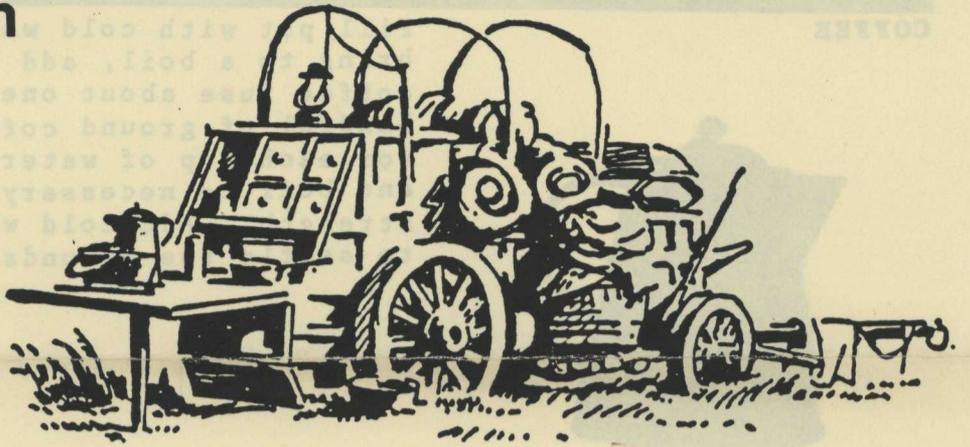


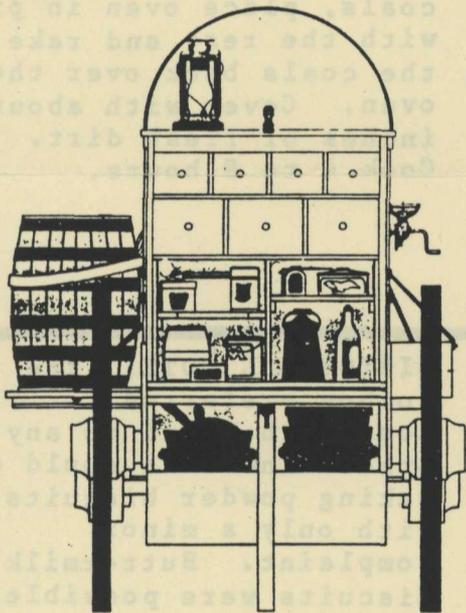
The Chuck Wagon

"Bacon on the pan,
Coffee in the pot;
Get up an' get it -
Get it while it's hot."



At a roundup at the home ranch, or on a 5-month trail drive that covered 1500 miles, the chuck wagon was the most important piece of equipment in the cattle industry, and the cook was the most important

person. More than any other man, the cook ensured the men were happy and productive. Without good food men would quit and the work would not get done.



Cattleman Charles Goodnight in 1866 took a surplus army wagon, made a few changes to it and developed the first modern chuck wagon. Its distinctive feature was the chuck box, a 4' x 3' box two to three feet deep, which was placed on the rear of the wagon. A board, hinged at the bottom of the box, folded down to form a work table. The box was divided into cubbyholes and drawers for small amounts of food, medicines, eating utensils, cooking

equipment, tobacco, and perhaps whiskey. Elsewhere they tucked a Dutch oven, skillets, a water barrel, flour, horse-shoeing equipment, branding irons, tools, and bedrolls: everything needed to care for the cowboys and keep them happy and working.



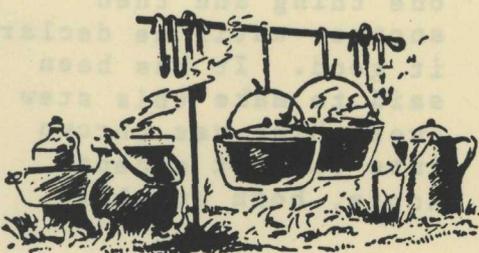
The cook was king of the chuck wagon and 60' around it, an area where his word was law, and woe unto any cowboy who broke one of Cookie's rules. In addition to making three meals a day for up to 30 men, he was the

camp barber, banker, dentist, doctor, referee, launderer, repairman, gravedigger, teamster, and seamstress. His background ranged from broken-down cowboy to horse thief to city slicker.

Hard work and long days meant the men needed good food and plenty of it. A typical breakfast was beef, hot bread, dried fruit and coffee. The noon meal was often roast beef, boiled potatoes, beans, brown gravy, bread or biscuits, coffee and dessert. At night there was deep fried beef steak, short ribs cooked with onions, and dessert.

A Cowhand's Coffee Recipe

To two gallons of boiling water add two pounds of coffee. Boil two hours, then throw a horseshoe into the pot and if it sinks, the coffee is not yet done.



Chuck Wagon Recipes

COFFEE



Fill pot with cold water, bring to a boil, add coffee (use about one handful of ground coffee for each cup of water), and boil to necessary strength. Add cold water to settle the grounds.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Coffee was commonly kept over a hot bed of coals all day. Men riding night herd needed a cup of coffee to keep them awake, those being relieved needed a cup to warm themselves up before resuming their interrupted sleep, and no matter how short his sleep, the cowboy wanted another cup immediately upon rising.

BEAN HOLE BEANS

1 lb. navy or pinto beans
1 tsp. salt
1/2 cup molasses
2 chunks of bacon
Pepper

Soak beans overnight, then bring to a boil and cook until skins burst when spooned and blown. Pour off liquid and save. Drop a chunk of bacon into Dutch oven, pour in beans; add salt, molasses, and some fresh ground pepper to bean water, then pour over beans to cover and add another chunk of bacon on top. Put on lid and set in fire pit, using hole-in-ground method.

For hole-in-the-ground cooking, dig a pit larger and deeper than the Dutch oven. Line it with small stones to prevent heat loss. Build a fire in the hole and let it burn briskly an hour or so, or until there are only hot coals left. Remove some coals, place oven in pit with the rest and rake the coals back over the oven. Cover with about 4 inches of fresh dirt. Cook 4 to 8 hours.

SOURDOUGH BISCUITS

2 cups starter
1/2 cup flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 tbps melted butter,
fat or oil

Mix all ingredients. Add more flour if thin, making a stiff dough. Lightly knead to form biscuits and drop onto buttered oven. Allow to rise until double in bulk. Brush with melted butter. Bake at about 400 F. in a Dutch Oven for a few minutes, then reduce heat and cook until done (about 45 minutes).

HISTORICAL NOTE: The cowboy preferred sourdough bread to any other kind. He could eat baking powder biscuits with only a minor complaint. Buttermilk biscuits were possible if some pretty nester girl made them, but none of them measured up to sourdoughs.

SON-OF-A-GUN STEW

Ingredients:

Tallow
Tongue
Liver
Sweet breads
Brains
A little slow elk (a neighbor's cow)
Salt and pepper

Throw all ingredients in a pot an' stir it an' stir it an' stir it an' stir it...

SECRET INGREDIENT: Marrow gut from unweaned calf



HISTORICAL NOTE: Son-of-a-gun stew was the cowboy's own dish. No one knows who originated this widely-known yet mysterious concoction. Perhaps an economically-minded cook trying to salvage parts of the beef usually thrown away made the first stew by adding one thing and then another until he declared it good. It has been said to make this stew everything was thrown into the pot except hoofs, horn and hide.