

Nov 1929.

Dear Mrs. Hoover

Your request for data on Tex. Ranches, Texas Ranchmen Their Brands & The Cattle Trail is a large assignment.

The activities of many Ranchmen would justify a Biography of many chapters, and their work Ranchmen whose history would fill a volume,

and The Trail, the Annual Cattle drive of Hundreds of Thousands -

That tracked from the Gulf to Montana, & Wyoming - I have a history & an interest all its own.

In a brief article one may only glimpse \Rightarrow the many phases of the greatest Texas industry of that age.

Though I take it that those of the Old Ranch days who still live owe it to posterity to impart ~~to posterity~~ such knowledge as they may possess.

So I shall in the hope of ~~you~~ far your finished picture. Wander far afield. In hope that by chance I may awake the spirit of that departed day.

The Blackland Belt - Grayson, Collin, Ellis, & other Middle Texas Counties - were never a Big Ranch Country -

Nor did they suffer from Indian depredations. This Section - was settled in the late (30) thirties & forties - by families who took up

home-stead tracts. As ~~game~~
wild game grew scarce the farmers
settled added cattle, ~~to his~~ they brought
from South West Texas. They thrived on
the finest of open range. And within a
few years were more than abun-
dant. - In 1861 the Civil war came
on. And the Confederate States govern-
ment, called to the ranks every able-
bodied man 17 years of age. -

For four years - cattle went mostly
~~unbranded~~ unmarketed, & unbranded.
Except by a few stray at home -
who ~~had~~ bought for a song, many
small herds. - and it was said that
some who owned only a yoke of steers
had by the free use of a branding
iron ~~built~~ built up herds of hundreds
by thousands. - The collapse of the
Confederacy in 1865 - left the people of
the South bankrupt - and the only
liquid assets left to Texas, was ~~her~~ her
thousands of cattle - for their market
was sought by driving through the
Indian Territory - first to Baxter Springs
S.E. Kansas & thence to other Rail Road
~~points~~ points from which they were
shipped to eastern cities for slaughter or
to corn fields of Iowa & Illinois &
of other states. The demand appeared
insatiable. Gold poured into Texas,
and a cattle boom was on.

For seeing men buy cattle without
limit, and established ranches - pushing

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Cattle trail as applied did not signify a beaten way, but a general course & open way - from one stream to another, and herds were not driven - but grazed & drifted - fattening and tending the way. Moving from (8) eight to (15) fifteen miles per day. And rounded up on to a bed ground for night - and guarded by cow boys - who stood two hour watches - with two on watch - riding round the herd, one each way.

Usually they sang, their voices & the musical jingle of their spurs - which were heavy & of fine steel with large rowells - & pendants of steel swinging against the rowells were quite musical - & soothing to sleeping cattle.

Every article of cow-boy dress was made with view to utility - (a chapter in itself)

In ~~the~~ this years of the open Range - like, or big riders had beats on the out limits of ranges - of 6 to 10 miles - & ranches were 10 to 30 miles across.

Then followed the drift fence, and the pasture - And soon

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the settler & the demand for
farm lands. And the
great Rancho. the Open trail &
the picturesque Cow Boy part into
history. A few years more & the
~~grey headed Vanguard of~~
last of the grey headed Vanguard
of the Rancho days that were.
will have ~~few~~ "Crossed over the
river to rest under the shade of
the trees." ~~~~~ Yours J. F. Edwards