
FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

January–March 1983

The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Volume VI, Number 1



The American Cowboy Exhibition
Library of Congress
March 26–October 2, 1983

FOLKLIFE CENTER NEWS

a quarterly publication of the

American Folklife Center

at the

Library of Congress

Alan Jabbour, Director

Ray Dockstader, Deputy Director

Elena Bradunas
Carl Fleischhauer
Mary Hufford
Folklife Specialists

Peter T. Bartis, Folklife Researcher

Eleanor Sreb, Executive Assistant
Brett Topping, Writer-Editor
Doris Craig, Administrative Secretary
Lisa Oshins, Staff Assistant

Tel: 202 287-6590

Archive of Folk Culture

Joseph C. Hickerson, Head
Gerald E. Parsons, Jr., Reference Librarian
Patricia M. Markland, Indexer-Secretary
Sebastian LoCurto, Staff Assistant

Tel: 202 287-5510

Washington, D.C. 20540

Managing Editor: Brett Topping

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Of Nancy Hanks, who died in January of this year, it can be truly said that she made a difference in the cultural life of the United States. It is an index of her contribution that people in so many cultural spheres—from museums to architecture, from dance to folklife—think of her as a key figure in their recent history. We who work with America's folk cultural traditions can count ourselves beneficiaries of her legacy, for she encouraged our work and strengthened our institutional base in a number of important ways. I hope this personal memoir will serve as a testimony.

I first met Nancy (there is no helping it, everyone who knew her and many who did not called her Nancy) at a Washington hotel dinner—it must have been around 1971. She and some colleagues were there to make a presentation on the work of the National Endowment for the Arts, of which she had served as chairman since 1969. The Arts Endowment had grown rapidly in funds and influence under her chairmanship, and Washington denizens were becoming curious. When I introduced myself as Head of the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress, she quickly and spontaneously volunteered, "Oh we [meaning the Arts Endowment] should be doing more for the folk arts." I remember her fondly for that early hint of her later commitment—but even more for that quick decisiveness, that genuineness when others might have equivocated.

In 1973 pressure was building from our field and from the Congress, in the form of a bill entitled the American Folklife Preservation Act, to deal more effectively with folk culture at the federal level. The Arts Endowment protested that its legislative mandate covered federal granting functions for all the arts, including folk arts. The rejoinder amounted to queries about what the Arts Endowment was doing with its mandate. Both the Arts and the Humanities Endowment pointed out that they had awarded grants in the field of folk arts and folklore—or "folklife," a term just then beginning to surface as an umbrella term in public debate about the field. And indeed they had. But Nancy Hanks went a step further.

In December 1973 the Arts Endowment called a special meeting to consider the issue. A number of us were called together and proceeded, as is the custom at such meetings, to tear up the agenda

and launch into a freewheeling debate on the subject. By the time Nancy arrived in the afternoon, the group had spawned a firm insistence that not simply funds but a focal program was necessary to do justice to folk arts.



Nancy Hanks delivering the keynote address on "Folk Arts and Public Programs" at the "Conference on Folk Culture in Texas: Preservation and Presentation" in 1977.

Nancy listened hard. And in April 1974 she began the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts by appointing its director. I was that nervous but happy person. Actually, the program as yet had no name—only a line item in the budget for "folk arts." When the new director showed a folklorist's customary anxiety about the word "folk," speculating whether "traditional arts" or "traditional arts and culture" (or some such circumlocution) might not be better, or at least more palatable to some groups, Nancy was vigorous in her insight: "Folk, folk arts, those are *good* words. If they don't mean what they ought to mean yet, the program will make them. Let the pro-

gram define folk arts for people." I wish I had had a tape recorder then, but that is the style and substance of it; and thus in a stroke she taught me the power of words well yoked to actions.

The Folk Arts Program was flourishing by 1975, but that bill in the Congress did not go away; in fact, it continued to gather support, propelled by the devoted lobbying of Archie Green. Nancy wondered why, and she was told by insiders and outsiders that though the Arts Endowment had begun a program, the Humanities Endowment had not followed suit. Moreover, there was still a need for an operating program and archive to complement grant-giving programs. Finally persuaded, she dropped her resistance to the bill and, characteristically, began to push actively for its passage. Nancy was not one to wait for events to overtake her. Her active support unquestionably helped the American Folklife Preservation Act become law in early 1976.

After the American Folklife Center was created in the Library of Congress, Nancy was an active member of its Board of Trustees (*ex officio* as chairman of the Arts Endowment). Her last official bequest to the Folklife Center—and, I believe, her last public address as chairman of the Arts Endowment—was a keynote speech at the "Conference on Folk Culture in Texas: Preservation and Presentation," sponsored by the Center and several Texas organizations and coordinated by Nancy's lifelong friend and fellow Board member, Raye Virginia Allen. Her address scanned the whole field of folklife, but dwelt upon the subject of professional training in folklife. She wisely perceived that our field needed professionals to serve as intermediaries and facilitators, and that the national need far outstripped the ability of the professionals to serve it. Looking back on

that wise counsel, I must say that—despite all the talk about the lack of jobs today—we still have not adequately supplied that need for which the nation turns to us.

Nancy was a friend of folk arts and folklife to the end. But then, she was equally special to other cultural fields. Perhaps her most profound contribution to our cultural life was inculcating in all our constituent fields a sense of *common cause*. This she accomplished not simply by precept, but by example. The force of her personality, her drive and energy in pursuit of *our* goals, her intuitive sense of balance and timing, her openness and friendliness to all, made us feel that our efforts were important, yet part of something larger and more important. We will remember her best by holding fast to that legacy.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Janet Anderson, Oregon and California,
Chairman
Ronald C. Foreman, Jr., Florida, Vice
Chairman
Raye Virginia Allen, Washington, D.C.,
and Texas
Edward Bridge Danson, Arizona
David E. Draper, California
Jeanne Guillemin, Massachusetts
William L. Kinney, Jr., South Carolina
St. John Terrell, New Jersey

Ex Officio Members

Daniel J. Boorstin, The Librarian of Congress
S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution
Francis S. M. Hodson, Jr., Chairman,
National Endowment for the Arts
William Bennett, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities
Alan Jabbour, Director, American Folklife Center

CYLINDER PROJECT PRESENTATION

When Thomas Edison demonstrated the recording and playback capabilities of his favorite invention, the cylinder phonograph, at a meeting of the National Academy of Sciences in 1878, women in the audience fainted. At the Center's recent noontime presentation on the Federal Cylinder Project, during which the project's recording technician Erika Brady recounted that story, no one reacted in a similar manner. Some, however, were surprised to learn that there were recordings which preceded the earliest discs and that they sounded as good as John A. Lomax's field recording of "Whoopie-Ti-Yi-Yo," made between 1908 and 1910, or baritone James F. Harrison singing the well-known hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name."

The presentation was scheduled to satisfy the curiosity generated over the past few years about what exactly the Cylinder Project is doing. It began with an overview by Joseph C. Hickerson, Head of the Archive of Folk Culture, of the use of the cylinder phonograph for ethnographic fieldwork. Prior to its invention there were two ways of documenting material in the field: learning something oneself and writing it down, or listening as it was performed and writing it down. When the cylinder phonograph became commercially available in the late 1880s, its instantaneous recording and playback capabilities revolutionized fieldwork for folklorists, musicologists, and anthropologists alike. Ethnologist Jesse Walter Fewkes first took the cylinder phonograph into the field in 1890; after that, scores of collectors never looked back.

The U.S. government became involved with cylinder recordings through the work of the Bureau of

Continued on page 17

THE AMERICAN COWBOY: Exhibit and Catalog

The American Cowboy, a new exhibition in the Library's Madison gallery, presents perspectives ranging from factual to fictional, from mundane to profane. The show combines documentary images, such as the 1890 photograph of Oklahoma Indian cowboys lined up on horseback staring seriously at the camera, with artistic works by Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, and others. There are also tools of the trade, a jukebox that plays twenty cowboy songs, cowboy autobiographies, playbills, pop art, maps, movie stills, and ads like one showing three self-consciously smiling cowboys in Oleg Cassini bathrobes ("What to Wear When the Sun Goes Down"). The exhibit materials are organized into three major sections—"The Real Live Cowboy," "The Cowboy Hero," and "Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch." The opening and closing sections offer realistic portrayals of the cowboy, then and now, while the central section presents the cowboy as embellished by the American imagination.

