

WESTERNERS INTERNATIONAL BUCKSKIN BULLETIN



Volume L - issue 4 -



MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE HOME RANCH



Greetings from the Chair

Here at the Home Ranch, we've enjoyed a sunny autumn, although we know that those 60-mph winds and driving snow will be arriving soon! Gotta bring in the firewood, decorate the tree, store the hay, and have lots of books and cocoa at the ready. Maybe even a wee dram or two.... It's been a busy season here with productive participation in the Nov. 2017 Western History Association meeting in San Diego, the polishing up of the office space, and the planning for continued traditions and exciting changes in 2018. We've opened up the participation in the WHA research-paper panels through a forthcoming call for papers, we're getting the office organized for the 2018 dues and awards packet distribution, and – yes! – we're planning for an informative and heck-of-a good-time gather and rendezvous at the Home Ranch. Mark your calendars for September 14-15, get yourself a scout, and join us in the Texas Panhandle this fall! See detailed announcements throughout this issue of the Buckskin Bulletin, and keep in touch with us at the Home Ranch if you have questions! May you enjoy a lovely Christmas and holiday season with wonderful family, fine friends, good health, and much to celebrate!

GATHER AND RENDEZVOUS AT THE HOME RANCH IN CANYON, TEXAS!! MARK Y'ER CALENDARS FOR SEPT 14-15, 2018!!

Saddle up your best pony and come to the Home Ranch for some Western-style fun in September 2018! During the board meeting at the recent November WHA conference, we talked about tweaking WHA arrangements and came up with the following for 2018: we'll keep the traditional WHA exhibit booth (great exposure!) and the time-honored WHA scholarly panel (great educational exchange!) as part of the long-standing WI-WHA partnership; but we will move the WI board meeting and awards reception to a festive, Western gather at the Home Ranch. This September, we'll have our board meeting Friday afternoon; then, on Saturday, we'll enjoy a morning educational program at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, an afternoon tour of Palo Duro Canyon, and a full-on Western ranch-BBQ and awards reception in the evening. It'll give us a chance to socialize, celebrate our beloved West, and even kick up our heels a little. Canyon is conveniently located just twenty miles south of the Amarillo Airport. We have three motels in Canyon, and many more in Amarillo. I will arrange for a hotel discount in Canyon, so please watch the Bulletin and WI website for announcements! Bring y'er best hat and boots, and join us in the fall for a memorable gather!!



photo courtesy: <http://www.texas-show.com>

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Our new contact information:

Westerners International Home Ranch - Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum - 2503 4th Ave - Canyon, TX 79015 - phone 806 651-5247

westerners@mail.wtamu.edu

2017 WESTERN HISTORY

ASSOCIATION IN SAN DIEGO:

FUN AND SUCCESSFUL EXHIBIT BOOTH, MEETING/AWARD RECEPTION,



Photos: (clockwise from left) Bonney MacDonald, Kent McInnis, Juti Winchester, and Cheryl McInnis. The other photos are of Bonney MacDonald (Chairman) and Kent McInnis (former Chairman) with Gary Turner (Los Angeles Corral), Brian Dervin Dillon (Los Angeles Corral), Charlotte Hinger (Ft. Collins Posse), and Walter Brem (Tucson Corral). Photo credit: Cheryl McInnis.

We had a fine gathering Nov. 1-4 for the annual **Western History Association** meeting in San Diego. Loyal Westerners Kent and Cheryl McInnis drove all the way from Oklahoma City with the award plaques – and turned their trip into a vacation to boot! They cheerfully pitched in at the busy exhibit booth, as did WI President, Juti Winchester, Brian Dervin Dillon (LA Corral Sheriff), and fellow Westerner Matt DeSpain. Hearty thanks to all! We also had a fine WI board meeting and awards reception, and a successful scholarly panel on the fur trade, chaired by Juti Winchester. Westerners attending the 2017 WHA also enjoyed the WHA banquet, countless scholarly panels on Western history, and – of course – the wonderful San Diego climate! Members had a chance to meet prospective new Westerners, connect with old WI friends, and promote the organization to WHA folks and to the many book publishers at the convention. WI was part of the WHA's founding and we're glad for the continuing partnership between the two organizations.



MORE NEWS FROM THE HOME RANCH



CALLS FOR PAPERS FOR OCT 2019 WESTERN HISTORY ASSOCIATION PANELS COMING IN NEXT BUCKSKIN BULLETIN! EMAILED ABSTRACTS DUE MAY 1, 2018

Conversation with fellow Westerners Matt DeSpain and Juti Winchester led to a new plan for WHA's research presentation panels. To increase accessibility, we'll post a **Call for Papers announcement** in the next Buckskin Bulletin, on the WI website, and in an email to all currently listed sheriffs. **The deadline for emailed 1-page abstracts (i.e. proposals/summaries of your proposed paper) will be May 1, 2018 with participant selection to follow by Sept. 1, 2018. These abstracts will be for the Oct 2019 WHA in Las Vegas, NV.** (WHA's organization starts very early so we have to follow suit; the panel for the Oct

