

EDITOR'S NOTE

By Dean Rea



The cowboy era began in the 1700s and still exists in various forms today in the West, which serves as the theme of material that appears in this month's issue of *Author's Bazaar*.

I discovered the West while working in Montana for the U.S. Forest Service during the summer of 1949. I earned \$500, which paid for my college expense the following year. Later, my family moved to Oregon after surviving a hot, humid summer in Missouri. Nearly six decades later, we still love this place.

Greg McKelvey sets the scene for our trip west with several photographs he took while visiting Grand Canyon National Park and other sites that attract thousands of visitors each year. June Bassemir shares an interesting bit of family history with close ties to the west in a story about how her father participated in a 1916 tour in a 1916 Maxwell to promote the car.

While cowboy lore suggests that chaste women were respected in the Old West, Arnold Ismach discovered that they were often treated as second-class citizens when he became a newspaper editor. Ismach is a former dean of the University of Oregon journalism school and a previous contributor to *Author's Bazaar*.

We learn a bit of cowboy vocabulary in an article written by a frequent *Author's Bazaar* contributor, Lee Kirk, and we learn about the West's "finest cowboy" from Barry Schrader, another frequent contributor.

As a child, Ross Carletta dreamed of becoming a cowboy. How that dream played out is described in his 2,250-word "Cowboy Days." An abbreviated form of the story appeared in *Oregon*, a hobby journal, in September 2009.

For those readers who enjoy reading poetry, Sheryl Nelms and Clarence Wolfshohl describe "real cowboys." However, I cannot vouch that the poem about a cowboy's toothache is anything other than fiction.

If you wish to communicate with the various authors in this issue, simply click on their by-line and it will produce their e-mail address.



Bosque de Apache: A national wildlife refuge. The name means "woods of the Apache." It is located along the Rio Grande in New Mexico.

Western landscapes PHOTOS BY GREG MCKELVEY



Capital Reef National Park: Located in south-central Utah in the heart of red rock country. A 100-mile-long geologic "wrinkle on the earth."



Grand Canyon National Park: Unique combinations of geologic color and erosional forms decorate the 277-mile-long canyon.



Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument: The 1.7-million acre monument in Utah is a geologic sampler with a variety of features.



Traveling West in 1916

By June Tuthill Bassemir

When C. Wayne Tuthill was 22 years old, he worked for The Maxwell Car Company in Newark, N.J. He and another fellow thought up the idea of traveling across the United States in a 1916 Maxwell stock touring car as a way of selling the public on the car.

He contacted Firestone Tires and Texaco gas to sponsor the trip, and they left the East Coast on November 16, 1916. Working their way on the "Santa Fe Trail and the Lincoln Highway" hoping to avoid bad weather, they arrived in Los Angles in 10 days, 16 hours.

It was not a race because they stopped along the way to "sell" the car. "Tut" kept a diary, and pictures were taken to record the adventure. After arriving in L.A., they traveled north to San Francisco (quoting from a news clipping) "a



The author's father, C. Wayne Tuthill, helped promote Maxwell cars during a cross-country trek in 1916. The car averaged 20.44 miles on a gallon of gasoline.

distance of 483 miles in 24 hours."

While in the north, they visited the Grand Canyon, which he described as awe-inspiring. They returned to LA "in 18 hours" for the trip back East.

Nearing the end of the cross-country trip, "Tut" reported they "averaged 20.44 miles to the gallon of gasoline and 130 miles to the quart of oil."

You would think sharing such a trip the boys would have kept in touch, but the diary reveals that his companion P.G. Skull "lost his wallet in CA," and "Tut" funded the trip back out of his own pocket. The friendship ended when they arrived in Newark.

In 1997 the Ertl Company in Iowa sold several coin

banks in the shape of cars. The Maxwell model was offered in a box that mentioned the memorable trip taken by C. Wayne Tuthill and P. G. Skull. Where they got the information is not known but they mistakenly said, "It was a race setting a national record." It was not a race but a tour to show the car to prospective buyers while advertising Texaco gas and Firestone tires.

Now we fast forward to 2013. "Tut's" grandson Douglas Bassemir located such a car on the Internet five years ago



and bought it with the desire to duplicate the trip on the 100th year anniversary. His son David Douglas will be 15 years old then and hopefully the pull of a girlfriend will not deter him from an exciting trip with his Dad.