Nearly 70 percent of the 370 exhibit items are reproduced in the catalog *The American Cowboy* in 100 color images and 200 duotones. It was designed by Derek Birdsall, edited by Evelyn Sinclair and printed by Garamond-Pridemark Press. Following a foreword by Daniel J. Boorstin, The Librarian of Congress, and Harry J. Gray, the Chairman and President of United Technologies, and an introduction by Royal B. Hassrick, the catalog is divided into the same three thematic sections as the exhibition. The sections are introduced by written commentaries: "The Open-Range Cowboy of the Nineteenth Century" and "The Cowboy Hero: An American Myth

Examined" by Lonn Taylor, and "Modern Cowboy Life on the Texas Plains" by B. Byron Price. The concluding catalog essay is a freewheeling fictional conversation between sportswriter Bubba Burkette and his songwriting roommate Virgil entitled "Bubba and Virgil: Cowboys Again!: A Dialectical Inquiry into the Recurring Fantasy of the Equestrian Herdsman (*Singing Variety*)" by Dave Hickey. Together the exhibition and catalog offer many visual, aural, and literary insights into the actual life of the working cowboy in the 19th and 20th centuries and the mythical cowboy of the American imagination.

"The Real Live Cowboy" describes what the open-range

cowboy was like during his heyday from 1866 to 1886. Period photographs, illustrations, first-person written accounts, maps, paintings, and equipment elucidate what the original cowboy looked like, what he wore, and how he sat in the saddle. The unique features of open-range ranching are also revealed—what cowboy camps were like, how range roundups were conducted, the techniques used for cutting, roping, and branding cattle, life on a trail drive, and how the cowboy's work related to the booming post-Civil War beef industry of which he was a part.

Not only did open-range ranching develop, flourish, and die within a very brief period,



Woven leather lariat owned by Col. Charles Goodnight. (Courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Tex.)



"The Texas Cattle Trade, 1873," a woodcut from a drawing by Paul Frenzeny and Jules Tavernier which appeared in Harper's Weekly, May 2, 1874. The artists were sent out by Harper's to sketch western life. Their drawing of the cattle trade depicts many features of open-range ranching from cutting out steers for branding to loading them in railroad cars for shipment East. (American Folklife Center)

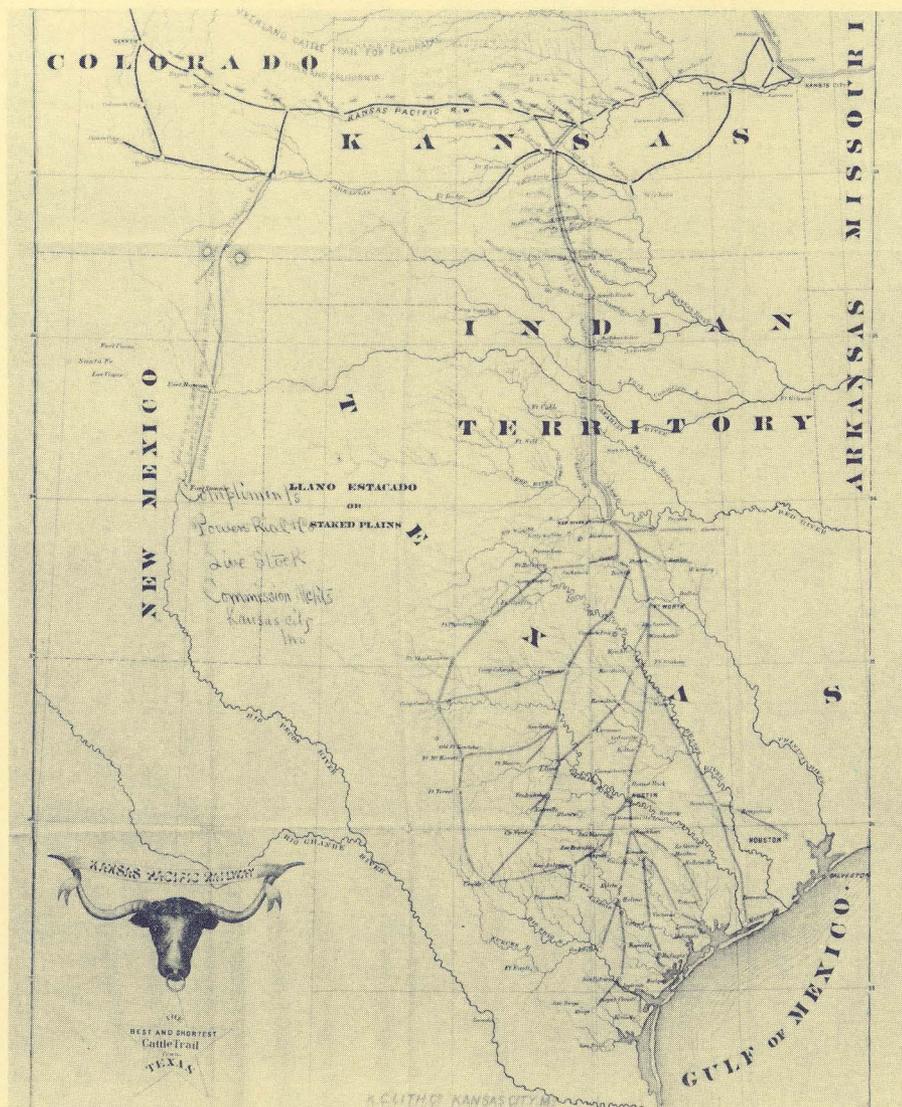
but relatively few people were involved in it. Although between six and nine million head of cattle were driven out of Texas, it took only ten men to move fifteen hundred cows. George W. Saunders, founder of the Old Time Trail Drivers Association, estimated that about twenty-five to thirty thousand men went up the trail to Kansas; there were probably not more than fifty thousand cowboys in the United States during the cattle boom. For most of these men, cowboy-ing was seasonal work. They signed up to work on a ranch's spring roundup in March or April. When that was over, they worked for a trail outfit through the summer, returning to Texas for fall roundup in September. If they were fortunate, they might be among the few cowboys who were kept on through the winter to do ranch work. If they were like most, they lived

through the winter on their summer earnings or found a job washing dishes or tending bar. To the cowboy, his did not seem to be a particularly romantic existence, and some remained realistic about it even in their old age. G.O. Burrows of Del Rio, Texas, was a former cowboy and trail driver who was asked in the 1920s to "write his experiences" for the Old Time Trail Drivers Association. He responded:

Some of my experiences were going hungry, getting wet and cold, riding sorebacked horses, going to sleep on herd and loosing cattle, getting cussed by the boss, scouting for gray-backs [body lice], trying the sick racket now and then to get a night's sleep . . . but all of these things were forgotten when we delivered the herd and started back to grand old Texas. . . . I always had the "big time" when I arrived

in San Antonio rigged out with a pair of high-heeled boots and striped pants and about \$6.30 worth of other clothes. This "big time" would last but a few days, however, for I would soon be busted and have to borrow money to get out to the ranch, where I would put in the fall and winter telling about the big things I had seen up North. The next spring I would have the same old trip, the same old things would happen in the same old way, and with the same old wind-up. I put in eighteen or twenty years on the trail and all I had in the final outcome was the high-heeled boots, the striped pants, and about \$4.80 worth of other clothes, so there you are.

from "The Open-Range Cowboy of the Nineteenth Century" by Lonny Taylor



An illustration from the book *Guide Map of the Best and Shortest Cattle Trail to the Kansas Pacific Railway*, published by the Kansas Pacific Railway Company in 1875. (Courtesy of the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, The University of Texas at Austin)

The central, largest, and most complex portion of the exhibit, "The Cowboy Hero," presents the many dimensions of the fantasy cowboy figure of the American imagination that gained ascendancy once the open range was gone. The section achieves a kaleidoscopic quality, first outlining the elemental features of the early heroic cowboy image, and then tracing the myriad recombinations of the basic elements and additions made by generations of

artists, illustrators, writers, advertisers, filmmakers, film stars, entertainment impresarios, and recording stars. Through numberless displays of familiar and less familiar representations—Rufus Zogbaum's oft-imitated *Harper's* drawing "The Prairie Letter Box," a poster for Buffalo Bill's Wild West and the Congress of Rough Riders of the World, rodeo photographs, stills from Gene Autry films, advertisements for Coors beer and Chaps cologne for men,

record covers, and contemporary sculpture—"The Cowboy Hero" defines the composite cowboy image of our fantasies.

