

Terrell County Memorial December, 2016
Sanderson, Texas

Museum News

Get Along, Little Doggie

The Story of Branding in Terrell County



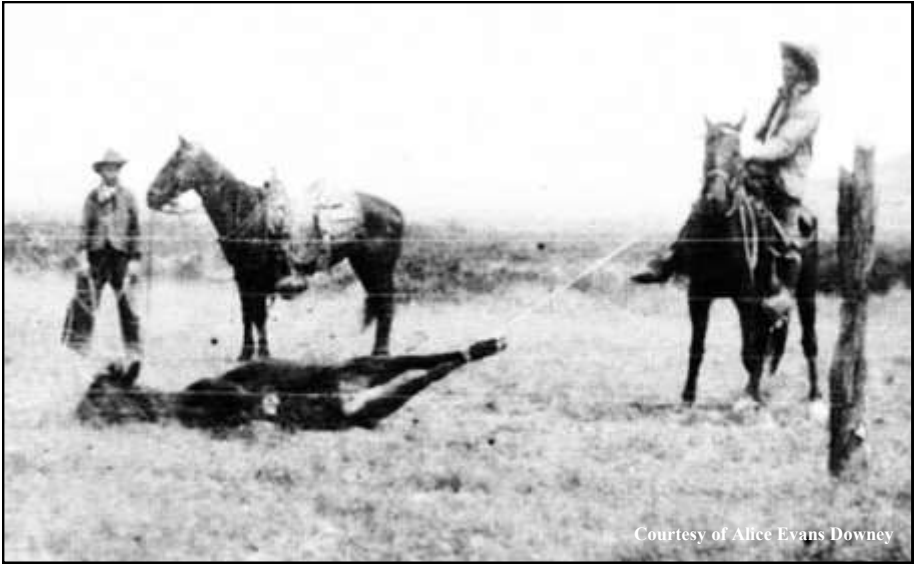
Courtesy of Alice Evans Downey

We live in one of the most romanticized areas of the world...the land of cowboys and vast cattle empires. Of course, those of us who live here realize that isn't all about the cows. Sheep and goats played a more prominent role in our local history than cattle, but Dryden, just 20 miles to the east, was the largest shipping point for cattle on the whole border. The huge cattle ranches in Mexico often drove their herds up to the Shafter Crossing of the Rio Grande and brought them up to the stockyards at Dryden for shipment to all parts of the world. The enormous Pecos Land and Cattle Company also called Dryden its headquarters and shipped thousands

of animals throughout the early years, so Terrell County could be called a cattleman's and sheepman's paradise. And, unlike other areas of the west, the two groups got along just fine.

But, as always, there were other problems for the livestock men. Rustling, or stealing livestock, was and is a big problem. Each animal represents a valuable investment and the best way to determine ownership of an animal is to examine its brand. All livestock men mark their animals with a personalized brand, which most animals receive early in their lives.

In this modern age, animals can have their ID information tattooed on the



Courtesy of Alice Evans Downey

inside of the mouth, put on metal or plastic clips fastened in the animal's ear or have electronic chips embedded under the skin containing the owner's information. Since the most valuable part of the sheep is its wool, sheep are given a paint brand that is administered after shearing, and has to be redone each year.

But, the time honored tradition of livestock men around the world is to use either a fire brand administered with a red hot iron, or in this day, a freeze brand using liquid nitrogen or some other super coolant. Freeze branding was instigated by animal rights activists who claimed it was less painful and therefore more humane than burning the brand into the flesh. Scientific tests have shown, however, that freeze branding is only slightly less painful than fire branding, and the pain lasts for a longer period.

However it is administered, the world of livestock brands is a fascinating place. The brand, in effect, becomes a

legal document of ownership, and to alter a brand is a highly punishable offence, like forging someone's name or passing counterfeit currency.

And, don't think that rustling is a thing of the past...it still occurs today.

Wayne Goodman, special ranger for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, says that rustling increases when the price of cattle goes up. When the price falls, rustling drops off. He advises cattlemen in ways to prevent cattle theft. He maintains that the best way to stop rustlers is to brand your cattle. Texas does not require that animals be branded, but Goodman finds that branded cattle in the possession of a non-owner is damning evidence of a crime. Branding also makes it easier to track down the original owners. Ear tags can be changed and chips can be reprogrammed. And, even brands can be altered, but the task is much more difficult.

Almost every state in the US maintains brand books at the county level to

keep track of brands in their district. In Texas, the County Clerk maintains the registration of brands and requires re-registration every five years.

There are four types of branding irons in use...blot irons, running irons, stamp irons and paint irons.






The blot iron is a flat piece of metal attached to an iron shaft and is used to "blot" out an existing brand. When branded animals were bought, the old brand was blotted out and the new owner's brand applied below. Blot irons are dangerous and cause a nasty wound that is slow in healing. Some animals have died at the use of blot irons. Later, the new buyer began to strike a slash over the old brand, then put the new brand below. The animal healed much faster using this method.








The second type of brand, the running iron, is illegal to use because they are the chief tool of rustlers. The end of the running iron is bent into an L-shape and the rustler literally can "write" with that end, enabling him to forge almost any brand. Other objects can be used as running irons, such as cinch rings and even fire poker.



Stamp irons are the third type and they have a design on the end, made up of letters and/or numbers or simple pictures. This is what we think of when someone says "branding iron." Before about 1880, ranchers used figures or simple pictures, almost exclusively. After that they began to use letters and

numbers, sometimes combined with figures.

The fourth kind of brand, the paint brand, is used when the hide or the hair or wool is too valuable to damage by burning. In this case, the brand is dipped into paint and stamped onto the freshly-shorn animal's side. This eventually wears off and must be reapplied yearly.

