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Theodore Roosevelt in 1883

ROOSEVELT AND THE STOCKMEN'S ASSOCIATION*

By RAY H. MATTISON

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This report is one of the research studies made by the writer for Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park. It was written in answer to the question, "What were Theodore Roosevelt's relations with the stockmen's associations in western Dakota and Montana during the years he spent in the Little Missouri region?" Some of the material in this report appeared recently in "Lessons in Democracy in the Badlands of North Dakota," *The North Dakota Teacher*, April-May, 1949 by the late Regional Historian Olaf T. Hagen, National Park Service.

In preparing this monograph, the writer wishes to express his deep gratitude to Mr. Russell Reid, Superintendent, State Historical Society of North Dakota, and the members of his staff for their generous assistance; also to Mrs. Lucinda B. Scott, Librarian, and Mrs. Anne McDonnell, Assistant Librarian, of the Historical Society of Montana. Mr. Wallis Huidekoper, past president, and Mr. E. A. Phillips, Secretary, Montana Stock-growers Association, both of whom are very much interested in the history of the organization, have also been most cooperative in helping the writer obtain information.

No other person associated with the Badlands of the Little Missouri River has received more attention from biographers than the late president, Theodore Roosevelt. Much has been written about the brief periods he spent in that region as a rancher. His skills as a cowboy, hunter, naturalist and general outdoor man have been subjects for much speculation. He has, in short, become very much of a legendary character. In spite of the fact that several books have been written about Roosevelt in the Badlands, his many activities there remain somewhat obscure. In the words of one writer, Roosevelt's years as a rancher have given the Little Missouri region "a fame inversely proportionate to their importance in the history of the cattle frontier."¹

*This paper by Ray H. Mattison, Historian of the Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park, is published through the courtesy of the National Park Service.

¹The most comprehensive account of Roosevelt's Dakota years is Hermann Hagedorn's *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands*, (Boston, 1921). Other worthwhile books on the subject are Lincoln A. Lang's *Ranching With Roosevelt* (Philadelphia, 1926) and William Wingate Sewall's *Bill Sewall's Story of T. R.*, (New York, 1919). See also Bruce Nelson's *Land of the Dacotahs* (Minneapolis, 1946); Lewis Pelzer, *The Cattlemen's Frontier* (Glendale, 1936); A. T. Volwiler, "Roosevelt's Ranch Life in North Dakota," *Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota*, Vol. IX, No. 1; Olaf T. Hagen, "Lessons in Democracy in the Badlands of North Dakota," *The North Dakota Teacher*, April-May, 1949.

In evaluating Roosevelt as a rancher, two questions arise: First, how extensive were his operations in comparison with other ranchers? Secondly, what significant contributions did he make to the open range cattle industry during the periods he spent in the Badlands? In answer to the first, Roosevelt was a small operator compared to John N. Simpson, Henry S. Boice, W. A. Towers, Dorr Clark and others. At the peak of his operations, he probably never owned more than 5,000 cattle at any one time. Pierre Wibaux, one of his contemporaries on Big Beaver Creek, at the peak of his operations from 1890 to 1900, owned from 40,000 to 65,000 head.²

One of Roosevelt's greatest contributions, if not his greatest, to the history of western Dakota and eastern Montana during the 1880's was in organizing the Little Missouri stockmen. Although it is doubtful if he ever grasped the practical side of cattle raising, he lent his organizing ability and indefatigable energy toward effecting a stockmen's association which could enforce the range regulations. His work in this direction earned him the cooperation and respect of the leading cattlemen in Montana and western Dakota. In accomplishing this, he succeeded where others failed.³

When Roosevelt came to Dakota to hunt in September, 1883, he found that the numerous buffalo herds, which at one time ranged over the prairies and Badlands, had been almost exterminated. It was only after hunting for several days that he was able to kill a solitary bull. The ranges upon which countless numbers had once roamed were covered with luxuriant native grasses which were excellently suited for the grazing of cattle. Contemporary western newspapers gave extravagant praise to the region as a cattle country. They pointed out the abundant grasses upon which the stock would thrive. Cattle would need neither hay nor shelter and the percentage of winter loss would be relatively small. In 1882, H. B. Wadsworth and W. L. Hawley from Minnesota had shipped 200 head of stock to Little Missouri. Sylvane Ferris and A. W. Merrifield were employed by the firm to raise cattle on shares with them. This was the first ranch of

²Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 195-217; Volwiler, *op. cit.*, 39; Bertha Kuhn, "The W Bar Ranch on the Missouri Slope," *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, Vol. V, (1923) 161; Lewis F. Crawford, *History of North Dakota* (Chicago and New York, 1931) 1:498.

³Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 83; Edward Everett Dale, *Cow Country* (Norman, 1945) 103.

importance to be established in northwestern Dakota. Farther up the Little Missouri River near the present North and South Dakota and Montana state lines several large Texas outfits had established ranches by the fall of 1883. Among these were Hughes and Simpson Company, known as the "Hash Knife," which had a ranch along Box Elder Creek; farther north down the river near the present town of Marmarth, North Dakota, was the W. A. Towers and Gudgell ("O X") ranch; near the confluences of Deer and Horse creeks and the Little Missouri, was the 777 ranch, operated by Berry, Boice Cattle Company. Also in the same vicinity was the Neimmela Ranch, financed by Sir John Pender of England and Commodore H. H. Corringe of the United States Navy, which was managed by Gregor Lang. The herds of Custer Trail Ranch, operated by Howard Eaton and financed by A. C. Huidekoper of Meadville, Pennsylvania, ranged on the Little Missouri between Deep and Davis creeks. Many of the cattle on the Badlands ranches were shipped from Iowa and Minnesota. Marquis de Mores, with the financial support of his father-in-law, L. A. Von Hoffman, New York banker, was building a large abattoir at Medora and had schemes of establishing a chain of packing plants along the Northern Pacific.⁴

What motives prompted Roosevelt to enter into cattle ranching in the Badlands is a moot question. It is quite probable that his love for the outdoors and his belief that there was a good future in the cattle ranching business were important factors. Like many other absentee ranch owners, his ventures were doomed to failure from the start. Before Roosevelt returned to New York in October, 1883, he entered into an agreement with Ferris and Merrifield. He bought out Hawley and Wadsworth's interests in the Maltese Cross herds and became owner of that brand. His initial investment in cattle ranching was \$14,000.⁵

⁴Ernest Staples Osgood, *The Day of the Cattleman* (Minneapolis, 1929); Harold E. Briggs, "Ranching and Stock-Raising in Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Vol. XIV (Pierre, 1928), 440; Arnold O. Goplen, "The Career of Marquis de Mores in the Badlands of North Dakota," *North Dakota History*, Vol. XIII, Nos. 1 and 2; Hagedorn, *loc. cit.*; Fred Jennewein, *The Wi-Iyohi*, a publication of the South Dakota Historical Society, Pierre, 1949, Vol. III, Nos. 7 and 8; *The Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Feb. 14, 21, March 13, 1884. The *Cow Boy* began publication in Medora on February 7, 1884 and continued until its office burned in January, 1887. The incomplete files of this newspaper, which are in the State Historical Society of North Dakota, run from February 7, 1884 to October 29, 1885.

⁵Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 41-43; Lang, *op. cit.*, 114-119.

In 1883 and 1884, the problems confronting the stockmen along the Little Missouri were similar to those faced by the stockgrowers earlier on the frontiers in eastern Montana and Wyoming. Few of them owned more than a section or two of the land on which their cattle grazed. Many, such as Roosevelt, owned none whatever. Their cattle roamed freely over the public domain and on the Northern Pacific railroad lands. In accordance with established custom, each rancher claimed a certain area of these lands as his range according to the number of cattle owned by him. Since the ranges were not fenced, the cattle wandered at will from one range to another. They became intermingled and scattered. Organization and cooperation were essential to protect common interests and property rights. In spite of the fact that there were unwritten laws, many of which originated in Texas, regulating the open range cattle industry, these could not be executed without adequate organization. What was needed was a cooperative association to enforce range laws and to deal with those problems with which no rancher could cope by himself.⁶