The first flush of the cowboy's popularity came in the 1890s, and he was endowed by his eastern admirers with all the virtues of the Progressive movement. The first mythical cowboy was manly, self-reliant, virtuous, competitive (but always fair), a free agent in the labor market, dependent only on his own skills for employment, and, above all, 100 percent Anglo-Saxon, embodying all of the alleged virtuous characteristics of that ethnic group. Once established in this manner, the mythical cowboy hero became a medium through which America's own changing social values were displayed. In the 1920s, the decade of craziness, he became a daredevil entertainer, both on the screen and, as rodeo became a national spectator sport, in the flesh—riding, roping, shooting, and, as films acquired sound, singing. In the depression-ridden thirties he became an escapist fantasy: a crooner in a fringed shirt and tooled boots, singing about a never-never land where tumbleweeds tumbled and the water was always clear and cool. In the 1940s and 1950s, as juvenile audiences swelled, he became a surrogate parent. In the 1960s and 1970s he became a corporate spokesman. We have yet to see what new form he will take in the 1980s and 1990s.

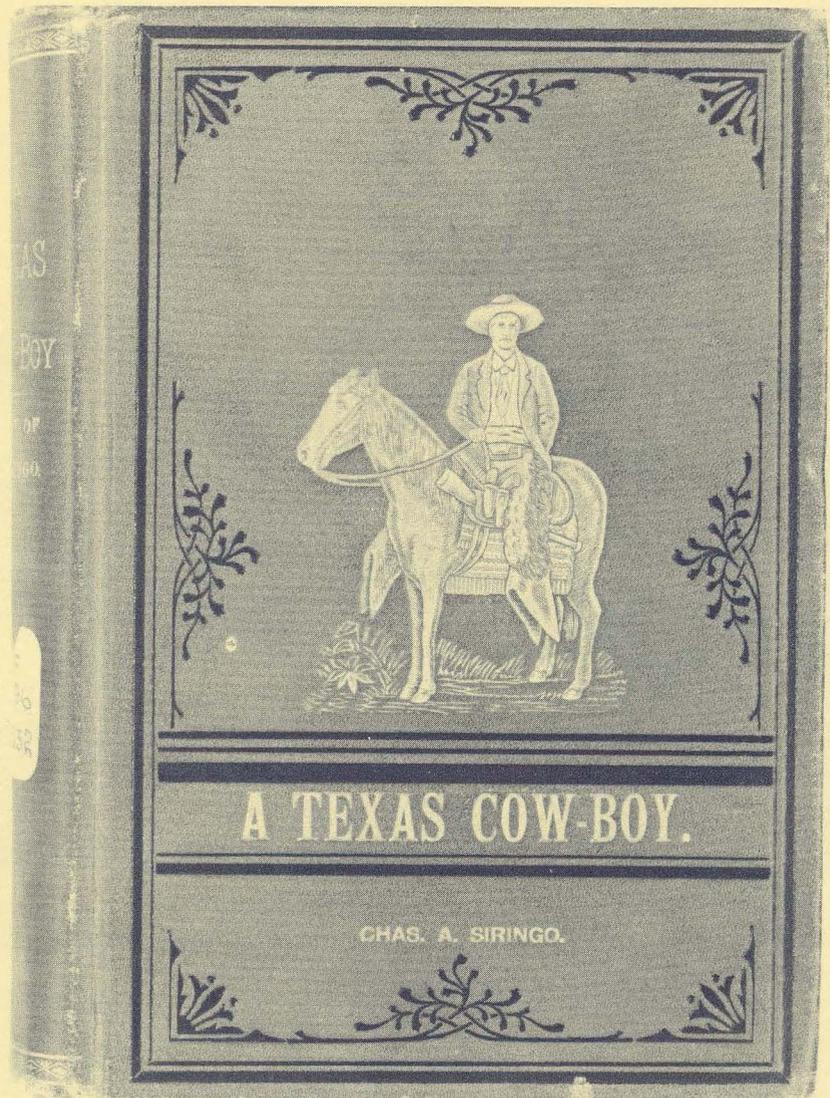
from "The Cowboy Hero:
An American Myth Examined"
by Lonny Taylor

"Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch" portrays the real cowboy of the 20th century. Farm Security Administration photographs made in

the 1930s and 1940s by John Vachon, Arthur Rothstein, and Russell Lee show cowboys filling syringes with vaccination serum, setting up camp around a pickup truck, and roping cattle. Photographs made during the Folklife Center's field project in Paradise Valley, Nevada, begun in 1978, include images of cowboys in "cat hats" and baseball caps, trailer homes for cowboy families, cowboys heating up irons over a propane fire, and roping cattle. A comparative look at these photographs and images made of the original open-range cowboys underscores the major changes that have taken place over the last century, as well as the continuities.

Because of the well-entrenched myth of the cowboy hero that has been packaged and sold for so many years by commercial advertisers, journalists, and filmmakers, Americans are almost oblivious to the cowboy's modern existence. Some who do know today's cowboy may consider him not worthy of the name, because the bulk of his work bears so little resemblance to that of the range-riding waddies of the nineteenth century.

Modernization has modified—though not eliminated—many traditional cowboy tasks and the individual skills needed to accomplish them. Today's roundups and brandings are mixtures of old-time methods and contemporary innovations. Most cow-calf ranches (ranches on which herds of mother cows are run to produce calves) still hold at least two gatherings annually, one about mid-May and the other in late September or early October. The dates of these roundups vary slightly from year to year depending on range and



A Texas Cow-Boy or Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony, by Charles A. Siringo. Published in 1886, it is probably the first memoir written by a working cowboy, describing the life of an open-range cowboy in a detailed and rollicksome fashion. (General Collections)

market conditions, but their purposes remain much the same as they were in the nineteenth century. Cattle are gathered in the spring chiefly to brand new calves, and the fall roundup is devoted to collecting stock for shipment to market or to feedlots.

The rhythm and pattern of ranching has changed so dramatically in the past three de-

cadecades that to be a good cowboy it is no longer enough to know cattle, to break horses, and to be a good roper and rider. The day has passed when cowboys let their feet dangle in the stirrup the year around. Today's ranch hand spends an increasing amount of time in non-cowboy tasks, particularly in the summer and winter when cow work is slack. In 1956 M. H. W. Ritchie, owner of the JA Ranch in the Texas Panhandle, described the trend that has characterized the



"Cowboys and Chuck Wagon" showing the Currycomb Outfit in the Texas-Oklahoma Panhandle area ca. 1885. (Photograph by Andrew Alexander Forbes, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library, Norman, Okla.)

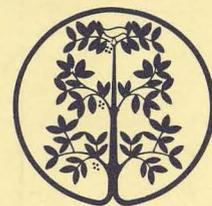
modern era. "The old-time cowboy is doomed," he said. "Times are changing. Certainly he must ride and rope and brand but he must also be prepared to carry a wrench in his hip pocket and a sack of feed across his saddlehorn." Economy requires that the contemporary cowboy be a carpenter, welder, and plumber in order to make necessary repairs and improvements on the ranch or stock farm. Even on ranches which use them in their most traditional roles, cowpunchers must sometimes assist a windmill in laying a water pipe to a remote camp or help a fencing crew in erecting or repairing barbed barriers.

from "Modern Cowboy Life on the Texas Plains"
by B. Byron Price

The exhibition opens in the bi-level exhibit gallery of the Library's James Madison Memorial Building on March 26, 1983 and will be on view through the summer months, closing October 2, 1983. It will then travel to the University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio (December 1983–January 1984), the Denver Museum of Art (March–April 1984), the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta (June–July 1984), and the San Jose Museum of Art in the San Francisco Bay area (September–October 1984). The softcover catalog is available for \$18.95, while supplies last, from the Information Office sales desks in the Library's Madison and Jefferson buildings and by mail order from the Information Office, Box A, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Please include \$2 for post-

age and handling. A \$50 hardcover catalog will be released by Harper & Row in the fall of 1983.