WESTERNERS AWARDS CYCLE STARTS AGAIN THIS SPRING! AWARDS ENTRY DEADLINE APRIL 15, 2018

As the Awards Committee chairs would tell you, this last year was a hard year for choosing winners because we had so many members who sent in fabulous entries! While, unfortunately, we couldn't give awards to all, we were so happy to see so many talented, active, and ambitious Westerners out there in our corrals and posses! So we hope that you will all consider sending in your materials from the 2017 year for the upcoming 2018 award-selection cycle! See the WI website for award categories and submission guidelines. Entry forms will go out with the 2018 dues packets on Feb. 1 to all corral/posse reps. Please remember that, as in the past, award winners need to be members of active and current WI corrals or posses.



from the
Westerner International Mercantile



- Lapel pin with pin clasp \$8.00
- "Past Sheriff" lapel pin \$8.00
- Bolo Tie with leather band \$15.00
- Lucite paper weight \$12.00
(shipping extra)

If you would like to place an order or send payment, contact:

Delinda King, WI Secretary, Westerners International, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, 2503 4th Ave., Canyon, TX 79015

You can also email her at dlking1@buffs.wtamu or call the office at 806-651-5247

MORE NEWS FROM THE HOME RANCH

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DUES, CORRAL/POSSE CONTACT INFO SHEETS, & AWARDS PACKETS COMING TO SHERIFFS FEB. 1, 2018: DUES AND CONTACT INFO DUE APRIL 1: AWARDS ENTRIES DUE APRIL 15

2018 dues forms, contact-info sheets, and awards entry forms will be mailed to all currently listed corral/posse reps Feb 1, 2018. **Dues and contact-info-sheets are due by April 1; award entries are due by April 15, 2018.** We ask that your dues and contact information be sent a timely way, as this helps the Home Ranch keep a'runnin' and it gives us the essential contact information on sheriffs and representatives, so we can reach you all during the year. We often need to reach officers for awards matters, event info, etc., and it can take a long time to track down corral or posse leaders without their current contact information! Please help us by sending us the names and contact info for your sheriffs and reps – we want to keep in touch! Remember, too, that in order to be eligible for an award, a contestant must be part of a U.S. or International corral or posse that is in current standing. If you have any questions or difficulties, just let me know. We're happy to answer questions!

In advance of dues season, please know that your annual dues (still \$5 per member!) go towards good work and good causes. We try hard to keep costs down, but it takes a good deal to keep the office up and running with costs for computers, copier, postage, commercial printing, WHA expenses, supplies, utilities, building fee, legal and accountant fees, leadership – and the list goes on! In addition to these practical expenses, we use dues to create printed and online publicity materials, and we spare little expense when it comes to WI awards and scholarships. Expenses for awards, scholarships, and the Western History Association conference this year alone are over \$7,000. We feel it's all worth it because it promotes and grows our wonderful organization and gets the word out; it recognizes and celebrates fellow members' accomplishments; it pays tribute to the West and celebrates what we do; it continues our traditions; and it draws in and supports a future generation of young Westerners through generous scholarships! In the spirit of the West, WI corrals and posses enjoy independent organization, self-planned programs, and independently-created posse and corral bylaws; but we have shared camaraderie, deep roots in our history, and much that brings us together. So thank you in advance for your continued great programs and activities, and thank you for keeping Westerners International flourishing through your dues, your participation, and your enthusiastic promotion of our shared American West!!



The Home Ranch would like to offer a hearty welcome to two new members of the **WI Board of Directors**, **Stan Moore**, Sheriff of the Denver Corral, and **Doug Hocking**, Sheriff of the Cochise County Corral. We look forward to their input and ideas in the coming years. Welcome to Stan and Doug!



Stan Moore is a husband, father, and grandfather; a third generation Coloradan; an author and historian; a Vietnam veteran; a retired small business owner; a blacksmith; and an avid mountaineer, backpacker and desert rat. His term as Sheriff of the Denver Posse of Westerners will end in late December. He and his longtime wife make their home near Denver with two cats who let them stay there.



Doug Hocking is sheriff of the Cochise County Corral that meets in historic (1881) Schieffelin Hall in Tombstone, is on the board of the Arizona Historical Society, and serves as executive director for Arizona of the Southern Trails Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association. He enjoys writing historical fiction and history. His latest, *Tom Jeffords, Friend of Cochise* has been proclaimed an instant classic by *True West Magazine* and a second book, *Black Legend: George Bascom, Cochise, and the Apaches Wars*, goes to the publisher December 2017.



CORRAL NEWS



BUCKSKIN BULLETIN INVITES YOUR ENTRIES AND CONTINUED NOTICES

Please continue to send in your Corral stories, articles, or notices to the Buckskin Bulletin! We get a lot of notices and items of interest, so we can't always include everything that comes in; but we want to be sure that we spread the word of all you're doing – and we always do our very best, as much as space allows! You can send in new items; but you can also request that the Bulletin reprint pieces or events that already appeared in your corral or posse publications. We want to spread the word of your good work, discoveries, and interests! Email all material, (Word documents less than 1500 words is preferred) to Kenneth Pirtle, Buckskin Bulletin Editor at kenneth.pirtle@me.com with a copy to westerners@mail.wtamu.edu. If you send printed materials through the mail, we will forward them to Ken Pirtle.



Featured Sheriff

John Bush, Sheriff of the **Omaha Nebraska Corral** for thirty-eight years, has run the train at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, usually a couple of days a month. It is an active train, hauling over 400,000 visitors in 2016. The engine was built in Linz, Austria in 1890 and brought to the zoo by the Union Pacific, who built the railroad in 1968-69. If you'd like to visit with John about the **Omaha Corral**, trains, or even motorcycles (another hobby!), you can reach him at oldinthewoods@yahoo.com. Thanks, John, for all you do with your **Omaha Corral** and for keeping historic trains alive!



