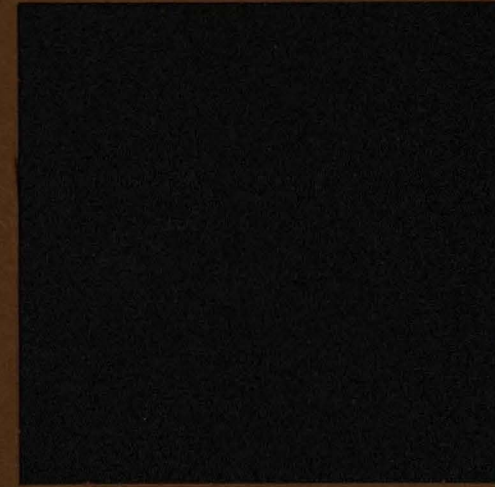


Vol. XI No 3
C.3

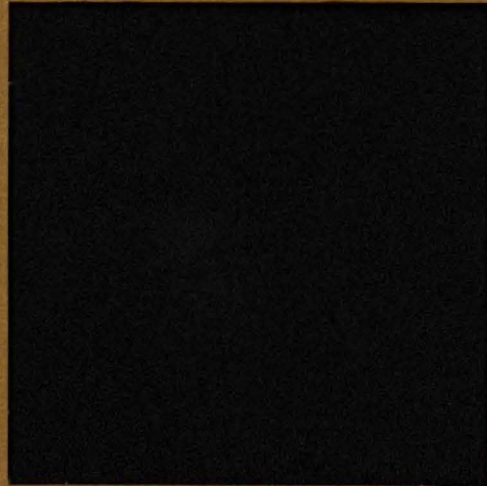


THE LONGHORN



American Scene

THE THOMAS GILCREASE
INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN
HISTORY AND ART
R.R. 6, TULSA, OKLAHOMA



THE THOMAS GILCREASE
INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY
AND ART
FOUNDED BY THOMAS GILCREASE
1890-1962
OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE
CITY OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA
ROBERT J. LaFORTUNE
MAYOR
CARL SMITH
CHAIRMAN, PARKS, RECREATION BOARD
PAUL A. ROSSI
DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE INSTITUTE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GEORGE H. BOWEN	Past Chairman
ALFRED E. AARONSON	Past Chairman
OTHA H. GRIMES	Past Chairman
WILLIAM S. BAILEY, JR.	Past Chairman
DAVID R. MILSTEN	Chairman
JAMES C. LEAKE	President
MORTON R. HARRISON	Vice-President
MRS. ROGER DEVLIN	Vice-Chairman
GORDON T. HICKS	Vice-Chairman
CHARLES B. GANNAWAY	Vice-President
PAUL H. JOHNSON	Secretary
WILLIAM S. BAILEY, JR.	Treasurer
PAUL A. ROSSI	Director of the Institute

Editorial Staff

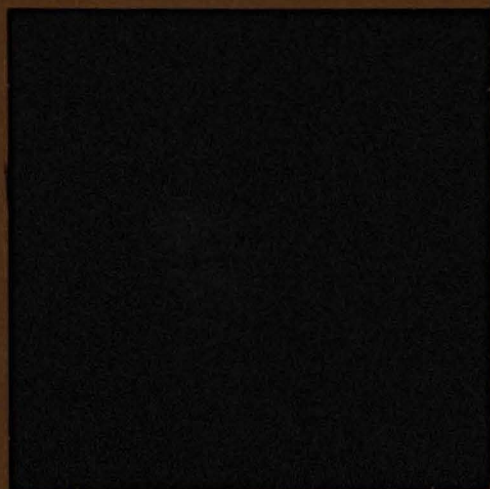
PAUL A. ROSSI	Editor
DAVID C. HUNT	Associate Editor
DONNIE D. GOOD	Associate Editor
G. P. EDWARDS	Associate Editor
MARIE KEENE	Editorial Assistant
OLIVER WILLCOX	Photographer
TULSA LITHO CO. INC.	Lithography

American Scene Committee

Lindsay Alexander	Chairman
James C. Leake	Member
George Lynde	Member
Morton R. Harrison	Ex-Officio

Vol. XI, No. 3 of the American Scene, published and copyrighted by the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, an Oklahoma Corporation. A \$10.00 membership in the Institute entitles the member to four issues of the magazine along with other membership privileges; regular subscription, \$5.00 per year. Single issues \$1.25.

© The Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, 1970.



