembering Gus, Call and Larena Wood

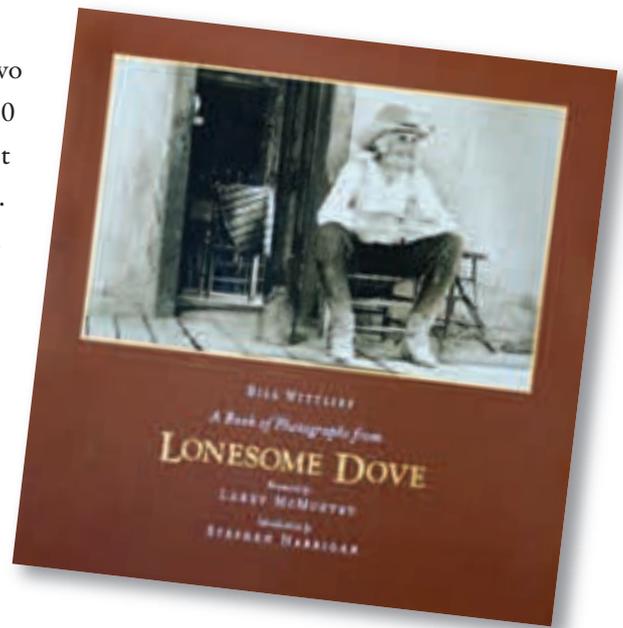
The iconic, *Lonesome Dove*, Larry McMurtry's epic tale of two aging Texas Rangers who drive a herd of stolen cattle 2,500 miles from the Rio Grande to Montana to found the first ranch there – captured the public imagination and has never let go. The novel, published in 1985, was a *New York Times* best seller and won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. More than two decades after publication, it still sells tens of thousands of copies every year.

The *Lonesome Dove* miniseries, which first aired on CBS in 1989, grabbed an even wider audience. Twenty-six million households watched the premier episode, and countless millions more have ridden with Gus and Capt. Call each time the movie has rerun on TV or been seen on DVD. It is hard to believe that it premiered some twenty-two years ago and even after all these years the images of the characters portrayed throughout the miniseries remain as fresh and heart-felt as that night in February, back in 1989 when it was first broadcast.

Bill Wittliff, of Austin, Texas, – whose photographs follow – co-produced the Simon Wincer-directed miniseries. He is also a distinguished photographer and writer whose photographs have been published in the books *La Vida Brinca* and *Vaquero: Genesis of the Texas Cowboy* and exhibited in the United States and abroad. With his wife, Sally, he founded the highly regarded Encino Press and the Wittliff Gallery of Southwestern & Mexican Photography and the Southwestern Writers Collection at Texas State University in San Marcos. As a screenwriter and producer, his credits include *Lonesome Dove*, *The Perfect Storm*, *The Black Stallion*, and *Legends of the Fall*, among others.

In 2007, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the 1989 miniseries, the Wittliff Collections released a glorious volume, *A Book of Photographs from Lonesome Dove* by Bill Wittliff. Published by UT Press in the Wittliff's Southwestern & Mexican Photography Series. The large-format, 188-page book features over 100 of the toned black-and-white photographs created by Wittliff – which he selected from his archive of over 5,000 negatives shot on set. Photographs from Bill Wittliff's *Lonesome Dove* series can be purchased through the Stephen L. Clark Gallery in Austin and the Andrew Smith Gallery in Santa Fe. Author royalties from the book's sales support the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University-San Marcos. For more information, |www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu

For all of us who keep Gus and Call close to our hearts, Wittliff's work is a daily reminder of when greatness happens, grace endures. BR





“I quote a few letters asking me (as screenwriter) not to let Gus die in the miniseries as Larry had in his book. But I got many, many more begging me not to let the cowboys eat the two pigs once they got to Montana.”

—Bill Wittliff



“Lorie darlin’, life in San Francisco, you see, is still just life. If you want any one thing too badly, it’s likely to turn out to be a disappointment. The only healthy way to live life is to learn to like all the little everyday things, like a sip of good whiskey in the evening, a soft bed, a glass of buttermilk, or a feisty gentleman like myself.”

—Gus McCrae



“Here’s to the sunny slopes of long ago.”

—Gus McCrae





“Sometimes with Tommy Lee you just have to stand back. He’s all force, all concentrated power coming right at you in a straight line. Such was his commitment to Lonesome Dove.”

—Bill Wittliff











“I hate rude behavior in a man. I won’t tolerate it.”

—Capt. Woodrow Call









“Early on pretty much everybody decided the star of this enterprise was Lonesome Dove itself. If there was a problem we’d say – Well, what’s best for Lonesome Dove? The idea was if we took care of Lonesome Dove, Lonesome Dove would take care of us.”

—Bill Wittliff





Who Listens to Range Radio?

By Bruce Pollock

Our listeners encompass loyal fans from all over the globe. From Maine to Slovenia, people are enjoying Range Radio. I am overwhelmed with the knowledge of all that we still have in common with each other, near and far. I hope we can make a difference somehow, some way, with what we deliver in music and word. Last week, I received a request from a listener in Calgary. After viewing, I was reminded, with great pride, of who our listeners “really are.”

“It would be great if your station could play the song that Ian Tyson recorded with schoolchildren to cheer up a blind golden eagle named Spirit.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s52Jikk-5k>

Sincerely,
Paul Rasporich
www.songforspirit.com

I am glad we had a platform to see what Paul and his 1st and 2nd grade classes had done with one of our most revered Western music artists, Ian Tyson. In the spirit of Range Radio, here is what our listeners have been saying about Range Radio:

Brenda Libby

What a nice mix of Music...i'm surely at "Home on the RANGE"~

Kay Ward

This is awesome im only 40 but i was raised on all the old stuff thanks Range Radio.

First I have to say your radio station in THE BEST! I'm from Slovenia, but still I'm listening it every single day ... at home and at work. If it's possible, I would really like to hear Blue Moon by Mavericks.

Thanks and greetings from Slovenia!