In common with those living in many frontier communities, the Little Missouri stockmen lacked the aid of a strong local government to protect their property from Indians, thieves, wild animals and disease. Billings county, in which the towns of Little Missouri and Medora were located, was unorganized. Petty cases were taken to Dickinson, the county seat of Stark county, 40 miles distant. Major offenses were taken to Mandan, about 145 miles from Medora. As a result, violations of the law became so common that the *Glendive* (Montana) *Times* commented:

Little Missouri is fast gaining a very unenviable reputation. It seems as though what little law does exist in the place cannot be enforced, and the better class of citizens being in the minority a committee of safety is out of the question⁷

This accusation was hotly denied by the *Bad Lands Cow Boy* in its initial issue on February 7. However, when the news reached

⁶Robert S. Fletcher, "Organization of the Range Cattle Business in Eastern Montana," Montana State College, Bozeman, 1932, Bulletin 265, 4. This excellent bulletin is a very comprehensive work on the organization of the open range cattle industry in eastern Montana and western Dakota. See also Theodore Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (New York, 1899) *passim*; Osgood, *op. cit.*, 114-118.

⁷The *Glendive Times*, Jan. 26, 1884. The files of this newspaper are located in the Historical Society of Montana, Helena.

Dickinson several months later that Billings county was taking steps toward county organization, the *Dickinson Press* gave the movement its editorial support.

Medora is clamoring for a county organization in Billings County. We hope they will get it. If there is any place along the line that needs a criminal court and jail it is Medora. Four-fifths of the business before our justice of the peace comes from Billings County.*

Early in 1884, Howard Eaton, one of the Eaton brothers whose "dude ranches" were later to become nationally known, and others took initial steps to organize the Little Missouri stockmen. A meeting was called by Eaton to be held February 28. The movement at once received the support of A. T. Packard, the editor, in the *Bad Lands Cow Boy*.

We are glad to see that Mr. Howard Eaton has taken the initiative in the one thing that is now most important to our cattle men. We refer to the subject of a cattle organization . . . This is a matter of vital interest to every stock man of the Bad Lands. Subjects continually come up that should be settled by the vote of the majority of our cattle men. At present there is no organization, and each man must decide all questions for himself. There is no need of recapitulating the list of benefits that will arise from this organization . . . This organization will be in the course of time, if not at once, one of the strongest in the Northwest . . . *

The meeting was held in Pennell and Roberts hall in Little Missouri as scheduled. It was called to order by Howard Eaton. D. Barr was elected chairman and A. T. Packard, secretary. A committee of four, consisting of Barr, Eaton, Packard and J. L. Truscott, was appointed to draw up the order of business. Due to the fact that so many cattlemen were absent, it was decided that a meeting should be called at a latter date. A committee of five members, comprised of Barr, Eaton, Packard, E. G. Paddock and A. W. Merrifield, was appointed to draw up a constitution and bylaws for the organization. It was decided that a committee

**Dickinson Press*, May 17, 1884. The town of Little Missouri was located on the west side of the river with the same name. The town of Medora on the east side was founded in April, 1883. As Medora grew, the people and businesses from the opposite side of the river moved across to the newer town until Little Missouri disappeared.

**Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Feb. 7, 1884.

of three influential men be appointed at some future date to draft a call for a territorial organization.¹⁰

The committee of five, assigned the task of drafting a constitution and bylaws for the proposed Bad Lands Live Stock Association, completed its work in March and called for a meeting of the proposed organization on the third Monday in April.¹¹ Apparently the hopes of the proponents failed to materialize at this time for the week following the time set for the meeting, the *Cow Boy* carried this item:

It was deemed best by many interested to put off the organization of the Bad Lands Stock association till next fall. Several reasons led to this result, among them the following: That there is no business of immediate importance to come before the meeting; that at the present season it is impossible for all interested to attend a meeting, many of them being away, and finally that the subject has not received as thorough a canvass as it should have. Altogether it seems better to put off the organization, as a poor association is little better than none at all and will prevent the establishment of a good one¹²

In the meantime, steps had been taken by a general agreement of the cattlemen for the spring roundup of 1884. A meeting of the Little Missouri stockmen was called for April 5 by Henry S. Boice of the Berry, Boice Cattle Company and W. A. Towers of Towers and Gudgell.¹³ The available contemporary newspapers do