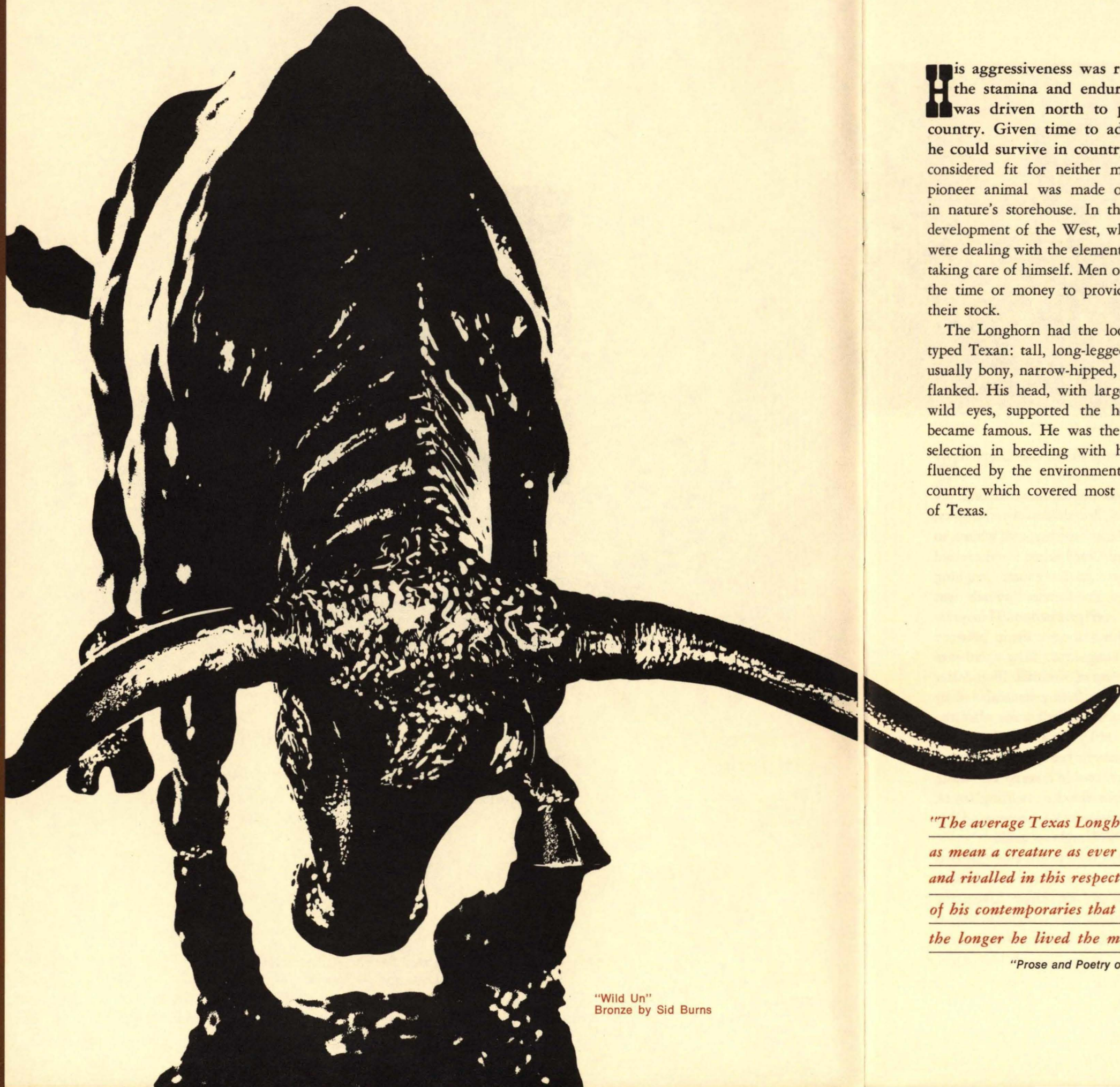
THE LONGHORN



The Longhorn was as aggressive a Texan as any who ever crossed the Red River. Known as cantankerous, cranky, dangerous, and mean, he was, nevertheless, the "animal of the hour," the animal for the job — the beginning and enduring heart of the cattle industry.

Researched and written for the American Scene by Donnie D. Good — Special design by Bill Patterson.

American Scene



"Wild Un"
Bronze by Sid Burns

His aggressiveness was represented best by the stamina and endurance shown as he was driven north to populate the cow-country. Given time to adapt to conditions, he could survive in country which was often considered fit for neither man nor beast. This pioneer animal was made of the sternest stuff in nature's storehouse. In the early days of the development of the West, while human pioneers were dealing with the elements, the Longhorn was taking care of himself. Men on the frontier hadn't the time or money to provide any comforts for their stock.

The Longhorn had the look of today's stereotyped Texan: tall, long-legged, and lean. He was usually bony, narrow-hipped, flat-sided, and thin-flanked. His head, with large flapping ears and wild eyes, supported the horns for which he became famous. He was the product of natural selection in breeding with his development influenced by the environment of the wild brush country which covered most of the southern tip of Texas.

"The average Texas Longhorn bull was about as mean a creature as ever went on four legs, and rivalled in this respect some of the worst of his contemporaries that went on two; and, the longer he lived the meaner he became."

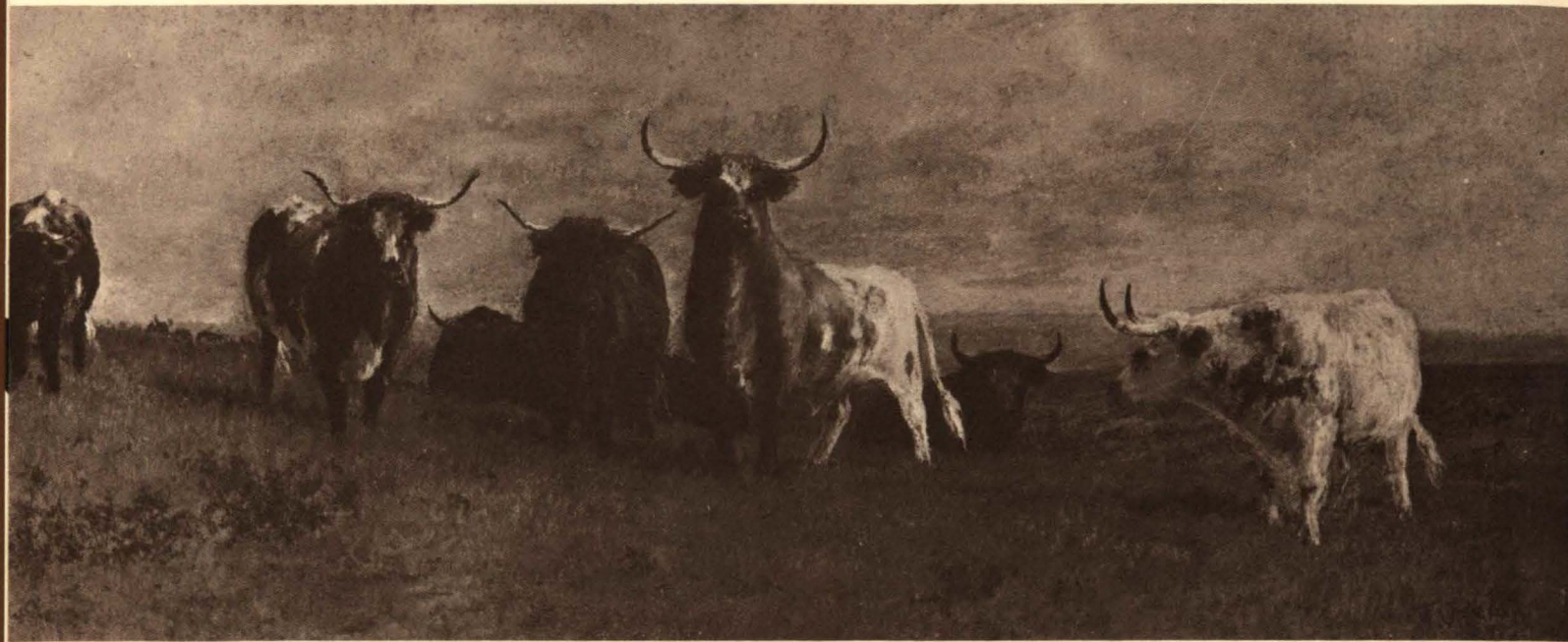
"Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry of the United States"

In the Texas brush country, vining mesquite grass was considered best for cattle. Although the eyes of cattle are not positioned to see what is above them, the limber neck of the Longhorn gave him access to food other than grass. Using his horns to hook down branches and stalks, his hard mouth enabled him to eat almost anything that grew in the brush country. The prickly pear cactus, or nopal, which stores quantities of moisture inside its spiny leaves, was a favorite of the Longhorn.

