

Corral Dust

POTOMAC CORRAL OF THE WESTERNERS

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Stetson - Good To The Last Drip

Western hats as depicted by various artists in past issues of *Corral Dust*





Erin Russell

CORRAL DUST
is a publication of
The Potomac Corral of
Westerners International

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Corral Dust is printed and distributed from P.O. Box 441110, Fort Washington, MD 20749 to all Corral members and selected Western history organizations.

Corral membership is open to anyone interested in Western lore. Dues for area residents are \$15.00 single and \$20.00 family. Corresponding members dues are \$5.00 a year.

1999-2000 - A successful season of Western Programs for the Potomac Corral

The season really began with the final spring meeting in May when the Jeff Dykes award was presented to Robert M. Kvasnicka for his service with the National Archives where he was responsible for the western history program. While Kvasnicka has published significant materials on western history, the award was as much in recognition of the assistance and guidance he has provided to a multitude of western history historians.

In September retiring sheriff Dale L. Anderson presented a slide illustrated talk on the great western trail drives. The first great trail drive he described was by Ewing Young, a trapper who drove 800 head of cattle from Sacramento to Oregon in 1830, became the richest man in Oregon and when he died unexpectedly, a meeting to probate his estate ended in the organization of the Oregon Territory. His last great trail drive began in 1929 when a Lapplander drove 3000 head of reindeer from the Seward Peninsula to the MacKinzie Delta of Canada over a five-year period.

In October the Corral was presented with Rod Ross's report on the use of the Serial Set, a collection of House and Senate reports and documents beginning in 1817 and containing all of the great 19th century Federally sponsored exploratory surveys of the West.

In November Carlton Bonilla compared the early fur trapper rendezvous with the Sturgis Motorcycle Rallies of today. The presentation was based on his article which won the WWA Spur Award for Best Western Short Nonfiction.

In December our Sheriff, Herman Viola, presented a slide show about the young indian artists imprisoned in the St Augustine, Florida, Spanish fort between 1875 and 1878. The art they generated in sketchbooks became the basis for Dr. Viola's book, *Warrior Artists*.

In February Allison Fuss, Assistant professor of History, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, presented a synopsis of her Ph.D. thesis on the growth of rodeo among the Lakota Indians.

In March we received the long delayed presentation by Bill Bell on his early days in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where he participated in rodeos and an early reenactment of the pony express rides. He showed photos of his participation in these events and in the last days of the U.S. Cavalry. The 85-year-old Bell's previous presentation on the last days of the horse cavalry won second prize in Westerners International's Philip A. Danielson competition in 1999.

Our April presentation was by William Creech of the National Archives, who discussed a review of WPA records and studies on grazing in western lands.

In May, 2000 our Jeff Dykes Award was presented to Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow, another worthy recipient of this significant award.

All-in-all, the Potomac Corral had a very successful season and was able to generate increased interest in younger historians as well as the usual fine collection of older historians and Western history buffs.

The Jeff Dykes Award

The Jeff C. Dykes Award of the Potomac Corral of the Westerners is presented annually in May to a person or persons determined by a committee appointed by the Sheriff to have made significant contributions to the understanding and promotion of Western Affairs.

A contribution is defined as a book, article or other publication, museum exhibit or extraordinary political, social or professional service. The term “Western Affairs” is considered to embrace matters concerning the history, heritage, environment, art, literature or politics of the American West.

The winner (or winners) will receive a plaque with fitting inscription and a \$ 100.00 check, presented on behalf of the members of the Potomac Corral.

JEFF C. DYKES AWARD RECIPIENTS

- 1990 - William Gardner Bell.
- 1991 - Jack Ewers
- 1992 - Paul J. Scheips
- 1993 - Wayne Rasmussen
- 1994 - Herbert M. Hart
- 1995 - Frank Goodwyn
- 1996 - Herman Viola
- 1997 - Robert M. Utley
- 1998 - Paul Francis Prucha
- 1999 - Robert M. Kvasnicka
- 2000 - Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow

THE 1999 POTOMAC CORRAL JEFF DYKES AWARD - Robert M. Kvasnicka

The 1999 recipient of the Jeff Dykes Memorial Award was long-time Potomac Corral member Robert M. Kvasnicka. For nearly forty years, Bob has been a specialist on records relating to the American West at the National Archives where he has been responsible for some of the agency’s most significant publications on western history. Indeed, few of today’s western historians are not in his debt. Bob has met them all and he shared with the Potomac Corral some insights about them and their work. As the senior western historian at the National Archives, Bob has undertaken the challenge of compiling a multi-volume guide to federal records about the Trans Mississippi West. His project followed the monumental Territorial Papers project begun by Clarence



Deputy Sheriff Herman Viola (left) presents the Jeff Dykes Award check to Robert Kvasnicka at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., May 1999

Carter and continued by former corral member John Porter Bloom. Among Bob’s publications are *Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox* (Howard University Press, 1976) and *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824-1977* (University of Nebraska Press, 1979). The Potomac Corral of Westerners International takes great pride in thanking this distinguished archivist for a job well done.

REFLECTIONS ON AN ARCHIVAL CAREER AND RELATED TRIVIA Remarks by Robert M. Kvasnicka at the 1999 Jeff Dykes Award Dinner

I have been a member of the Potomac Corral for many years, but I seldom attend the meetings. However, I was here last year when Father Prucha accepted the Jeff Dykes award. The notion that I might someday receive this award never crossed my mind, so the news that I was this year’s recipient came as a real shock to say the least. I want to thank the Corral for this honor and for recognizing, through me, the roll archivists play in writing history. As you know, if historians seek to go beyond secondary sources, and many don’t these days, they more than likely have to deal with archivists at some point in their research.