With the anticipated traffic on the roads in 2016, it will probably take them much longer, but wouldn't "Tut" think it a great idea?

One thing for certain: They will not have the sad encounter of running into and killing 2 sheep as the two young men did in Wheeling, W. Va. The farmer charged them \$8.25 — a lot of money in those days.

Moving west

How I became a teminist drumbeater

By Arnold Ismach

It was 1955, and the annual management/staff meeting on payroll raises was under way at the *Union-Bulletin* newspaper in Walla Walla, Wash. I was the paper's news editor and staff representative at the meeting.

"Why are we paying women reporters less then men for the same assignments?" I asked the publisher at one point. "It's none of your business," he snorted.

I waited until the close of the meeting and asked him again, "Why aren't we paying the women as much as the men?" He glared at me, and finally said, "Because we don't have to!"

That was an awakening moment for me. I had just gotten out of the army the year before and had moved west,

and, at age 24, this was my first newspaper job. I was always an admirer of women, but had never encountered a dispute like this.

FEMINISM

IS THE RADICAL

NOTION THAT

Feminism arrived decades earlier, when women won the right to vote. But the new age of activism for women's equality was still a decade away. Still, learning that women reporters were being paid less than men came as a shock to me. And it started me on a lifetime path of advocating for equality, at all levels.

WOMEN ARE One of the outcomes of the PEOPLE dispute with my publisher, I suspect, was the loss of my job. A year later, the newspaper downsized from morning and afternoon editions to just the a.m. edition. As a result, the staff was cut – and I was among those cut.

I quickly and easily found another job in California, though, at the Sun-Telegram in San Bernardino. I started as night city editor, and in a few years became the executive city editor for the morning and evening papers. It was a large, successful newspaper with a county-wide circulation of more than 85,000.

When I arrived in San Bernardino, there were women reporters on the staff — but all of them worked in what was then called the "Society Section." None were in the City Section.

That, too, came as something of a shock to me.

So, when I became executive city editor, I began hiring women. By the early 1960s, we had four women on the city staff. It certified my lifelong devotion to equality for all – women, blacks, Hispanics and Native-Americans.

My devotion to equality for women wasn't prompted by political considerations. It was the result of a lifetime of appreciation and admiration of them.

I was born in New York City in 1930 and lived there throughout my childhood in a poor family that suffered through the Great Depression. My father was a somewhat remote individual and had little contact with me. My mother reared me and treated me like a prince. So did my two sisters, seven and nine years older than me. They took me with them to movies, concerts and to the zoo.

My junior high school teacher and adviser, Mrs. Ryan, also took me under her wing and convinced me that I could win admission to the Bronx High School of Science (then an all-boys school) and should go on to college after that.

All this attention and affection from the women in my life accumulated in my mind, and through my teen years I developed respect and admiration for them – even though this was an age when women didn't have a major role in the lives of teen-aged boys. We played stickball and hung out together. Sex wasn't a no-no. It was just a subject that almost never came up among us.

From high school, I went on to college in Oklahoma – where I didn't have a girlfriend until my senior year. And from college, it was on to the army, and almost three years stationed in post-war Germany, where I ran the public information office of the 2nd Armored Division. And yes, we didn't have any women in the office.

When I finally left the army in 1954, I had traveled all over Europe. And back in the states, I decided I wanted to see more of America. So, I looked for a job out west and quickly found one in Walla Walla.

Still, women's issues weren't a big factor in my mind, much as I admired them. Until that confrontation with my publisher a year later. From that point on, I became a drumbeater for women's rights.