The Longhorn developed slowly, was considered mature after four years, didn't attain his full weight until he was eight to ten years, and sometimes lived to be more than twenty years old. He did not shed his teeth in old age. "Mossback" or "Mossy-horn," were the names given to the old, wrinkle-horned, heavy muscled, Longhorn steer.

On the open range, the Longhorn developed a keenness of senses far beyond that of average cattle. His acute sense of smell aided him in detecting the approach of wild animals, guided him to scarce sources of water, and gave him immediate notice of the approach of man. Steers seemed to have a better sense of smell than either cows or bulls. Longhorns on an open range were known to have traveled distances of ten miles or more following the scent of water.

Although the Longhorn was known for an ability to endure long waterless periods, the animals which developed the longest horns and the sturdiest bodies came from the ranges which had most adequate water facilities. The truth was that he would more likely thrive on a limited food supply with an abundance of water than on a limited water supply with an abundance of food. Rather than drinking from a trough, the Longhorn preferred watering at a pond, lake, or river. He would walk out into the water and stand for long periods to drink. However, when drinking from a trough, he chose a particular spot and wouldn't hesitate to defend his "place" if another animal approached. He often would wait his turn if another animal occupied his favored spot when he went to the trough to drink.



"The Herd", Oil by Frank Reaugh

The horns of the Longhorn became the symbol of the cow-country and of many businesses which developed as a result of the cattle industry. Horns with sharp and polished points curving gently upward were known as the "oxbow." A hornless animal was called a "muley." "Corkscrew" horns had twists and spirals of one or both horns which caused an unmatched, imbalanced, often menacing look. The tendency of a wild Longhorn to hook with his horns is believed to have been caused by the shape of the horns. Turning his head to accommodate horn passage in close places further indicated the animal's awareness of his mighty horns.

A four to four-and-a-half foot horn spread was commonly seen during the heyday of the Longhorn. Some exceptional animals were recorded to have measured horn spans of six feet and over. The age of the animal determined the length of his horns as they continued to grow until the twelfth or fifteenth year. Neither cows nor bulls grew the lengthy horns of the mature Longhorn steer. Although no positive information has been compiled, it is indicated that environment seems to have effected the length of horn growth. Whether it was the climate or diet or some other influence, the longest horns grew on the cattle in

the low brush country west of the Guadalupe River in Texas.

No single color was predominant among the Longhorns. Colors included shades of reds, blues, yellows, creams to dark browns, and whites to blacks, with speckled, line-backed, and mixed combinations. The average Longhorn, weighing approximately eight to nine hundred pounds, was not known for good beef production. Thin grass and limited water with a long walk in between didn't make for fat Longhorns. Why then, was this animal the beginning of a multi-billion dollar industry and why is he so fondly remembered by hundreds of cattlemen a hundred years after the last herd went up the trail? The answer is stamina and fortitude. The heavy, beef-producing, pure bred animal of today couldn't walk the dusty miles, couldn't swim the flooded, swirling rivers, couldn't live on the minimum of forage available on the cattle drive. The Longhorn could.

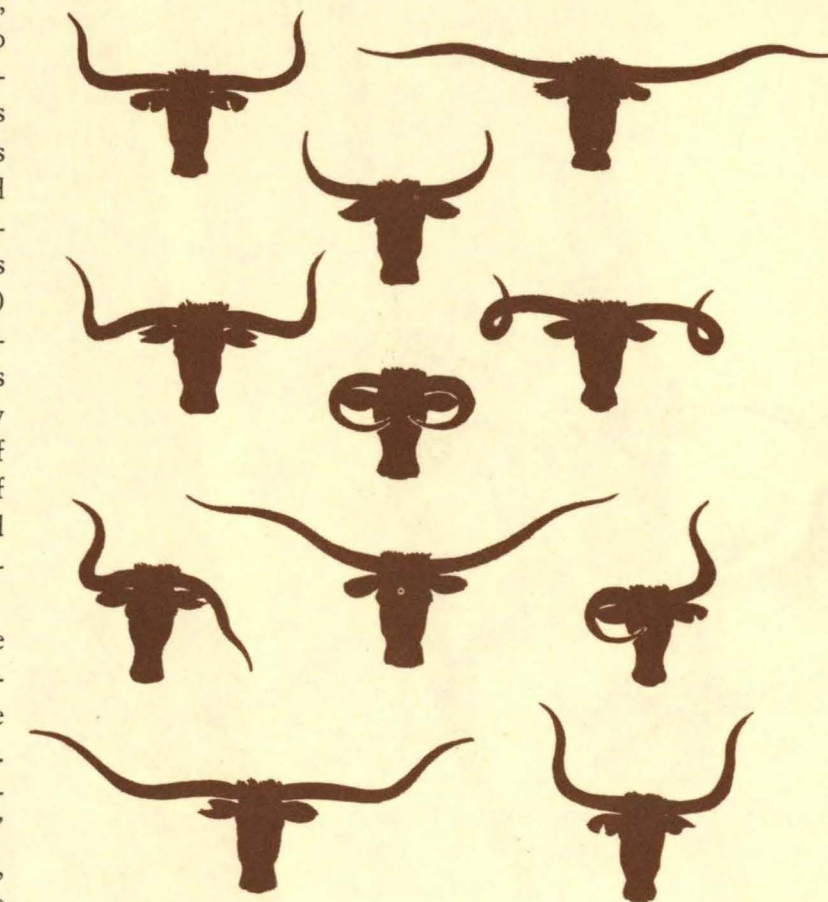
The Longhorn, at the time of his emergence as the foundation of the cattle industry, was a Texan, heart and soul, attitude and disposition. Like many an early human "Texian," the Longhorn had as diversified a background as he did a future.