Everyone in this group probably knows that the National Archives and Records Administration is the custodian of the permanently valuable records of the Fed-

eral Government. When I accepted a job at the National Archives in 1957, however, I had only a vague idea of the agency's mission and no real idea of what the job entailed. My first task on the new job was to perfect the arrangement of the central files of the Bureau of Mines, Department of Interior and to see that they were boxed properly, so my connection with records relating to the American West began almost immediately. Through on the job training I learned that the Archives staff is responsible for acquiring the records from government agencies, for preserving them for posterity, and for making them available to researchers who are seeking information on a multitude of subjects. My years at the Archives have been primarily spent serving researchers, either directly as a reference archivist, or indirectly, as a project archivist producing finding aids that enable researchers to identify records they need to examine. After a three-year stint in the Army from 1958 to 1961, I came back to the National Archives, where I once again worked with the records of the Department of the Interior and the New Deal, specializing in the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Work Projects Administration, more commonly known as the WPA. In 1988 I was asked to move to the editorial office to shepherd production of the guides to Congressional records which were being compiled for the bicentennial of Congress in 1989. Rod Ross was one of the many staff members who labored with me on that project. When the guides were completed I was given the opportunity to compile the Trans-Mississippi West guide series. I've been working on that project for the last 10 years.

It's been suggested that I relate stories about the people I've worked with, but I'll limit that to just a couple of tales. I'll start with an "it's a small world" story -- namely a recap of the circumstances surrounding my introduction to Herman in summer of 1967. It's easy to remember the year because that was the year I got married and the wedding actually plays a small roll in the story. When Herman was hired by the National Archives he was still busy working on his biography of Thomas L. McKenney, the first superintendent of Indian Affairs. McKenney was appointed to the job by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun. It so happened that Mary--my wife to be--was an assistant to the editor of the John C. Calhoun papers. When Mary returned to South Carolina to prepare for our wedding she informed me that the editor had received a letter from Herman who was re-

questing information about materials relating to McKenney. Herman mentioned that he had just recently been hired by the National Archives to be the specialist for the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Since I had been working with the records several years by that time, Mary was only too happy to report that there soon would be a new gun in town. One of my colleagues was not amused by the news. Ed Hill had written the two-volume inventory of the records of the Bureau--one of the best finding aids ever produced by the National Archives--and he was the acknowledged specialist in the Bureau's records. So we were all waiting--not exactly with open arms--for Herman's arrival. You'll have to ask Herman what kind of reception he got--frankly I don't remember. But we became friends and eventually both Herman and Ed Hill left the Branch. Herman went on to become the first editor of *Prologue, the Journal of the National Archives*. Ed Hill went on to produce *The American Indian*, an excellent one volume guide to relevant records in all record groups in the National Archives. And I was left as the specialist in the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Since most people here know Father Prucha I'll tell you a story that involves him. As you might expect, he's a very careful researcher who takes very detailed notes. He spent a good part of one summer sitting in the Old Branch research room filling up one note card after another. Other researchers came, looked at records, ordered copies, and left. When I asked him why he didn't order photocopies--this was at a time when even Jesuits could afford them--he explained that people who used photocopies had to do their research twice: once to locate the document and a second time to extract the information from the photocopy. He preferred to save time by taking notes directly from the original records. Not too long after our conversation, he took advantage of my absence to have an extremely long report copied. When he placed his order he asked the staff member who did the work not to tell me he was having the report reproduced. Needless to say, my co-worker squealed.

In 1972 when the Red Power movement was going strong, the National Archives held a conference on research in the history of Indian-white relations. The program focused primarily on resources for Indian historical research at the National Archives and elsewhere. Our choice of Father Prucha to present the opening address generated some unexpected controversy. He was

considered to be too pro-Government by some of our Indian invitees, and one of our Indian speakers withdrew in protest. Nevertheless, we had capacity attendance and many of those who came were Indians. A highlight of the conference was the evening reception held in the Castle building of the Smithsonian Institution. It was a lavish affair in impressive surroundings. During the evening one Indian scholar came up to me and said she didn't think much of the conference program, but we sure did know how to throw a great party.

Regardless of the perceived quality of the program, it presented many well known figures in the field of Indian and military studies. In addition to Father Prucha the speakers included William Hagan, Robert Athearn, Robert Utley, Donald Berthrong, John Ewers, Robert Berkhofer, Henry Fritz, Loring Priest, Roy Meyer, Mary Young, Thurman Wilkins, Lawrence Kelly, Alvin Josephy, Jr., Darcy McNickle, and Louis R. Bruce, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Younger historians included David Baird, Kenneth Philip, Richard Ellis and Herman Viola. Also on the program was Angie Debo, who spoke on major Indian record collections in Oklahoma. Meeting her was one of the real highlights of my career. Although she was well into her 80's at the time, she was busy writing her biography of Geronimo. After she returned to Oklahoma we corresponded about records concerning the young Apaches who attended Carlisle Indian School. When the book came out, she wrote to me apologizing profusely for the fact that my surname was misspelled in the acknowledgements. I assured her that it wasn't the first time, and it wouldn't be the last. And it wasn't, of course. My surname has been misspelled in numerous ways and mispronounced in even more. In 1992, however, a new error was introduced. My name was incorrect on the certificate I received for 35 years of government service. Curiously enough my last name was spelled correctly but my middle initial was wrong. The certificate reads Robert C. instead of Robert M.

In the 1930's Angie Debo worked for the WPA's Federal Writers' Project in Oklahoma. Her unvarnished account of Oklahoma's history, which was to be included in the Oklahoma State Guide, offended some State politicians and it was rejected for a less frank version. Hopefully her experience was unique for the WPA State guides are a great source of obscure facts for western historians. I don't know how many of you are familiar with the Guides, but a testament to their value is the fact that

many of them have been reprinted in recent years. I have found the tour sections of the guides extremely useful in identifying sites, buildings, and lesser known historical figures. Although publications of the Work Projects Administration and its predecessor, the Works Progress Administration, might seem an unlikely source of material for a western historian, considerable *information of value* to State and local historians throughout the country can be found in the various guides produced by the Federal Writers' Project. The introductory materials found in the inventories of State and Federal records produced by the Historical Records Survey and the Survey of Federal Archives are also a good source of information. These publications are available at large research libraries, of course, but the records of the WPA in the National Archives also *contain unpublished* materials that western historians will find of interest. The records of the Federal Writers' Project, for example, include an incomplete manuscript titled "History of Grazing" and background materials for 15 of 17 western States. The chapters for Idaho and Nevada are missing from the records in the National Archives, but it is possible that they are included in the copy in the Library of Congress.