Greg



Chesteen Lindberg

My Saddle Pal in Santa Barbara found this station and sent me the link. What a great find. It is so good to hear artists like Ian Tysan and Dave Stamey et. al - downstreaming while I am at work. Great article on the Hunewill ranch - I visit twice a year and find it is a home away from home. Thanks so much for bringing Cowboy /Western music to the web where we all can listen.

Julie DeBrun-stinnett

Love it — your music will definately make the countdown for the 4 - J Big Piney Trail Ride go a little faster! Illinois is listening

Bobbie L Schroder

Just found you! This is not your typically slick and boring “country” music station. It is authentic “country and western” music

Kristie Oliver Farris

I LOVE this station! Really gets me through the days I’m tied to the desk. Thanks

Jackie Jax

I wish they had Range Radio in Texas but sadly they dont but one day I will have sat radio and I’m gonna find it

Colleen wrote:

I don’t know who’s brainchild this station is but God Bless ya! I worked for CHUM in western Canada many moons ago when country was, well...western. Ah, the good ‘ol days...

Dolores Augustine Field

I love this type music. Real hard to find on east coast of Virginia. Yee Haw. Makes me want to dance



Click to Listen to Range Radio

Mary Wilson

WOW! PERFECT! Just like the music I grew up on. Thanks for keeping it ALIVE AND WELL

Lyle W Brunson

Nice to find some real western music for a change. Only Station I’m gonna listen to from now on here in Tucson Az

Cheryl wrote:

“Love it love it love it — “country music” IS NOT Western Music. Thanks.”

Payson Reese

Shoshone, Idaho

I love the radio station as I play it at my business and my customers love the music too. Keep up the great work!!

Katelyn Pease

Found you guys threw facebook and downloaded great work!!





Katelyn Pease

Found you guys threw facebook and downloaded your iPhone app. Now I can listen to you guys whenever I want all the way in Maine :]

Donna wrote:

"Nice sounds on this station ! We are listening in Lytle Texas.."

Mary Ann wrote:

"Listening this mornin to Range Radio..what a great station ! thanks

Jessica Dudenhofer Beery

I'm enjoying your station in mid-Michigan! Just found you the other day and LOVE listening the songs I used to sing with my dad growing up. Thanks for streaming it

Frank James

I'm listening to your traditional country music and singing it here in Wisconsin. You have two new fans.

Jenny Gummersall

Just discovered you! Great!!! I am enjoying listening from Durango, Colorado

Candy Roden

Thanks so much for this station. Love it here in Six Mile, AL. I have Google Chrome so I can open Range Radio in one tab and use another tab to go where ever I want and never lose you.

Don wrote:

"This is a great site for true country WESTERN music! Thanks!"

Ann wrote:

"And thanks for keeping it 'WESTERN'! I love it!! Great job!"

Tami Nearing

Best mix of Country/Western and new music along with some great new artists

Pat wrote:

"I love Range Radio! I love that new artists

Pat wrote:

"I love Range Radio! I love the app! I'm telling everyone I know! Thanks for the BEST country radio station ever! "REAL COUNTRY RADIO!"

Chuck wrote:

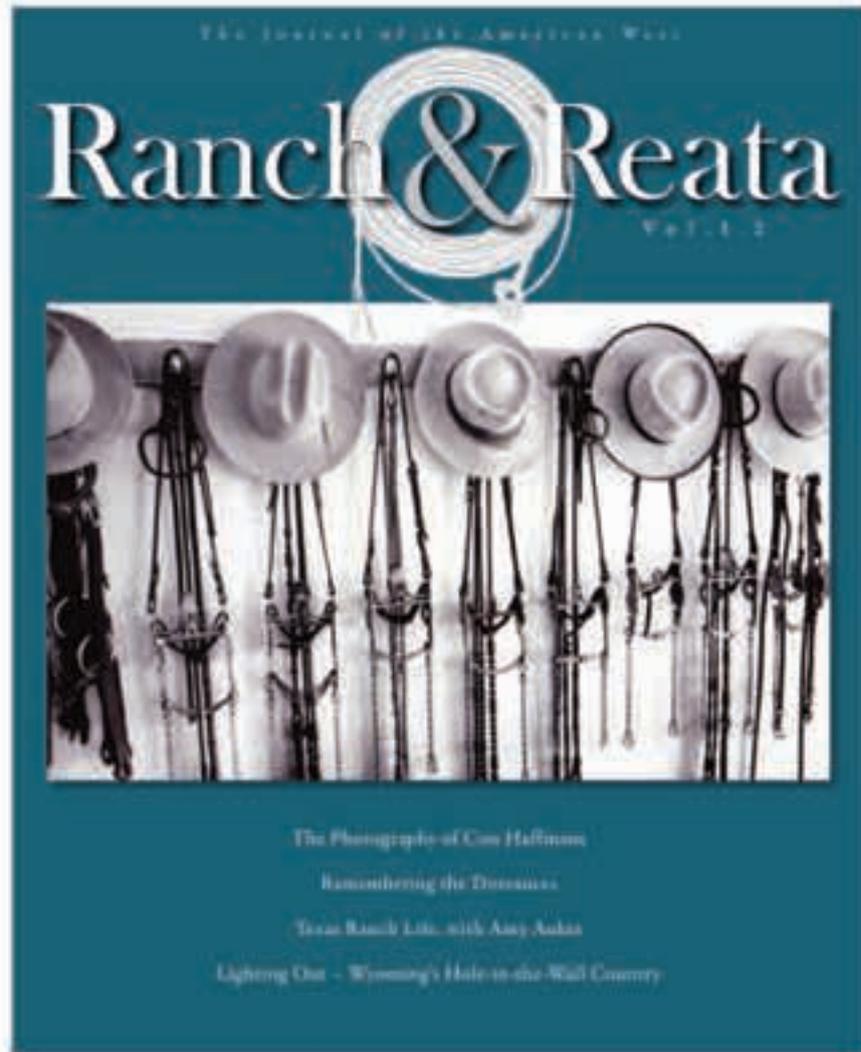
"Sure was good feeling to find this site. This is the place to be for great music! Thanks Range Radio!"