"Resting", Pastel by Frank Reaugh • Longhorn types by Paul Rossi

Fine cattle, brought to this continent from Spain, were taken during the early 1500's to Mexico and eventually into what is now the southwestern United States. For three hundred years scattered Spanish missions and small settlements developed in the Southwest which were occupied primarily with stock raising. By 1770, some mission ranches recorded ownership of as many as 40,000 head of cattle. During the decade of 1770 to 1780, marauding Indians scattered and slaughtered thousands of cattle in southwest Texas. As a result of the Indian raids, ranching drastically declined in the area, leaving large numbers of cattle to roam the country. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the abandoned cattle had multiplied and were so wild that they were considered only good game for hunting.

In 1820, when the first Anglo-Americans were given Empresario Grants by the Mexican government, there were thousands of cattle roaming the country from the Red River to the Rio Grande. Looking for cattle to stock their lands, the colonists soon learned that the wild "mustang cattle" could not be domesticated. These wild cattle, descended from stock brought from Spain, were black and brown, sporting wider, longer horns



Many Confederate veterans who had returned to Southern states to find their homes destroyed and their lands ravaged, made their way to the West to get into the cattle business. Actually, many ended up in what you would more accurately call the mavericking business. Whether working for themselves or for an established rancher, being a mavericker was not an easy job.

Although there are dozens of legends about the name "Maverick," J. Frank Dobie, in his book, "The Longhorns," relates the following story as the one which is most likely true.

Samuel A. Maverick, a lawyer, one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence against Mexico, and an extensive speculator in lands, was the leading English-speaking citizen of San Antonio in 1842 when an invading Mexican army captured him and took him prisoner to Mexico City, where he was in time released.

In 1845 he was living temporarily at Decrow's Point on Matagorda Bay. A neighbor named Tilton owed him \$1200, could not raise the money, and persuaded Maverick to take four hundred head of cattle running on Matagorda Island in cancellation of the debt. Maverick did not want the cattle; he knew almost nothing about cattle and had no ambition to learn. Soon after receiving them, he left the four hundred head thus forced upon him, along with a few ponies, under the care of a Negro family . . . Matagorda Island, with its southern appendage Saint Joseph's Island, is a great sand bar more than seventy miles long, in places less than a mile wide and in other places spreading out four or five miles . . . Here Maverick's cattle could roam as free as any other creatures of nature . . .

The Mexican War was being fought, Texas was ceasing to be a Republic and becoming a state. Maverick was in the stir of the times. Now and then he heard something about the cattle and heard that the calves were not being branded. In 1853 he had his entire stock, in so far as it could be gathered, crossed to the mainland and driven to a range up the San Antonio River. His visible stock still numbered about four hundred head.

The Negro family came with the herd and continued to be the official caretakers. They became energetic enough to brand about a third of the calves. Owners of other cattle in the country were keeping their own calves branded up, and were hunting down older unclaimed animals. Surmising that at least some of the unbranded animals they saw were Maverick's they got to calling all of them "mavericks" . . .

In 1856 he [Samuel Maverick] sold out his stock of cattle, estimated at the original number, four hundred head, at six dollars around, range delivery.

"While most brands consisted of combinations of letters and figures, many were pictures of some particular object. Well known brands of this type were the spur, pitchfork, fryingpan, milking stool, and rocking chair. As ranching grew in importance almost every imaginable device came to be used. Brand books of the period when ranching was at its height show such brands as a bridle bit, spectacles, hat, hatchet, pipe, flask, jug, apple . . . and many others equally curious."

Edward Everett Dale — "The Range Cattle Industry — Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865 to 1925."



Before the Civil War it had been the range custom when, at branding time, a cow and calf belonging to another owner would be brought in with a rancher's cattle, to brand that calf with its mother's brand as a courtesy to its owner. During the years of the war, however, thousands of calves had been born and had gotten up to four years growth without being branded. As there was no way to tell who was the owner of the animals, they were considered strays and called "mavericks," and were the property of anyone who could round them up and put their brand on them. The only successful maverickers, however, were those who could get the cattle they had branded to market and sell them.

During the winter of 1865 Texans, with large herds of Longhorns virtually worthless on their home ranges, heard of the high prices being paid for beef in the North and determined to drive their cattle to the Missouri Pacific railroad at Sedalia, Missouri, the following year. Ranchers worked ceaselessly throughout the winter and spring rounding up and branding cattle and attending to all the details necessary for a long grueling cattle drive. During the summer of 1866 an estimated 270,000 Longhorns crossed the Red River.

As the drives started the cattlemen were optimistic about their prospects. However, due to all the unexpected problems they encountered that year, very few cattlemen made profits from sales. Trail crews of inexperienced men handling wild Longhorns on unfamiliar trails would have created enough problems. But those were the easy ones. There were constant troubles with outlaws driving off or stealing the cattle. There were other troubles and delays, harrassment from the Indians, and an early rainy season. The old feud between Missouri and Texas cattlemen over "Texas fever" was revived. The northern drive of 1866 was such a disaster and disappointment that few men considered repeating the experience the following year.

In 1867 many herds were sent by an expensive river route to markets in Illinois and Iowa. Driven to the Red River, the cattle were loaded onto steamers which took them to the mouth of the Mississippi and up the river to the Northern market. Steamer travel proved to be a damaging experience for the Longhorn. The close confinement which was necessary caused Texas fever among the cattle to spread to almost epidemic proportions. The results of mixing the Texas cattle with their native herds caused the Illinois stock raisers to refuse to accept any further shipments of Texas cattle.

Meanwhile, the first of the lusty "cow-towns" of the West was being established in Abilene, Kansas. Located on the Union Pacific, later the Kansas Pacific Railroad, Abilene was developed to attract the business of the trail herds. Contracts were made with the railroad for favorable rates for freighting cattle to the East, and shipping pens, barns, stables, and a hotel were built to accommodate men as well as animals.