The history of brands in Terrell County is a very interesting one. Brands can be figural, letters or numbers, or a combination. The earliest brands registered in the area was J. D. Houston, NANA 1880; the Pecos Land and Cattle Company, Swinging H brand  1884; John Camp, KL 1885; Reuben Mussey, Flying V  1885; John H. Reagan,  1886; S. A. Purinton, P Bar  1886 and Independence Cattle Company, Cross L  1887.

Figural brands include Dull Brothers, anchor  ; D. Hart, heart  ; W. J. Carpenter, booger D  ; Gatlin and Anderson, pitchfork  ; Lee Grigsby, triangle  ; R. H. Murrah, star (for goats)  and F. W. Young, rocking chair Y .

Letters and numbers: R. C. Paston, RCE; Jesus Flores, JF; John McClain, 72; Charles Downie, Y F Bar ; Cecil Arvin, PAK; and Ed Counts, T E, .

Although branding may seem archaic and cruel, it has been and is a very necessary part of the ranching business in Terrell County.



References

- "Terrell County, Its Past, Its People", Alice Evans Downie. Sanderson, Texas: Terrell Co. Heritage Commission, 1978.
Wayne Goodman interview, KSWT FM 91.3, retrieved 10-29-15
"Four types of branding irons used in Texas,"The Seguin Gazette-Enterprise - Seguin, Texas, December 29, 1993, p10
"Livestock may feel less pain with freeze branding," Steve Hill, The Rio Grande Herald (Rio Grande City, Tex.), Thursday, June 27, 1991, p5
<http://northamericanauktioncompany.com/>

All newsletters can be found at <http://terrellmuseum.info/newsletters/>

Early Brands of Terrell County

Henry Mansfield, 1898	✓+H	John McClain, 1890	72	J.L. Tarver, 1907 (Z cross)	Z
H.J. Packenham, 1895	NIL ₁ H	Prosser and Brown, 1915 (D dot)	D•	W.T. Carpenter, 1888 ("Booger D")	79
F.W. Young, 1891 (rockingchair Y)	dy	Perferco Ochob, 1911 (running F)	9, CV	J.E. Carter, 1914	#
Nils S. Pierson, 1888	NOP	Big Canyon, 1905 (anchor and CV)	9, CV	Boyd Doak and John Camp, 1892 (pig pen)	7X
W.H. Lemons, 1890	V1	Joe Bean, 1905 (J bar 11)	11	Wm. Schupbach, 1907	7M
Hooper Bros., 1892 (cross 4 and T5)	H ₃ S	A.T. Folsom, 1905 (7NA)	74	Calvin Stansell, 1909	D6, 7Z
Manley Holmes, 1905 (TUP connected)	3H, U	Clark Bros., 1914 (seven L)	7L	Joe Wolff, 1906	CS
D.L. "Doc" Anderson, 1895 (circle bar M)	φ M	Monry Corder, 1915 (Diamond C and C Bar)	φ, C-	Y.C. Slover, 1906	Δ
	S	Horace Carmichael, 1915	7L	Lee Grigsby, 1914	Y
Alex Mitchell, 1901 (MA)	M	John Doak, 1895, 1906 (swinging H)	H, DOK	Gatlin and Anderson, 1915 (pitchfork)	C/
Western Union Beef Company, 1893 (7d)	7	Downie Bros., 1915 (H6)	H	Pedro Galvan, 1918 (G slash)	WV
Wilson and Hawthorne, 1898	WH	Robert Duncan, 1898	H	Roy Harrell, 1912	φ
D.M. Boozer, 1890 (Flying VB)	VB	George Fenley, 1908	FF	Roy Barksdale, 1914	V
J.J. and A.J. Dull, 1898 (anchor)	9	John H. Reagan, 1886	Y	Mrs. Maude Ellis, 1909	PAK
R.C. Paxton, 1901	RPE	W.J. Banner, 1900	X, WB	Cecil Arvin, 1912	SS
Geo. Reiminger, 1889	H, TL	N.G. King, 1900 (NK connected)	NK	M.A. Sherbino, 1905	V
Richard Crosby, 1898 (cross BY)	b Y	Herman Young, 1892 (33 bar)	33	R.H. Murrain, 1917 (cattle, bow and arrow)	X
S.A. Purinton, 1886 (P bar)	P	Bev Farley, 1895 (cross V)	V	(goats, Texas star)	T
J.D. Houston, 1880 (NA)	NA	John Camp, 1885	KL	Doc Turk, 1914 (Lazy 7)	TF
Pecos Land and Cattle Company, 1884 (swinging H)	H	Reuben Mussey, 1885 (Flying V)	V	H.G. Burdwell, 1912 (lazy pitchfork)	Ⓜ
Reagan Bros., 1890	55	John H. Lemons, 1895 (JHL Slash)	JHL	M.F. Boykin, 1912 (circle M)	A-
Jesus Flores, 1911 (Burras)	JF	D.G. Franks, 1885 (T six connected)	T	George Burdwell, 1914	E
M.H. Goode, 1906	OT	Independence Cattle Company, 1887 (cross L)	L	Ed Counts, 1907 (TE)	OU
D. Hart, 1907	V	Charles Downie, 1890 (VF bar)	VF	Jesus Calzada, 1907	VC
Grover King, 1909 (cross A)	A	A.J. Royal, 1890	J	W.A. Cochran, 1911	Y
Le Min & Co., 1906 (Bar U or "pocket")	U	Fenley and Sons, 1895 (Diamond Triangle)	Δ	Victor Coronado, 1900	Y
Simon Lopez, 1906 (on horses)	SL	R.L. Doak, 1906	3-	J.M. Bassett, 1916 (Block Y)	Y
Luis Martinez, 1908 (Bar M Bar)	M				