

**"THE COWBOY" BY PHILLIP ASHTON ROLLINS
GIVES MUCH HISTORICAL DATA ABOUT RANGE
RIDER OF THE WEST; AUTHOR IS NOW HERE**

Cowboys, their ways of living, their adventures, both true and imagined, and the work they do and the fun they have, have been described with uncounted millions of words during the past century. A great deal of what has been written will not bear very close scrutiny by a Westerner, but there is one book which appeared recently which is just conservative enough that it will meet with approval from the mind of those best posted on conditions as they relate to the men of the range.

This book is by Phillip Ashton Rollins, now living in the East, and bears the stamp of Charles Scribner's Sons. Mr. Rollins and his wife are here for the Round-Up this year. The title of the book is "The Cowboy," and characterizes the life of the cowboy. The author covers his subject exhaustively and has an appreciation for Western humor that lightens his story. The chapter is as follows:

The clothing worn by members of the trade was distinctive. Although picturesque, it was worn not for the production of this effect, but solely because it was the dress best suited to the work in hand. Inasmuch as it was selected with view only to comfort and convenience, it knew nothing of variable fashion and suffered from no change in style.

It, however, was subject, as were many of the cowboys' customs, to differences in form according as the locality involved the Northwest or the Southwest. The line of demarcation between these sections, though never very clearly defined, was in effect an imaginary westward extension of Mason and Dixon's Line, this extension zigzagging a bit in some places.

The hat was, in material, of smooth, soft felt; and, in color, dove gray, less often light brown, occasionally black. It had a cylindrical crown seven inches or more in height, and a flat brim so wide as to overtop the wearer's shoulders. The brim might or might not be edged with braid, which, if it appeared, was stiken and was of the same color as the felt. In the Southwest, the crown was left at its full height, but its circumference above the summit of the wearer's head was contracted by three or, more commonly, four, vertical, equidistant dents, the whole resembling a mountain from whose sharp peak descended three or four deer antlers.

Few men of either section creased their hats in the manner of the other. A denizen of the Northwest appearing in a high crowned hat was supposed to be putting on airs, and was subject openly to be accused of "chucking the Rio," vernacular for affecting the manners of the Southwesterners, whose dominant river was

the Rio Grande. Present-day Northwesterners, faithful to this tradition, have foreworn the low crown and assumed the peak. The United States war department recently has flown in the face of history by formally designating the dented high peak as the Montana poke.

Around the crown, just above the brim and for the purpose of regulating the fit of the hat, ran a belt, which was adjustable as to length. The belt was made usually of leather, but, particularly in the southwest, occasionally of woven silver or gold wire. The belt, if of leather, commonly was studded with ornamental nails, or, did the owner's purse permit, with "conchas," which were flat metal plates, usually circular, generally of silver, in rare instances of gold. In the cowboy's wardrobe, his subject, rattlesnake's rattles, gold nuggets, or other showy curiosities not infrequently adorned the leather. For leather, some men substituted the skin of a rattlesnake.

From either side of the brim at its inner edge, depended a buckskin thong; these two thongs, sometimes known as "bonnet strings," being tied together and so forming a guard, which, during rapid riding or in windy weather, was pushed under the base of the skull, but which at other times was thrust inside the hat.

Did the brim sag through age or unduly flop, it could be rectified by cutting, near its outer edge, a row of

slits and threading through them a strip of buckskin.

The wide brim of the hat was not for appearance's sake. It was for use. It defended from a burning sun and shaded the eyes under any conditions, particularly when clearness of vision was vital to a man awake or shelter was desirable for one asleep. In rainy weather it served as an umbrella. The brim, when grasped between the thumb and fingers and bent into a trough, was on its upper surface the only drinking-cup of the outdoors; when pulled down and tied over the ears, it gave complete protection from frost-bite. It fanned in to actively every camp-fire started in the open, and enlarged the carrying capacity of the hat when used as a pail to transport water for extinguishing embers. The broad hat swung to right or left of the body or overhead provided a conspicuous means of signaling; and, when shoved between one's hip or shoulder and the hard ground, it sometimes hastened the arrival of a nap. Folded, it made a comfortable pillow. No narrow-brimmed creation could have had so many functions.