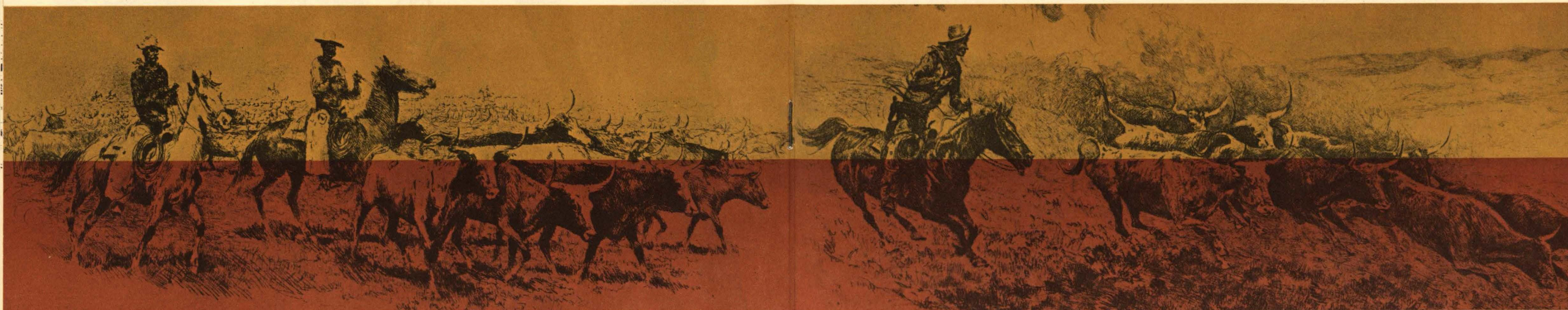
As the facilities of Abilene were being completed, news was sent out that a new railhead market was available for use by trail herds and herders. Located far enough west in Kansas for the Texas drovers to be able to avoid the trouble spots in Indian Territory and especially their "Texas fever" enemies in Missouri and eastern Kansas, Abilene was to become the chief shipping point for Texas cattle. Herds of Longhorns followed one of the earliest cattle trails, the Chisholm Trail, from the brush country of Texas to Abilene.

Abilene's supremacy as a shipping point was short-lived, however, for by 1871, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad extended its rails and, on that line, Newton and Wichita became major shipping points. The most famous of the "cow-towns," however, was Dodge City, Kansas, built on the Santa Fe Railroad in 1872.

Trail herds driven to these western shipping centers were divided before they were shipped. Fat, mature cattle ready for slaughter were sent to Kansas City, St. Joseph, or Chicago. Young cattle were sent to the corn belt states as stockers and feeders. When some of the problems of making cattle drives had been solved, cattle markets developed other than the selling of animals at Western railheads for shipment to the East. Beef contracts were made by the Government for supplying cattle to military posts and to Indian reservations. Railroad development criss-crossing the West employed crews which created another demand for beef.

"Boys, the secret of trailing cattle is never to let your herd know that they are under restraint. Let everything that is done be done voluntarily by the cattle. From the moment you let them off the bed ground in the morning until they are bedded at night, never let a cow take a step, except in the direction of its destination."

Andy Adams — "The Log of a Cowboy."



"Parting Cattle", Etching by Edward Borein

"Stampede", Etching by Edward Borein

There had been cattle and ranching activities in states and territories north of Texas before the end of the Civil War, but they were few and in select and scattered regions. Although the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain areas were not unknown, they were very sparsely populated. Military men, miners, trappers, and traders were virtually the only permanent inhabitants of the region with freighters and emigrants frequently passing through. Some of these inhabitants turned from the occupations which had brought them to the West to cattle raising, supplying the need for beef created by activities of other men in the West.

The northern drive of the year 1866 marked the beginning of the development of the "cow-country." As the first Texas Longhorn stepped on the dry land of the north bank of the Red River, the first of millions destined to follow in the next twenty years, the development of "cow-country" was begun. During the first few years following the 1866 drive, more cattle were shipped to furnish beef to the East than remained to stock the northern ranges. However, due to the necessity of often having to hold trail herds over the winter on the northern ranges, cattlemen learned that Longhorns, lean from the long drive, could be fattened there and bring better prices at market. They soon began to drive yearlings and two-year olds to sell to ranchers on the northern ranges to be raised there until they were matured. In the following decade, cow-country spread from Texas to Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and parts of Nevada and Utah.

A great deal of romance now surrounds the remembrance of the various activities of roundups, brandings, cattle drives, stampedes, and all the major and minor aspects of handling the Longhorn. The cowboy has been glamorized and immortalized in film and fiction. The myth may have started with the hoopla of the period, written by some late nineteenth century public relations man to attract Eastern investors' capital to the cow-country. Although means of communication were limited, the word got around, and the fascination with what was believed to be going

on in the cattle industry in the West seemed to effect everyone except those participating in the business.

The Texans, cattlemen and their cattle, were motivated to move and to be moved, not by idealistic desires to create a vast cow-country, but by the sterile facts of economics. The Longhorn, at the end of the Civil War, was worth from two to four dollars a head on his home range, where buyers were as scarce as cattle were plentiful. It cost about a dollar a head to drive a herd from Texas to the north. At the railhead markets, however, a Longhorn might bring thirty to forty dollars a head. Reconstructing Texans, with an over-abundance of cattle, began the famous cattle driving period only because of sound economic reasoning. No romantic illusions surrounded the basic situation of supply and demand. It was a fact that the demand happened to be hundreds of miles from the supply. Thus the Texans headed north driving their cattle to market.

Early trail experiences dictated the necessity of a systemized drive. By the early 1870's the average size trail herd was made up of about 2,500 to 3,000 head of cattle. Traveling ten to fifteen miles a day, the herd could cover three to five hundred miles a month. An outfit of a dozen experienced men could handle a herd of this size with a minimum of damage or loss to the cattle.