Another seemingly unlikely source of western lore, are the records of the WPA's Federal Theatre Project. Nevertheless, the National Archives holds about 2 1/2 feet of research documents assembled by the Research Department of the Federal Theatre Project of Oklahoma. They are chiefly transcripts of stories of Indians, cowboys, outlaws, and pioneers, based on interviews and responses to questionnaires. Some files are relatively extensive. Cherokee materials, for example, cover such subjects as origin stories, the 1785 treaty, old Settlers removal, the Trail of Tears, early settlements, tribal laws, politics, missions, agencies, schools, and tribal members John Ross, Richard Boudinot, Stand Watie, and Will Rogers. Materials on similar subjects are found for the Choctaws. Pioneer files include interviews with women whose reminiscences provide details of life during the Territorial period. Outlaw files include information about such figures as Sam Bass, Ned Christie, Jesse and Frank James, Belle Starr, and members of outlaw gangs. Found in this group, but probably misfiled, is a file on Buffalo Bill Cody, although he might qualify as a con man.

It would be nice to tell you that all of my experiences with researchers were pleasant, but that's not the

case. One of the most obnoxious researchers I ever dealt with spent an entire summer working with the records of the Federal Writers' project. He was a student at a prestigious eastern university, and his dissertation was an administrative history of the project. He had never worked with the records, but he came in and proceeded to tell me about them, what they should contain, and how I should go about bringing them to him. Not only was his personality abrasive, but his personal hygiene left much to be desired. By the time the summer was over people in the central research room were giving him a wide berth. Some years later his dissertation was published. It actually was a pretty good book, and he gave me a very nice acknowledgement, one I can say I really earned.

My major foray into outside publishing was *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824-1977*, which Herman and I co-edited. The book consisted of biographical sketches of 43 commissioners written by 34 contributors and it received limited but good reviews. Now it's my understanding that most authors are unhappy with the amount of publicity the publisher gives their book and Herman and I were no exceptions. And as it turns out we were right to be concerned. A few years after the book was published I attended the Western History Association meeting in St. Paul. On the street outside the conference hotel I overheard two conference participants talking about the need for a book on the Commissioners of Indian Affairs. The man who was interested in doing the book suggested the same approach Herman and I had taken, multiple contributors doing the individual sketches. The other man, who worked for a publisher, agreed that it was a good idea. At that point I interrupted and told them that such a book was already available and that it could be seen at the University of Nebraska Press display. The publisher's representative sort of gulped and looked embarrassed. Seems he worked for the University of Nebraska Press and wasn't aware that the book existed.

These days I'm describing the records of the Washington office of the General Land Office. It will be the third volume of the guide to records of the Interior Department relating to the trans-Mississippi West during the territorial period. The National Archives undertook the publication of the Trans-Mississippi West guides as an alternative to the Territorial Papers project, which had become too costly to continue. The Trans-Mississippi

West guides instead of offering transcripts of individual documents, provide descriptions of the records of various government agencies that contain information about the contiguous western States during the period 1804-1912. This concept allows us to provide information about records concerning California, Texas, and Indian Territory, areas that did not pass through the formal Territorial stage prior to statehood and would not have been covered by the Territorial Papers project. The record descriptions in the guides vary as to levels of detail, ranging from general summaries of content to lists of individual file titles. Five volumes of the guide have been published so far. These cover the records of component agencies of the State Department, the Justice Department, and the Agriculture Department, and some agencies of the Interior Department.

I like to begin each record group chapter with an epigraph, something that sets this guide apart from other finding aids that the National Archives has produced. Some of these documents I selected for this purpose comment on the mission of the agency, some are ironic, given the benefit of hindsight, and some are just plain amusing. I thought I'd share a few of them with you tonight. Anyone who has seen pictures of traffic jams in our national parks or actually been involved in one will appreciate the following memo dated March 12, 1909:

"The roads in the Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, Yosemite and Sequoia in California, and Crater Lake in Oregon, are of such character and are used to such an extent by persons on horseback and in vehicles to which horses are attached, that to permit them to be used by automobiles would prove dangerous to life and limb."

A report on "County Roads and Road Laws," printed in the 1868 Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture yielded the following from an enthusiastic homer in Texas:

P. T. Tannehill, of Henderson County, Texas, says: "Our roads are not worked, the wagoner making his own way. Soil remarkably favorable for roads. No macadamizing material in the State, *none needed*. Road laws in this magnificent State, like other laws, seldom executed. No turnpikes; don't need them. Roads last until they become *too miry*, when wagoners cut a new one. Texas can boast of the best roads, with the least work, of any State in or out of the Union. Our citizens generally regard work as *unconstitutional*."

Perhaps my favorite, however, is this letter to Brig. Gen. A.H. Terry, *Commanding, Department of Dakota*, which heads the chapter on the records of the Office of the Paymaster General: Lt. Colonel Custer during his expedition last summer sent to your headquarters a full and lengthy report by telegraph, involving an expense of several hundred dollars. This charge was reluctantly passed by this office and the 2nd Auditor of the Treasury.

“Will you now permit me to suggest that instructions be given Col Custer in his projected expedition this summer, to send you only concise telegraphic reports, reserving his full report to send you by mail.” The letter is dated March 25, 1876. Needless to say, Custer didn’t report on his summer campaign that year.

