

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

(Continued from page 2.)

above. Along the Mexican border, some men, principally "Graseros," wore the huge straw hats of Mexico; but these head coverings were not often assumed by Americans, for there was a suggestion of peonage in the straw.

Many punchers had such vanity as to their hats that the makers gave, in the so-called "feather-weight" quality, a felt far better than that used in the shapes offered to city folk, a felt so costly that only ranchmen would pay its price, and thus they alone made use of it. Not infrequently a puncher spent from two to six months' wages for his hat or sombrero and its ornamental belt.

These hats and sombreros, while by Western classification "soft hats," should not be confused with the un-stiffened, cheap felt hats worn by city dwellers; for these latter head coverings, though admittedly "soft," were subject to the contemptuous accusations of being mere "wool hats." Furthermore the Range knew that the city-dwellers were also "hard" or "hard-boiled" hats, subdivided into the two classes of, first, "dierly" or "pet" and second, "plug" or "stove-pipe," but no "hard hat" attempted, unless accompanied by a tenderfoot, to appear within the cattle country.

The handkerchief which encircled every cowboy's neck was intended as a mask for occasional use, and not as an article of dress.

The handkerchief, diagonally folded and with its two thus most widely separated corners fastened together by a square knot, ordinarily hung loosely about the base of the wearer's neck; but, as the wearer rode in behind a bunch of moving stock, the still knotted handkerchief's broadest part was pulled up over the wearer's mouth and nose. The mask thus formed eliminated the otherwise suffocating dust and made breathing possible. It offered relatively like protection against stinging sleet and freezing wind.

The cowboy did not dare risk being without this vitally necessary mask when need for it should come, and so he ever kept it on the safest peg he knew; under his chin.

In color and material the handkerchief, though sometimes of silk, usual-

ly was of red bandanna cotton, of red not because the puncher affirmatively demanded it, but because ordinarily that was the only color other than white obtainable from the local shopkeepers. The shopping cowboy was very tolerant save in his selection of hats, chaps, spurs, guns, ropes and saddles.

The handkerchief-selling shopkeeper in his own turn had followed the line of least resistance; and, being subject to no special demand for green, blue, or whatever, had forborne to make among the manufacturers a hunt for varied colors, and had contented himself with an article which he readily could obtain, the red bandanna.

Thanks to the requirements of the Southern West, this article constantly was manufactured. Thus the "Aunt Dinah" of the Southern kitchens unwittingly identified as to what the cowboy of the West should hang around his neck.

A relatively similar reason, fostered the Texan herald's star upon the saddles, chaps, and boots of many of the Northwesterners. The Texans with their intense state pride, asked for this adornment, and the manufacturers, putting it on the "Texan" accoutrements, standardized output, and started the equipment of almost everybody who did not object.

White handkerchiefs were eschewed by many punchers, because these handkerchiefs, when clean, reflected light; and thus sometimes, upon the range, called attention to their wearers when the latter wished to avoid notice by other people or by animals. Moreover white soon so suffered from dust as to appear unpleasantly soiled.

There was nothing peculiar about the shirt beyond that it was always cotton or wool, always was collarless and starchless (not "holed," "billed," or "died-faced"); and, though of any checked or striped design or solid color, almost never was red. That latter tone was reputed to go badly among the cattle, and, in any event, belonged to the miners. Furthermore, the puncher's taste in colors was in the main quite subdued.

Collars were unknown. A white one starched would have wrecked its wearer's social position. This denying the ranchman a white collar did not

withhold it from such of the professional gamblers as cared to wear it. A "turn-down collar" or celluloid (of paper in the early years), provided the wearer's handkerchief and salivary glands occasionally functioned in unison, would make the gambler showily immaculate, and so would advertise apparent prosperity.

Each of the cowboy's shirt-sleeves customarily was drawn in above the elbow by a garter, which was of either twisted wire or of elastic webbing, and frequently, and as an event to the general demureness of sartorial tone, was brightly colored, crude shades of pink or blue being much in favor.

Nor was there anything distinctive about the coat and trousers, which were woolen and, in cut, of the sack-out variety; then, as now, the usual garb of American men, unless one regards as distinctive the fact that almost universally these garments were sombre in hue.

Possibly this predilection for black and darkest shades found its source in Texas and Missouri, where the frock coat, string tie and slouch hat of the Southern "colonel" had ever been of black.

However, the cowboy sometimes substituted for his woolen coat one of similar cut, but made of either brown canvas or black or brown leather.

Denim overalls were considered beneath the dignity of riders, and were left to wearing by the farmers, the town-folk, and the subordinate employees of the ranches. The puncher's trousers, universally called "pants," stayed in place largely through luck, because the puncher both avoided "galluses," the suspender of the tenderfoot, as tending to bind the shoulders, and also was wary of supporting belts, as the latter, if drawn at all tightly, were conducive to hernia when one's horse was pitching. However, if the puncher wore of Mexican blood, he would gird himself with a sash of red or green silk.

In the mending of rents the safety-pin often functioned in lieu of thread and needle.