Susan Tognazzini

What a find you are. I have very little time to surf around and am by far not a computer person, but was so stinkin proud to have found you. You now have a loyal listener. Now to find out how to get you to the barn from my computer. Guess I am going to have to break down and get an iphone or something just to listen to you. Worth it I think now! Thanks so much.



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Dave Stamey

The acclaimed musician rode a wide circle as his career developed. The cowboy, packer and former novelist draws upon firsthand experiences to fuel his songs.

By Jameson Parker

The shopworn advice to young authors: write what you know. Dave Stamey has taken that advice to heart, but it was a rocky beginning, one typical of the ranching and cowboy life. He was born in Montana, east of Billings, where the prairie meets the mountains.

“My dad was a rancher, but when the cattle market went bust, he lost the ranch,” Dave says. “So when I was 12, we moved to the central coast of California and he opened a feeder operation. Then Nixon got into a fight with the Russians and enacted a grain embargo that made the cattle cost more to keep alive than to kill.

“I got interested in music and started playing the guitar around that time, but I was also interested in writing. No one in my family did either one of those things, so they were a little confused. They were supportive, but they didn’t understand.”

Dave started out working in feedlots and as a packer up in the Sierras (“I still host a pack trip up there with

my partner every summer.”) but then he decided to make the switch from packer to full-time musician.

“I played every bar up and down the Central Coast 10 times, but there was no way to keep it up professionally,” he says. “No one listens to your music and

you get insulted in some men’s room once too often. So I quit music and set out to write the great American novel.”

He jokes about his writing (“I wrote 10 novels I would fight to the death to keep out of print.”), but he must have been better than he’s willing to admit because he landed no less an agent than the late Knox Burger. A legend for his crustiness, an unwillingness to tolerate

fools and pretenders, and his championing young writers with ability, Knox Burger worked with a who’s who of 20th century fiction, including such authors as Louis L’Amour, Kurt Vonnegut, John Steinbeck, Ray Bradbury, and many other giants.

“I sold one Jake Logan novel,” Dave says. “Jake Logan” is the pen name shared by the numerous authors



photo by Lori Merritt



photos courtesy of Melissa Stamey

Some favorites by Dave Stamey

The Vaquero Song by Dave Stamey, photography by David R. Stoecklein: <http://youtu.be/rh0DQ80kZoY>

The Bandit Joaquin by Dave Stamey: <http://youtu.be/s-5hhfNKCTY>





of the nearly 400-volume *John Slocum* Western series. “But I won’t tell you which one, and after 10 years Burger dropped me because he couldn’t sell anything of my own. I went back to packing mules.”

Fate intervened, as it so often does, in the form of Dave’s wife, Melissa.

“She told me to go back up into the mountains and get my head right, so I picked up my guitar again and started writing songs,” he says. “I had written prose for so long it took me a while to realize I could connect better with people with a song than with an 80,000 word novel. But that prose background is what makes lyrics so important to me. The people who come to my shows like a story, and I try to make them as true as I can.”

Most of Dave’s songs are shaped by his history and the places he has lived.

“Almost everything I write is personal,” he says. “It’s something that happened to me or something I know firsthand, something I saw happen. With “The Circle,” the first two lines were based on my own horse.”

*The horse I ride is old but he has served me well
Coat like old tobacco rich and warm*

“The rest of the song came out of that,” Dave continues. “Trying to pinpoint the source of inspiration is like trying to nail grape jelly to the wall, but if I come up with a good line it gives me an approach and a sense of the form, whether it’s going to be upbeat or a lugubrious, vein-opening ballad.

“I write all my drafts on an early 1970s Olympia typewriter, but when I was working as a wrangler, I used to write on horseback. When you’re doing something you know really well you can sort of disengage and use your mind for different things. For me it was to rough out a song.”

California writer Jameson Parker is the author of the memoir *An Accidental Cowboy*.

Learn more about Dave Stamey at www.davestamey.com.

Dave and Melissa recently bought horse property in the foothills of the Sierras, but he doesn’t get to spend much time at home. His show schedule looks like a



photo by Lori Merritt

horsemanship clinician’s, bouncing from Arizona to Washington and from California to Montana and all points in between, circling around on trails he has ridden many times before, but that are always new, always inspiring new songs.

“If I had to guess, I’d say I’m on the road 150 days a year,” he says, “but I don’t even want to know. But it’s like the cattle business: if you have a good year, then next year you’re up against [your own success] and you have to work harder and harder to reach your own goals. I want everything to be as good as it can be.”

*The life I live goes on it fits me oh so well
Old and new together evergreen
I mount my horse at dawning
My heart rings like a bell
And we ride through the canyons
Where the air is fresh and clean*

— “The Circle”

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Rendezvous West Art in Leather and Wood

A Flourishing Journey



By Jayne Skeff

When most people hear the word “rendezvous” they assume it to mean a final destination or meeting point. Well, Rendezvous West is a destination, just not a finite one. It’s a meeting place without boundaries where leather and wood artists and sculptors Russell and Deborah Shamah invite you to experience the life and beauty of the American West and its magnificent complexion which they transform into art. “Through our work we want to provide you a place to escape and rendezvous with us, sharing with you a part of the Rocky Mountain West... the place we call home.”

At the core of what the Shamah’s share as a life team is their passion for using the magnificence nature provides and turning it into functional art to wear and art to display. In doing so, they are able to transform and extend these pieces of nature into timeless treasures.

They create works in wood and leather, incorporating stones and sterling, which exude a richness reflective of that environment in which they live, yet maintaining the organic soul of the materials they use.



Deborah and Russell Shamah, Rendezvous West

Russell works in wood and Deborah works in leather. They inspire each other, support each other and, yes, critique each other – but as a team their creativity is boundless.

Deborah looks back to her childhood with sentimental tears in her eyes as she recalls her parents who were the inspiration to follow her creative dreams. Both, artists in their own right, and their

encouragement and skillful mentoring are reflected in every piece of work she creates today.