Cowboys were usually paid twenty-five to forty dollars a month. The trail boss, responsible for the outfit, cattle, and men, received an average of \$125 a month. The average expense of a drive was \$500 a month. This amount included salaries of the men, food, allowances for charges for watering the cattle, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Each cowboy furnished his own bedding and saddle but the owner of the herd supplied the horses for the drive. The group of horses for all the men on a drive were referred to as the "remuda," "cavvie," "saddle band," or "caballado." The success of the drive sometimes depended on the number and quality of horses supplied for each rider. With an average of six to eight horses for each man, the horse which could swim best was considered the prize of the group. Although each

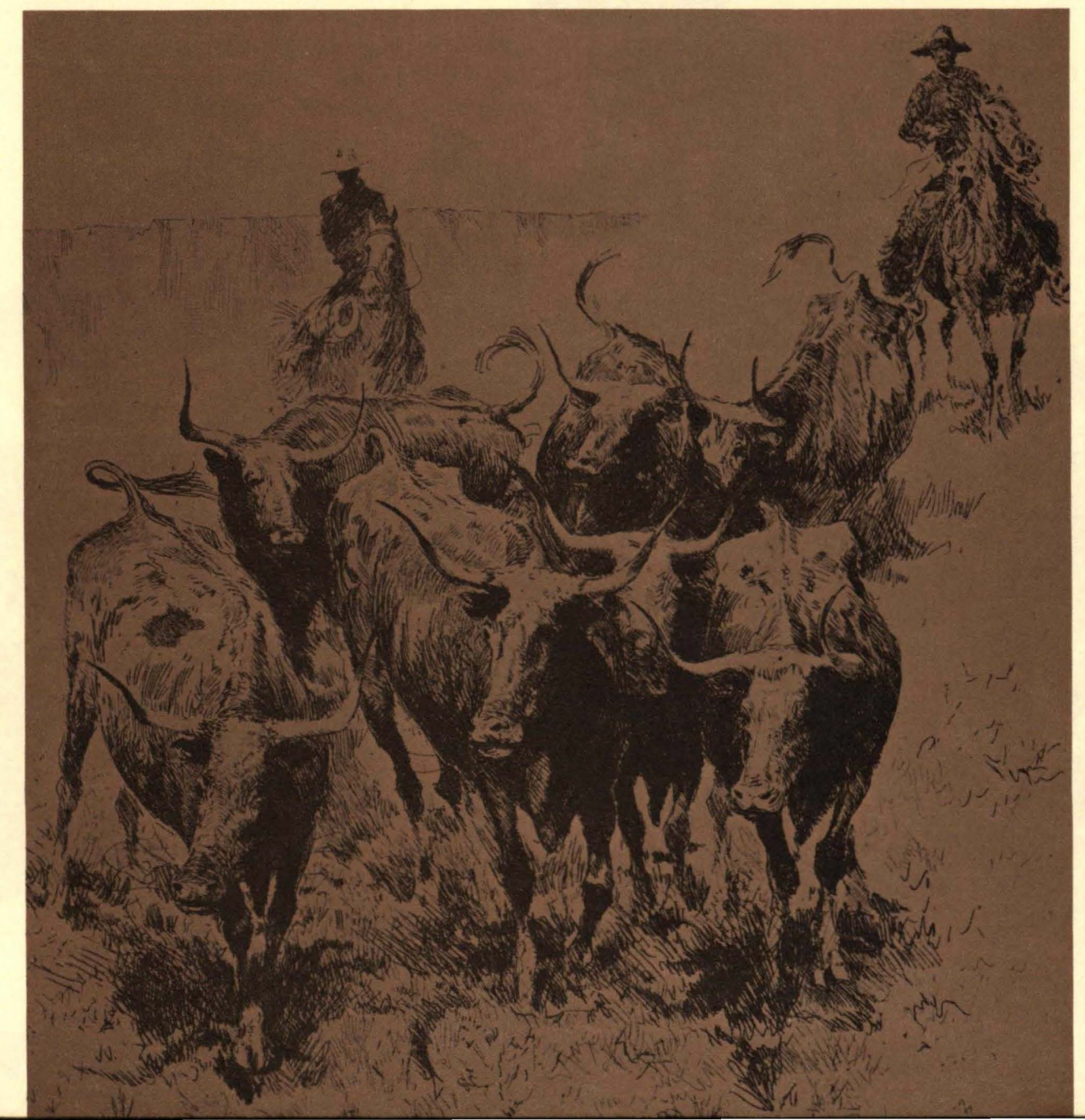
cowboy saw to the needs of the horses assigned to him, a separate "horse wrangler" attended the combined remuda.

Commonly the most temperamental member of the crew was the cook. He was, almost without exception, cantankerous and cranky. Charged with the responsibility of cooking for the outfit, attending to supplies and equipment, and driving the chuck wagon, his temper was a defense against the harassment of the practical jokes of the off-duty cowboys.

The first few days of a cattle drive were made at an accelerated pace, sometimes covering twenty-

five to thirty miles a day. This method served to accustom the cattle to being driven and to get them out of familiar country. Also, tired cattle were more easily handled. As the herd became broken to the trail, accepting the new experience, the pace was reduced and a daily routine established. Early in the morning the herd was allowed to feed while moving slowly in the direction of the drive. Then they hit a steady pace until noontime when they were allowed to rest and, if water were available, drink. After another period of steady driving, they were again allowed to feed. Toward evening they were rounded up for the night.

"Long Horns", Etching by Edward Borein



*"I want to caution you boys about your horses;
there is such a thing as having ten horses in
your string, and at the same time being afoot.
Accidents will happen to horses, but don't
let it be your fault; keep your saddle blankets
dry and clean, for no better word can be
spoken of a man than that he is careful of his
horses . . . A man afoot is useless."*

Andy Adams — "The Log
of a Cowboy."



As a herd became adapted to being driven and accustomed to the established daily routine, it formed its own ranks. Each day the leaders took their position with other cattle maintaining positions behind them to the "drags" in the rear. The leaders were the strongest, most energetic animals. Followers ranged from the cattle with lessening degrees of energy and strength to the weakest or laziest at the rear. Yearlings and two-year olds could, by their antics, cause problems on a drive. Although many herds were comprised only of mature beeves, some drovers believed there was less trouble with mixed herds including even cows with calves.