The American Folklife Center would like to thank United Technologies Corporation for the generous gift that made *The American Cowboy* exhibition and catalog possible.



CONVERSATIONS

How does an exhibit like *The American Cowboy* progress from a glimmer of an idea to a fully realized presentation? What considerations structured the exhibit's contents and format? How do some of the creators of the exhibit feel about the finished product? To gain some insight into these and other questions about *The American Cowboy*, the editor interviewed several people who played a major role in its production. Ray Dockstader, Deputy Director of the American Folklife Center, was instrumental in conceiving and coordinating the exhibit. Lonny Taylor, guest curator for the exhibit, began six months of research at the Library in the fall of 1979 and has visited regularly since to assist in the exhibit's development at every stage. A Western historian and author of *Texas Furniture*, he was formerly Director of the Winedale Museum of the University of Texas and Curator of History at the Dallas Historical Society. He has recently been named Deputy Director of Collections and Research at the Museum of New Mexico. Ingrid Maar was appointed Exhibits Curator for the Library in 1977. As the Library's curator for *The American Cowboy*, it has been her task to coordinate all the exhibit details and oversee the transformation of the completed concept into a fully mounted exhibition and companion catalog.

Ray Dockstader

How did the American Folklife Center decide to do an exhibit on the American cowboy and why?

Dockstader: *The cowboy is one of the more universal folk heroes in the United States. It was suggested some years ago that maybe this might be a focus around which we could build an exhibit to suggest the extent and diversity of the collections of the Library. I spent a few weeks looking around the Library just to see if there was much material on the cowboy in the Library, because cowboys and libraries don't really seem synonymous. I did some checking and found that there in fact was a great deal in the Library: unusual things—brand books, manuscripts, and maps—and of course all of the obvious things—photographs, books, and recorded music. Then I started putting together a proposal to be reviewed in the Librarian's office. After the Folklife Center was given the go-ahead, we negotiated with Lonny Taylor to come and spend six months going through the Library's collections to determine the extent of the cowboy-related materials and to further develop*

the concept of the exhibit.

Different people have mentioned the amount of cooperation within the Library that has made the exhibit possible. Would you tell me a little more about that?

Dockstader: *So many units of the Library are involved in an exhibit of this nature. A majority of the items in the exhibit come from Library divisions—Blind and Physically Handicapped, Manuscript, Rare Book, Geography and Map, Prints and Photographs, the general collections—almost every division has something in the show. The service divisions within the Library, such as Buildings Management, play an important part in seeing that the exhibit is brought together. And the core group involved in the exhibit is under the guidance of the Associate Librarian for National Programs. Not only the Folklife Center, but the Exhibits Office, the Information Office, and the Publishing Office all have a very important role in bringing this exhibit to fruition—the catalog, the installation itself, and the publicity.*

What aspects of the exhibit are most interesting and satisfying from your point of view?

Dockstader: *I like it because it's not just another exhibit of cowboy-related paintings or photographs. There have been any number of books and exhibits on old photographs dealing with the cowboy, or paintings, old and contemporary. This exhibit has that, but it also has other things associated with the myth—artifacts, contemporary crafts, kitsch—you have all aspects of the cowboy's influence.*

So, is there anything else you'd like to add?

Dockstader: *No I can't think of anything, other than it's going to be a good show!*

Lonny Taylor

How is this exhibit different from other cowboy exhibits that have been taking place in the last few years?

Taylor: *Well, I think the main difference is that this is an exhibit about both the myth and the reality of the*

Continued on page 12

THE LONESOME COWBOY SONGS
of the
PLAINS and HILLS

WITH CHORD ACCOMPANIMENTS
 for UKULELE,
 TENOR BANJO
 and GUITAR.

Compiled by
John White
George Shackley

Net Price \$1.00

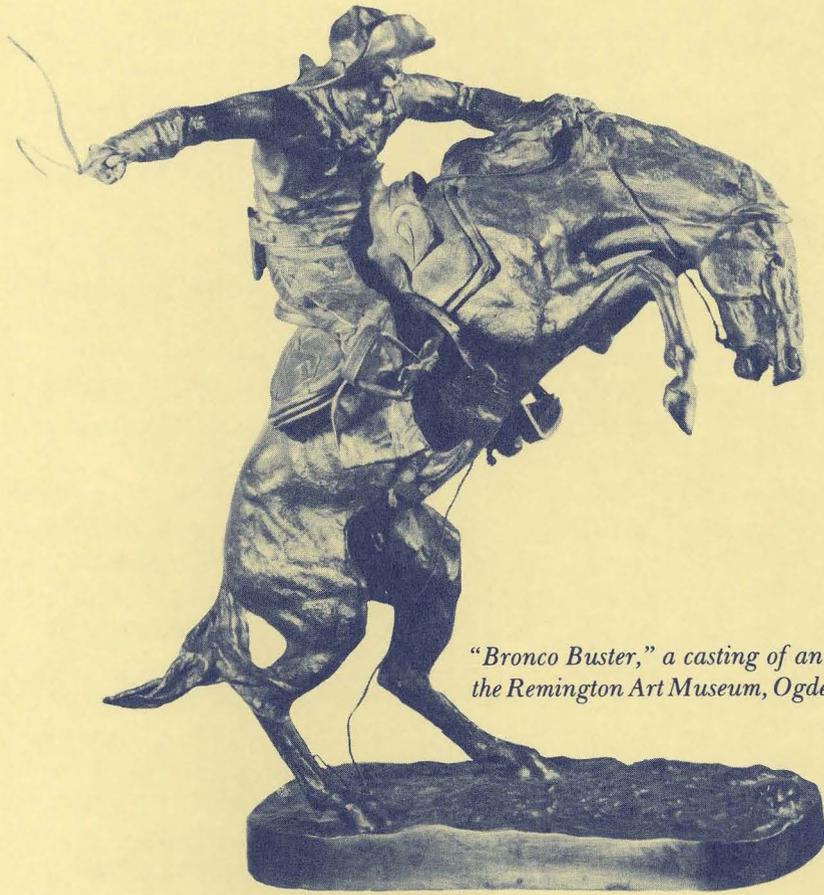
M11629
 W58 L5
 1930

SOLE SELLING AGENTS
F. HAVILAND Pub. Co.
 111 WEST 44th ST. NEW YORK.