A Philadelphia manufacturer virtually monopolized the making of at least the better grades; and, from his name, every broad-brimmed head covering was apt everywhere slantly to be designated as a "Stetson," instead of either one of its two legitimate and interchangeable titles of

BRIDGER DISCOVERS THE GREAT SALT LAKE

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to the Pacific for later emigration. They were the first white men to descend Green river and the first, after Colter, to enter the Yellowstone wonderland. They were the first to travel from the Salt Lake southwesterly to Western California, the first to cross the Sierras and the deserts of Utah and Nevada. They were the first, so far as is known, to travel by land up the Pacific coast from San Francisco to the Columbia river.

Bridger, after some years spent as a trader, established Fort Bridger, on Black's Fork of Green river, which became one of the most famous of the western trading posts. He was in constant demand on official expeditions. For twenty years he was almost continuously engaged in this work, his services in the later exploration of the west by the government being invaluable. He was frequently consulted by army commanders in laying out their Indian war campaigns.

Late in life Bridger settled on a farm near Westport, Missouri, now a portion of Kansas City, where he died in July, 1881.



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"hat" and "sombbrero." While these two legitimate titles were interchangeable throughout the west, the northwest leaned toward "hat," the Southwest toward "sombbrero."

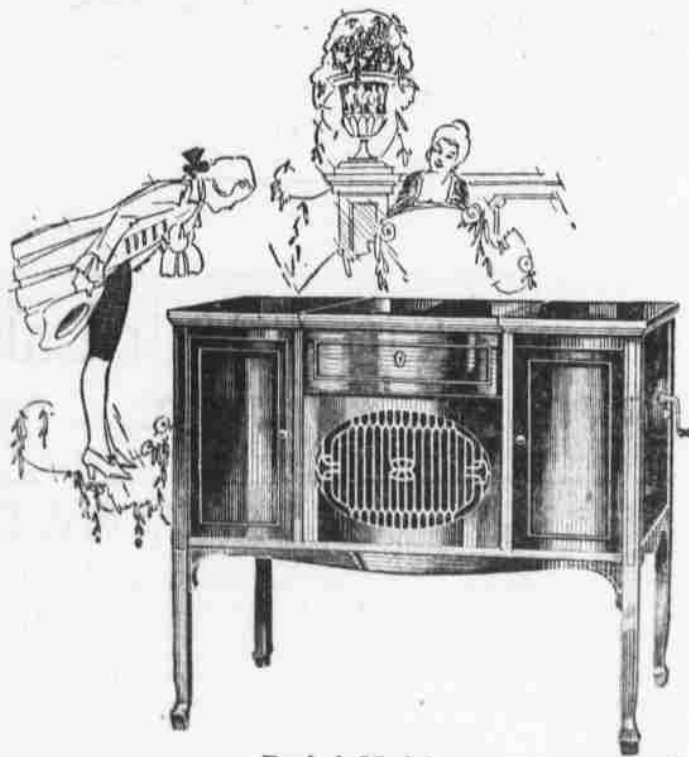
There were slang names other than the one just mentioned, but none that

had more than infrequent usage. These other names included "lid," "war-bonnet," "donk cover," "hair case," and a host of like inventions. Southwesterners often wore, in lieu of the hat already described, the real sombrero of Mexico, with its high

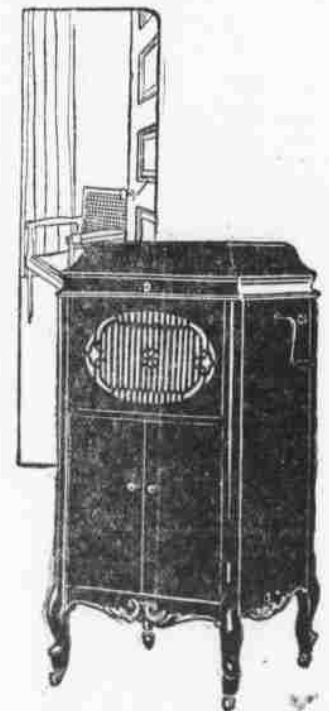
crown either conical or cylindrical, its brim saucer-shaped, and its shaggy surface of plush, frequently embroidered with gold or silver thread. No Northwesterner ventured, while in his home country, to "chuck the Rio" to the extent of such a head-gear.

Most of these sombreros, though reaching the American wearer by the route of importation from Mexico, had been made in Philadelphia by the very manufacturer who is mentioned

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