Real Cowboy

By Sheryl L. Nelms "Them rodeo cowboys are just another kind of pro athlete

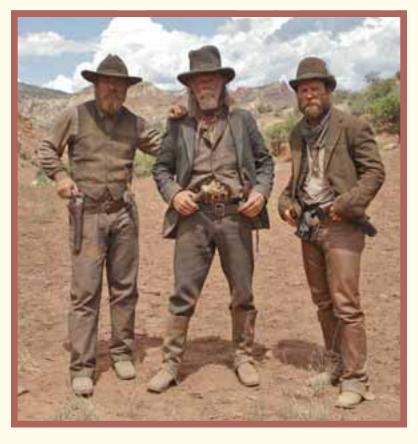
just a fine tuned machine

now you take
an old boy
that's been out
there brush
poppin
them cows
outa mesquite thorns

now there's a real cowboy

but he probably wouldn't do no good in pro rodeo he'd be too damn slow

he's just a hard working good old boy"



Cowhoy Conversin'

How to talk like a real buckaroo

By Lee Kirk

TRAVELING

afoot Other than being carried feet first out the door in a plain pine coffin, being afoot is the least acceptable form of transportation to a cowboy. Not only is walking below a cowhand's dignity, it's uncomfortable — a lifetime of saddle riding usually results in stove-up knees and stove-in legs.

In the old days, being afoot carried a load of meanings. It most likely meant that the cowboy had sold or lost his horse, and a man was judged by the qualities of his horse and the care he gave it. A good stock-working horse might assure a man of a job. In the open country, having a horse could mean the difference between living or dying. Horsethieving was the worst crime in the West, usually punished by instant hanging. A hand who lost a horse through gambling or carelessness was irresponsible, untrustworthy and shamed. Even the contemporary cowboy wants no part of being afoot in open range country where danger to life and limb include exposure to the elements, starvation and dehydration, and attacks from wild animals and even range cattle. If a cowboy is forced to walk, he has some colorful terms to describe the event:

amble To walk slowly or aimlessly. Slightly derisive. **high heel it** Describes walking in high-heeled rid-

ing boots.

taking the ankle express To walk.

riding shank's mare (taking shank's mare; going by shank's mare) To walk. The area from the knee to the ankle is the "shank" of the leg. The phrase may be Scottish in origin.

terrapin (As in, "He just terrapined down the trail.) To walk very slowly. The word terrapin describes any of several North American turtles usually associated with slow or brackish water. In other words, the fellow in question was moving at about the speed of a lethargic turtle.

straddlin' down the road Used to describe a bow-legged cowboy's walk.

lost steam Tuckered out from walking.

wheezin' like a windbroke horse This cowboy has walked too far. He's gasping for breath like a horse suffering from a respiratory disease that affects its breathing.

blowin' like a bull snake at a barkin' dog Huffing and puffing from his effort.

footermans A Wyoming cowhand's term for a walking man.

LEAVING

A cowboy didn't simply "leave" or "go." A variety of terms describe his leave-taking:

adios This term can mean either "goodbye, see you later" or "to leave," as in "I'm going to adios now." The word comes from the Spanish phrase a diós, "to God."

hit the trail To leave.

leavin' Cheyenne The phrase comes from the song lyric, "Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm a-leavin' Cheyenne; which was often played as the last number at dances.

mosey An unhurried departure. "I'll just mosey along now."

drift Similar to mosey. "I think I'll drift on up to Sante Fe."

vamoose (Sp. vamose): To depart. Sometimes implies leaving in a hurry; to "disappear."

light out Usually, although not always, implies that haste is called for.

hot-foot it Generally indicates haste. The usual definition of "hot-foot" refers to the cattle-rustler's practice of burning a calf between the toes with a hot iron so that it couldn't follow its mother. Horses were sometimes subjected to a similar painful experience by paring down their hooves so that they were too tender-footed to wander off. This raises the question of how "hot-foot it" came to mean

"depart in haste." One might speculate that the term comes from another practice — a practical joke in which a wooden match was inserted between the sole and the boot top of a snoozing ranch hand. When the lighted match burned down, the cowboy received a "hot foot," which often resulted in some pretty spectacular jigging and stomping. This was a good time for the jokesters to hot-foot it out of his reach.

hump your tail at the shore end, hump it, hump your tail Move out quickly, without delay.

light out like a scalded cat, take off like a turpentined cat To move very fast indeed.

leak out of the landscape To leave without leaving a trace; for instance, to take off two jumps ahead of the sheriff (or an irate husband or sweetheart.)

churn up the dust Go fast.

high-tail it To go fast, like a running horse with its tail flying high behind it.

riding with his head over his shoulder Someone who's travelling and watching behind for pursuit; someone who is dodging the law.

stay among the willows To travel in concealment; again to avoid pursuit or notice.

travels the lonesome places Someone who

Toothache*

By Dean Rea

Old Jake got a toothache While tendin' the herd. He let us all know it With a heap of cuss words.

