

RANCH SIDELIGHTS

J. F. Evans

In early days in far away locations where timber was scarce, the Rancho house was usually a dug out. An excavation in a hill-side with front of log pickets. They had one door and a glassless window with wooden shutters and with center ridge pole with smaller poles laid on for roof. With a six inch dirt cover this made a substantial roof. A fire place was dug in the rear wall and a well-like hole dug or drilled down for chimney. These houses were warm in winter and cool in summer.

A Cow Boys mount was four to six horses and when on trail or holding herd, each rider kept one horse saddled all night as precaution against stampedes.

2500 to 3000 head of cattle were as many as should be put in one Trail herd, requiring 10 to 12 cow hands, one horse rustler, who had charge of horses not in use, and one cook, who drove chuck wagon, gathered his firewood and provided meals for the outfit. A cows hide was swung under the wagon to carry fuel in against woodless camps.

Each Cow Boy provided his own personal outfit, which consisted of saddle, bridle, blanket, and (bedroll) 2 pairs of blankets and one tarpoleen of 8 oz. duck, which spread on ground and being twice the length of blankets was doubled back over blankets as a protection against dampness from the ground or above. On the trail this was rolled up, a strap buckled around it and tossed into wagon. A Lasso (lariate) of 5/8 inch hard twisted manilla rope with loop in one end was indispensable.

On the trail or working on range round ups, the Rustler drove the Caveyard (horse herd) to Camp morning, noon, and night, where four men holding ropes formed a Correl (inclosure) round the horses. Each rider turned his ridden horse loose and threw his lasso over the head of a fresh horse (of his mount) and saddled him.

The first watch took charge of the herd when it was rounded onto bed ground at sunset. Two men to each watch were changed every two hours. Other men slept with their night horses saddled. At sunrise cattle rose from their beds, stretched and were permitted to graze off in the course of travel.

The Cow Boy Saddle was made on the California tree, the best for comfort, hard-riding and health that has ever been made, and Stirrups were broad heavy wooden ones or broad leather covered iron stirrups.

In an Indian Country he carried a heavy 45 Caliber Six Shooter on a belt that held 50 cartridges, a Hunting Knife and a Winchester rifle in scabbard strapped to side of his saddle and under his stirrup leather.

Most Cow Boys were of good families and fairly or well educated who had come west preferring adventure. They were the best boys of their family, self reliant and trustworthy.

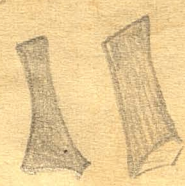
Line Camps, on out limits of ranges, usually for two men, one of which road each way six to ten miles and back, were small dugout, preferable location being in the bank of some Coule (a small draw or hollow) with water in it. They furnished shelter and were generally grassed.

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