

Cattle buyer may have been 'Real McCoy'

By Ron Wilson

*Director
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development
at Kansas State University*

"The real McCoy." That's a phrase which means the genuine article or the actual thing - something we can count on. Where did this phrase originate? There are various accounts, and we will probably never know the actual source. But one version credits this phrase to a man who played a pivotal role in the history of rural Kansas and the American West.

Joseph G. McCoy was an Illinois cattle buyer. After the Civil War, McCoy saw high demand for beef on the east coast while herds of longhorns were running free in Texas, having been abandoned by soldiers who had gone off to war. McCoy wanted to get that beef to the markets back east.

titled "Cattle Trade of the West and South-west."

The book describes how McCoy looked for a place where Texas cattle could be brought to a railroad and shipped east, but his visionary idea was not well received. When McCoy took his idea to the president of the Missouri Pacific railroad in St. Louis, he was essentially thrown out of the man's office.

So McCoy went further west and followed the route of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, looking for a site to receive Texas cattle.

He finally settled on the rural community of Abilene. His book described the town at the time: "Abilene in 1867 was a very small, dead place, consisting of about one dozen log huts, low, small, rude affairs, four-fifths of which were covered with dirt for roofing; indeed, but one shingle roof could be seen in the whole city."

According to one account, Abilene at the time had a population of about 300 people. Now, that's rural.

But as Kansas cowboy historian Jim Gray wrote: "Joseph McCoy would change all that with his vision of a great cattle 'depot' on the plains. In 1867, McCoy's Great Western Stockyards welcomed (the Texans) eagerly with open arms. With the first drives of Texas cattle to Abilene, the sleepy little town became the first of the 'end of trail' cattle towns in Kansas."

Jeff Sheets, director of the Heritage Museum in Dickinson County, nominated Joseph McCoy as one of the Kansas Sampler Foundation's 8 Wonders of Kansas People. The nomination says, in part: "In 1867, 35,000 head of cattle were driven to Abilene. The drovers were so impressed with the new market that the word spread across Texas, bringing more herds up the trail. During the next four years over 1.3

million head of cattle were driven up... the Chisholm Trail."

Abilene became a boomtown virtually overnight. Here, the Wild West truly came to life. When Texas drovers came in off the trail, they got paid and were ready for a spree.

Jim Gray wrote, "Galloping horses and frantic gunplay were commonplace on Abilene's streets. The cowboy would often imbibe too much poison whiskey and straightway go on the warpath. The Topeka Commonwealth declared, 'Hell is now in session in Abilene.' For the next couple of years, the Texan and the merchants of sin reigned supreme." Eventually the lawlessness was stopped, due to brave marshals like Tom Smith and Wild Bill Hickok.

The cattle trade moved on and had an indelible impact on the history and development of Kansas and the west. Joseph McCoy would be hailed nationally as a

cattle baron and founder of the Kansas cattle trade. Abilene became known world-wide as the End of the Chisholm Trail. Today, it is a beautiful, modern community which attracts travelers from all over.

"Abilene would not have been the End of the Chisholm Trail, if not for Joe McCoy," said Glenda Purkis, director of the Abilene Convention and Visitors' Bureau. "His creation of the trail creates a demand for western heritage history from travelers of today."

Joseph McCoy was said to have told Chicago cattle buyers he would bring them 200,000 head in 10 years. When he made good on that boast and far exceeded it, it inspired the phrase "the Real McCoy."

We salute Joseph McCoy and the modern day leaders of Abilene for making a difference and making this heritage real.

sunflower 4-h

The Sunflower 4-H Club held its Model Meeting on Monday, March 5, at the 4-H Building. President Kinsey Volk called the meeting to order and Vice President Jake Anderson led the club in the flag salute and 4-H Pledge. Roll call of

"What is your favorite book?" was answered by 17 members, six parents, one leader and one guest. Ryan Berls led the club in singing, "If Your Happy And You Know It."

During the business meeting, Marie Edwards was inducted into

the Sunflower 4-H Club as an honorary member for her support and service to the club. Following the business meeting, President Kinsey Volk turned the meeting over to Vice President Jake Anderson for the program. Ashley Anderson did a

project talk on the cuts of beef. Ryan Volk played "Camptown Races" and "Fre're Jacques" on the trumpet for music appreciation. A current event about tornado conditions was presented by Makayla Fitzgibbons. Following the program, President

Kinsey Volk declared a short recess for recreation. Robbie Lawson led the group in playing the game, "Down by the Banks."

The next club meeting will be held on Monday, April 16.