Although I enjoy the work I’m doing now, I do miss working with the researchers even though there have been a good many unusual ones, like the woman who claimed to be a direct descendant of the Virgin Mary and the man who wanted copies of all the records created before Noah’s flood. I especially miss the contact with the western historians and anthropologists. Unlike the New Deal historians who generally work on one subject and go on to projects in other areas, the western history researchers have no problem finding new topics in the field. Consequently, many of them return to the Archives periodically and over the years a few of them, particularly Father Prucha, Tom Hagan, Donald Parman, and Lawrence Kelly, have become good friends. In addition to the people I’ve already mentioned I’ve had the pleasure of assisting many other historians and anthropologists including Alexander Adams, Gary Anderson, Ed Bearss, Joseph Cash, Donald Chaput, James Clifton, David Edmunds, Jerome Greene, Laurence Hauptman, Herb Hoover, Harry Kelsey, Michael Lawson, Craig Miner, Fred Nicklason, Floyd O’Neill, Patricia Ourada, Gary Roberts, Ronald Satz, Margaret and Frank Sasz, Robert Trennert, Lyman Tyler, William Unrau, and Wilcomb Washburn. In addition, I’ve had the opportunity of working with many good archivists, some of whom you may have met, such as George Chalou, Dale Floyd, Mike Musick, our Civil War specialist, and Tim Wehrkamp; some of whom are current Corral members, namely Elaine Everly, Ralph Ehrenberg, and Rod Ross; and former Corral members, Sara Jackson, John Porter Bloom, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. During the past eight years I’ve had the pleasure of working closely

with Anne Bruner Eales, who spoke to you a few months ago about her book *Army Wives on the American Frontier*. She has formatted camera ready copy for all of my published guides, and the volumes have benefited greatly from her editorial skills as well as her technical expertise.

All in all, it’s been a long and interesting career, and it’s not over yet.

The Jeff Dykes Award for 2000

Joseph Medicine Crow is a unique individual by anyone’s standards. The grandson of Custer scout, White Man Runs Him, he is the first member of the Crow Indian Tribe to graduate from college -- Bacone -- and the first to obtain a Master’s Degree (in anthropology from the University of Southern California). He was working on



Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow

his doctorate when World War II interrupted his studies. Although offered a commission, he refused on grounds that a warrior must first prove himself in battle before becoming a leader of men. It was, he said, “the worst mistake I ever made because the U.S. Army does not operate on the principles of the Crow tribe and I never got another chance at a commission.” Nonetheless, Private Medicine Crow went on to distinguish himself on the battlefields of Europe, where he counted coup on the enemy and even captured a herd of fine German horses. Because of his war deeds, Crow elders made him an honorary chief upon his return from Germany. Yet, it is his gift as a storyteller and carrier of his people’s oral history that makes him such a worthy recipient of the Potomac Corral’s Jeff Dykes Award.

Dr. Medicine Crow was born in Lodge Grass, Montana, in 1913. He was raised by his grandparents, who knew life as Plains Indians before the reservation days. From them, he acquired training in Crow ways and customs. After the war, he worked for the tribe in various capacities, but always he collected stories from Crow, Cheyenne, and Lakota veterans of the Indian wars.

In 1996, the University of Montana awarded him an honorary doctorate. A key advisor to the National Museum of the American Indian, he is also the author of *From the Heart of the Crow Country*, which is about to be reprinted by the University of Nebraska Press.

Who Was Jeff Dykes?

(Jeff Dykes: Living Legend - by Robert M. Utley, January 1989 *Buckskin Bulletin*)

Anyone born at the dawn of the twentieth century and now approaching a vigorous ninetieth birthday enjoys a commanding lead over competitors for the distinction of living legend. The lead becomes unbeatable when the legend springs from a dual career of both vocational and avocational excellence and eminence. Both in his chosen profession and his sparetime pursuits, Jefferson C. Dykes left an indelible mark on the world.

For those concerned with the heritage of the American West, Jeff Dykes' claim to legendry rests on his stature as bookman-bibliographer, collector, and dealer-combined with his constructive contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the Westerners movement. But this is his avocation. For his vocation he is equally well known as a professional scientist and a professional bureaucrat. With a foot planted firmly in two worlds, with a record of uncommon achievement in both, Jeff Dykes looks back on a seventy-year career of rare distinction.

Despite nearly half a century in the national capital, Jeff never lost his Texas roots. Born in Dallas on July 20, 1900, he attended high school there before moving on to Texas A&M. That institution awarded him a degree in vocational agriculture in 1921, and to this day it retains a firm grip on his loyalty and affection. Texas A&M has also showered its distinguished alumnus with well-deserved honors.

Dyke's professional destinies lay with the federal Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agri-

culture. He joined SCS in 1935, the year it was organized. Based in Fort Worth, he passed his early years traveling his four-state region advancing the scientific principles that, in the Depression ridden, drought-ravaged 1930s, had led to the creation of SCS. He also devoted himself to family concerns -- wife Martha, whom he married in 1923, and daughter Martha Ann ("Little Sug"), born in 1927.

As with many civil servants who demonstrate superior merit, Jeff's call to Washington was inevitable. It came in 1942, and until his retirement in 1965 he served ably as Deputy Administrator in charge of the SCS Field Service.

I first met Jeff Dykes early in 1955, as the Potomac Westerners were gearing up for a long and distinguished history in the national capital.

(Who has a picture of Jeff?)

Jeff Dykes

Jeff had been one of the original dozen who gathered for lunch at the Federal Trade Commission on December 16, 1954, to lay the groundwork for the Potomac Corral. Two other dedicated westernists from the SCS accompanied him, Bill Allred and Fred Renner. Steered by the experienced Leland Case, that meeting gave birth to the Potomac Corral.