Along about nightfall
As we stopped and made camp,
We decided to help him
By extracting the scamp.

We broke out some gut string, We tied him up tight. Old Jake mighta hurt some Had we allowed him to fight.

We pried open his jaw, And what did we see? A festered gum sportin' Some 'bacca-stained teeth.

The cook checked the wagon For some fence-mendin' pliers, Found only a shovel, A rope and barbed wire.



We wrapped the wire Around Ol' Jake's tooth Commenced to pullin' Until it came loose.

We hid Old Jake's gun, Untied him and fled A wonderin' whether We'd live or be dead.

Old Jake rode next day
Dejected and mum.
He didn't once thank us
For the chore we had done.

The roundup ended,
The crew rode to town.
We toasted Old Jake
With beer round by round.

At midnight he muttered:
"To tell you the truth,
I 'preciate your kindness
But you pulled the wrong tooth."

^{*} With some help from cowboy poet Dallas McCord

The finest cowboy I ever knew

By Barry Schrader

Johnie Schneider never acted in movies, never made a TV appearance or performed with Buffalo Bill's "Wild West Show," but he could have done all three if he had wanted to.

This real live cowboy was born in 1904 in Stockton, California, and spent his later youth as a ranch hand around Livermore. He was in his 70s when I first met him. He was living on a small ranch near Salinas at the time but made

regular trips back to Livermore to visit relatives. One day he stopped into our newspaper office to say hello. Our friendship continued from then on

I had heard about this legendary cowboy from old timers in Livermore but did not know he was still alive until he stopped by. Johnie was only five-foot-six, but stocky and his muscular physique showed through his western shirt and jeans. He still



Johnie Schneider shown when he was top all-around cowboy on the rodeo circuit.

had on well-worn cowboy boots, but no spurs. I imagine his legs were even a little bowed, but I didn't check. He shared some of his history as a young rodeo competitor in Livermore, and then I learned of his illustrious career on the rodeo circuit.

Getting his start in the late 1920s at the Livermore Rodeo, he soon became the best at bull riding, bareback bronc riding, roping and bulldogging, you name it. By 1931 he was named World Champion All-Around Cowboy, then in 1935-36 the Best All-Around in Australia and in 1939 duplicated that title in the Hawaiian Islands. After a decade of winning purses, he bought a ranch near Livermore and later one near Sacramento. His wife Julia died of cancer. He married again in 1951, staying married to that gal Bernice until his death in 1982. He became a brand inspector for the state to make a good living until retirement.

When I told our sons Todd and Darrin whom I had met that day in the office, they were anxious to see a genuine cowboy and rodeo star. So, the next time he came up from Salinas. I asked him to have lunch with us, and he agreed, bringing our boys autographed photos of him atop a bucking horse. The family was thrilled, and we kept in touch after that. I talked the Rotary Club into dedicating a monument at the Livermore Rodeo Stadium in his honor in 1976, the year he was chosen grand marshal of the rodeo parade in town. He was also inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame at Colorado Springs and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

I asked him to be the speaker at our annual meeting of the Livermore Heritage Guild in 1981 when I was president, and he entertained us with his cowboy and rodeo



One-time World Champion rodeo cowboy Johnie Schneider spoke at the annual meeting of the Livermore (Calif.) Heritage Guild when Barry Schrader, at right, was president. They had become friends a few years earlier.

stories. We also found out he had the heart of a poet as he recited some poetry from his early days. The one I liked the most was about the "girl he left behind." Probably the best known among those he wrote is "Black Beauty," which I will share here:

I'll tell you a story of a thing that makes me blue.

Please listen for a moment, for the words I speak are true

For two years I'd been riding and scheming for to get— My hands upon a beauty that no one will ever get— I'd caught many a wild horse and never failed until, I started on this youngster at the foot of Rocky Hill. He was nothing but a baby, when first I saw him there— Standing by his mother, a little old grey mare.

And when he'd grown from colthood to a big strong handsome black

There was always by his hoof prints, the little old grey mare's track.

I lay awake many a night, trying to scheme a way For to make a big black beauty, be my saddle horse some day.