Ryan Berls, Reporter

Let the classifieds help you with your spring cleaning Call 899-2338

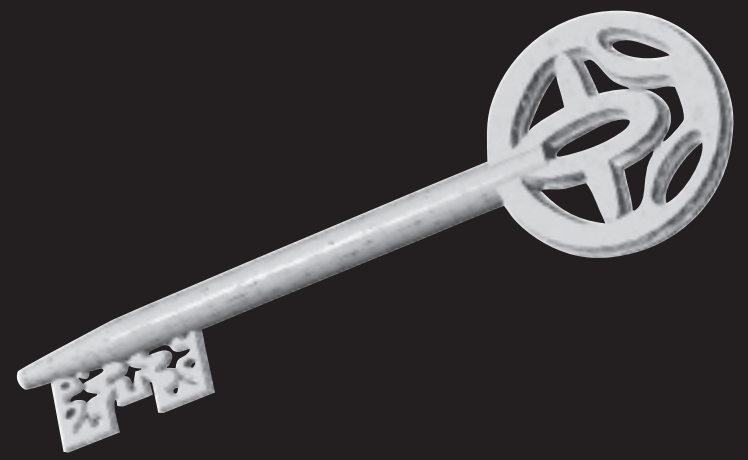
The Goodland Star News Service Directory

785-899-2338

Your KEY to business success.

Have your name up front when a customer needs you. Repetitive advertising is the key to opening the door to new customers.

Combined rates are available to feature your services in the Goodland Star-News and The Country Advocate.



YOUR HEATING AND A/C PROFESSIONAL.

GET COMFORTABLE.
Get hooked up with a great heating or cooling system for your home. Our energy-efficient systems are reliable, powerful and economical.

Bowman's Heating / Air Conditioning

577 W. 31st, Goodland (785) 899-5770

TRANE
It's Hard To Stop A Trane

The Decorating Co.

Interior Design Consultants
Irene Smith & Rochelle Kling

There's no limit to our imagination.

1011 Main Avenue, Goodland, KS 67735
(785) 890-5441
E-mail: decorco@st-tel.net

NEW SYSTEM PROFESSIONAL WINDOW CLEANING

Serving Northwest Kansas & Northeastern Colorado since 1992!

(785) 462-6995 OR (800) 611-6735
egriffith@st-tel.net

www.mywindowcleaner.net

Eldean and Janet Griffith • PO Box 692, Colby, KS

2003 PRESIDENT'S AWARD **Ford** 2005 PRESIDENT'S AWARD

"Where Service is an Affair of the Heart"

DAN BRENNER FORD

222 W. HWY. 24, I-70 BUSINESS LOOP, GOODLAND, KS
(Toll Free) 800-636-8770
(Business) 785-899-2316 (Fax) 785-899-2317

Hendricks Realty, Inc.

Farm, Ranch, Residential & Commercial

Phone: (719) 346-7187 • 1401 Rose Ave., Burlington, CO

Mike Hendricks: (719) 340-0217 (cell #)
Broker & Certified General Appraiser

Debra Miller: (719) 340-0345 (cell #)
Broker Associate

www.hendricksrealtyinc.com

Windy Plains Bike Shop

Professional bicycle repairs since 1978!
Parts, accessories and service for all makes.
Pick up and delivery available in Goodland!

**TIRED OF FLATS?
ASK ABOUT OUR NO FLAT GUARANTEE!**

Harold Sneath
6085 Rd. 17
(785) 899-4786 • (785) 899-5858 (home)
Same day service on most out of town repairs!

PLAINS HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING, INC.

FREE ESTIMATES! **Scott Sitzman** **FREE ESTIMATES!**
Residential & Commercial HVAC
New Installations-Replacements-Service

Phone: 785-890-2914 • Toll free: 800-678-2914
1104 Main Ave., Goodland, KS

"Serving Eastern Colorado for 35 years, and now serving Western Kansas!"

Discover the comfort of a Mendota Fire!
www.plainsheating.com

Truck Lettering
800-886-2423

AWARD WINNING SIGNS AND PINSTRIPING SINCE 1974

Hot Brush 204 W. 4th Box 309
Bird City, Kan. 67731

Culligan Quality Service since 1948
Better Water. Pure and Simple™

Scheopner's Water Conditioning, Inc.

904 Main, Goodland (785) 899-2352

- * Drinking Systems
- * Water Softeners (Sales & Rentals)
- * Water Coolers
- * Salt Sales & Delivery

WANTED: DIRTY CARPET

IF YOU HAVE DIRTY CARPET, WE CAN STEAM CLEAN IT.
NO JOB TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL!

- Commercial/Residential
- Advanced Truck Mounted Steam Cleaning Equipment
- Water Damage Restoration
- FREE ESTIMATES

PRO FLOOR CARE
Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning
(785) 462-8313 or (800) 473-4138

The Service Directory... it works FOR YOU!!

Brandon's Carpentry

Drywall • Painting • Flooring • Roofing
Doors • Windows • Siding • Decks • Ramps
Small Building Construction • Garages and More

BRANDON LEE (785)332-3370
St. Francis, KS 67756 Cell: (785)332-5264

Serving the tri-state area.

"Seek Shelter Today!"
LIFE • HOME • CAR • FARM • BUSINESS

Jim Alcorn, Agent
1624 S. Main Street
Goodland, KS 67735-0727
Business: (785) 899-2553

www.shelterinsurance.com

Call Jeff today to find out how!

(785) 899-2338