The Buckskin Bulletin loves to hear what all is going on in your Corral or Posse. Here's some of the activities that make Westerners International the special outfit that it is.

Bill Loyer of the **Cheyenne Wyoming Corral** reports that over 50 members attended both their September and October meetings. Suzanne Norton shared the history of the Wyoming State Capitol building in September. In October the group heard from the Supervisor of Collections of the Wyoming State Museum, Jim Allison and about the restoration taking place there.

Sheriff Bill King has shared a copy of *The Pony Express*, newsletter for the **San Dimas Westerners** (California). Westerner Hal Durian will be speaking about Bat Masterson at their November meeting.

The **Los Angeles Corral** will hold their November meeting at the Almansor Court and will hear **Philip Nathanson** share the history of Santa Fe, NM and pioneer merchants there, Louis Gold and sons. The December meeting will have **Peter Blodgett** speak about "Pioneering Motor Tourists in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1900-1920."

The **Scottsdale Corral**: November's meeting will be a private tour of "Jan Young: Photographing Tempe in the 1970s". Jan Young made photographs for the Tempe Daily News during the 1970s, and in the process captured the look, feel, and values of the community during that decade. Tempe in the 1970s was a place of dramatic change, with rapid population growth and a greatly expanded built environment. Jan Young's photographs show that Tempeans stayed current with the social and technological trends of the 1970s. She was a quirky local character, who today is remembered fondly for her trench coat, Volkswagen Beetle and "one shot" photography style. The exhibit runs through March 24, 2018

The **Scottsdale Corral** reports that on the 22nd of March, 2018 they are having a meeting and presentation open to the public. Program title is: "The Death of Billy the Kid" and the efforts to get an official death certificate for him" by historian and Westerner **Robert J. Stahl**. Also, Bob Boze Bell, Editor of *True West Magazine*, will attend and promote his magazine and western history.



Stan Moore, Denver Corral: please join local author **Stan Moore** at Tattered Cover Aspen Grove, November 29, 7PM. He will discuss, read and sign his 75th Anniversary Commemorative Edition of "Seesaw, How November '42 Shaped the World". Seesaw is a look at five campaigns around the world as well as related political, economic, and social issues. These developments turned the outlook and outcome of the greatest war in history during November 1942.

The **Pine Ridge Corral of Chadron, Nebraska** met in September with a program of "The Amazing Story of Books and Libraries". Their October meeting had **Dr. Caroline Winchester** speak to the group about "What's new on our school frontier".

Michael Grauer of the **Goodnight Corral, Canyon, Texas** gave a program titled "Gus & Woodrow on the Panhandle Plains" as part of the traveling exhibit based on the Pulitzer Award winning novel "Lonesome Dove" by Larry McMurtry. The Panhandle Plains Historical Museum (host for the WI Home Ranch) held the event which includes exhibited photographs by Bill Wittliff taken during the filming of the movie.

more **CORRAL NEWS**

The **Fort Collins Corral's** November meeting heard "**Frederick R. Baker, How the Civil War Influenced Fort Collins, Culture and Values**", presented by **Brian Carroll**. Before coming to Fort Collins one of its early settlers played an important and unique role during the Civil War. As a member of Abraham Lincoln's body guard, the Union Light Guard of Ohio, Frederick R Baker was a witness to the activities that brought an end to the Civil War as well and events surrounding the assassination of President Lincoln. Baker brought these experiences with him when he arrived in Fort Collins in 1873. From then, until his death in 1906, Baker was a significant figure in the development of the city. A major farmer, banker, and four term mayor, Baker demonstrated the character, resilience, and vision his military experiences exposed him to. The back story of Baker is one that has been lost through the years.

The **Fort Collins Corral** has taken on a special restoration project. According to Carol Tunner, "Our second streetcar is finally going back together with working lights! Free tour of the restoration progress on Fort Collins' Streetcar #25". The all-volunteer, non-profit Fort Collins Municipal Railway invites you to an Open Trolley Barn at the historic 1907 Streetcar Barn, 330 N. Howes St. (corner of Cherry and Howes), Saturday, December 2, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Thanks to **Marie & Klaus Krizanovic** for this information.

The **Northwest Montana Posse, Kalispell, MT.** had a special showing in November of; "**The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance.**" starring Jimmy Stewart, John Wayne, and Lee Marvin among other famous stars. Sponsored by Kalispell Video Plus and hosted by the Museum at Central School. This event is free to the public.

Additionally, thanks to **Richard Hardesty** of the **Northwest Montana Posse** for sending to the Home Ranch their excellent publication the "**Posse Dispatch**". This issue contains a well written article titled "**A Clash of Principle: The Ironclad Loyalty Oath**" in Montana by Carol A. Buchanan, PhD.

Also, Cowboy Poetry Corner: "Song of the Foresters" by Steve Zinke. Thanks Richard also for a copy of your most recent "**Pony Tracks**"- well done!

Vern Gorzitze sends notice that the **Utah Corral** and Westerner, **Alan Engen**, gave an October presentation on his famous father by looking back on Alf's life from a very humble beginning in Norway to becoming one of the greatest all-around skiers to ever grace the sport. Viewing a selection of Alan's personal historical ski photos, he presented a first hand account of his father's life, including the many contributions and honors he received up until his passing in July 1997, at age 88.