¹⁰*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, March 6, 1884. This item names the persons and companies in the vicinity interested in cattle: Dickey Bros., Stoneville, Montana; Clark & Plum, Spearfish; Driscoll & Son, Spearfish; Hughes & Simpson, Stoneville; Continental Cattle Company, Stoneville; Towers & Gudgell, Keith, Montana; Berry, Boice & Co., Keith; Gregor Lang, J. L. Truscott, Wm. Dantz, Bullion & Marsh, D. K. Wade, J. L. Roberts, Ferris & Merrifield, E. W. Casey & Co., Marquis de Mores, E. G. Paddock, Wm. Tuttle, Custer Trail Cattle Co., Soho Cattle Co., Wadsworth Bros., Geo. Fitzgerald, Little Missouri Land & Cattle Co., at Medora, Dak.; Grisy & Wibaux, D. C. Rowe, Morrison & Davis, of Keith, Mont.; J. A. Cotton, Griffin & Ward, Keystone Cattle Co., John Heffron, W. O. Serrine, Moore & Rumsey, George McCone, of Glendive; Capt. Wm. Harmon, Bismarck; T. R. Selmes, Mandan; Fair & Darling, Terry, Mont.; Andrew Messersmith, Dickinson; Richardton & Co., Richardton; J. Coulson, Belfield.

¹¹*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, March 13, 1884. The subjects suggested by the committee for consideration at this proposed meeting were: (1) Repeal of the herd law; (2) Bulls running with the herds; (3) Setting off the western tier of counties in Dakota as a stock country; (4) Getting the trapping of beaver stopped so that there may be dams to hold the water; (5) Shutting up bulls between February 1 and July 15; (6) Strychnine to be furnished for poisoning wolves and coyotes and bounty paid for their pelts; (7) That a brand be adopted for all stray unbranded horses and cattle and also for unclaimed branded horses and cattle; (8) That no inferior stallions be allowed at large at any time; (9) Appointment of a cattle inspector.

¹²*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, April 24, 1884.

¹³*Ibid.*, March 20, 1884.

not give an account of this meeting. John Goodall, foreman of Marquis de Mores, was named foreman for the roundup. The call read as follows:

The cattlemen are all supposed to know that the round-up for this section of the Bad Lands begins May 25, at the Beaver creek crossing of the N.P.R.R. Every stock owner will send enough cow boys to look after his interests, who will all be under the orders of and subject to dismissal by the foreman, John Goodall. Each cattle owner will provide a mess-wagon or make arrangements to mess with someone else. At least six good horses will be needed by every man. There will be day and night herding, in which each man must take part. Branding will be done every day. Every man who wishes his cattle taken care of, must be represented on the round-up. The time taken by the round-up will be from six weeks to two months and the extent of territory is about one hundred by fifty miles. In this district there are about 40,000 cattle.¹⁴

The roundup was completed late in June, earlier than expected. The *Cow Boy* reported:

. . . . It lasted just a month and was a great success, especially considering the fact that it was the first round-up for this district. No dispute or dissatisfaction of any kind arose and everything moved like clockwork. The district rounded up averages one hundred by fifty miles and contains between 30,000 and 40,000 cattle. The cattle are in excellent condition, most of them being ready for slaughter. The calf crop is lighter than was expected, the highest estimate for the district being 75 per cent and the lowest 55. This is doubtless owing to the fact that bulls have been allowed to range with the herd the year round. Under an association, this evil will be remedied, as it is a prime necessity in this climate to keep the bulls up from November till July at least, longer would be better.¹⁵

Following his return to New York in October, 1883, Roosevelt was reelected to the State Assembly without difficulty. It was his most important year and he had a voice in all major legislation. In the midst of his political triumphs, personal tragedy suddenly struck. Within a single night in February, 1884, both his wife and mother died. Several days later he returned to Albany and continued his work in the assembly where he stayed until the end of the legislative session. In June, he was sent as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago. Here, Roosevelt

¹⁴*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, May 15, 1884.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, June 26, 1884.