Russell’s passion for working with wood goes back to high school “shop class” in New York where he grew up. Tools were limited and he only had a lathe, so he

began carving by hand, always pushing the envelope just one step further. Today, both are self-taught contemporary masters in their work.



Harvested from a dying Aspen tree, Russell was able to keep sections of bark intact while turning the piece, adding to the natural element of the piece.

Measures 11" x 9"

112

The story how Deborah and Russell met is a delightful one. She lived in Colorado and he in New York. Russell spent some time in Europe, which had given him an appreciation for mountains and nature. Upon his return, he decided to settle in Colorado. Having to earn a living, he opened a hair salon in town. "Carving wood or carving hair – it's all the same. You take away some, you add some color... put your head in my hands and I'll carve something out of it," says Russell. "Carving wood however, is a bit more forgiving. It doesn't yell at you when it doesn't turn out to look like the model on the cover of this month's issue of *Vogue Magazine*." His sense of humor is something seen in everything he creates. It's probably safer that he's working with wood now and not hair.

With Russell upstairs in his hair salon, Deborah

opened a small boutique below where she designed and sold her line of clothing. Well, the rest as they say is history. They met, their creativity merged (or shall we say rendezvous'd) and some 30 plus years later they are still a creative and unstoppable team. Their actual merging had something to do with Deborah using Russell for fittings for her clothing line but details were not shared in the interview. Less we digress...

Turning to the work they create, words like "earthy but refined," exquisite yet organic" are frequently used. For Russell, he creates his work from dead or dying wood in the surrounding forests. The hunt for that perfect piece is an inspiring part of the journey for him. It's this hunt that stimulates his endless imagination to create yet another magnificent treasure.

For Deborah, who works primarily in leather with stone and sterling accents, her goal is to use only American hide, American stones and American sterling. It's a challenge these days, when so much is sent to



Russell searches for this perfect burl for his creations. Pictured here, Russell precariously stands high in a tree sawing that perfect piece he saw from the ground. Not pictured is Deborah below excited for his find yet a bit concerned by his position.



Hand carved cowhide bands by Deborah, and Rendezvous West signature hand tied leather barbed wire band by Russell are framed in layers of sterling silver wire. Turquoise stones with sterling silver frames complete the designs. The bracelets are lined with soft deerhide to add comfort to each piece.



The unusual grey blue coloration in this bowl is found in pine destroyed by the Pine or Bark Beetle throughout Colorado. A fungus following the infestation of the Beetle causes the staining. This piece was turned by Russell from a burl harvested from a dead tree in the South Park area of Colorado. It features Nevada turquoise inlay. Measures 6.5 x 12"



One of Deborah's favorite trees, the aspen, is carved and sculpted into the bottom of this leather vessel she calls "Simply Aspen." Crafted of cowhide ocean jasper dangles from the lip of the bowl. Measures 3" x 21"



This expansive piece is turned from a pine burl harvested from a dead tree found in the South Park area of Colorado. The burl was so large Russell had to cut it in two pieces. While turning the bowl Russell discovered bullets embedded in the wood, leftovers from someone using the tree for target practice. One known bullet remains in the piece. He inlaid Nevada turquoise chips and deer antler embellishments to finish the piece. Measures 20" across



This stunning vase was a "rescue" from their fireplace. This piece of Aspen harvested from a dying tree was almost ready to be tossed into the flames. A second look found Russell saving the piece and creating this stunning work.



Nevada Turquoise and Arizona Wildhorse Magnesite are framed and woven atop sterling silver frames. The deerhide bands feature carvings of Rocky Mountain fern and wild roses. Lined with deerhide. Deborah debuted her leather embroidered belts at the DesignAmerica-Texas Fashion Show. Shown here, her elkhide belt is embellished with South Dakota Dinosaur Bone, US Petersite, Pyrite beads and deer antler buttons. A matching deerhide cuff with Petersite and Pyrite beads is pictured with the belt.

China, but her standards prevail.

Her high standard in design and leather sculpting has won her awards and national recognition. Almost on a whim, she entered her leather petal and horsehair vase in the renowned Sheridan (Wyoming) international leather



Deborah practices the ancient art form of pyrography. First creating her own pen and ink drawings, she then burns her artwork into the leather. An unconvension yet very difficult and precise art form, the results are exquisite.



This piece is technically the most difficult leather vessel Deborah has created to date. Made of one continuous piece of cowhide, delicate edges are skived into each petal then individually hand sculpted to their round shape and joined to one another. Swags of horse hair and brass beads finish the piece. Measures 9" x 13"

contest. Faced with master competitors from around the world, being awarded "1st Runner Up to Winner" was the most humbling experience in her life, she recalls. Deborah's ability to take a piece of hide and transform it into a bowl with overlapping petals, or design a belt carved and dyed to complement its natural richness along with her mastery of the ancient art form of pyrography is unparalleled and every piece is one-of-a-kind.

Deborah and Russell Shamah work together and inspire each other to continually raise the bar in their world-



Hand crafted by Russell this one of a series he calls "Explorer" is crafted of cowhide, hand sewn with faux sinew and closes with a claw made of conch shell.

Measures 3" x 7" x 3"

class design. At the root of who they are, though, are just two talented individuals who want to share their love of where they live and what they create with the world. "Our work wants to be touched, and worn and loved."

Their efforts are where passion, heritage and limitless imagination meet – for everyone to embrace and enjoy.

To rendezvous with the Shamah's and their work, please visit their website at www.rwestart.com. Or visit them in person at the Denver Old West Show and Auction, June 24-26, 2011 (www.denveroldwest.com).



Jayne Skeff is President of DesignAmerica Foundation and a freelance writer for several western publications.