The November meeting of the **Utah Corral** will convene on November 21 at the Alta Club. The program will be "Salt Lake City's Magnificent Knutsford Hotel: How an Opulent Building's History

Reflects the Ongoing Transformation of a Farm village into a Sophisticated Urban Center." In this talk Walter Jones will present five features of the hotel's history.



We are pleased to received the latest copy of "**The Branding Iron**", the well written and produced publication of **The Los Angeles Corral**. Thank you **Brian Dillon** for sharing. The fascinating feature story is about "Mission San Antonio de Padua, William Randolph Hearst", and Fort Hunter Liggett", by James W. Shuttleworth.

Mission photo by Shuttleworth.



The **Llano Estacado Corral** of Lubbock, Texas enjoyed hearing Westerner **Sally Abbe** share the story of the "**History of the Lubbock Women's Club**" at their October gathering. In November, **Sandy Fortenberry** shared his research "**A New Deal for Monroe**".

We received "**Signals From Telegraph Hill**" the newsletter for the **San Francisco Corral**. Lynn Downey, historian for the Levi Strauss & Co. gave a talk about the man, Levi Strauss, who gave blue denim jeans to the world. **Sheriff for the San Francisco Corral** is **Robert Chandler**, PhD.

The **Huntington Westerners** (California) recently met at the Women's City Club in **Pasadena** and heard a program by **Luis Fuerte**, award winning cameraman, relating his many experiences working with Huell Howser, popular host of the local public television show *California Gold*.

The **Los Angeles Corral** shared their new great looking recruitment brochure. They ask the question, "*history is the dreariest form of indoor entertainment that I have ever been forced to endure!*" If you "strongly disagree" you are encouraged to join the **Westerners** of the **Los Angeles Corral**.

The **25th Annual West River History Conference** with the theme "Commerce on the Frontier" was held in October at **Rapid City, South Dakota**.

Linda Cravens reports that **The Scottsdale Corral of Westerners** is collecting new unwrapped toys to be donated to the Paiute Center this December.



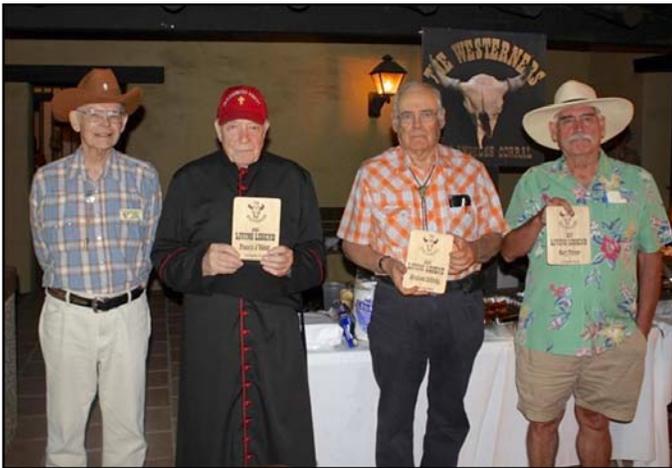
more **CORRAL NEWS**

Featured Sheriff

Stephen Hackney is the sheriff of the **Adobe Corral** of the Westerners, based in Tucson, Arizona. Stephen studied history at the University of Arizona, and enjoys a continuing interest in this subject at the monthly meetings. His previous duties with the Adobe Corral included terms as Chief Scout, which involved recruiting and scheduling speakers. His other hobbies include philately (stamp collecting), and going to movies & concerts with friends. Thanks to you, Stephen, for all you do with the Adobe



La Frontera Corral has recently had the following programs: Oct 2, -Sandra Chan "The History of Tucson's Chinese Community", November 6, Mike Anderson of Bisbee, AZ "The Bisbee Deportation of July 12, 1917", Dec 4 Betty Barr talking about her recent book, **Arizona Cattlewoman, the Remarkable Life of Carrie Swigart Frazier**, -La Frontera Corral meets regularly at Casa Community Center in Green Valley, AZ. Thank you,



The **Los Angeles Corral of Westerners** held its annual **Rendezvous** in October at Mission San Fernando Rey de España. This historic mission, founded in 1797 by Franciscan friar Fermín de Francisco Lasuén de Arasqueta, provided the perfect setting for this year's big event. In addition to approving the site, our magnanimous host, **Corral Living Legend No. 60 Monsignor Francis J. Weber**, opened the Mission's archives to Rendezvous visitors. Treasures within included relics of recently-minted Saint Junípero Serra, mementos from the last four or so Popes, and some very stall jellybeans donated by President Ronald Reagan.

The Los Angeles Corral of Westerners boasts 4 Living Legends (left to right): Jerry Selmer, Francis J. Weber, Abraham Hoffman, and recently awarded Gary Turner.

The **Goodnight Corral, Canyon, Texas** met for an old style T Anchor Christmas in the historic T Anchor Ranch headquarters building now located just outside the **Panhandle Plains Historical Museum**. Corral members and several guests brought food which was enjoyed under kerosene lamp light. Corral **Sheriff Michael Grauer of PPHM** and adjunct professor at WTAMU shared the history of the ranch in his "Cowboy Mike" gear. It was a wonderful old west experience.

