

## The Cowhand Then and Now

<b>Then:</b>	<b>Now:</b>
An outfit's home place was called the range. In the mid 1800s it did not have fences, but by the late 1800s and early 1900s fences were the norm.	An outfit's home place is called a ranch and has fences around its borders.
Main Focus: The cow.	Main Focus: The cow.
Cowhands loved animals, the outdoors, and hard work.	Cowhands love animals, the outdoors, and hard work.
Technology: horse, rope, and cow sense.	Technology: computer with specialized programs for ranch management. Cowhands may be college educated. Antibiotics and other vaccinations have eradicated many diseases and infections that killed cattle in the past.
Clothing was functional. The cowhand's ensemble included brown jeans, collarless work shirt, vest (for pockets), boots, cowboy hat, spurs, handkerchief, and rain slicker.	Clothing is still functional. Instead of cowboy hat for work, the baseball cap style is preferred. Many of these are "giveaways" from businesses. Vests are used for warmth. Jeans are blue and shirts have collars and pockets.
Socializing: storytelling and conversation between comrades.	Socializing: storytelling and conversations between comrades.
Food: coffee, beans, slow belly, biscuits, sometimes pies and other treats like pickles.	Food: iced tea, beef, bread, beans, and whatever else the ranch has on hand. There is greater accessibility to a wider variety of food than in the past.
The transportation of and working of cattle was done from the back of a horse.	The transportation and working of cattle can be completed from the back of a four-wheeler. Cattle are transported by pick-up truck and semi-trailer rather than walking them. However, many ranches still round up and trail cattle from horseback. Sometimes helicopters are used to round up and check cattle.
<b>Seasonal Work</b>	<b>Seasonal Work</b>
Spring roundups: worked cattle, branded, dehorned, and castrated new calves. Cut beeves out of herd.	Spring roundups: work cattle, brand, dehorn, and castrate new calves. May inoculate them. Transport to pasture (seeded wheat field or range) or feedlot.
Summer trail drive: drove cattle to rail head or market. Sold cattle by the head.	Summer work: ride pastures and repair barbed wire or electric fences. Check windmills, water holes, doctor cattle, spray for ticks and flies. Put up hay.
Fall roundups: worked cattle and branded, dehorned, and castrated new calves born during the summer.	Fall roundups: work cattle, brand new calves. Sell those ready to be sold and move others to winter pasture. Those sold may be sold by weight, not head at the market, to a feedlot, or on the ranch.
Winter work: rode the line and protected the property of the outfit/ranch.	Winter work is continuation of summer work. It revolves around checking the cattle, doctoring, and preparing for the new season. Stock shows happen in the winter.
Heat for branding iron was provided by wood fire.	Heat for branding fire is provided by propane stove.
Remuda was kept in rope corral. It was expected that each cowhand would use two to three mounts per day during the trail drive and round up.	Portable corral panels made of lightweight tube steel are transported by pickup truck to where the cattle and horses are. Extra horses are housed in the panels until needed. The panels may also be used to separate calves during the castrating, dehorning, and inoculating stages of work.
Cowhands were usually single young men in their early twenties. Seldom did they have a family or wife.	Cowhands are any age. Many work at being a cowhand until they retire or die; they marry and raise families on the ranch. Many are women. Oftentimes the spouse of the cowhand has a job in town or may work with the cowhand on the ranch.