My memories of Jeff and his dominating influence are vivid. He dominated physically of course: that big frame topped by an expressive, kindly face loomed over every gathering in the second-floor dining room of the Cosmos Club. He dominated by personality: his enthusiasm, sociability, knowledge, and good sense pervaded

every meeting. And he dominated simply by his dedication to the Westerners and all the organization stood for. His willingness to devote time, thought, and effort made him a faithful communicant, a regular contributor to publications, and in 1961 the Sheriff himself.

The Dykes influence radiated beyond the Potomac Corral to other Westerners throughout the nation, who kept abreast of western literature through his book-reviewing activities. Also, he often appeared to champion the Westerners interest at the annual meetings of the Western History Association.

Jeff's contributions to the Westerners movement are inseparable from his achievements as a bookman. He is a bookman in the broadest sense of the term. He collects books, searches tirelessly for books, buys and sells books, reviews books, and appraises books. Plainly, driving all these activities, he loves books.

Jeff's feelings toward his avocation are summed up in the title of a seventypage brochure he wrote in 1978: *I Had All the Fun: Some Recollections of a Book Collector*. One cannot read this reminiscence, published as a "Keepsake" by Texas A&M, without appreciating Jeff's love of books and the genuine fun he has had pursuing them over the span of half a century.

"I have decided to collect books about the Texas Rangers!" he wrote in the first entry of his newly launched bookman's diary, April 21, 1937. Soon, of course, his collecting interests spilled over into other Texan subjects and ultimately seeped into corners of the entire American West. His official travels, in the pre-jet era, often afforded layovers between trains that allowed him to explore book stores from Boston to Chicago to San Francisco. As friends and colleagues, he came to know the great book sellers of the forties, fifties, and sixties specializing in Western Americana. He launched his own book business, operating out of his suburban home in College Park, Maryland.

Jeff also wrote and published. He wrote mostly about books, but sometimes about the people and events contained between the covers of books. A 1981 bibliography of his publications lists sixteen books and twenty-three articles that he authored, four books that he edited, and fourteen more that he contributed. As I myself have good reason to appreciate, his work on Billy the Kid is a significant and lasting contribution. His *Billy the Kid: The Bibliography of a Legend*, published in 1952, remains the indispensable starting place for any-

one interested in the West's most famous outlaw. And his introduction to the 1954 edition of Pat Garrett's *Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*, still in print in its twelfth printing, promises to stand as a cornerstone of Kid literature for decades to come.

An achievement of breathtaking scope and influence sprang from Jeff's activities as one of the "Old Bookaroos." Early in January 1955, as the Potomac Westerners began to take shape, the SCS troika of Dykes, Allred, and Renner met at Jeff's home and organized the Old Bookaroos. From their pens, over the next two decades, flowed the most comprehensive and authoritative coverage of western books to be found anywhere. In the "Western Book Roundup," readers of *Corral Dust*, *True West*, *Frontier Times*, *Old West*, and *Arizona and the West* knew what books on western topics had been published and what three of the country's leading experts thought of them. Not the least of Jeff's claim to living legendry springs from his station as the last of that remarkable institution, the Old Bookaroos.

Jeff Dykes himself suggested the scope of his bookman's activity at the time of his retirement in 1965: "I had assembled a library of sixteen thousand items. I had learned about editions, condition, high spots, rarities, and personal and catalog buying, and had absorbed some of the tricks of the trade. I had appraised a ten-thousand volume library to the satisfaction of the owner and the buyer. I had compiled four catalogs for fellow dealers. I had written about five hundred reviews of western books for our column. I knew personally about as many book dealers as any collector in the country. I knew a number of collectors, writers, and illustrators scattered from coast to coast, and I had a published bibliography and numerous articles about my collections to my credit."

The summation testified to a truly impressive legacy of that first inauspicious diary entry of 1937 recording a resolution to collect books on the Texas Rangers. That legacy alone would have supported the seal of living legend. But a span of years approaching a quarter century lay before Jeff in 1965, hopelessly outdating his statistics and indisputably validating the crown and toga of living legend.

Jeff's library now enriches Texas A&M. Jeff's love of books remains the bedrock of his whole being, the force that shaped a living legend.

The Stetson Hat - An American Classic - Book Review

Freshly creased or crumpled, the cowboy hat is recognized around the world as a symbol of the American West. Vaqueros and Texans wore broad-brimmed felt hats long before John Batterson Stetson made his first trip to Colorado. The Spanish influence was so pervasive in the West that mail order catalogues as late as 1900 still referred to the hat of the “cow boy” as a sombrero. Felt hats were, and still are, made from the fine hair of beaver, rabbit, and other small mammals. The processed hair is compressed into felt and emerges as a cone-shaped hat body. Hatmakers use steam to mold the hat body over a form, or hat block. Early hats came in black and natural-fur colors, with white and color-dyed selections appearing on the market after 1920.

John B. Stetson’s family had manufactured hats in New Jersey since 1790, but when he established his shop in Philadelphia in 1865, Stetson had his eyes on the West. Cattlemen needed hats that would protect them from the elements and not fall apart.

Stetson supplied quality felt hats in popular styles. Though other hats were available in the West, Stetson was the largest producer and a genius at marketing his product. John B. Stetson did not invent the cowboy hat, but he set the standard and developed styles immortalized by rodeo and movie idols.

Many people are under the impression that a Stetson is a cowboy hat any cowboy hat - and just a cowboy hat. Still some people believe that Dyson and



An early Stetson - collectors item valued at \$500

Vax make Hoovers.

Stetson is the brand of hat started by John B. Stetson in 1865, and became the biggest manufacturer of all types of hats anywhere in the world.

Stetsons have been the Guv’nor of hats ever since. The first Stetson hat was, and still is, referred to as “The Boss of the Plains.”

But cowboy hats are just one chapter of the story. No Chicago Bluesman would be seen dead without his Stetson hat, although quite a few Chicago gangsters were. If you think that you have never seen Brando or Sinatra in a Stetson, look again. They were not just wearing hats - they were wearing hats by Stetson.