Gregg Bynum of the **Goodnight Corral** (and **Westerners International's** Grand "Keeper of the Chips") recently attended a Christmas party at the original, historic **XIT** ranch headquarters in Channing, Texas.

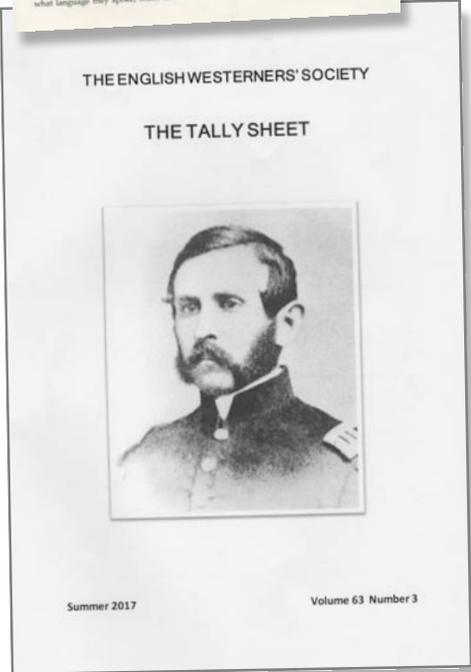
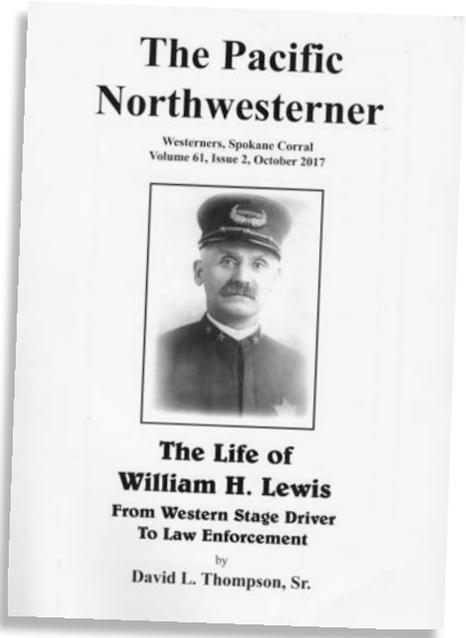
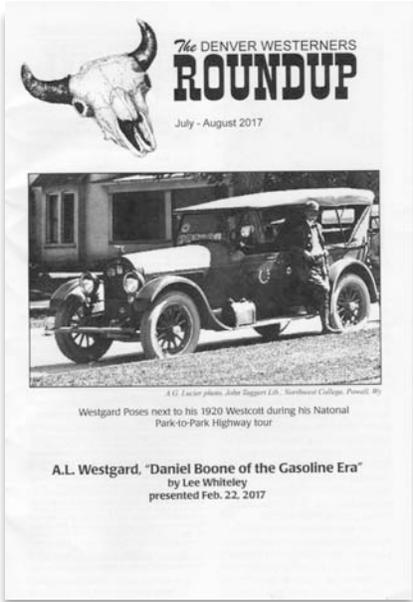


Bob Cates, local historian, shares stories during the annual Christmas party inside the XIT headquarter's office of Mr. A. G. Boyce (XIT Ranch Manager.)
Photo courtesy of Gregg Bynum



more **CORRAL NEWS**

The Buckskin Bulletin is pleased to receive these impressive scholarly bulletins, written and produced by various corrals and posses. These have wonderfully fascinating stories from the past. Here are a few samples. If your corral or posse produces bulletins or publications, we'd love to see and share what you are doing.



The Branding Iron Los Angeles Corral, summer 2017 issue, has a feature story by Sheriff Brian Dervin Dillon titled "Sierra Pelona Prehistory: Fact or Fiction". The Sierra Pelona is a range of mountains found throughout California rich in carvings by indigenous peoples. The natives that created these artifacts are long extinct but their legacy remains.

The Denver Westerners Roundup's feature by former Sheriff Lee Whiteley tells the amazing story of "A.L. Westard, Daniel Boone of the Gasoline Era". In the early decades of 1900, A.L. transversed the United States several times in a customized truck with a covered bed where there were few roads and many challenges- like rattlesnakes, fires and no gasoline. There are many maps and photos of his experiences.