Bedding ground was carefully chosen with the most level ground available being preferred. Cattle needed plenty of room for bedding down to allow for their shifting during the night. The cattle were thoroughly watered and fed before lying down for the night. The chuckwagon and camp were kept quiet but not too far from the bedding ground. Muleys, the hornless animals, would somehow manage to get together and sleep apart from the horned animals. Night herders sang to the

cattle as they slowly rode their horses around the bedded cattle to prevent any sudden sounds from startling them.

Although daylight stampedes were common, most occurred at night. Lightning caused more stampedes than any other single thing, but the cause could be anything. Lobo wolves, wild hogs, stray dogs, or small prairie animals could set a herd to running. Sometimes a strange smell, a snapping twig, or a sneeze by human or animal could get them started. Any sudden sound or movement, often the most trivial thing, would startle the cattle to their feet with an answering thunder of hooves into the night.

The stampede was the most dreaded occurrence on a cattle drive. Cowboys who were not superstitious about anything else would often be about stampedes. Although stampeding cattle usually ran only five to ten miles, they could, especially in the darkness, do great damage to themselves. Sometimes a herd would stampede every night. Any stampeding herd was a big job for the men handling it, but stampedes in which several trail herds ran together were the trail herder's nightmare. The challenge of stopping these stampedes was only the beginning of the work of separating them.

During the 1870's, as cow-towns were established at railheads in Western Kansas, and the procedures of cattle drives were systematized, the volume of the annual drives increased. Many cattle of the great drive of 1871 were held over the winter on the ranges of the North. The severe winter that year caused the death of thousands of Texas cattle. The drive of 1872 was limited and yet the market was good. The good market of that year encouraged the drive of 1873 to increase. However, due to the lack of buyers, except Indian beef contractors, the Texans again had to hold their herds on the northern ranges over the winter, hoping for a better market the following year. The Panic of 1873, which came in the fall of that year, was a result of drovers not being able to borrow money to hold their herds for another winter on the northern ranges. Many cattlemen faced finan-

"The Stampede", Bronze by Frederic Remington

"Livestock associations were organized as soon as ranching on the plains reached considerable proportions and these organizations grew in numbers and power with the growth of the industry."

Edward Everett Dale — "The Range Cattle Industry — Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865 to 1925."

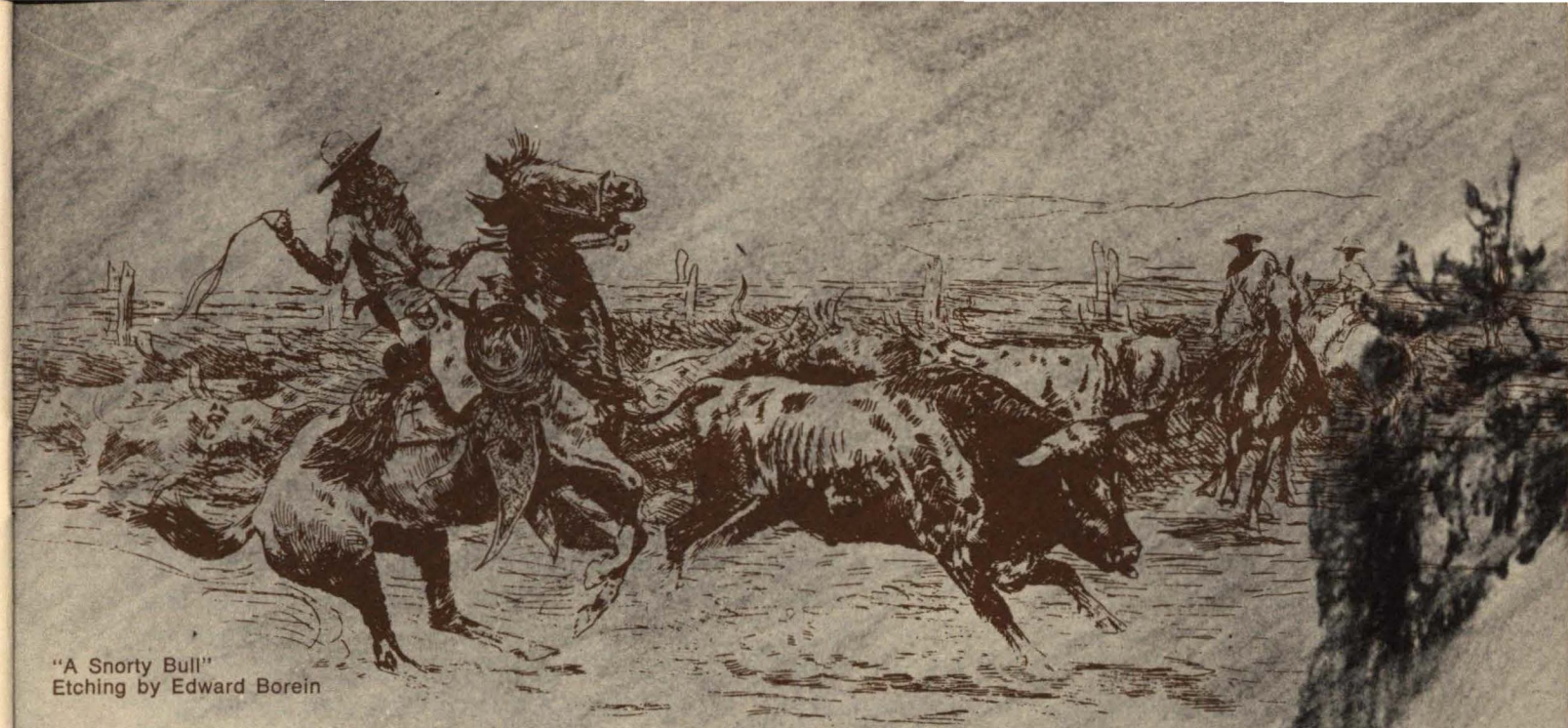


"A Maverick Calf"
Etching by Edward Borein

cial ruin. During the rainy winter of 1873-74, more heavy losses were incurred by already destitute cattlemen. Although the ranges of the northern cow-country were by no means completely stocked, the troubles of the early seventies caused an obvious decline in the volume of the drives from Texas until the 1880's.