Northern Plains Rifle Case, c. 1890s

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Edward Borein *California Vaquero*
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Making History

By Melissa McCracken

The original photograph of Billy the Kid – you know the photo: in his hat and boots, Winchester by his side – will be sold at auction this June, and is estimated to bring between 300,000 and 400,000 dollars. The photo is actually a tintype, produced sometime around 1880 in Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and is the only known, authenticated photograph of The Kid in existence. It has been passed down through a single family for over 130 years.

At the same auction is the personal collection of Mr. Jordan B. Cottle, a performer in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* and friend of William F. Cody. Cottle's extensive assortment of artifacts includes his personal scrapbook, meticulously assembled by Cottle and inscribed by Cody. It is a treasure trove of the ephemera of an era: letters, notes, cards, passes, tickets, photos, dinner menus. Gathered together, they capture a time and place in a way that a written account could never achieve.

Katherine ("Kay") Haley was a noted Ojai, California horsewoman and art patron, who collected contemporary Western artists. A friend and supporter of Edward Borein, she assembled the finest and most extensive collection of Borein's work in private hands. Now, ten-plus years after her death, her favorite Borein watercolor, "California Vaquero" will be sold at the auction as well, and is expected to fetch a handsome price.

Brian Lebel's Old West Auction will be offering these pieces (along with a few hundred more) at its 22nd annual event this June 25th in Denver, Colorado. Lebel's auction, and accompanying weekend dealer show, have always attracted collectors of fine Western art and artifacts, and Brian Lebel himself has been in the Old West antiques business for over 30 years. He is a man who has handled his share of historic



The Upham tintype or ferrotype, 3" x 2", photographer unknown, c. late 1879 or early 1880. It is the only authenticated photo of Billy the Kid, most likely taken by a traveling photographer in Fort Sumner New Mexico



This is probably one of the finest watercolors ever painted by Borein because of the quality of the draftsmanship plus the beautiful action of the principal figures. It is my favorite.

—Katherine H. Haley 1988

items. Yet, he says of the first time he held the Billy the Kid tintype, “my knees shook.” There’s something about being able to physically touch history that enchants people; that allows them to feel a connection with the past that is otherwise absent, even someone as accustomed to it as Lebel. (The reason you can’t touch the walls at the Alamo is precisely because *everybody* wants to.)

We recognize that history lives in more than just books,

and we understand that it’s vital that we preserve the artifacts of our American past and culture. We pretty much count on museums and private collectors to bear the primary responsibility for this preservation effort, and it will likely be museums and collectors that purchase the big-ticket items at Lebel’s auction. But the reason that Billy’s photo and Cottle’s scrapbook are still here a century later is because someone thought to take care of them when they were new. Kay Haley sat in Borein’s studio and collected his work when he was living, and as a result she helped to cement not just his legacy, but hers as well. Yes, it’s important that we preserve our past, but it’s equally important that we preserve our present.

What we make in this country matters; and also what we save, what we pass down. The flotsam and jetsam of our daily lives are the artifacts of the next century, and though we can guess at what might be considered historic a hundred years from now, we certainly can’t know. It would seem then that we need to be mindful of what we create and consume, and, of course, what we throw away. Not only because it matters now, but because it matters in the future. What will we leave behind? What will fill the museums of the 22nd century? History is being made every day in myriad tiny ways. That’s something worth remembering.

For more information about Billy’s tintype, Cottle’s scrapbook, Kay’s favorite watercolor, or any of the other historic and collectible items at Brian Lebel’s Old West Auction, visit www.denveroldwest.com.



Melissa McCracken is a freelance writer and publicist for Denver Old West.

The Shoe Box

Publisher's Note: Years before my father passed away, he gave me a folder with some typed pages – typed meaning typed on a “typewriter” – you remember those pre-iPad machines? He explained that the folder contained a story someone had sent him with the idea of making a film. It was a story of a discovery in an upstairs attic in a rather famous old California home that had to do with a shoe box, writer Helen Hunt Jackson and Charles M. Russell. It was the Russell and Charles Lummis connection that had intrigued my father for so many years. He said the piece had been attributed to writer Charles Outland, an authority on Ventura, California ranches. Whether the story is true or not, it takes us to a place of wonder of finding something connected to our cultural past. A story of history and “placed” people, something wonderful that was found, in a shoe box.

It was only a shoe box gathering dust in the attic of the famous old adobe ranch house. Once its glossy texture had shone from the shelf of the some store – A. Hamburger & Sons, perhaps – the contents wrapped in delicate tissue awaiting the feet its leather would protect. Hopefully, the fit would be perfect when the buttonhook had drawn the bright new buttons through the loops. Now it was discarded, useless, dulled with age and soiled where an inconsiderate raindrop had discovered an entryway through the roof. Why had this humble shoe box been saved at a rancho that fairly reeked with genesis of California history?

The Indians had given the place its name, *Camulos*. The Sacred Expedition under Portola had tramped its soil and camped nearby. Antonio del Valle, a soldier of old Mexico, had admired the setting on travels between Missions and obtained possession through San Francisco Land Grant. John Charles Fremont and his band of ragamuffin “soldiers” had passed this way en route to Los Angeles and the Treaty of Cahuenga.

It was Ygnacio del Valle who enlarged a primitive adobe into the now famous ranch house and lived the good pastoral life through his declining years, pressing

the oil from the olive and wine from the grape.

Helen Hunt Jackson, while dreaming her typically maudlin nineteenth-century classic, *Ramona*, had stopped here for a few hours to taste the flavor of California rancho period, an era that was lingering on its deathbed long before Ygnacio had completed the ranch house. Yet it was she more than anyone who would forever put the stamp of fame upon the place the Indians had called *Camulos*.

Now a new day was dawning. No longer would the descendants of Antonio del Valle dispense the legendary hospitality of the Californians. As a means of saying goodbye, the del Valle family would hold one last grand and glorious “bull’s head barbecue” for which the old rancho had long been famous. Then the *Camulos* would be turned over to August and Mary Rubel, who had purchased this remaining acreage of the once vast San Francisco Grant of eleven square leagues. They were tenants who had promised to cherish and guard the land and its heritage with all the fervor of Ygnacio himself.