and his friends suffered defeat when James G. Blaine received the presidential nomination. He, meanwhile, had decided, if his cattle wintered well in the Badlands, to start another ranch. When he learned of his small losses, he made arrangements with two of his former guides in Maine, William W. Sewall and Wilmot Dow, to operate his new ranch for him. On June 8, the day following Blaine's nomination, Roosevelt took the train for Medora.¹⁶

From June, 1884 to the fall of 1886, Roosevelt made frequent trips between New York and the Badlands. His letters, together with the reports in contemporary newspapers, give considerable information regarding his activities in 1884. In a letter to his sister, dated June 17, he wrote:

Well, I have been having a glorious time here, and am well hardened now. I have just come in from spending *thirteen* hours in the saddle. For every day I have been here I have had my hands full. First and foremost, the cattle have done well, and I regard the outlook for making the business a success as being very hopeful. This winter I lost about 25 head from wolves, cold, etc., the others are in admirable shape, and I have about a hundred and fifty-five calves. I shall put on a thousand more cattle and shall make it my regular business. In the autumn I shall bring out Sewell [sic] and Dow and put them on a ranche with very few cattle to start with, and in the course of a couple of years give them quite a little herd also.

. . . . I am in the saddle all day long either taking part in the round-up of the cattle, or else hunting antelope I am really attached to my two "factors," Ferris and Merrifield; they are very fine men.¹⁷

On June 19, the *Bad Lands Cow Boy* reported: "Mr. Roosevelt [sic] is still at Ferris & Merrifield's ranch, hunting and playing cowboy. It seems to be more congenial than reforming New York state politics. He is thoroughly impressed with the profit of raising cattle in the Bad Lands, as his vigorous backing of Ferris Bros. & Merrifield testifies."¹⁸ Several days later, it carried this item: "Theodore Roosevelt, the young New York reformer, made us a very pleasant call Monday, in full cow-boy regalia. New

¹⁶Henry F. Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt, A Biography* (New York, 1931) 49-53; Hagedorn, *Op. cit.*, 87-89; Sewall, *op. cit.*, 11-14.

¹⁷*Letters from Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles, 1870-1918* (New York, 1924) 57-58. Hereafter these letters will be cited "Mrs. Cowles."

¹⁸*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, June 19, 1884.

York will certainly lose him for a time at least, as he is perfectly charmed with our free western life and is now figuring on a trip into the Big Horn country"¹⁹ Early in July, he left for New York where he remained for about a month.²⁰ Late in the same month, Ferris and Merrifield returned from Iowa with 1,000 head of cattle for the Maltese Cross ranch.²¹ The *Cow Boy* described them as ". . . one's and two's, half steers and half heifers, and are said to be the best lot of cattle shipped west this year."²² Early in August, the *Cow Boy* commented: ". . . He [Roosevelt] has established another ranch [the Elkhorn] about thirty miles down the river, stocked it and put it in charge of Wm. Seawall [sic] and Wm. McDow [sic]."²³ Following his return to the Badlands that month, he wrote to his sister, "I found the cattle all here and looking well; I have now got some sixteen hundred head on the river"²⁴

In the fall of 1883 and the spring and summer of 1884, the "rustlers" were extremely active in eastern Montana and western Dakota. The ranchers along the Little Missouri suffered severely. The thieves were hard to find in their Badlands hideouts. Their cabins were strongly fortified, each being a miniature fortress in itself. In 1884, the matter of taking steps to stamp them out was brought before the April meeting of the Montana Stockgrowers Association which was held in Miles City. A part of the members were in favor of organizing a small group of cowboys and raiding the country. The more conservative group, headed by Granville Stuart, opposed this method, claiming that it would cost many lives and, if any of the rustlers were killed, the cowboys would probably stand trial for murder. It was finally decided that the association should take no action whatever against the thieves. The latter obtained information about the decision of the association and intensified their operations.²⁵ In July, the *Cow Boy*

¹⁹*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, June 26, 1884.

²⁰Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 59.

²¹*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, June 19, July 31, 1884.

²²*Ibid.*, July 31, 1884.

²³*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Aug. 7, 1884.

²⁴Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 60. Letter of August 12, 1884.

