



MILLIONS OF LONGHORNS such as these were driven from Texas to Kansas on the Western Cattle Trail from 1874 to 1886.

Books detail trail, Last Indian Raid

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Though brief, the era of the great cattle drives evokes a strong, romantic image of the American West.

"The subject 'Cattle Trail,' regardless of a trail's official name — Western, Eastern Chisholm, or whatever — brings to the minds of old and young alike romantic images of horses, longhorns, chuckwagons and cowboys," wrote Tom B. Saunders IV in the introduction to the book, "The Western, The Greatest Texas Cattle Trail 1874-1886," written by Gary and Margaret Kraisinger of Halstead. "These images have provided endless hours of entertainment through good books, as well as great movies and TV series over the past years.

"But why did the trail-driving period develop and why was it such a success? There was a need or demand and then the supply to satisfy it. If one connects the two, a profit generally results, and such was the case of Texas and the hungry multitudes back in the northeast."

The authors will be at the Decatur County Last Indian Raid Museum in Oberlin during Mini-Sapa Day on Saturday, Oct. 1, for a book signing.

"After the Civil War," Mr. Saunders wrote, "Texas — like all southern states — was broke, but its greatest asset rested in its cattle — beef on the hoof and lots of it, estimated into the hundreds of thousands roaming free over the 184 million acres of open grass land.

"The early Texas settlers became cattle ranchers. The cattle were there and free for the taking. All it took to be a cowboy was to sit in the middle of a good horse and handle a stout rope. All it took to become a rancher was to capture these wild Texas longhorns, brand them, and then gentle them to the point where they could be handled and, eventually, herded and driven."

When the news came in 1867 that the trailhead had moved westward and Joe McCoy had built stock pens in Abilene, Kan., the great cattle movement began as these enterprising ranchers threw herds together and drove them out of Texas for sale to the northern markets.

The two major cattle trails used after the Civil War were the Eastern or Chisholm Trail and the Western. The Eastern started in 1867 in south Texas and headed north to the newly opened railhead at Abilene, the au-

Authors will be at museum Oct. 1

When the Decatur County Museum in Oberlin observes its annual Mini-Sapa Day on Saturday, Oct. 1, activities will touch on not only the Last Indian Raid in Kansas, but also the historic Western Cattle Trail where it came through Decatur County.

As part of the celebration, a bus tour will follow the path of the Indian raid and also the trail, and two concrete markers showing its location will be unveiled. One will be on land owned by Marcia (Petracek) Wiltfong of Norton, 13 miles south of Oberlin along U.S. 83, and the second on the Evan Unger farm, near the television station nine miles west of Oberlin along U.S. 36.

Gary and Margaret Kraisinger of Halstead, who wrote the book, "The Western: The Greatest Texas Cattle Trail 1874-1886," will be at the museum for an open house and book signing from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Other guests will be James N. Leiker and Ramon Powers, who just completed the book, "The Northern Exodus in History and Memory," which tells how the

Northern Cheyenne exodus of 1878 has been remembered, told and retold.

Both books will be available for sale. Anyone who wants to ride one of the buses for a 2 1/2-hour Last Indian Raid tour on Mini Sapa Day needs to make a reservation by the end of the month. Call the museum at (785) 475-2712.

Director Sharleen Wurm said there's space for 96 people, and the cost is \$5 each. The buses will load in front of the museum at 12:45 p.m. and leave at 1 p.m. Those who don't want to ride a bus may follow in their own cars. A reenactment of the Indian Raid along the Great Western Cattle Trail is planned.

The day will kick off with a pancake feed from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Old Bohemian Hall. The DCHS Singers will perform from 8 to 9 a.m., followed by the book signing from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the museum.

From 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., lunch will be served for a donation. Money raised will go for upkeep and maintenance.



TWO MARKERS like this one will be unveiled during the Great Western Cattle Trail/Last Indian Raid tour Saturday, Oct. 1.

thors say. In a few years, it connected with several rail-loading points, including Ellsworth, Newton, Wichita and Caldwell.

As the eastern Kansas counties filled up with settlers, and as more and more longhorns were being driven into the state, a problem with the Texas cattle as carriers of Texas Fever became a significant issue.

Ranchers and homesteaders believed that when Texas longhorns came in contact with their domestic cattle, it meant devastation. The disease was nearly 100 percent fatal to Kansas livestock, the Kraisingers note.

As a result, the Kansas Legislature passed quarantine laws forbidding Texas cattle from entering the area. That shut down all the established eastern cattle shipment depots and forced the trail to move west.

This more westerly trail, designed to avoid the settlements of homesteaders and ranchers and to adhere to the law of 1875, was the Western Cattle Trail. It started as

far south as Brownsville and pushed north, crossing the Red River at what would become known as Doan's Crossing, with its main destination being Dodge City. Cattle to be delivered north were detoured around Dodge and drovers pushed the herds across western Kansas to points north including Ogallala, Neb., the Dakota Territory, Wyoming, the Montana ranges and Canada. The trail thrived for 12 seasons, until it, too, was quarantined out of existence.

