

A Cowboy Portfolio

"Our cattle also shall go with us"
Exodus iv, 26.

These words, especially fitting for a life on the seemingly endless grassland ranges of the Great Plains, appear as the epigraph for *The Log of a Cowboy*, a book by Andy Adams which first appeared in 1903.

Born in Indiana in 1859, Adams left home while still a teenager and ended up in Texas. In 1883, as a Lone Star State cowboy, he rode up the trail with a herd of longhorns, all the way to Caldwell, Kansas. Later, he drove horses, participated in a Colorado mining boom and a Nevada gold strike. But upon seeing a play that he felt grossly misrepresented cowboy life, Adams penned *The Log of a Cowboy*. The book is a novel, but one which contains many clearly autobiographical elements. And throughout, it proclaims the author's real-life experiences as a cowboy.

The Log of a Cowboy did not initially draw a particularly enthusiastic response, but over the years, though, it has been justifiably recognized as a classic account of cowboy life. J. Frank Dobie, the dean of old-time Texas historians, once observed that if a person could read just one book about the trail driving life, it should be *The Log of a Cowboy*.

Jim Hoy, one of this volume's authors, collected the images in this portfolio. The words are those of Andy Adams. If they strike a responsive chord, and you've not yet done so, you owe it to yourself to pick up a copy of *The Log of a Cowboy*. Nobody ever did a better job of depicting the way of life on the Long Drive from Texas to Kansas than Andy Adams.



"There's no use crowding them, for that only excites them, and if you ever start them milling, the jig's up. They're nice, gentle cattle, but they've been balked once and they hadn't forgotten it."

*Frederic Remington's drawing—"Texas Cattle in Kansas Corn Corral"
(Harper's Weekly, April 28, 1888)—Photo courtesy
Kansas State Historical Society*



"Sure it's one cent for coffee and two cents for bread
Three for a steak and five for a bed,
Sea breeze from the gutter wafts a salt water smell,
To the festive cowboy in the Southwestern hotel."

*Branding calves on the John Lough Ranch in Scott County, Kansas
(1906)–Photo courtesy Kansas State Historical Society*



"Did you ever notice, old sidey, how hard this ground is?"

"Oh, yes," said Moss, as he turned over, hunting for a soft spot, "it is hard, but we'll forget all that when this trip ends. Brother, dear, just think of those long slings with red cherries floating around in them that we'll be drinking, and picture us smoking cigars in a blaze. That thought alone ought to make a hard bed both soft and warm."

*F.M. Steel's photo of round-up scene in southwest Kansas.
Cowboys carried blankets and extra clothing in their bedrolls.
Photo courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.*



"Don't you know that the man you've just hired is the worst drunkard in this country?"

"No, I didn't know it," replied Flood, "but I'm glad to hear he is. I don't want to ruin an innocent man, and a trail outfit is not supposed to have any morals. Just so the herd don't count out shy on the day of delivery. I don't mind how many drinks the outfit takes."

F.M. Steel's photograph of cowboys branding steers at Salt Fork, Barber County, Kansas. Photo courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.



"You may be a good enough horse wrangler for a tough Texas outfit, but when it comes to playing second fiddle to a cook of my accomplishments -well, you simply don't know salt from wild honey."

*F. M. Steel's photograph of cowboys eating a meal at the chuckwagon on the Irwin Brothers Ranch in Ashland, Kansas in 1895.
Photo courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.*