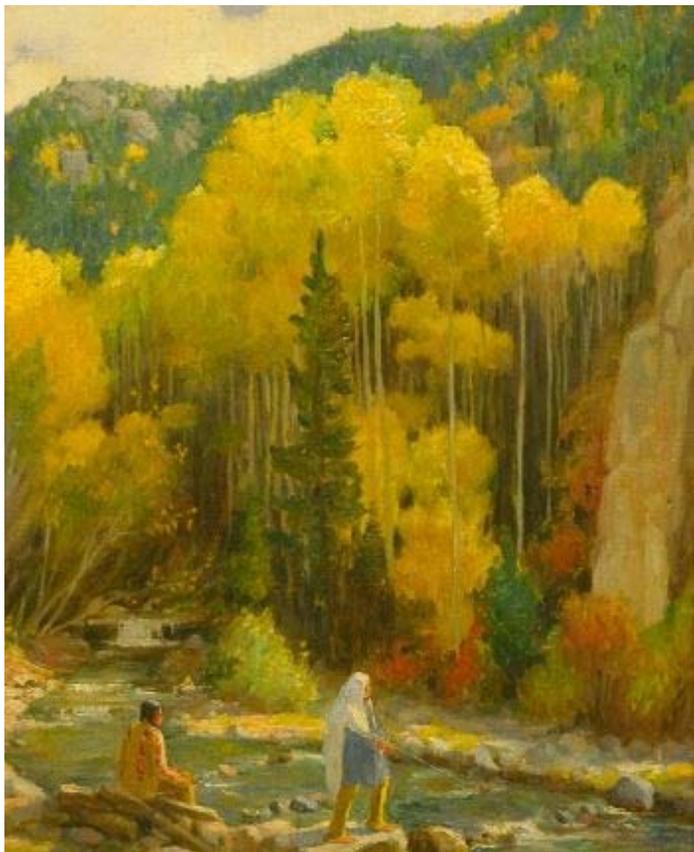
The Pacific Northwestern, produced by the Spokane Corral has a number of short stories such as "A Blizzard on Crazy Woman Divide" and "The Saga of Big Nose George". The feature is "The Life of William H. Lewis, from Western Stage Driver to Law Enforcement" by David L. Thompson, Sr. . The Sheriff of the Spokane Corral is Dick Jensen.

The Home Ranch is always pleased to receive correspondence and publications from our overseas friends. *The Tally Sheet* is published by the English Westerner Society and edited by Michelle Pollard, The feature article is "Folly, or Zeal for Soldierly Distinction" by Francis B. Taunton.

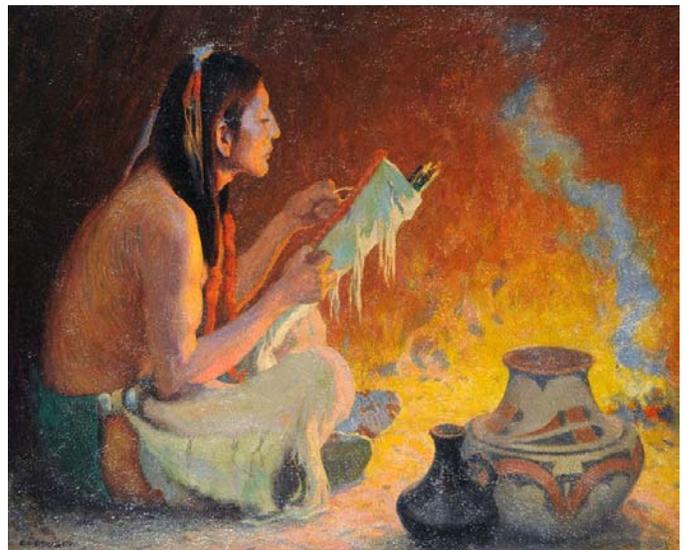




The Home Ranch is proud of its affiliation with the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas. PPHM is the largest historical museum in Texas. For current and upcoming exhibitions, lectures, and special events please check the museum's web page at: <http://www.panhandleplains.org>



Joseph H. Sharp
Indians Fishing, Taos Canyon ca. 1920



E. Irving Couse
The Quiver Maker, 1917

*These paintings are a sample from the Museum's permanent collection. Thanks to the **Panhandle Plains Historical Museum** and Michael Grauer for allowing us to showcase these paintings.*



Julian Onderdonk
A Field of Bluebonnets, 1919

"The PPHM is my single favorite museum and has been a huge source of inspiration to me as a historian. Touring it is an amazing learning experience. For almost 20 years now I have been recommending the place to travelers. You can do whatever you like, I tell them, but don't miss the PPHM!"

- S. C. Gwynne



Abilene, Kansas

by Jim Jennings Palo Duro Corral Amarillo, Texas

page 10

A bilene, Kansas, the original end-of-the-trail cow town,

was pretty wild and woolly 150 years ago. In 1867, when Joseph G. McCoy stepped off the train in Abilene, Kansas, he wasn't impressed. He later described Abilene as a very small, dead place, consisting of about a dozen log huts that were low, small, rude affairs, and that four-fifths of them had dirt roofs. There was only one shingled roof in the whole town. He said that the business of the town was conducted in a couple of single room log huts and although there was, of course, the inevitable saloon, it was also in a log hut. In other words, Abilene wasn't much to look at. However, before very long, McCoy would do more than anyone to change all that.

Abilene is located in central Kansas, along Interstate 70, about 95 miles west of Topeka, Kansas. The town began as a stage stop in 1857, and it was originally called Mud Creek, named for the creek on which it was located. The name was changed to Abilene in 1860 by the owners of the stage stop, who took the name from the Bible's New Testament chapter of Luke. It's meaning was "City of the Plains."

C.H. Thompson first laid out the town in 1860, when he realized the railroad was building that direction, and then he quickly constructed some log houses to give it some semblance of a town. In 1864, Dr. W.S. Moon opened a general store, which he called the Frontier Store, and these were probably the structures that McCoy saw on his first visit to Abilene.

McCoy was from Illinois, and he first got into the cattle business in 1861 by shipping large herds of cattle to slaughter. Longhorns in Texas were worth only three to four dollars per head, but in cities like Chicago they were worth \$30 to \$40 per head. He began to examine how he could send cattle to market on the railroads, but the closest the railroad had come to Texas was Kansas, and Kansas had passed legislation to keep the Longhorns out of the state. They were trying to control what was called Texas Fever. Longhorns were immune to the disease, but they were carriers and the Midwestern cattle were not immune. A number of Kansas farmers had lost their cattle to Texas Fever after a herd of Longhorns had passed nearby. But then, in 1867, Kansas eased the law by allowing the Longhorns to enter the state as long as they were west of the cities located in eastern Kansas. McCoy took advantage of the new law and selected Abilene as his shipping point.