This large migration lasted only some 20 years, but during that period, over 10 million head of cattle left Texas and brought back some \$250 million to the Lone Star State, putting Texas back on her feet.

"Some states were carved or born, but Texas came from hide and horn," wrote Bertha Nance, as quoted in the book.

The trail brought countless herds of animals through this part of Kansas, including Sheridan, Decatur and Rawlins counties.

It was the greatest cattle trail in distance, time and volume of cattle, the authors write. Its impact on ranching in the Northern Plains was tremendous. Drovers from south and west Texas pushed the hardy animals across Texas, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and Kansas to Ogallala, then on north or west. They followed the same trails that the Cheyenne Indians would take in their quest to reach their homeland.

The exodus of the Northern Cheyenne from the Darlington Agency and reservation in Indian Territory in 1878 brought about the last confrontation between the Indians and white men in the fabled Plains Indian Wars, the authors note, and much of their trek was along or near the trail.

In September, a Northern Cheyenne band, led by Dull Knife and Little Wolf, fled the agency and created a reign of terror across Kansas and Nebraska that left its mark in history.

In 1877, the Northern Cheyenne had been marched from Nebraska to join their southern relatives at the Darlington Agency, near Fort Reno. It was a monumental time in American history. Within three years, the prairies of the Midwest had changed from Indian lands with roaming buffalo to homesteaded land of white men with domestic cattle.

The Northern Cheyennes were settled along with the Southern Cheyenne at

the Darlington Agency, two miles north across the North Canadian River from Fort Reno.

Even though the Northern Cheyenne and Southern Cheyenne were kin, several years had passed since they had shared together in ceremony. The Northern Cheyenne had intermarried with the Lakota and many Southern Cheyenne had made ties with the southern Kiowas, Comanches and Arapahos. Soon differences between the two flared and Little Wolf and Dull Knife's people refused to associate with their southern cousins. They camped far from their lodges.

The following year was disastrous for the Northern Cheyenne. They

were accustomed to northern winters and were not suited to the dry heat of Indian Territory. Their authorized buffalo hunts were dismal failures, and food allotments were less than those required by treaty agreements. Many became sick and died, especially the children.

Thus on Sept. 9, 1878, during the night, the Northern Cheyenne, facing disease and starvation for the coming winter, slipped silently away, leaving their camp fires burning and lodges standing and headed north toward their homeland in Montana.

Dull Knife and his leading warrior, Little Wolf, had fewer than 100 warriors, and some 150 women and children with camp material, in their party.

When the tribe was missed the next morning, Capt. Rendlebrock, several Indian scouts, 81 men of the 4th Cavalry, and four officers from Fort Reno, followed in close pursuit. By the end of the day, the troops camped 60 miles from the Darlington Agency. The captain dispatched couriers to Camp Supply to inform the soldiers that the Northern Cheyenne seemed to be following the general route of the Western Cattle Trail toward Dodge City.

In order to sustain themselves, the Indians took from the land and settlers what was needed in the way of animals for food and horses for fresh starts. White settlers had been warned about the uprising and took cover, some within the walls of a nearby fort, others to the safety of a nearby town.

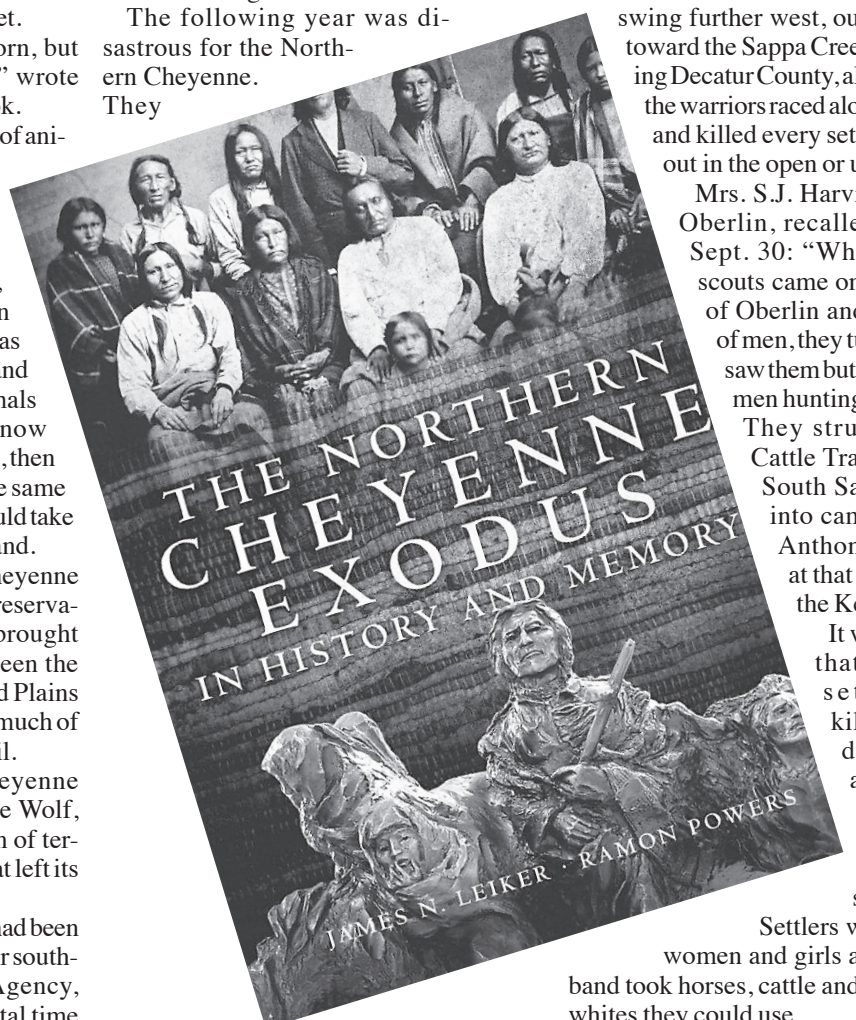
The Northern Cheyenne continued to attack cattlemen and ranches on their way north. They crossed the Kansas Pacific tracks between present-day Oakley and Grinnell. North of Buffalo Station in Sheridan County, they crossed the trail. On the North Fork of the Solomon River, the Cheyenne warriors pillaged the old Sheridan post office and shot two boys. Both escaped, one running to Oberlin to warn settlers. The Indian warriors then raided the Shilboeth post office on Prairie Dog Creek in Decatur County.