J. E. DOUBLET
VOGEL
 MUSIC CO., INC.
 112 WEST 44th STREET
 NEW YORK.

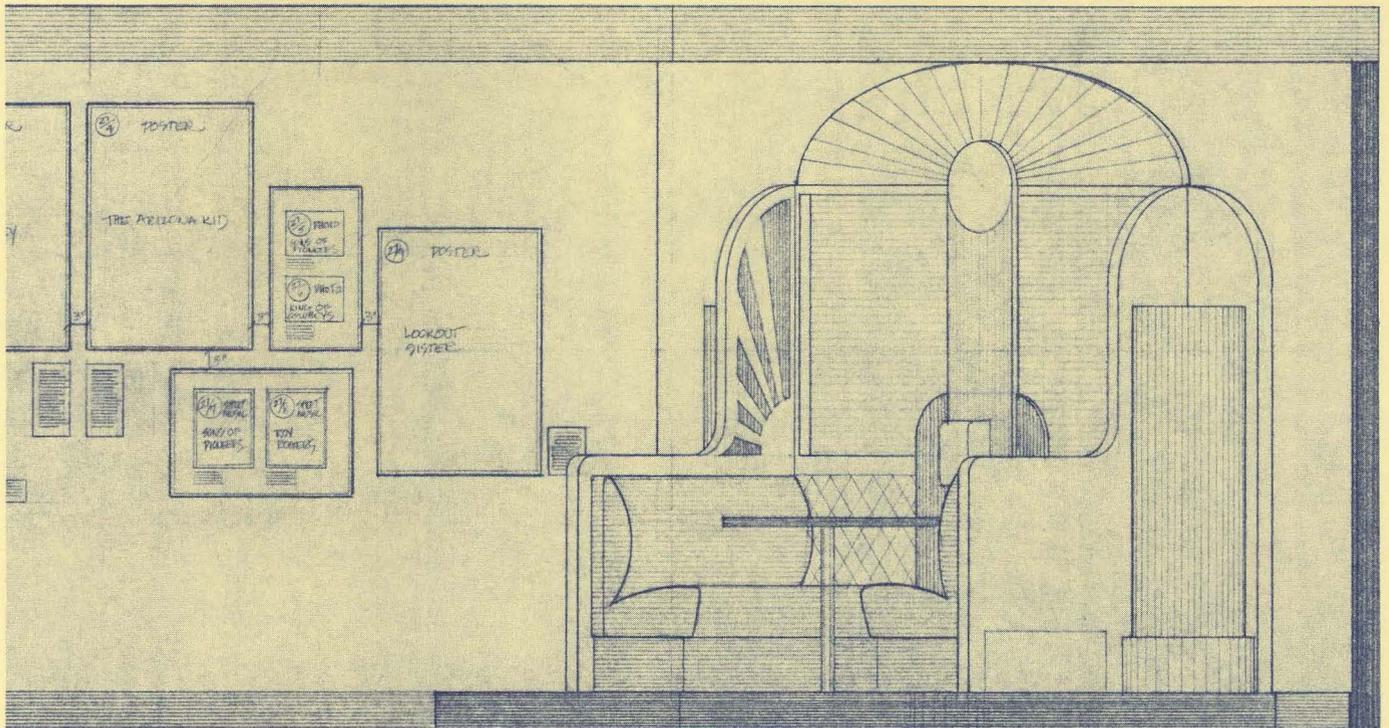
PUBLISHED BY
GEORGE T. WORTH & CO.
 112 W. 44th ST. NEW YORK

Collection of sheet music compiled by John White and George Shackley and copyrighted in 1930. (Music Division)



"Bronco Buster," a casting of an 1895 bronze by Frederic Remington. (Courtesy of the Remington Art Museum, Ogdensburg, N.Y.)

Portion of the exhibition plan prepared by Staples & Charles, Ltd. for the singing cowboy section of the exhibit with the diner booth and jukebox.



CONVERSATIONS

Continued from page 9

cowboy, and I don't know of any exhibits that deal with the myth of the cowboy. There are a lot of exhibits about what it was like to be a working cowboy, primarily emphasizing equipment and that sort of thing. But this exhibit emphasizes the growth of the myth over a hundred-year period.

When the opportunity arose to do this exhibit, what was the most interesting aspect of it for you?

Taylor: *I think the chance to comb through the Library of Congress and see what kinds of materials could be found here.*

What aspects of presenting the cowboy to the public were appealing?

Taylor: *Well, of course, all museum curators are frustrated teachers; they'll have ideas that they want to communicate to the public. I think that the central idea I wanted to communicate with this exhibit was the fact that the myth of the cowboy is based on open-range ranching which ceased to exist in most places in the 1890s. What a cowboy does today is really very different from what a cowboy did in the 1870s and 1880s, when they were involved in open-range ranching. But there is a very strong tendency among people who admire cowboys to insist that the cowboy is unchanging and somehow embodies mystical American virtues. And I think that the chance to take a nice, hard look at that idea—critique it, evaluate it, and say "This really isn't correct"—appealed to me.*

Why do you think the cowboy is such a lasting image?

Taylor: *I think particularly because he first became very popular in the 1890s and the early 1900s, and his popularity coincided with the invention of film. And so he was immediately wedded to a medium like no other popular American hero was. We've had popular heroes, usually originating in the West, since the 1820s, and even before that. The hunters of Kentucky, who came out of the War of 1812, were really our first popular Western heroes. They were replaced by the flatboat men, and the plainsmen, and the bee hunter, and Leatherstocking, and so forth right down to the cowboy. But the cowboy was wedded to film, and, like a fly in amber, became embedded in the medium of film. That's such a powerful medium, and none of these*

other heroes had an opportunity to gain that kind of exposure.

In your introduction to the catalog you talk about how the cowboy has consistently been a medium for expressing the nation's changing social consciousness. I wonder what the current cowboy images that are being portrayed say to you about today's social customs?

Taylor: *I think it is very ironic that the use of the cowboy in advertising, primarily by beer companies and clothing companies, has led people to think of the cowboy primarily as a person of leisure, when in fact, the cowboy probably worked harder than most American working-class people in his heyday. He has come to symbolize relaxation, leisure, and a mystique of the Southwest that is a sunbelt mystique—that it's a place full of young people who are athletic, spend their time outdoors, and have a great deal of leisure time. To me that's summed up by that Kohler ad in the exhibit of the cowboys sitting in a hot tub out in the middle of the desert.*

So, you are saying that the cowboy is being used to legitimize the activities of today.

Taylor: *Yes, to legitimize the values of today, which are primarily leisure and materialistically oriented, two things that the cowboy had very little of—leisure and material goods.*

Actually, the reality of the cowboy life—having to herd cattle and work on a daily basis like any other worker—never has surfaced at all as part of the image.

Taylor: *Not really, no. As a matter of fact, someone described Owen Wister's novel *The Virginian* as a novel about cowboys without cows, and that was published in 1902. Ever since then we have always mentally separated cowboys from cows. It fascinated me when I first began work on this exhibit here that people in the Library would say, "Oh, you're doing an exhibit about cowboys, you mean like Matt Dillon." And I would say, "Now wait a minute. Matt Dillon, in the first place, is a television character, and he's a law officer, he's not a cowboy." And they'd say, "Oh yeah, well, I guess that's right, but he wears that big hat." So the cowboy has really become separated from his work. And yet, I think we would agree as people who are interested in folklore and anthropology, that if you really want to understand*

somebody, you have to understand the work he does.

What was the selection process for what you wanted to include in the exhibit?

Taylor: *There were several factors involved in the selection process. I worked by making outlines of each section, and by writing down the mental point, what I call the "teaching point," that I wanted made in each section. In other words, the teaching point might be, "On a trail drive the chuck wagon was the center of the cowboy's world." And then I looked for images of chuck wagons with cowboys grouped around them. I picked maybe ten or fifteen images to illustrate that point, knowing that in the final exhibit we might only have one or two. Then some of them were dropped out because they had been published before, some of them were dropped out for compositional reasons—they simply were not as good an image from a compositional point of view as others. Then, when we began to work with the designers, others were dropped out because of size, because there wasn't space for them, because they wouldn't fit, because there were copyright problems in some cases. So there were all sorts of factors, but the overriding factor was familiarity. I did not want to use images that people had seen before. And you know Time-Life has done such a wonderful job of hunting images that the problem in putting an exhibit together almost becomes finding images that haven't been used by Time-Life.*

Ingrid Maar

What I'd like to know is at what point you took over the day-to-day curatorial work of the show and what was entailed in getting all this information together, the tools you used, a little bit about all of it.

Maar: *Well, once the exhibition idea had come up from Folklife, the idea for the show itself, and the Center had chosen a person, namely Lonn, to write the major texts and enlist the people who would write the other essays, we had a core. Lonn had an enormous amount of material that he had gathered together. This was the period when I came in, rather early on.*

At this point the cowboy exhibition was just an idea, and there were a lot of thoughts about the collections of the Library, and a lot of thoughts about things that Lonn had seen in other places, which he had talked to

people about eventually borrowing. This is where I came in. The first thing that I had to do was look at the idea realistically, and there was too much material, particularly from a visual point of view. Some of the objects suggested would have made a point as far as a historian was concerned, but visually they didn't make the point at all.

What sort of objects are you referring to?

Maar: *There were photogravures and lithographs that would, let's say, somewhere in the corner of the image show a vaquero—the point being made that the very first cowboys still wore Mexican costumes. What I then had to do was take that idea, which clearly needed to be presented, and find an image that would visually make the point more effectively. At the very outset I cut the show down from approximately 450 items to what it is now, still approximately 370. When you write a book, you have the luxury of making your points with several examples, while that's a luxury you seldom have when you're doing an exhibition. Putting an exhibition together is very much like editing all the time, and being really hard on yourself. What I had to do first was go through the show and see whether or not our points were made effectively. Were we running on about it? Could we cut it? Were we succinct enough? Was the exhibition divided into clear sections? There is always an enormous amount of reshuffling at this stage. I changed the original outlines over and over again. Sections were renamed to match the material clearly, even before the final selections had taken place, and there was still much too much. The next step was settling on a more precise outline, cutting down on the objects, and then going back and checking again whether or not we were making all the points. Later we had to change the outline again because, while it seemed to be working for the exhibition, it did not hold together at all for the book. It just was too elaborate. That was like a second set of controls, causing us to tighten up the show outline once more. By this time several months had passed.*

At what point did script books begin to be assembled, and could you describe the role that they play in helping to create an exhibit?