The pistol's belt, wide and looped for extra cartridges, ever loosely sagged, and so threw the weapon's weight upon the thigh instead of placing strain upon the abdomen.

When possible the cowboy went

coatless, but he always wore a vest. The coat was attractive to ease of motion. Also it somewhat invited perspiration, and perspiration for a man condemned to remain out of doors day and night in a country of cold winds was uncomfortable, if not dangerous. In every day's life the vest was of ordinary, civilian type and usually was left unbuttoned. It was worn, not as a piece of clothing, but solely because its outside pockets gave handy storage not only to matches but also to "markings," which last-mentioned articles were cigarette papers and a bar of "Bull Durham" tobacco.

Mixed in with these necessities were, in all probability, a gold nugget, an Indian arrow-head, or an "old tush" or two. These "tushes," the canine teeth from the wapi's upper jaw, now widely known as insignia of a great secret order, were in the West of years ago equally well known as the most treasured jewels of the Indian squaw. Every cowboy acquired all the "tushes" he conveniently could, doing so usually with no purpose of ultimate trade with the Indians, but only because of a vague, boylike idea that somehow, some day, they might be useful. In reality, as he got them he gave them to Eastern souvenir hunters, as he also gave the nuggets and the arrow-heads.

This naive predilection for so-called "natural curiosities" went hand in hand with desire to benefit either science or the federal government; was shared, in this public spirited form, with the scouts and hunters, and worked for the inconvenience of the receiving clerks at the Smithsonian Institution. There flower, for years, to the doors of the latter's museum and from out of the West a steady stream of useless bones, horns, skins, crystals, pieces of wood, and other things enthusiastically started on their journey and most of them ultimately and properly landing on the scrap-heap at Washington.

Men would undergo great personal risks to obtain "fine specimens."

The prevalent desire to patronize "The Smithsonian" was exemplified in the experience of two Northwestern scouts who had the same beneficent attitude toward science as had the punchers.

The Crow Indians had "jumped" their reservation and were on the war-path. They were being trailed by Tazewell Woody and James Dewling, Woody riding a horse, Dewling a mule.

These scouts discovered an enormous bald eagle, which, feeding at a carcass was so gorged as to be helpless. The tremendous size of the bird suggested immediately that Washington was in great need of this fine specimen, so a heavy stick was brought down on the national emblem's neck, and the latter's immediate owner was then pronounced to be dead. The eagle's legs were lashed to the back of Dewling's saddle, while a throng held in place the folded wings of the hanging bird.

The men mounted, and forthwith a war party broke from cover and attacked them. The scouts spurred their mounts into a retreat, but were rapidly overhauled by the Indians, whose ponies were fleetlier than Dewling's mule. Meanwhile shots were flying.

Just as it began to look hopeless for the two whites, there happened simultaneously three things: First, a bullet struck the ground in front of the galloping mule, raised a flurry of dust, and caused the mule to spin around and to hurry toward the foe. Second, a bullet cut the thong which had bound the eagle's legs. Third, the eagle came to life, and, though with legs still fastened to the saddle, stood erect.

Then the charge completely reversed its direction and appearance. It had been to both whites and reds a hundred armed warriors chasing two helpless victims. Now it seemed to the reds a pursuing demon hastening to destroy a fleeing Indian tribe. What Woody witnessed was a screaming eagle with talons imbedded in the rump of a crazed mule, with wings outspread and beating the air, and with beak digging, amid the screams, into uncomfortable Dewling's back, while the mule rushed after the Indians, intermittently pausing to buck and bray, Dewling himself meanwhile shouting, cursing and shooting.

The matches in the cowboy's pocket, like all matches on the range, were in thin sheets like coarse toothed combs. They had small brown or blue heads that were slow to start a blaze, and, for some time after striking, merely bubbled and emitted strong fumes of sulphur. To obtain a light, the West lightened its trousers by raising its right knee, and then drew the match across the trouser's seat.

There has been described the vest of every day, but there were occasional days which were not like every day, the occasional days when the puncher went in state either to town or to call upon his lady-love. On these infrequent and important errands, he was fain to put on a waistcoat which was specially manufactured for the Western trade, and which, though normal in size and shape, was monumental in appearance. Plush or shaggy woolen material was prey to the dyer's brutality, and on the cowboy's mainly but innocent front the Aurora Borealis, and the artist's paint-box met their chromatic rival. A man of modest taste, and such were the majority of the punchers, was content with brown plush edged with wide, black braid. But what was such passive pleasure as compared with the bouncing gladness which another and more primitive being derived from a still well-remembered vest of brilliant purple checker-boarded in pink and green?

The overcoat was of canvas, light brown in color, with skirts to the knee, was blanket-lined and to make it wholly wind proof, commonly received an exterior coat of paint; which latter process often successfully invited the sketching of the owner's brand upon the freshly covered surface.

All men donned gloves in cold weather; this, of course to keep the hands warm. In warm weather most men wore gloves when roping, this to prevent burns or blisters from the burning heat, and wore them also when riding bucking horses, this to avoid manual injury. But some men, regardless of temperature or the nature of their work, wore gloves all the



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