But this beauty always dodged me 'spite all that I could do.

Til one day I dug a pit down by the waterside,

I covered it over with sticks and leaves and climbed a tree to hide.

I hadn't been there very long; the sun was shining still, When I saw the couple coming thru the rocks up on the hill.

And as they came down closer to the waterside,

The old mare done the leading and the black stayed close beside

Another step was all it took till she'd be in the pit.

She bowed her head and snorted and then stepped back a bit.

She turned her head as if to say—there is danger here my son.

And at the twinkle of an eye, my right hand grasped my gun.

I jerked it from its holster, for now I knew the truth.

I'd never catch the beauty with the old mare running loose.

I peeked out thru the branches—drew a fine sight on my gun,

My finger clutched the trigger, and the old mare's days were done.

The great black reared straight in the air then sort of

settled down

And stretched his long keen neck to smell the blood upon the ground.

He blew a loud shrill whistle, his nostrils flaming red,

And with his sleek foreleg he stroked his mother lying dead

Then a sudden fear seemed to seize him and he whirled and with a bound—

Crashed into a pine tree, then sank back to the ground.

I climbed down thru the branches and ran to where he struck,

And lifting up his small keen head I found he broke his neck.

I knew that I was beaten as they both lay cold and still— I laid the beauty's head back down and started up the hill.

My heart was sure heavy with the whole thing on my mind.

For now I knew the very truth—the black had been born blind.

COWBOY'S BOOTS

By Clarence Wolfshohl

A cowboy's boots tell his story from scallop down to the sloping heel. It narrates his folly and his glory and lets us know if the cowboy is real.

Any man can wear a big buckle on a belt with his name around back, and with a Stetson he may press his luck till his image has nary a crack.

But one look at the man's footwear will tell us a book-load of stuff. Are the heels and soles worn bare, or the toes, once sharp "v's," now sorta rough?

Has duct tape replaced the inlay for decoration on the long shaft? Is it bound around the instep to display the latest fashion to keep out a draft?

Cowboys may have shiny boots they wear with their Sunday best, so to determine the lie from the truth there is one more, sure fire test.

The boots never lie about a real cowpoke; you can always tell which one is truer. Look on his soles from spur ridge to toe; the cowboy's always has manure.



Days

By Ross Carletta

I was tucked deep inside my sleeping bag when everything started to move and shake and shift. I popped my head out of the sleeping bag. The first hint of dawn was faintly showing through the trailer's grimy windows.

I grabbed for my glasses on a shelf that kept moving from side to side. The old bucket of a trailer was creaking and moaning and rocking.

"What the hell?"

My first thought was, "Bear." A bear was trying to get into the trailer. Only one way to find out.

I climbed out of the sleep-

ing bag wearing only my long johns and socks. I quietly and slowly opened the door to the frosty March morning expecting to find a bear on its hindquarters rocking my home.

Cattle!

The cattle had drifted up the mountainside from their pasture and had surrounded the trailer, many of them rubbing and rocking against it.

"Hey, cut it out," I yelled.

They looked at me with those big, innocent eyes and those long eyelashes.

"Go on, get the hell out of here," I said, waving my arms.

Half startled, they turned and tromped off into the woods and pasture.

I almost felt bad for being so rude to them, but I hadn't had my first cup of coffee yet.

It had been my first night alone tending cattle for a rancher out of Payette, Idaho. I'd been working for him on weekends since September. A few days earlier, he'd trucked his 2,000 cows from his Indian Creek ranch near Paddock Reservoir to summer pasture on a hillside east of Cascade Reservoir.

He needed someone to camp with the herd for the summer. There wouldn't be much to do, he said. You'd ride fence twice a day and generally keep tabs on things. The only problem was a quarter-mile stretch in the upper reaches that had no fence. You'd have to make sure none of the cattle found it and slipped over the ridgeline. Look for cattle tracks, he said.

It was the middle of March 1981 with the chill of late winter still in the air. I was due to start work in June at the newspaper in Lewiston, Idaho. But until then, I was free. I took the job.

My home was an aluminum trailer that looked like a turtle and about the same size. It had bunk beds in the back, a toilet that didn't work, and a kitchenette with stove and sink that didn't work.