McCoy purchased 250 acres of land north and east of Abilene, on which he built a hotel he called the Drover's Cottage. He also built a stockyard that was equipped for 2,000 head of cattle and he made sure it had railroad loading facilities. The Kansas Pacific Railway put in a switch that enabled the cattle cars to be loaded. Next, McCoy built an office and a bank, and then he advertised extensively throughout Texas to encourage cattle owners to drive their cattle to market in Abilene.

The cattle trail to Abilene was called the Chisholm Trail, named for its founder, Jesse Chisholm. The first herd up the trail to Abilene was owned by O.W. Wheeler and his partners, who in 1867, bought 2,400 steers in San Antonio and headed north. At the North Canadian River in Indian Territory, they saw wagon tracks and simply followed them all the way to Abilene. In the beginning, the path was referred to simply as "the trail." Later, it was called the Kansas Trail, the Abilene Cattle Trail or McCoy's Trail. Though Chisholm's path actually only went just north of the Red River, before long the Texas cowboys gave Jesse's name to the entire trail, from the Rio Grande to central Kansas.

The long trips up the trail from Texas were hazardous for both the cattle and the cowboys. The trip took anywhere from two to three months, and they had to cross such major rivers as the Canadian, the Arkansas and the Red. In addition, the drovers had to be concerned about Indian attacks, cattle rustlers and stampedes. But the rewards at the end, selling cattle for 10 times what they had paid for them, made it all worth it.

That first year, 1867, McCoy shipped 35,000 head of cattle by train to the northern markets. One source reported that by 1871, more than 440,000 head had been shipped out of Abilene, making the town the largest stockyards west of Kansas City.

The new shipping point stimulated growth in the town. More businesses were established and homes were built, but with prosperity sometimes comes trouble, and Abilene was no exception. It wasn't long before the gamblers and confidence men moved in, along with the soiled doves – all the things that might tempt a cowboy who had just spent two to three months on the trail.

More saloons opened up, and in 1870, the two-story Merchant's Hotel was built, giving more of the cowboys a place to stay while they were in town. But, as the various herds pulled into town, shootings became common occurrences, and soon, the rougher element of the town appeared to be running things. In an effort to get their town back, the local citizenry elected McCoy as the first mayor and built a courthouse with a jail.

In June 1870, McCoy hired Thomas J. "Bear River" Smith as the town's first chief of police. Smith was well known as a tough man and had been a professional middleweight boxer. He was originally from New York City, where he worked as a police officer, and prior to his move to Kansas, he also served as a lawman in a few



Abilene, Kansas, Queen of the Cowntowns - photo: legendsofamerica.com

small towns in Wyoming, including Bear River, as well as in Kit Carson, Colorado. Smith received the nickname "Bear River" due to a stand he made during a skirmish with vigilantes while serving as a lawman in Wyoming.

Smith was also commissioned as a Deputy U.S. Marshal, and was insistent that he could police Abilene using his hands and wit rather than by using guns. For a time, he was somewhat successful, although he was forced to use guns in the course of his duty on a few occasions. However, being the marshal of a town like Abilene at that time proved to be a dangerous job to have. He implemented a law of "no guns in town limits," which was extremely unpopular with many of the cowboys that drifted through town, and over the next two months Smith survived two assassination attempts.

He was, however, killed in a gunfight on November 2, 1870, when he tried to arrest an accused murderer. His replacement, hired April 15, 1871, was the famous Wild Bill Hickok, who was already well known for his gunfighting skills before he came to Abilene. Hickok was able to keep order in the town, mainly through his reputation. However, he spent most of his time at the gaming tables in the Alamo Saloon and with the various ladies of the evening.

On October 5, 1871, Hickok was standing off a street brawl crowd, during which Phil Coe, the owner of the Bull's Head Saloon, fired two shots. Hickok ordered him to be arrested for firing a pistol within the city limits. Coe argued with Hickok that he was shooting at a stray dog, but then he suddenly turned his gun on Hickok, who fired first and killed Coe. Hickok then caught a glimpse of someone running toward him and quickly fired two more shots in reaction, accidentally shooting and killing Abilene Special Deputy Marshal Mike Williams, who was coming to his aid. This event haunted Hickok for the remainder of his life.

By this time, the citizens of Abilene had had enough and told the Texans to find somewhere else to ship their cattle. Hickok was relieved of his duties as marshal less than two months after accidentally killing Deputy Williams, but that wasn't the only reason. This incident was just one of a series of questionable shootings and claims of misconduct.

The railroad had by now been extended on to Newton, Wichita and Ellsworth, Kansas, and those became the new shipping points. In 1871, the last big year for Abilene, more than 40,000 head of cattle were shipped out by rail, but by the next year, without the cowboys and the element they had brought to town, Abilene quieted down into a peaceful, law-abiding community.

In 1892, future President Dwight D. Eisenhower's family moved to Abilene, and Eisenhower attended both elementary and high school here. He always considered Abilene to be his home, and he and his wife, Mamie, are both buried there.