But there was work to be done. Dozens of historic documents and artifacts abandoned by the del Valle family were interlarded with worthless trivia in the attic





of the adobe and the loft of the winery. (One might suspect that to a del Valle a bull's head barbecue, vintage Camulos brandy, and a fandango rated higher priorities than an 1852 legislative document printed in Spanish or an ancient pistol plowed to the surface in the orange orchards of the Camulos. And who is to say that he might not have been right?) Even that old shoe box was abandoned, although there must have been some reason for its preservation. In an attic jammed with mishmash castoffs of generations, the wheat must be separated from the chaff and the accumulated dust swept clean. Here was a job for the new mistress of Camulos, Mary Rubel.

In the "wheat," Mary would find those Indian artifacts and ancient firearms plowed up in the fields; saddles and bridles of Mexican origin; and early California legislative pamphlets printed in the Spanish language, one on the condition of native Indians. These countless memorabilia of the del Valle family were carefully set aside, while the "chaff" of trivia was tossed across the attic to be carted away and burned. The old shoe box sailed through the air with all the grace of a derailed freight car, but in its fluttering Mary Rubel had seen something that had no business being on a shoe box. Walking over to the pile of trash, she examined her find.

It was a simple sketch, yet charming. The artist had drawn two horses front and center standing head to rump, each swirling the flies from each other with its tail. In the background were more horses, tossing their heads, stomping their feet, and tails flying in the desperate, eternal battle against flies. In the lower left corner were the initials C.M.R. over the legendary horned skull. Russell! Charles Marion Russell!

Mary Rubel smiled. She had always wanted a Russell. Yes, even a simple sketch on an old shoe box would do. The famous painter of horses and the West

had not given his work a name (it was probably an impromptu doodling on Russell's part), but an appropriate title was obvious: *Damn the flies!*

Later, Mary would cut out the sketch, using the remainder of the box for matting. A recessed old-fashioned frame completed the preservation of this mysterious bit of Western Americana.

How had this homey piece of art, created by one of America's most famous painters, come to be in the attic of the old Camulos ranch house? It is tempting to imagine Russell's presence at that last bull's head barbecue, an affair now legendary in del Valle annals. A guest list that included George Wharton James, Carrie Jacobs Bond, Charles Wakefield Cadman, and William S. Hart would not have suffered from Russell's presence, particularly in view of the fact that Hart and Russell were close friends. However, the del Valle farewell was held at a time when America's foremost Western painter was severely handicapped with health problems. Further, Mary Rubel would have remembered if he had been there or known of the shoe box sketch before it ever got into the cramped attic of the adobe.

Possibly someday some obscure researcher will find documentation of when Russell was at Camulos and the circumstances of his visit. In the meantime, from the meager evidence and Russell's known sketching habits we can only imagine what might have happened.

Two friends in particular must be suspected of bringing Charlie Russell to the ranch: William S. Hart or Charles Lummis. Both men were thoroughly at home and familiar with Camulos. In fact, it is known that Lummis became so fascinated with "The Home of Ramona" that his visits were altogether too frequent and prolonged in the opinion of some members of the del Valle family. Charles Fletcher Lummis has to be the first choice as the one responsible for bringing Russell to Camulos, with William S. Hart a close second.





photo courtesy Montana Historical Society

Russell in front of his masterpiece, *When The Land Belonged to God*, finished in 1914.
It hangs in the capital rotunda in Helena, Montana.





Another consideration is the known sketching habits of Russell. Give the man any pen, pencil, or what have you, a piece of paper and those talented fingers would be at work drawing some Western theme. Indeed, there are those who will maintain that if Russell had been lost in the wilderness and stumbled onto a sliver of ochre and a large smooth rock, the result would have been a masterpiece to stir the envy of his Indian friends.

Finally there is the shoe box itself. Why, of all things, a shoe box? It is doubtful that even Charles Lummis would have had the audacity to request of Mrs. del Valle a shoe box upon which her guest might sketch some horses. No. There is a more plausible theory.

Old shoe boxes were and still are handy containers in which to pack picnic lunches. Is it difficult to imagine Charlie Russell and Charles Lummis, or possibly

William S. Hart, throwing together a picnic lunch, packing it in the shoe box and riding horseback into the hills surrounding the Camulos? And to carry the fantasy still further, is it unreasonable to visualize the men resting in the shade of a native oak during a warm noontime, with Russell's restless talent scribbling on the side of that shoe box, now empty, the unique fly-swatting techniques of his favorite animal; or his companion, fascinated with the sketch, conjuring up some excuse to carry it back to the ranch house upon their return?

A fantasy it must remain for the present, to this writer at least. After all, it *was* only a shoe box gathering dust in the attic of an old California adobe ranch house made famous by Helen Hunt Jackson. But are there any finer ingredients for fantasy?





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Her Rightful Place

Amy Hale Auker writes of her love affair with the working cowboy and the American West.

By Kathy McCraine

Every horseman rides beside an open grave. – Old Spanish Proverb

She thought, Being a wife and mother and cook just isn't *it*; there has to be more. At that moment she faced and conquered her greatest fear, "that terror of being substandard, middle-of-the-pack, good enough," and said, "I am a *writer*."

After years living in West Texas cow camps, writing her life down in notebooks and journals, sharing voluminous letters and e-mails with friends, writing bits and pieces about the ever-changing colors of life on the prairie, at 41, Amy has finally found her rightful place as an author. Her recently released book of essays, aptly titled *Rightful Place*, from Texas Tech Press, paints an intimate yet unsentimental picture of an almost vanishing way of life on the big outfits of West Texas, with its itinerant people, horses, cattle, wildlife, windswept prairies and unforgiving climate.

A petite young woman with a thick mane of long blond hair and eyes the color of robin's eggs, Amy knows

life in the Texas Panhandle well, having moved within it some 27 times since she was born there. Her father was at various times a cowboy, feedlot hand, rancher, oil field worker and English teacher. When her parents moved to Guthrie, Texas, both to teach English at the Four Sixes Ranch headquarters, Amy knew she had found her roots.