It was a place to sleep and shelter when it snowed or rained, but that's all. Life was spent outside, either on horseback or around a campfire, cooking, relaxing and reading Louis L'amour novels.

How I got there was a journey that started as a child-hood dream in Rochester, N.Y., more than 30 years earlier.

I'm a Sagittarian. For a kid who grew up in a city suburb with no access to horses – except for pony rides at the park during family picnics — it's the only way I can explain how I became a horse lover. There's no explaining how I became a part-time cowboy in Idaho when the only cows I saw as a



kid were the kind that gave milk.

There are family photos of me when I was four or five dressed in a Roy Rogers cowboy outfit – hat, vest, chaps, holster and plastic revolver. This was no passing fantasy. I don't know where the ideas came from, but I was always drawn to the West. Movies and TV, of course. All boys my age wanted to be cowboys. We grew up with Gene Autry, Roy and Trigger, Wild Bill Elliot, Marshall Dillon and John Wayne.

But while my buddies' interest faded as we grew, mine went into hibernation in the back of my mind. I'm convinced that had I been born 100 years earlier, I'd have run away to the West and become a cowboy.

My dream re-emerged in the fall of 1961 when I attended journalism school at the University of Montana in Missoula.

I rode the train – long before Amtrak was invented – and watched in amazement as the nation between Rochester and Missoula passed before my eyes. It was the first time I'd been more than 100 miles from home.

When we reached the arid West, my attention became riveted. I couldn't take my eyes off the treeless sage country, rolling hills and then the Rocky Mountains. I kept thinking of Mark Twain and "Roughing It."

I saw for the first time corrals at rail sidings, some with cattle and working cowhands on horseback. For the first time, I saw wide-open spaces that had been sectioned by barbed wire, herds of cattle grazing within.

And there was that iconic Conoco billboard with the cowboy's hand, gloved in leather roper's, holding a red-hot iron bearing Conoco's triangular logo. It was "The Hottest Brand Going." I knew I was in cowboy country.

Somehow, I felt I was coming home to a place I'd never been. John Denver may have immortalized the phrase, but I thought it first.

My cowboy days didn't start in Montana. But as my col-

lege years unfolded and I traveled and worked around the state and became familiar with its people, the Western culture was making deep impressions. I learned Western ways and values, and the way people talked, thought, worked and lived. It was quite different from where I'd come from.

After graduating from college in 1965, my journalism career took me to many places far removed from the West and the Rockies. But in May 1975, I came home again to the West. This time, it was to work on the newspaper in Boise, Idaho.

It wasn't long before my interest in horses and the cowboy culture returned, too. But I had no idea what to do about it? How was I going to fulfill the dream when I knew nothing about horses, couldn't ride and knew nothing about cattle?

The answer arrived in a classified advertisement seeking cowhands.

A phone call connected me with the rancher, Lynn Bolen, who was running the family spread not far from Payette. I convinced him to let me come out and talk.

I drove up Interstate 84 on a crispy, bright Saturday in September to Sand Hollow Road, then up dusty Little Willow Road to the Indian Creek Ranch and the Bolen Cattle Co.

For some reason, I expected some crusty old rancher who would have taken one look at me, laughed, called me a greenhorn and told me to get off his spread.

Bolen, however, was in his 30s, like me. We were college grads and Vietnam vets. He was stocky, had light brown hair, wore a beard, and was dressed in jeans tucked half in and half out of his cowboy boots, a warm flannel shirt and a cowboy hat.

I looked more like a hippie than anything – long hair and beard, jeans and sneakers, light shirt and jacket, no hat and a daypack.

As we sat in a little shack he called his office, I explained that I had no idea how to ride, work cattle or do anything else on a ranch, and I could work only on the weekends, but that I'd work my butt off to learn.

I have no idea why he hired me. Maybe because he was hard up for hands; maybe because we had a common experience called Vietnam. There's no explaining it.

But I did learn, the hard way - by doing it.

All through the autumn and winter and into early spring, I was out there every weekend, working and living with the full-time hands, a bunch of young kids with names like Festus and Donner.

I learned about branding, polling, castrating, vaccinat-

ing, and I learned more about bucking bales than I'll ever want to know.