From 1873 to 1880 several changes and innovations were made which, to varying degrees, effected the entire cattle industry. In 1874 the first barbed wire was marketed and introduced to the range. Although its use brought about general improvement of the quality of cattle it also brought about severe disagreements between the men occupying areas where it was used. In 1875 a New Yorker began sending refrigerated beef to England and began the development of refrigerated railcars. This innovation caused an increased demand for beef — however, the demand was for better beef than that which was produced by the Texas Longhorn. This change brought about an acceleration of a practice of the cattlemen of the northern ranges, which began in the early 1870's, of the cross breeding of pure bred cattle with the Longhorn. Economy demanded this step of progress and by 1876 Hereford bulls began to be introduced to fenced ranges in Texas.

Although the Longhorn was not completely gone by 1880, he was definitely on his way to being a thing of the past. His contributions to the new cross bred animal were the very qualities for which he is remembered: stamina and fortitude. However, as more high grade cattle were bred, the resulting animals were less hearty than the old time Texans.



"A Snorty Bull"
Etching by Edward Borein



WILL JAMES
— 27 —

By 1880 the northern drive again increased. With improved cattle and more efficient methods of operation, prices increased. Rising profits attracted investors from the Eastern United States and from Europe. This was the era of the grand scale cattle operation in the West. Water, which had always dictated the limits of regions which could be used for range, became an obsolete problem when enormous amounts of capital made the drilling of wells a standard procedure in waterless areas. Thus cattle raising spread over even more hundreds of acres within the cow-country. By 1882 the prices of cattle were at an all-time high. More and more money was being invested in the cattle business and expansion and improvement was the order of the day. Big operations with over-stocked ranges pushed for government leasing of public domain.

In November, 1884, during the peak of prosperity for the range cattle industry, a national cattlemen's convention was held in St. Louis, Missouri. Among the approximately two thousand delegates were men involved in all phases of the

cattle business: ranchers, breeders, and feeders, as well as men representing business closely associated with the cattle industry such as bankers, railroad officials, and packers. The convention, a gala affair, lasted a week and attracted the attention of writers, artists, and a crowd of curious onlookers.

The delegates of the convention were split into two factions which were determined by regional interests. The Northern group was interested in using the combined influence of the convention delegates to cause the government to grant long term leases for public lands to be used for grazing. The Southern group proposed that the convention endorse and push for government legislation to create a National Trail. Reaching from the Red River to the Canadian border, the proposed trail was to be from three to six miles wide, fenced, with allowance for quarantine and grazing grounds. Although both proposals could have aided the entire industry, no agreement was made by the delegation to support either proposal.

By 1885, quarantine laws established by Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado caused great difficulty for herds being driven north from Texas. The decreased volume of the drive left Texas heavily stocked when the severe winter of that year hit the southern ranges and caused heavy losses of cattle.

In 1886 Texas cattle, in poor condition from the previous winter, were driven north to already overstocked ranges. During the winter of 1884-85, the cattle of the northern ranges had been involved in the greatest drift in range history. The drift involved cattle grouping and straying miles away from their home ranges. Drifts caused expensive and time consuming gathering for ranchers as well as damage to the condition of their cattle.

Therefore, as the winter of 1886 approached, the northern cow-country from Colorado to Canada, the ranges were overstocked with animals in generally poor condition caused by circumstances of the two previous winters. The winter of 1886-87 was an almost complete disaster to the range cattle industry. Losses of 40 to 60 percent were common, with up to 90 percent losses in vast areas. Outside

with up to 90 percent losses in vast areas. Outside investors who had rushed in during the period of prosperity hurriedly withdrew their supporting capital when faced by the losses of the disastrous winter. Drought in the corn belt during the following summer didn't help the situation.

Although the series of events which occurred from 1885 to 1887 caused a general depression in the cattle industry until the early 1890's, cattlemen learned to profit from their mistakes. The cattle industry recovered from the disasters of the late 1880's but continued in its development without the Longhorn. Overstocking was recognized as a practice which could only lead to disaster. Better cattle, requiring more care and comforts, was the economically sensible answer to the question of the best use of the available range. Economics fenced the ranges. Economics ended the cattle drives. Economics forced the changes that brought about the end of the era of the Longhorn.

Sensible men saw the necessity of economically sound reasoning — but sensible men didn't always like the outcome.



Drawing by Olaf C. Seltzer

Range men did not in their hearts choose to exchange free-running Longhorns, capable of rustling their own living, for fine haired stock requiring endless attention; did not gladly go from the self sufficient breed to the care-requiring breed . . . Circumstances forced the changes . . . The Longhorn did not vanish like the wild pigeon . . . He was bred away, not only in horn but in other characteristics . . . Charles Goodnight regretted as long as he lived that ranchmen in improving their herds diluted the blood of the original stock until the thrift, hardihood and vitality belonging to it were lost, and that the rage for uniformity in flesh marks prevented keeping enough of the Longhorn for developing "the great American cow" . . .

J. Frank Dobie — "The Longhorns"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Andy. **The Log of a Cowboy.** New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1903.

American Cyclopedia. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1866.

Armer, Laura Adams. **Cactus.** New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1934.

Brisbin, General James S. **The Beef Bonanza; or How to Get Rich on the Plains.** Norman, Oklahoma: Reprint — University of Oklahoma Press, 1959.

Dale, Edward Everett. **The Range Cattle Industry — Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865 to 1925.** Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1930. (New edition, 1960.)

Dobie, J. Frank. **The Longhorns.** Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1941.

Hinman, Robert B. and Harris, Robert B. **The Story of Meat.** Chicago: Swift and Company, 1939.

Latham, Dr. Hiram. **Trans-Missouri Stock Raising.** Denver, Colorado: Fred A. Rosensstock, The Old West Publishing Company, 1962. (Originally printed by the Daily Herald Steam Printing House, 1871.)

McCoy, Joseph G. **Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest.** Washington, D.C.: The Rare Book Shop, 1932. (Originally printed in 1874.)

Murphree, Nellie. **A History of Dewitt County.** Victoria, Texas: Privately published, Edited by Robert W. Shook, 1962.

Pasture and Range Plants. Bartlesville, Oklahoma: Phillips Petroleum Company, 1963.

Pelzer, Louis. **The Cattlemen's Frontier.** Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936.

Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry of the United States. Kansas City, Missouri: National Live Stock Association, Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Company, 1904.

Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1884. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884.

Webb, Walter Prescott. **The Great Plains.** Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936.