But when you see Stetson by “XYZ” for example, You’re not seeing a Stetson Hat, you’re seeing at best influence and emulation, or at worst copying or misinformation.

The name Stetson is a registered trademark owned by the John B. Stetson Company of U.S.A.. Calling anything other than a hat made under license from Stetson, “A Stetson” is incorrect. Selling a hat as a Stetson that isn’t one, is unlawful.

John B. Stetson was born in East Orange, New Jersey in 1830. His father, Stephen Stetson, was a successful hatter and taught his children the hatting trade. His family ran the No Name Hat Company in East Orange, established by Stephen in 1790 on



John Batterson Stetson (1830-1906)

Main Street. The company was known for its superior quality hats and “John B.” learned the trade well as a child. As one of the most junior of thirteen siblings, however, John B. was unlikely to inherit the family business his brothers Henry T. and Napoleon and nephew Henry continued to run in 1850.

John Stetson developed tuberculosis as a young man. He headed west to St. Joseph, Missouri, hoping to recover. His health was so precarious that he was rejected when he attempted to join the Union Army in the early 1860’s as the Civil War was heating up.

St. Joseph was little more than a trading post outfitting parties bound for Pike’s Peak and other points on the western frontier. Unable to leave town as a soldier, Stetson worked his way up to part owner of a brickyard on the banks of the Missouri River instead. When the river flooded and washed this business away, Stetson joined one of the groups headed west to Pike’s Peak seeking their fortunes mining for gold. During the 750 mile trek on foot, John B. recovered his health .

As the story goes, Stetson and his compatriots were sleeping rough, out under the stars. Occasionally they would sew together skins of animals they had killed, making crude shelters for rainy nights out on the open prairie. However, these untanned skins were worse than useless when the temperature rose the next morning. Seeking a less pungent form of waterproof shelter, Stetson used his felting skills to create waterproof tarps for himself and his partners.

To make the felt, Stetson would have had to first shave the fur off a number of animal skins. Once he had a pile of fur, he would have made a hunter’s bow from a hickory sapling and an animal skin thong. Following age-old techniques, he stirred the fur into a small, misty cloud. Drifting down in a fine, evenly distributed layer, Stetson gently blew a mouthful of water



“Boss of The Plains”

blanket.

Using this primitive felting technique; Stetson also fashioned a large, broad-brimmed, open-crowned, “picturesque,” modified sombrero for himself as additional shelter from the elements. As their travels continued, a cowboy is said to have spied Stetson and his unusual hat, rode up, tried the hat on for himself, and paid Stetson for it with a five dollar gold piece, riding off with the first Stetson western hat on his head. This was the original Boss of the Plains that would later become the cornerstone of Stetson’s Philadelphia hatting business.

One year searching for gold in the shadow of Pike’s Peak was enough for Stetson. In 1865, as the Civil War drew to a close, he returned east to Philadelphia to try his hand at the hat manufacturing trade he had been brought up on.



This style was popular in the 1920s - value \$500-700

over the fur to bind the fibers together.

When the fur mat was strong enough, Stetson rolled it up. Dipping the sheet of matted fur into a pot of boiling water, the mat shrank, pulling the fibers closer and more firmly together. When the process was finished, Stetson had a crude, water repellent felt

The city John Stetson returned east to was a major metropolis in 1865. It had many large, mechanized factories, a sizable labor force regularly augmented with a steady influx of immigrants, inner-city slums, numerous commuters, and expensive residential and shopping districts.’

Philadelphia was known as a hat manufacturing town. Just prior to the Civil War, the city could boast of manufacturing some of the best hats in white fur felt and high quality silk. According to 1860 Census figures, annual hat manufactures in the city of Philadelphia were valued at \$1,109,000.

Hats were being produced in Philadelphia for both domestic and foreign consumption. Many fashionable

shops within the city's limits sold hats produced in city factories. Stetson would face serious competition from previously established hatters. However, the hat manufacturing process itself had yet to be consolidated under one roof in a single, efficient operation at the time of Stetson's arrival. Workers tended to drift from plant to plant and town to town.

In 1865, Stetson rented a small room at Seventh and Callowhill Streets. With investment capital of \$60 loaned to him by his older sister, Louisa Stetson Larrick of Corwin, Ohio, he purchased his tools and fur, and took on two workers. Stetson's first hats were imitations of popular styles of the day. Their claim to fame was that they were lighter weight than most, a mere two ounces at a time when heavy felts called "iron" hats were the rule. Stetson wore his creations while traveling from one hat shop to another looking for sales. The results were less than stellar.

The competition in the mid-range city hat market proved to be highly competitive. Stetson soon realized that if he were to stay in business he would have to try something different. Of course, he had already made something different ... out west.

Texas cattlemen had become prosperous businessmen in the 1840's, driving as many as 200,000 long-horns over the Shawnee Trail to Missouri. Steamboats carried other herds across the Gulf of Mexico to New Orleans. When Civil War tore America apart the drives stopped, cattlemen went off to fight the Yankees, and unattended herds doubled in size. After four years of war, ranchers returned to find huge, feisty, unbranded herds ranging across the plains. Here was a serious business opportunity.

By 1867, the railroads reached as far west as Abilene, Kansas. Both railroad workers and Easterners were quickly supplied with cowboy-driven herds of Texas beef. In the early 1870s, railroads carried beef east and wealthy hunting parties west to slaughter buf-

falo herds, clearing the plains for additional steers. New rail lines continued westward and forts began to dot the landscape. Income levels out west were rising rapidly.