I learned about cowboy bars on Saturday nights, and the cowgirls who came for the cowboys. And I learned that no matter what time you got home, no matter how drunk you got, no matter how hung over you were, the boss was there before daylight rousting you from sleep. And I learned the best remedy for a hangover is hauling hay on a dark, frigid winter morning.

I learned to ride, but not before a horse ran off with me and didn't stop until he was back in the stables.

I learned to work cattle, but not before doing stupid things such as pushing them too hard and driving them through barbed wire.

I learned to rope from the back of a sprinting horse over broken ground, but not before earlier tries had almost torn my arm from its shoulder socket.

I learned there isn't a job on a cattle ranch that can't kill or maim you. I'm convinced the only reason I'm alive and not busted up into little pieces was my horse. His name was Tiny.

Tiny, as you might guess, was a very large animal. He was gelded, gray-white and had a few spots on his rump. I figure he had to be part Appaloosa.

I quickly learned to listen to Tiny. And to watch his ears. He knew way more than I did, and he saw and heard things I didn't. He kept me from trouble more than once.

Like the time we were pushing cattle toward an alley of barbed wire that lead to a corral. There was another little opening I could slip into so the cows wouldn't slip out. When we got close to the opening, Tiny came to a sudden, dead halt. I damned near went flying over his head. Tiny had seen what I didn't – a wire that ran across the opening. It was electrified.

Or the time Tiny and I were out alone, checking cattle one evening. We were miles from the ranch when darkness overtook us. I had a general idea where the ranch was but



couldn't see my usual landmarks. I just gave Tiny his head, and he took me home.

And when it came to working cattle, I just let him do it. My job was to point him in the general direction so he knew where we wanted the cattle to go, then to sit there and not get in his way.

A recalcitrant cow was no match for Tiny. Again, my job was to simply keep my center. He did all the work.

I loved that horse.

But Tiny, like all horses, could be a real pain in the ass.

For example, back at Cascade Reservoir, the horses were kept in a large pasture wired off from the cattle. At the ranch, the horses were either in the stable or in a small corral. Catching them wasn't that big of a deal.

But in the large pasture, it could be impossible if a horse didn't want to be caught, especially when you were alone. There was no place to corner the horse.

In the morning, I'd drive the pickup from camp to the pasture, catch rope hooked in my belt behind my back so Tiny couldn't see it. I'd walk in slowly with my cowboy hat held out as if it were a bowl. I'd shake it and scratch at the grain it held.

"C'mon, Tiny," I'd say softly. "Time to go to work." Tiny was no dummy.

He'd come in close, sniffing and snuffing. He could smell that grain and wanted it. But he also knew what was hiding behind my back. When my right hand moved ever so slightly, Tiny would take a step back.

"C'mon, Tiny," I'd say, moving my right hand back to the grain.

He'd move in, maybe even snatch a nibble. I'd go for the catch rope, Tiny'd step back. Sometimes he'd sprint away to the far end of the pasture, my curse words following him.

We'd do this dance for half an hour, sometimes more. Then, when he'd decided he'd tortured me enough, he'd just stand there, let me walk up to him, slide the catch rope around his neck, slip on the halter and lead him away. The dirty looks and foul words I had for him made no impression. He'd nicker. I took it for a snicker, and he'd follow behind me like a little kid who'd just gotten away with something.

As the end of May approached, and the rainy days gave way to the warmth and sunshine of early spring, my time at the Bolen Cattle Co. was rapidly coming to an end. It was time to say goodbye to the crew, to Tiny and Lynn, pack the few duds I had in Boise and head north to Lewiston.

I started work at the paper in the beginning of June. I quickly found a ranch not far from town that let me come

out and work on weekends through the summer. I helped bring in the herd and helped with branding. I felt like a real cowhand because the Indian Creek Ranch had schooled me.

Before you knew it, autumn arrived. I'd spent a whole year as a cowboy, part-time and full-time. But now it was time to give up my boots and saddle for my fishing waders and fly rod. It was time to explore Northern Idaho with my other passion – fly-fishing.

Somehow, I never got back to cowboyin'. It's a hard life, and I sometimes think you have to be born to it.

I'm old now. The days of recklessness are over for me. But I have the memories of youth and wild times. Damn, those were great days, those cowboy days.