Little Wolf's warriors continued to swing further west, out of their way, toward the Sappa Creek area. Reaching Decatur County, along the Sappa, the warriors raced along its branches and killed every settler they found out in the open or unprotected.

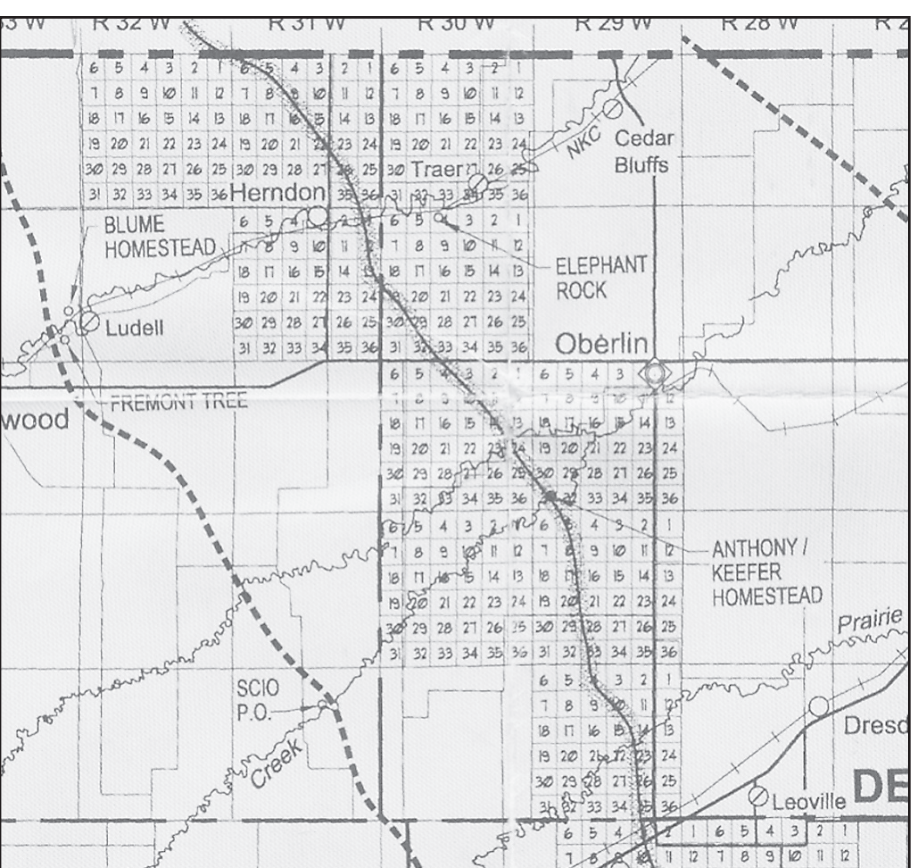
Mrs. S.J. Harvie, a citizen of Oberlin, recalled that day of Sept. 30: "When the Indian scouts came on the hill south of Oberlin and saw a crowd of men, they turned west. We saw them but took them to be men hunting cornerstones. They struck the Texas Cattle Trail, crossed the South Sappa and went into camp west of the Anthony homestead, at that time known as the Keefer Ranch."

It was in this area that many white settlers were killed. The two-day rampage along the Sappa and Beaver creeks may have been a survival raid.

Settlers were killed and women and girls abused, but the band took horses, cattle and belongings of whites they could use.



A NEW BOOK, "The Northern Cheyenne Exodus in History and Memory," has been released by authors James N. Leiker and Ramon Powers, who will be in Oberlin for the museum's Mini-Sapa celebration next week. It features Dull Knife, a Cheyenne chief and one of the leaders of the raid, in the center of the cover.



THIS MAP OF THE WESTERN Cattle Trail shows where Texas cowboys took their longhorns through Decatur and Rawlins counties on the trek to Ogallala, Neb., Wyoming and the Dakotas.