With the eastern hat market difficult at best, Stetson turned his attention to the westerners. He acquired lists of clothing and hat dealers in the west. Extending his credit to the limits, Stetson made a western hat for each southwestern dealer in the Boss of the Plains "B.O.P." style he had invented during the trek to Pike's

Peak. These hats were natural in color with four-inch crowns and brims; a plain strap was used for the band. Stetson sent each dealer a hat and a letter asking for an order of a dozen. Within two weeks orders began to come in. Some of the orders came with



Popular Stetson - lining which features the image "Last Drop from His Stetson"

cash, asking that their hats be delivered fastest. Stetson filled orders and sent out more sample hats with letters stating that prepaid orders would be filled first. While he was only making one style of hat, Stetson offered his "B.O.P." in different qualities ranging from one-grade material at five dollars apiece to extra fine nutria or pure beaver felt hats for thirty dollars each.

Stetson had made the right choice. Elbert Hubbard tells us that in "... less than a year after Stetson began to make the B.O.P hat he gave up Philadelphia local trade entirely, and in the interest of economy moved from the business district to 4th Street and Montgomery Avenue ... three miles out ... clear in the suburbs of the city." He purchased a three-story building, one hundred feet long and thirty feet wide.

By 1899, roughly 2800 retailers across America were selling Stetsons. While the hats were expensive to carry, merchants could rely on the fact that very few "dead stock" or shopworn hats would have to be sold at a reduced price. The hats arrived in good condition and apparently moved off the shelves quickly despite their high prices.

To supply these retailers, the company employed over 1200 workers in 1899. Hat production was estimated at over 50,000 dozen hats for that year.



The editor's "Open Road" favored by American presidents 1940s to 1960s.

This model was called the "LBJ."

In the early years, Stetson designed and manufactured his own hats. He also opened up sales territories for himself, promoting and marketing his own hats. The 1872 catalogs may have been his first. In the early 1870's



This 1946 Royal Stetson the editor inherited from his father. It's still a great hat.

seasonal catalogs, Stetson displayed his dress hats. These catalogs were sent to his retailers, with whom Stetson maintained close contact.

Every manufacturing step necessary to produce Stetson's hats was completed within the walls of the growing factory compound. By 1899, eight manufacturing departments would be involved in Stetson hat production. Even equipment was to be produced on site. The machine shop was one of the earliest departments completed, building and maintaining the factory's machinery."

When John B. Stetson set up shop in Philadelphia, hatter's were not generally held in high regard. Nineteenth century, hatmakers were considered snobbish, lazy, and careless with their money. Hatmakers with their job-switching ways would be among the forefront of the union movement. Hatmakers were also known for their heavy drinking -- said to wet the dry throats they developed working in dusty factories.

None of these attributes would produce the well-made, quality hats Stetson had in mind for his company.

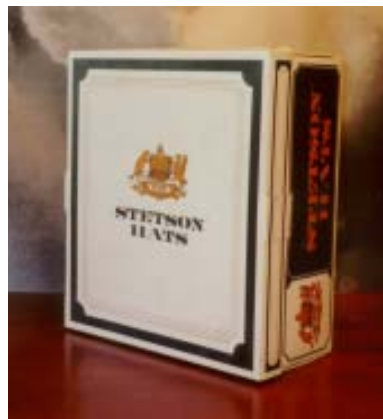
He needed workers who would stay on the job in his plant, who would remain sober, and who would be loyal to their employer. Stetson



Look inside to verify its a Stetson

took some very unusual steps for a nineteenth century manufacturer to ensure that his hatmakers would be different. Both employer and employee benefited from the relationship.

Stetson developed an entire community in the lower Kensington district of Philadelphia where his factory was built. The company quickly became more than a source of employment for immigrant workers; for workers and their family members Stetson became a way of life, and the surrounding neighborhood row



Stetson hat boxes are collectors items

houses acted as a company town. During this period of self-made industrialist millionaires, owners set the rules for life both in and outside of their plants.

Stetson followed suit. He took a paternalistic interest in the welfare of his employees, initiating a variety of company services from health care, education, and recreation, to banking, housing and religious services. Stetson was motivated by deep Baptist religious convictions, a strong philanthropic conscience, and a certainty that satisfied workers would be more productive. Employee benefits reduced labor turnover, attracted a higher caliber work force, and therefore increased the company's profits. As Roman Cybriwsky and Charles Hardy III wrote of Stetson's policies in 1981: "From the 1870s to the 1920s the firm functioned under a labor management system which in many ways was reminiscent of European feudalism."

Although John Stetson himself died in 1906, his company continued to prosper in the early twentieth century. By 1915 the 25-building factory covered 9 acres of ground, employed 5400 people: 4000 men and 1400 women, and was producing 3,336,000 hats annually, roughly 11,000 hats every day. These were supplied to 10,000 retail merchants and 150 wholesale distributors. Roughly 1125 of the retail merchants were in foreign countries that year, including Argentina, Europe, and South Africa.

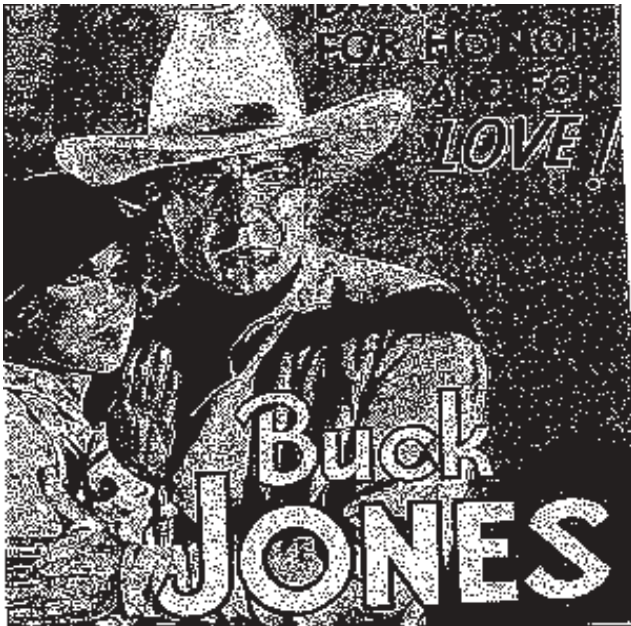
“No cheap, apologetic, sneakerino tightwad ever wore a Stetson-it wouldn’t fit him.”-- Elbert Hubbard, 1911