Maar: *There are different ways of putting an exhibit together. You can have a time line, if you have space; you can have it all drawn out. I just find, particularly when an exhibition is this large, that script books are the best way to go because, as you reach the point of*

deciding on the images, you have a record photograph and an information sheet for each one to work with. You then begin to insert your ideas of what has to happen with every single object. At first there will be many questions regarding the object and its identification, all of which have to be substantiated. What is the title? What is the execution date? What is the medium? Are we certain this is really the artist? What are his dates? What do I want to say about him? What is the size? What are some of the special requirements? Does it have to be floated? Does it have to be hinged? Will we need a sink mat? Are there special requirements, if it's an out-house loan, if it's borrowed from somewhere else? Even in-house, you know, there can be special requirements. I'll make notations about all this. Do I want to make a lengthy text? Is this where I want to go into detail about something, or do I want to save it for later?

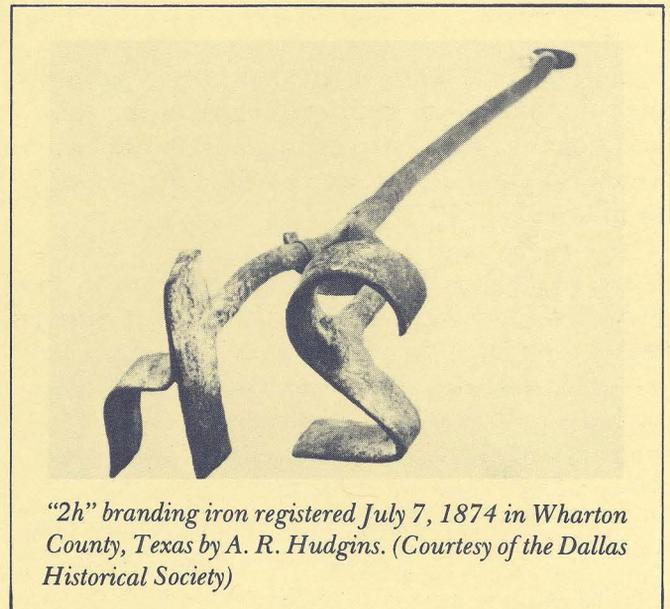
Then after the research is done and everything is substantiated, I develop a curatorial caption. This is a precise and painstaking process. Then the credit line is finalized, of course, and that's where most lending institutions are very sensitive. Then the text is prepared and the working details are all fastened down, so to speak, with the curator's notations.

When I get to the stage of working with the exhibition designers, the script is absolutely essential, whether it's in books, on time lines, or just in charts, because that's where all my notes are. To give you just a very simple example: We'll have Bronco Buster, the sculpture by Remington, and we will show a manuscript of Remington writing to Owen Wister saying something like "My oils and my watercolors will all fade out of the public's eye, and people won't remember me for that, but I'll go down in time with my bronzes." Remington wasn't exactly a modest person. My notation will say "Goes with item 58," "Set of 4 belong together," or "The following 3 items belong together." This then is translated in talking to the designers about how to put the show together. It is the absolute Bible, because from that the design of the show is developed.

Then there's a long, thorough, painstaking stage of the curator talking to the designers, one of the biggest steps. Once your script is ready with all the instructions that you make for yourself, these instructions have to be communicated to the designer. That conversation can take several weeks. As you help the designer understand exactly what you're trying to do, one of the most important things is that they know what the anchor pieces are, how the sections are grouped, and where the emphases are. A certain image might appeal to the designers, but

it might not be all that important. Sometimes there are discussions like, "Yes, this is beautiful, and it lends itself well to this wall, it's vertical, and I see why you would like it, but it's really only peripheral, and here is what I'd like to see played up, or here is where we have to create a clear section-break." That takes a while, and they have to gain considerable understanding through the texts. Then there is a whole separate thing—you have to come to an agreement about how to divide the major texts, subtexts, and sub-subtexts using typefaces, different point sizes, and what have you. Particularly when you have a large show like this, there's a real tendency on the part of the curator, who has by that time worked on it for a year or so, to think, "Sure, you understand this, this is section 1, and it breaks right here." But it doesn't work that way. So usually the first set of preliminary charts that comes from a designer show misunderstandings, and just don't do. But after some back and forth it worked out very well.

Probably the most important things for me about curating an exhibition are, first, getting the loans together. Next, going through the stage where I have to start writing and rewriting, still not being totally sure whether I will really have certain objects, and having substitutes in mind, while writing the kind of texts where I might just be able to shuffle things around a little and still be okay. And finally, after I've done my script, translating all this to the designer. Then, of course, there is all the work on the book: getting the illustrations to the book designers, getting the texts to the book designers and the typesetters, proofing copy, and so forth.

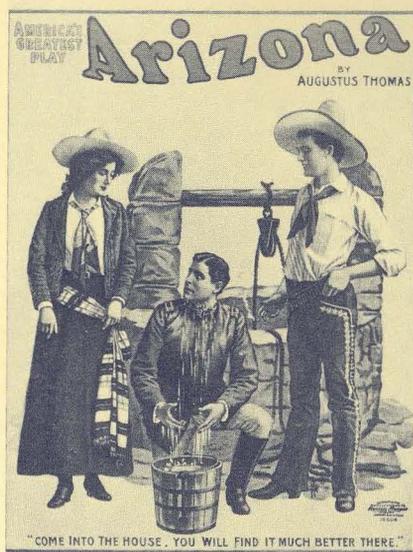


"2h" branding iron registered July 7, 1874 in Wharton County, Texas by A. R. Hudgins. (Courtesy of the Dallas Historical Society)

