

First Rodeo Held At Old Courthouse

This year will be Elgin's Thirtieth Annual Stampede, but the origin of rodeos dates back as far as the early 1800's.

At Pecos, Texas, in 1833, cowboys penned the longhorns on the courthouse lawn and roped them on the main street. This was the first rodeo.

But the complete story behind the rodeo begins shortly after the Texas came home from the Civil War, to find that their longhorn herds had multiplied unchecked. Southern cattle markets, already depressed by the collapse of the Confederacy, were soon glutted. So the Texans turned their herds to the north and to the west, driving them across the plains, first to better markets, then to the western railroads at Abilene and Wichita and Dodge, later to the greener pastures that stretched across the great plains clear to the Canadian line.

The trail drivers were tough men and independent, who lived in the saddle and slept under the open sky.

Occasionally they'd hit a train town, where they blew off enough steam, in that brief moment of history, to keep four

generations of fiction writers busy ever since. But town, in the long monotony of their lives, was an unexpected pleasure: a binge of a few days, perhaps, in every year.

Between towns they created their own amusement. The hands of different cattle outfits, coming together on the trail or at round-up time, bet their scant wages on their skill at riding the rank broncos or roping and busting the longhorned steers.

At Cheyenne, in 1872, the townfolk gathered at the settlement edge to watch some Texans try to ride the wild cattle.

In a short generation the wild west settled down. The open range was fenced and posted and front street saloons were closed up by a wave of civic respectability. But throughout the west, the best of the rough string riders and the toughest hands with rope, still rode for the money at the contests the townsmen kept alive.

In 500 communities in the U. S. and Canada the cowboy contests are put on by the townsmen who serve on the committee without pay to keep the frontier spirit alive in a city-wide event the whole area supports.

The rodeo, cowboy earns no salary, draws no expense allowance, has no guaranteed annual wage. His only income is what he can win in his sport. What is more, he must pay for the privilege.

The competing cowboy can win more in a minute than most men earn in a month.

The cowboys' herds nowadays are whizzed down super highways in big trucks, by contract haulers. His cattle are calmed by tranquilizers and branded in chutes. He rides the range in a pickup truck and turns on the television in his livingroom. But in the arena he's still a cowboy. There you'll find him still, a sound horse under him, a stout rope in his hand. He's still a cowboy, still a tough hand riding the last frontier.



CASEY KEEFER
Rodeo Co-Chairman
(Observer Photos)



GEORGE CARROLL
Advertising Chairman



MILDRED HARWOOD
Queen Mother



MERVIL BENNETT
Dance Chairman

Committeemen Hard At Work

Behind the fun and festivities of the Stampede an able bodied crew of committeemen and committee chairman put in extra hours whipping final details into shape.

Maurice Beck who is president of the Stampede is acting as general chairman for the two-day event.

Assisting Beck are his co-chairmen Casey Keefer and Larry Follett.

A committee of three is in charge of the program. They are Carl Long, Casey Keefer, and Larry Follett.

Ray McCall is in charge of the Sunday morning parade which will begin at 11:30 a.m.

Richard Cason will have charge of the club events and Dale Clark is chairman of the ticket sales.

George Carroll is handling the advertising while Ben Hayes is in charge of the police and gate.

Rex Roulett is handling the decorations.

Walley Moore and Bob Townsend have combined their efforts to bring the grounds up to top condition.

Mervil Bennett is chairman of the dance committee which includes the Coronation ball held last week.

Bill Hindman was named arena director, and Earn Adams is chairman of the club concessions committee.

Stub Krause will again be in charge of the kids parade.

Drill master for the Stampede this year will be Dick Hibberd.

Margarette Follett had charge of the queen contest, and Mildred Harwood is acting as queen mother.

The sound equipment is under the direction of Herman Stroeder. Official announcer for the rodeo will be Bob Chambers from Pendleton and stock will again be furnished by Harley Tucker.



LARRY FOLLETT
Rodeo Co-Chairman



MARGARETTE FOLLETT
Queen Contest Chairman



ELMO BOITANO
Stampede's Vice President



MAURICE BECK
Club President



HARRY GILLIAM
Club Director



SPENCER TOLLY
Club Director



DALE CLARK
Ticket Chairman

Workers Complete Ground Repairs

Several new improvements have been made on the Stampede grounds this year in preparation for the rodeo.

Stampede have built a new cement block rest room unit. It is

located on the south end of the grounds.

The track has also been rebuilt and widened and a new guard rail has been installed around the inside of the track.

Some new fence has also been added.

All work was done by donation and the materials were paid for

by the Stampede themselves.

It is reported that the cost of improvement is around \$2000 to \$2500.

A Stampede spokesman reported that for a time both men and women were hard at work in a mutual effort to complete the improvements.

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for the

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