Savoring the occasions when ranch manager Tom Moorhouse let her ride with the wagon, she knew she never wanted to go back to the city. But she soon faced a harsh reality – women could never be part of the cowboy's world on those outfits. Her only hope of living her dream was to marry a cowboy with a camp job.

She spent two miserable semesters at Texas Tech.



photos by Kathy McCraine

Amy's work chronicles her life on ranches throughout West Texas.



“College was a groomed and manicured world where the clock rules and my dorm room was the size of a coffin,” she would later write. “I missed the sky.” Then Amy found her escape in Nick Auker, a South Dakota farmer’s son who had come to Texas to cowboy. Nick was tired of living in a bunkhouse and ready for a camp, so after dating for three weeks, he told Amy, “Hey, if you marry me, Bob Moorhouse will give me a camp at the Pitchforks.” Not the most romantic proposal, but she accepted. She was 19, and Nick was 25. For the next 18 years she would move and move again – the Fulton Quien Sabe, the Pitchfork, the JA, Holt Brothers – always another cow camp.

On the 7D Ranch that first spring, she learned that there was no cook for the crew and they packed sandwiches for lunch, so she offered to cook. “It never crossed my mind to ask why I couldn’t just hire on as day help and pack my lunch too, because this was Texas,” she says. Women simply had no place on a cowboy crew, so armed with the cookbooks she got as wedding gifts and a few instructions from her mother over the phone, she taught herself to cook, sometimes getting paid by the plate, and sometimes working for groceries and day wages.

She worked hard on those ranches, but never horseback. Besides cooking, she helped Nick dig ditches and build fence, calve out heifers, halter break and start colts, though only on the ground. The rule was she couldn’t get on them. After ground work she turned them over to the cowboys, and that was hard.

The early years were a crash course in being a camp wife. “I didn’t know how to buy groceries for a month at

a time, what to buy a lot of, what wouldn’t keep,” she says. “We didn’t make a lot of money, and you just went to town for groceries once a month because once you did that, you were out of money.” And, she hated the city.

“The city is in constant motion with cars and vans and pickups and trucks speeding by or waiting or turning the corner or baking in the sun. Every human being is going somewhere. Even the asphalt, concrete, and glass scream hurry, hurry, hurry.” That was never the life she wanted.

Over the years, Amy and Nick raised two kids, Oscar and Lily. While other camp wives escaped their lot by taking jobs in town, Amy was determined to homeschool her kids at the ranch. “I could not fathom putting a child on a school bus for three hours a day. Why raise them on a ranch if they’re never there?” she reasoned.

After many moves, the couple found themselves working on a yearling outfit owned by the Holt Brothers at Goodnight, Texas. It was the first time Amy had moved out of the river brakes and up onto the caprock and Llano Estacado, a land of flat prairie, blue northers and blizzards. Running yearlings was intense work.

“The man we worked for was a bargain hunter,” she says. “They’d call and say there was a truckload of Mexican yearlings coming up from the border. Always, it would be Thanksgiving, or Christmas, or the middle of January when it was raining or snowing. They’d come dump them out, and you just hoped for a manageable death loss. Death loss is a personal thing to a cowboy. I never liked running yearlings.”



Amy Auker, author of the essay collection
Rightful Place



Amy now calls the Spider Ranch, near Prescott, Arizona, home. She's completed two novels and continues to write about her ranch experiences.

Frustrated with her segregation from the world she longed for, Amy began to do two things: she walked endlessly over the prairie, and she began writing e-mails about her life.

"I ran to two places for solace. First, I ran to the land. And when I came back into the house with flushed face and full heart, I ran to the keyboard. I was becoming enamored with the watershed of the Salt Fork of the Red River, that place where I found myself when I needed it most. I wrote about colors, blue herons, blizzards, eggs warm in the nests, long-legged colts on yellow pastures..."

Amy sent some of her work to John Erickson, whose company, Laid Back West, marketed the work of several western humor writers and cartoonists. Erickson

was enthusiastic and encouraged her to write more. Soon her humorous "ranch wife" stories were being published in magazines and small-town newspapers. Still, she was discouraged because she felt "the writing was not good, and I got tired of being funny because there is so much to this lifestyle that isn't funny."

Meanwhile, Amy had gotten acquainted with singer and musician Red Steagall at the JA Ranch, where, every year, he pulled a wagon out for Texas businessmen to help brand calves. Amy's son Oscar was growing up to be a cowboy and, after studying poetry in his home schooling, discovered he was a natural performer. Steagall took him under his wing and became his mentor. Amy and Oscar began to travel with



him to shows, and then to the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada. It changed her life forever.

“All of a sudden I was around all these people who were living the lifestyle, most of them, and they were making art,” she says. “It was a time when my children were getting very independent and sailing away from me. I hated that, and I had to find something positive.”

Steagall introduced Amy to Andy Wilkinson, series editor for a Texas Tech project called *Voice in the American West*. He was looking for undiscovered talent, and when he read Amy’s work, he was “knocked out.” He told Amy, “Stop writing e-mails. You’re wasting your writing.” Wilkinson began sending her essays to read, and she attended his writing workshops.

“She has a very strong, clear, fresh voice in the way she writes,” he says. “Those essays are poems as much as they are prose, but even more important, she has something to say. There is nothing predictable or trite about her writing.”

Between the spring of 2005 and 2006, Amy completed the manuscript for *Rightful Place*, but it would be five years before it was published. A university press differs from a commercial publisher in that every book has to go through a review by peers to determine if it is scholarly enough to make the cut. In the end, Amy’s book was accepted and praised by the established writers that reviewed her.

“When I finished the book, I realized two things,” she says. “One, I had to break free from a culture where I couldn’t be a part of what I loved, and two, I couldn’t stay in my marriage.”

Amy made the break in the winter of 2008 and wound up living in a “terrible house” in Chino Valley, Arizona, where she took a miserable job at the local Sonic and continued to work on perfecting the book.

She now saw it as her only future.