Today, the current population of Abilene is about 6,000. It's pretty well a diversified agricultural community, but there are a number of museums and other attractions that feature the rich history of the town. There is the Eisenhower Center, which consists of the presidential museum and the original Eisenhower family home; the Dickinson County Historical Museum and the American Indian Art Center. And there is the Abilene and Smoky Valley Railroad, which is 10-mile excursion train ride through the Smoky River Hill Valley. It features a 100-year-old wooden coach dining car, as well as other vintage equipment. Do yourself an historical favor and check out Abilene, Kansas.



BOOK NEWS

OF INTEREST TO WESTERNERS



A Promise Fulfilled, The Kitty Anderson Diary and Civil War Texas, 1861

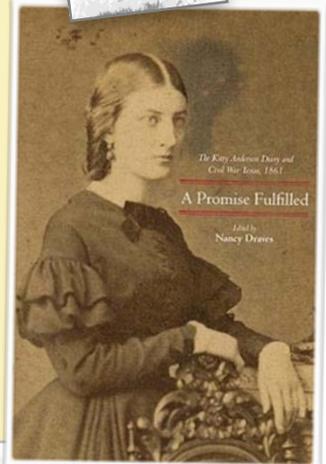
By Nancy Draves

- Publish Date:10/15/2017
- Product Number:9781682830031
- ISBN978-1-682-83003-1

Price:\$ 24.95

In 2008, Texas historian **Nancy Draves** happened upon an amazing find up for public auction: the 1861 diary of Kitty Anderson, the daughter of prominent San Antonio resident and vocal Union Army supporter Colonel Charles Anderson. Kitty's diary chronicles the Anderson family's tumultuous experience during the early years of the Civil War. Following the vote for Texas's secession and the surrender of San Antonio's federal garrison, Col. Anderson attempted to flee, only to be arrested by Confederate Texas soldiers.

from the Texas Tech University Press (ttupress.org)



A Gathering of Statesmen, Records of the Choctaw Council Meetings, 1826-1828

By: Peter Perkins Pitchlynn

Price \$23.95

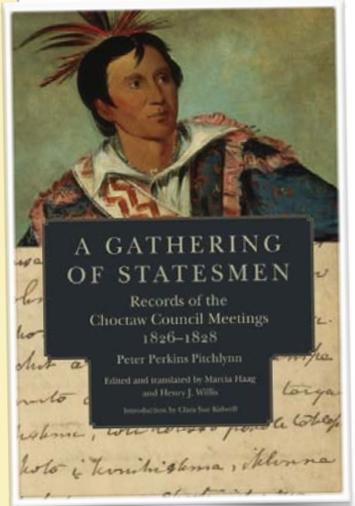
Edited By: Marcia Haag, Henry Willis

Introduction By: Clara Sue Kidwell

- ILLUSTRATIONS: 7 ILLUS., 2 MAPS
- PUBLISHED: 2013
- PAPERBACK ISBN: 9780806143491

The early decades of the nineteenth century brought intense political turmoil and cultural change for the Choctaw Indians. While they still lived on their native lands in central Mississippi, they would soon be forcibly removed to Oklahoma. This book makes available for the first time a key legal document from this turbulent period in Choctaw history. Originally written in Choctaw by Peter Perkins Pitchlynn (1806–1881), and painstakingly translated by linguist Marcia Haag and native speaker Henry Willis, the document is reproduced here in both Choctaw and English, with original text and translation appearing side by side

from the Oklahoma University Press (oupres.com)



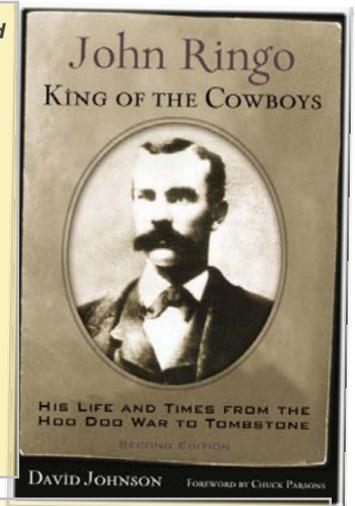
John Ringo, King of the Cowboys: His Life and Times from the Hoo Doo War to Tombstone, Second Edition **By: David Johnson**

Price \$29.95 Hardcover

- Paperback ISBN-13: 9781574416725
- Physical Description: 6x9. 384 pp. 22 b&w illus. 2 maps. Notes. Bib. Index.
- Publication Date: April 2017

Western gunman John Ringo is most well-known for his role in Tombstone for backing the Cowboys against the Earps. In his youth he became embroiled in the blood feud turbulence of post-Reconstruction Texas and the Mason County "Hoo Doo" War, then shot it out with Victoria's raiders during a deadly confrontation in New Mexico before going to Tombstone in territorial Arizona. There Ringo championed the largely Democratic ranchers against the Earp brothers and Doc Holliday, finally being part of the posse that hounded these fugitives from Arizona. In the end, Ringo died mysteriously in the Arizona desert, his death welcomed by some, mourned by others, wrongly claimed by a few.

from the University of North Texas Press (<https://untpress.unt.edu>)



Two must reads for Westerners (recommended by your "Ink Slinger") **Down The Great Unknown**, John Wesley Powell's 1869 Journey through the Grand Canyon by **Edward Dolnick** (2001) and **Empire of the Summer Moon, Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History** by **S.C. Gwynne** (2010)