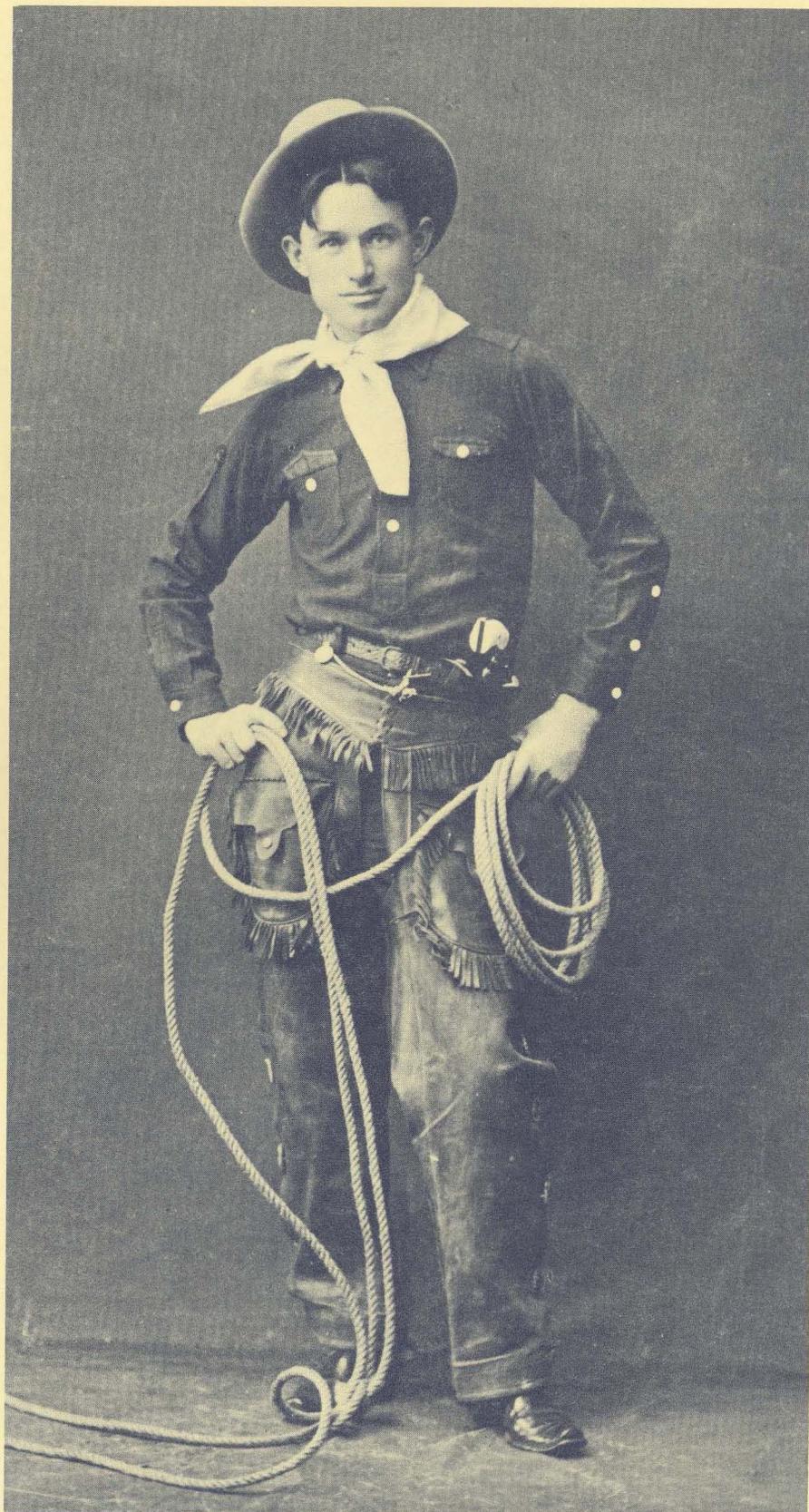
DESIGN FEATURES

The American Cowboy will be mounted in the newly opened bi-level exhibit gallery of the Library's James Madison Memorial Building. The only exhibit previously displayed there was *James Madison and the Search for Nationhood*, designed and mounted by the Library's Exhibits Office in 1981. It now falls to Robert Staples and Barbara Charles of Staples & Charles, Ltd., Washington, D.C. to create a format that is both appropriate to the contents and overall feeling of the cowboy exhibition and gives a distinct visual impression from the previous Madison show.

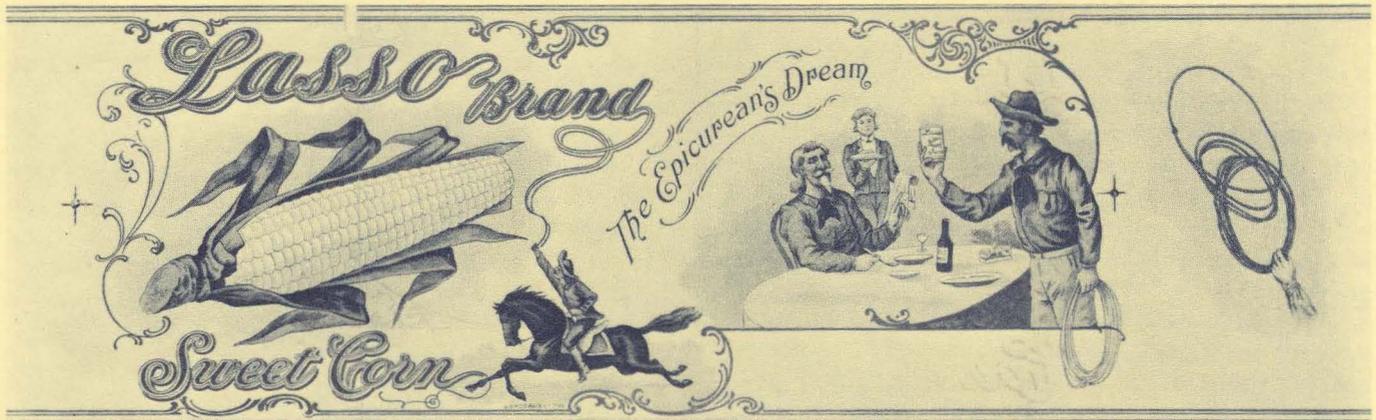
At the entrance to the exhibit, visitors will be greeted by painted cutouts of a mounted cowboy and his herd of steers, inspired by the cover illustration of an early edition of *The Log of a Cowboy* (1903), an autobiography by Andy Adams. The nearly lifesize cutouts will be displayed against a backdrop painted with sage brush on a western landscape, crowned by the



Playbill copyrighted in 1907 for the popular melodrama Arizona by August Thomas which opened in New York City in 1900. (Poster Collection, Prints and Photographs Division)



Studio portrait of Will Rogers taken by Naegeli, Union Square, N.Y. ca. 1905. (Courtesy of the Will Rogers Memorial, Claremore, Okla.)



"Lasso Brand Sweet Corn," color offset ad ca. 1900. (Popular and Applied Graphic Art Collections, Prints and Photographs Division)

wide open sky. Smaller panels, painted with the same scene, will be scattered throughout the exhibition area. Robert Staples explained that their idea in using the motif was to create an impression of the openness and horizontal space of cattle country. The walls for the separate sections of the exhibit will be in distinct colors which also suggest the West—blue, light green, sand, and grey brown.

The exhibition will open with depictions of the early open-range cowboy and then move on to an examination of the cowboy image. Throughout the exhibition almost lifesize photographs of well-known personalities highlight some of the major elements that went to create the image. On the ground floor, Buffalo Bill will be used to personify the glamor and excitement associated with the first cowboy entertainment troops that appeared in the East. Dustin Farnum, the first actor to play the lead role in Owen Wister's *The Virginian*, will underscore the incredible popularity of Wister's play and the influence it and other theatrical and literary works had on the American imagination. Teddy Roosevelt will demonstrate how a prominent national figure could at once validate the cowboy image and enhance his own by playing up his cowboy connections. A special portion of the downstairs exhibit will be devoted

to the work of John A. Lomax, who recorded cowboy songs in Oklahoma and Texas between 1906 and 1910. There visitors will be able to hear some of his cylinder and disc recordings and view a cylinder-recording apparatus.

The show will break after an examination of cowboy short stories and continue upstairs with presentations on the cowboy entertainer, the commercial cowboy, and the contemporary working cowboy. Here again lifesize photographs will be used to highlight major themes—gun-toting Tom Mix to exemplify the vitality and energy of the cowboy film star, and Will Rogers to underscore the subtleties of cowboy humor.

Three displays on the second floor will actively engage visitors with fanciful and realistic aspects of the cowboy persona. Two are audiovisual displays and one an audio program; all three employ laser videodiscs. Videodiscs were chosen because they offer the possibility of interactive programs and do not suffer from wear and tear like magnetic tape. The first audiovisual display will present William S. Hart's prologue to his 1925 film *Tumbleweeds*, reissued with sound in 1939. Close by, the American Cowboy Cafe will herald the singing cowboy. Amidst photos and posters of Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and other stars who convinced the

American public that a guitar was an indispensable tool of the cowboy trade, one will find a 1940s diner booth and a wall-mounted jukebox. Pressing the appropriate buttons will cause the jukebox to play one of twenty cowboy song hits, including "When the Work's All Done This Fall" by Carl T. Sprague, "Cattle Call" by Tex Owens, and Roy Rogers and Dale Evans's unforgettable "Happy Trails." The cafe menu will provide a brief discography. The final videodisc display will present film footage of contemporary ranching shot in 1979 and 1981 during the Center's Paradise Valley (Nevada) Folklife Project. The program will focus on the autumn round of work on the 96 Ranch. Like the jukebox, this display will be interactive. At various junctures in the program visitors will be able to select segments of additional information: film clips that amplify aspects of footage they have just seen. Carl Fleischhauer coproduced the videodiscs with Metamedia Systems, Inc. of Germantown, Md.

The talents of many people, both Library staff and consultants, have gone into the design and production of *The American Cowboy*. The exhibition is seen as a means of drawing increased attention to the Library's dual roles as a repository and exhibitor of extensive public collections.