Then her life took another turn. At that January’s poetry gathering in Elko, she met Gail Steiger, an Arizona cowboy who was managing the 68-section Spider Ranch near Prescott, Arizona. A songwriter and filmmaker, Gail was a regular performer at Elko and other poetry gatherings. When he heard about Amy’s book, he insisted on reading it before it was published.

“My heart went out to her,” Gail says, “because she seemed so lost without the prospect of living on a ranch or finding a ranch job. As soon as I read the book, I was a goner. I just fell in love with her.”

Now Amy has found a home at the Spider Ranch. She and Gail are partners, sharing all the work, whether it’s branding calves, fixing fence, or digging out a muddy spring. During the spring and fall works, they camp for days on end, instead of trotting the seven miles back and forth to headquarters every day.

Amy has found that when she’s trailing cows, her mind goes into creative mode, and at night back in camp, she writes feverishly by head lamp, tearing out pages and pages of longhand copy from yellow pads to stuff in her cantele bag. Back home she rewrites and transfers it into her computer. Already she has finished two novels – fiction is her latest passion.

She tells the story about branding a bunch of big calves last fall, ones that had escaped the spring branding. “We finished and turned everything back together. We had some calf fries on the branding pot, and each of us had one warm beer apiece left, so we sat down in the branding pen and ate our calf fries and drank our beer and watched the calves mother up. It wasn’t a big crew on a huge outfit. They weren’t even our cows, but we both knew we were exactly where we wanted to be. This is our rightful place.”



Amy Hale Auker’s book *Rightful Place* is available at www.amyhaleauker.com.

Kathy McCraine is a rancher and writer from Prescott, Arizona.

A Western Moment

Artist of The West: John Edward Borein (1872 - 1945)



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Ed Borein was a “first-hand student of humanity, a cowhand, and artist and philosopher,” wrote his biographer, the late Harold Davidson. Borein loved the common work of the West – the way of cattle, horses and the rawhide reata. “Proof,” as Davidson wrote of him, “that the common things in life are the most important and are worthy of celebration.”



TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

Welcome to *Ranch & Reata* 1.2 – the second digital issue of our magazine. Since last we spoke sixty days ago, we have been pretty busy – working on the radio offerings and making this issue of *R&R* even better than the first. And we thank you for coming back for more. Many of you have purchased the Limited Edition copy of *Ranch & Reata* 1.1, the premiere edition. Thank you. There were only 1,000 printed and we have very few left so if you have not purchased yours – please log on to www.rangeradio.com and get your copy.

It has been so interesting visiting with folks about what Range Radio and this publication are doing. Everyday we talk to people – subscribers, listeners, potential advertisers – explaining that what Range Radio is, is a look into the future of niche entertainment. People will look to their phones and iPads and other hand held devices to be their major source of news, entertainment and reading. This

centralization of access is a no-brainer – it's the way it will be. Time is the only variable. Take some of the ads in this issue. We make a point of not having too many as we want you the reader to have a solid reading

experience that is as uninterrupted as the listening experience you have on Range Radio. That means we hand pick the advertisers whose creative is appropriate and their products or services fit with the editorial we lay out for you. Ads = Content. That's another thing that will be commonplace – everything will work together to give you a wonderful entertainment/learning experience.

That's the advantage of this digital presentation. Oh we love that printed magazine too, don't get us wrong. But the digital offering means an ad or a story is more than something two-dimensional. It's why the ads in *R&R* all link to catalogs or videos. It allows for a deeper experience beyond just a page turn, giving you a better understanding as to why we



My parents ranch, the Bar Nothing, was near the Douglas Army Airfield in Douglas, Arizona where my dad was stationed as a B-25 flight instructor during the Second World War. The “Raunchy Rancho” sign above the ranch gate was a little humor he added to the place – along with the base commander's boots.



believe the fine advertisers we display have products worthy of your time and attention. It also means the stories can have embedded video or music – like the piece on the late, great Nicolette Larson – again adding dimension to your experience.

Cool right? Well yes. But the real test is the rapidity of the behavioral shift in how people accept this growing “digital reality.” We are here to show that shift is OK to embrace. So, tell your friends to join in and enjoy this quiet evolution.

This magazine allows for a longer form of story, something readers have said they appreciate. Given that I can guarantee you would not see the story about the little shoebox anywhere else in a western magazine. As I said in the introduction to that piece, my late father gave that story to me years ago. Someone had typed it out for him and he had filed it away since the mid-1970s. He loved the story and I know why he would have been drawn to that story, as he was what is known in the art and antique collecting world as a “picker.” He loved nothing more than to find out of the way antique stores and “pick through” their stuff for the unusual and the rare. One of his greatest finds was on a day he had left his office at CBS in Hollywood for a meeting and had driven past where workers were tearing down the old Brown Derby Restaurant. It had been a *save* of the old Hollywood types and he loved the place. So much,

he had a laminated copy of the recipe for the original Cobb Salad that he had gotten from its inventor – Bob Cobb – who owned the Brown Derby during the 1930s. He carried that around in his briefcase for years. Anyway, as he drove by the demolition he saw workers piling stuff into dumpsters – a sight no self-respecting picker could refuse. He asked if he could go through the junk being thrown away and as this was in the “pre-hard-hat-only” era, nobody minded. It was there, amongst the rubble he found four-framed charcoal drawings of four cowboys – Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard and Buck Jones – thrown away amongst the trash, frames cracked but glass intact. These were the original drawings done by the Hollywood artist Nicholas Volpe – whose portraits of Hollywood luminaries literally covered the walls of the famous Hollywood eatery. My dad love “the hunt” so I can only imagine what he must have thought when he came upon this treasure. He spoke of that find for as long as I can remember and always told me to “never stop looking, never stop seeing, the best things in life may be right at your feet.” He felt that way about life and art right up until the day he went ahead of us, on up the trail. Maybe this digital world will be a new way of seeing, of taking the time to read and search and learn. Maybe we can help more people learn about and love the West this way. It’s a good plan. My dad would approve.



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