These are not hat-wearing times. Back in the 1870s when John B. Stetson started selling his hats in earnest, it was a different story. Nobody went bareheaded and almost anybody



*Praire Rose Henderson
female bronc rider at the
1915 Pendleton Roundup*

could tell you something about a man’s social status, attitudes, and beliefs, or a woman’s class, upbringing, and marital status, by the hat perched on that person’s head. Back then, wearing a Stetson spoke volumes. As Elbert Hubbard so subtly pointed out, these hats were expensive, high quality gear. From the moment Stetson started producing his trademark “Boss Of The Plains” western hat, he offered it at prices ranging from five to thirty dollars apiece depending on the quality of the felt involved. These were steep prices for the 1870’s. The cowboy riding the range wearing that Boss of the Plains or the city-slicker in a Stetson fedora let the world know he was doing well.



*An old, nearly white TOM MIX Stetson.
It features an old version of The Last
Drop From His Stetson advertising art
and an imprint in the black leather band
reading “Sheplers Inc. World’s largest Western Store.”
It is also marked “TOM MIX.”*



Familiar figures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who wore Stetsons included Colonel William R (“Buffalo Bill”) Cody, Calamity Jane, Will Rogers, and Annie Oakley.

Legend has it that General George A. Custer rode into the Battle of the Little Big Horn wearing his Stetson. The first American law-enforcement agency to adopt Stetson’s western hat as part of their uniform was the Texas Rangers, although many would follow. After the Boer War, British general R.S.S. BadenPowell ordered 10,000 Stetsons. The future leader of the Boy Scouts gave them to the South African police force. The Royal

Canadian Mounted Police, police forces in over thirty American states, members of the National Park Service, Border Patrol, Army and Air Force Drill and Rifle Teams, and the U.S. Marine Corps all followed suit, donning various Stetson styles.’

Many rodeo riders from Cheyenne and Calgary to Pendleton and Fort Worth wore Stetsons. Notable women starring in rodeos wore Stetsons as well. Ruth

Some 1899 to 1928 Stetson Styles



San An



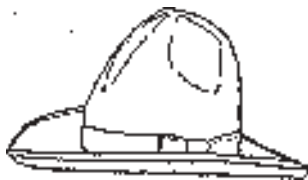
Lone Star



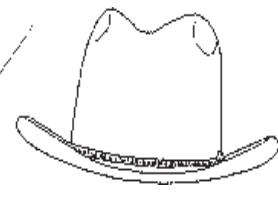
Surprise



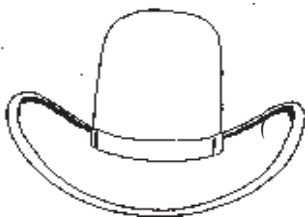
Big Four



Carlsbad



The Columbia



Montana Special
 (“Hoss”
 Cartwright in
 Bonanza)



*The Boss
 of the Plains*



The Alaska



The Dakota

Roach, a favorite on the rodeo circuit from c. 1914-1927, wore a high crowned Stetson western hat. Faye Johnson Blesing was a headliner with the Madison Square Garden Championship Rodeo for seven years in the 1930s. Popular and beautiful, Blesing’s endorsement was sought by many manufacturers, including Stetson. The Stetson Company created a western hat for her with a “Faye Blesing Crease.” Blesing later went on to work in the movie industry as a stunt double.

Actors were some of the most visible Stetson wearers, including Tom Mix, Douglas Fairbanks, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and Dale Evans. More recently, John Wayne, Burt Reynolds, Dennis Weaver, and James Coburn wore them.

Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Johnson all preferred to wear the Stetson “Open Road,” a small, formal western Stetson. Officials of all sorts from mayors and presidents to princes and pontiffs have been given Stetson hats as gifts at one time or another. In 1981 it was reported that a ten-gallon Stetson had been given to Pope John Paul II.

Stetson hats presented as gifts are highly prized collectibles. They carry a presentation label stamped into the leather of the sweatband which includes the name of the person receiving the hat. In a news photograph dated August 26, 1946, copies of such labels bearing the names of famous men were shown hanging on a wall of the Stetson printing department as trophies. The names of some of the notables on those presentation labels included Will Rogers, Winston Churchill, Fred Allen, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The labels read either “Made by John B. Stetson Company Especially For ...” or “Made by Stetson Especially For ...”.

Eventually the company stopped producing hats, but continues to license other hat manufacturers to use the Stetson name.

The family name has been carried on through the endowment of Stetson University, in Tampa, Florida, and primarily through the identification with quality hats, especially in western lore.

Source : *Stetson Hats 1865-1970 and the John B. Stetson Company*, Jeffery B. Snyder, Schiffer Publishing Company, 4880 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, PA 19310, 1997, ISBN 0-7643-0211-6

The American Cowboy Gallery, Don Reeves, Persimmon Hill, Autumn 1999, pp 17-27. Also Winter 1999 (National Cowboy Hall of Fame)



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Book Listings and Reviews:

From The Heart Of The Crow Country - The Crow Indians' Own Stories, by Joseph Medicine Crow. The Library of the American Indian, Herman J. Viola, Editor, Crown Paperbacks, New York, ISBN 0-517-88220-5, First Paperback Edition. The First edition was by Orion Books, c1992.

Joseph Medicine Crow, respected elder of the Crow tribe, draws on more than sixty years of story collecting to offer readers this extraordinary look at American Indian culture from the Indian point of view. Born in Lodge Grass, Montana, in 1913, he was raised by old grandparents who knew life before reservation days and from them he acquired training in Indian life and customs. Few native Americans alive today can provide such a compelling and authentic window into a way of life that ended more than a century ago.

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