COWBOY SYMPOSIA

The Folklife Center will present three special, day-long programs, coinciding with *The American Cowboy* exhibit, to highlight features of cowboy life and culture. On March 29 the working cowboy will be the focus of a symposium organized by folklorist Beverly Stoeltje from the University of Texas at Austin. The image of the cowboy will be examined during the May 17 presentation, organized by William Howze of the Amon Carter Museum. Cowboy music will be featured on July 21 during a symposium developed by Charles Seemann from the Country Music Foundation, which will be combined with a noontime outdoor concert. The programs will be held in the assembly room of the Madison building (LM-649). For further information contact Mary Hufford, Folklife Specialist, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.



Dave Jones helps hold a calf and readies a can of spray antiseptic, while Alfonso Marcuerquiaga inoculates the calf with an inoculation gun and foreman Dennis Brown cuts identificatory wattle during a 1978 roundup in Paradise Valley, Nevada. (Photograph by Carl Fleischhauer, American Folklife Center)

Cylinder Project Presentation

Continued from page 3

American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution, and particularly the prodigious recording efforts of Frances Densmore, who joined the Bureau in 1907.

Duplication of cylinder collections at the Library began in the early 1940s, when Jerome Wiesner was head of the Recording Laboratory, and continued during George Steele's tenure. The duplication pace picked up during the mid-1950s through the efforts of Robert Carneal, the current Head of Laboratory Services, in an attempt to outstrip the rapid deterioration of the cylinder collection. Over the years Carneal, who is especially interested in copying cylinders, has developed duplication techniques and invented special apparatus to facilitate reproduction of cylinder recordings.

Dorothy Sara Lee, director of the Federal Cylinder Project, continued the program by describing the extent, composition, and variety of the Library's field cylinder collection, one of the largest in the world. It is made up of collections given or transferred to the Library by the Bureau of American Ethnology, the National Archives, Harvard's Peabody Museum, the American Philosophical Society, the American Museum of Natural History, and many others.

The presentation moved on to Erika Brady's explanation of the functions of the cylinder recorder, the composition of the wax cylinders, the techniques used in their duplication, and the urgency generated by the rapid physical deterioration of the cylinders. Then the audience gathered around the display table to peer more closely at the curious and remarkable cylinder phonographs.

FACE TO FACE: TRADITIONAL AND REVIVAL ARTS

Wheat weaving was the subject of the Folklife Center's noontime workshop held on December 10, 1982. Carolyn Schultz from North Newton, Kansas, the author of *Wheat Weaving Made Easy* (1977), and Uršulė Astras of Grand Rapids, Michigan, well known in Lithuanian-American communities for her ornamental straw work, were the two artists invited to demonstrate their techniques. The program offered an excellent opportunity to observe two proficient and dedicated artists who have "come into the tradition" through different paths. From a folkloristic perspective their two cases stimulate some reflection.

Carolyn Schultz became acquainted with the craft of wheat weaving during a long visit to the British Isles. She was fascinated by the numerous examples of "corn dollies" or harvest symbols displayed in museums and proceeded to learn all she could about the regional variations and styles of the tradition. Her special affinity for the craft was affected in part by her Kansas connection. Kansas is the state to which Mennonite immigrants brought the sturdy red-wheat strain they had cultivated in Russia, which soon became the bread crop of our prairies. Upon her return from England she stimulated a great deal of interest through lectures and workshops on wheat weaving, stressing the regional connection to Kansas wheat. Schultz herself cites the Bicentennial year, and particularly workshops organized by the Bethel College Women's Association, as stimulants to the strong revival of the craft that has developed since. Students at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas are kept busy today filling the numerous



Uršulė Astras.

mail orders for her popular book and packages of wheat. It is clear that many Kansas residents who probably never shared the wheat-weaving tradition as part of their family's cultural legacy have now adopted it as a result of Carolyn Schultz's enthusiastic campaign.

Uršulė Astras, on the other hand, does not even remember when she first learned to work with straw. Now in her seventies, she recalls that as a little girl in Lithuania she used to run about with other children in the wheat fields picking the stalks and weaving long plaits, which adults later sewed into straw hats. She also remembers seeing geometric straw mobiles hanging in the guestrooms of farmsteads in her region. While still in Lithuania she learned how to cut and flatten wheat shafts and prepare inlay de-

signs on boxes. After coming to America in 1949 she continued to make straw ornaments, especially the hanging mobiles that have become popular Christmas tree decorations among Lithuanians. Once here she discovered masking tape, and it revolutionized her flattened-straw technique. Instead of simply inlaying on flat surfaces, she now could press the straw onto strips of tape and make long ribbons which she could cut into various forms. She started making four, six, and eight-sided geometric snowflake designs that are also hung on Christmas trees. These "snowflake" cut-outs were never previously made in Lithuania, though the patterns are reminiscent of carved traditional ornamentation on large wayside crosses and traditional textile patterning.



Carolyn Schultz (standing) and her daughter Lori demonstrate how to weave a corn dolly.

Schultz is very conscious of what is traditional and what is innovative. She identifies herself as a well-informed "revivalist" of the tradition and is proud of the impact her enthusiasm has had on others. But she also has experimented with creating new designs which she hopes will have special meaning for prairie-state residents, such as the "pioneer lady" corn dolly. Through them she hopes to enrich America's repertory of regional artistic expressions.

Astras does not dwell on the question of what is truly traditional and what is not. She likes to craft beautiful things and is pleased that others find her work interesting and appealing. She has been invited to Lithuanian youth camps and community workshops to display her work and to teach others. But she does not accompany her demonstrations with explanations about what is folk or traditional and what is new or innovative. All *her* work is *her* work. Asked how her work relates to Lithuanian traditions, she simply replies, "Because I am Lithuanian, my work is Lithuanian."

The two women demonstrate different degrees of self-conscious-

ness in their relationship to traditions. Carolyn Schultz, who did not learn her craft through traditional means, is very much aware of what is traditional and what is not. Uršulė Astras, who acquired the knowledge through "cultural osmosis," makes no such distinctions. Schultz is consciously trying to promote knowledge and appreciation of the craft. Astras presents her work only when called upon and, aside from teaching her own children, does not seem to worry much about what goes on elsewhere. As a matter of fact, she speaks little English and relies on her children to assist her presentations to non-Lithuanian audiences. She herself will not promote her craft. She says, "I'm simply too busy making the ornaments." But as long as others in the Lithuanian community sense its importance and create the opportunity for her to present it at camps and meetings and through exhibits, the craft will persist.

If a folklorist were to choose which lady to study in depth, Uršulė Astras would be the normal choice. The juxtaposition of individual innovation and traditional continuity would be especially in-

teresting for analysis. Carolyn Schultz would probably be passed up as a candidate for detailed study. Yet I would argue that the dynamics of both cases are worth attention. The contributions an individual makes towards the revitalization of a craft should be of special interest to folklorists who work in the public sector. We ourselves organize programs to help heighten appreciation of folk arts through workshops and demonstrations, and the programs often entail teaching techniques to workshop participants. Inevitably, some participants become enthusiasts and do exactly what we folklorists had hoped for—bring new life back to a "dying" tradition. But somehow those individuals rarely figure in our scholastic studies. Nor have we analyzed the impact of our folk arts programming in schools, festivals, or museums on a particular community. It seems that we work hard to get people to look at traditions and increase their appreciation of them, but once they do, we lose interest. Worse, we sometimes seem to look down at the "popularized" manifestations of peoples' interest in cultural traditions.

As scholars we will always be attracted to people like Uršulė Astras to study their particular traditional arts, and perhaps it is fitting that our limited scholastic energies be so directed. But as folklorists working in the public sector, we must take into account individuals like Carolyn Schultz who not only present a particular folk art to the public, but inform them about the traditions in a way that a truly "traditional" artist rarely can. Such well-informed devotees can be considered the professional folklorist's "lay brethren" in public education, and they deserve our respect and appreciation.

Elena Bradunas



Wood and mixed media sculpture of John Wayne made in 1963 by Marisol Escobar. (Courtesy of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, Colorado Springs, Colo.)

Front Cover: "A Real Live Cowboy" by T. W. Ingersoll, Saint Paul, Minn.; copyrighted in 1898. (Prints and Photographs Division)

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C.
PERMIT No. G-103