²⁵Lang, *op. cit.*, 141; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 139-146; Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier* (Cleveland, 1925). In two volumes, 2: 195-197. According to Stuart, Marquis de Mores was strongly in favor of a "rustlers war" and was staunchly supported by Theodore Roosevelt, who was also a member of the association. Stuart was in error on this point since Roosevelt never attended the meeting of the association in April, 1884. It was not until the following year that he joined the association.

briefly summarized the problem of horse stealing and suggested a solution.

From all parts of Dakota and Montana come reports of the depredations of horse-thieves. We think we are entirely within bounds in stating that in Dakota alone, there have been at least two hundred head stolen, and scarcely more than half dozen have been recovered. Several men have also been hung for horse-stealing, but the plague still goes on We wish to be placed on record as believing that the only way to cure horse-stealing is to hang the thief wherever caught. The end, in this case, fully justifies the means.²⁶

Beginning the following month, however, items in the contemporary newspapers disclose that some mysterious organization, known as the vigilantes, was secretly at work in an effort to stamp out the rustlers. In the middle of August, the *Glendive Times* carried this item:

A report comes to us from the lynching of two men on the Little Missouri We were unable to learn the cause or the names of the victims, but the report seems to be confirmed as everyone from that way brings the same report²⁷

Rumors were flying thick and fast in October of 1884 regarding raids on horse thieves. At one time, a party of Canadian mounted police with Cree scouts was reported as moving down into the Badlands east of the Yellowstone "hot on the trail" of horse thieves. A few days later, Miles City officials got off the train at Glendive packing their saddles. The officers crossed the Yellowstone River and were ". . . met by stockmen, cowboys, and horses whence they left for the lower country. Simultaneously a party from the Little Missouri Stock Association crossed from Mingsville [now Wibaux, Montana] to operate in the badlands below and in conjunction with the officers and cowboys on the west side" Another party of cowboys from Granville Stuart's and other outfits was reported as "awaiting in the brush to operate in conjunction with the other parties." Several days later the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* carried a telegraphic account, received from Miles City, of a fight about 17 miles north of Mingsville near the Wibaux ranch between cowboys and horse thieves. According

²⁶*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, July 24, 1884.

²⁷*Glendive Times*, August 16, 1884.

to this report, "five empty cowboys' saddles were found on the field" and "four horse thieves were hung."²⁸

The principal leader in the movement to organize against the rustlers was Granville Stuart, a prominent Montana stockman. The vigilance committee was primarily an unauthorized company of men who were banded together for the purpose of catching and hanging everyone suspected of being a horse thief. This committee was made up of two groups, the honorary members and the active members. The former were primarily prominent stockmen who did not dare risk their reputations in taking an active part against the thieves. The latter group did the actual work. The active members included many irresponsible characters and men of shady reputations. It is claimed that while the vigilantes served their primary purpose of exterminating thieves, they at times served a secondary purpose which overshadowed the first in importance. Two of their favorite methods of obtaining information were putting a rope around a suspect's neck and threatening to hang him if he did not divulge what the vigilantes wanted to know; the other was to hold the victim as prisoner indefinitely. Their methods earned for them the title "the stranglers."²⁹ When Packard, the editor of the *Cow Boy*, who was one of Medora's leading advocates of law enforcement, learned of the intention of the vigilantes to invade the Little Missouri region, he issued this warning:

A report that the Montana "stranglers" were on their way to Medora caused considerable talk, and all kinds of rumors were afloat. Last week they captured an innocent cow boy and held him in custody for two days. He says he could not convince them that he was honest, nor would they listen to anything he said, but knew everything. It seems strange that men from other territories should come to Dakota to hunt for cattle thieves, when it would keep an army of men very busy for a long time to eliminate that element from their own borders. Medora is able to take care of her own stock, and can dispense with the aid of the "stranglers," as they style themselves. A horse thief stands no show, nor does he deserve any, but to take men who are looking for estrayed stock and

²⁸*Glendive Times*, October 11, 25, 1884.

²⁹Wallis Huidekoper, "Land of the Dacotahs" (Helena, 1949) 15; George F. Shafer, "Early History of McKenzie County," *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, Vol. IV (Grand Forks, 1913) 58; Hagedorn, *op cit.*, 145-147, 157-158, 192-198.

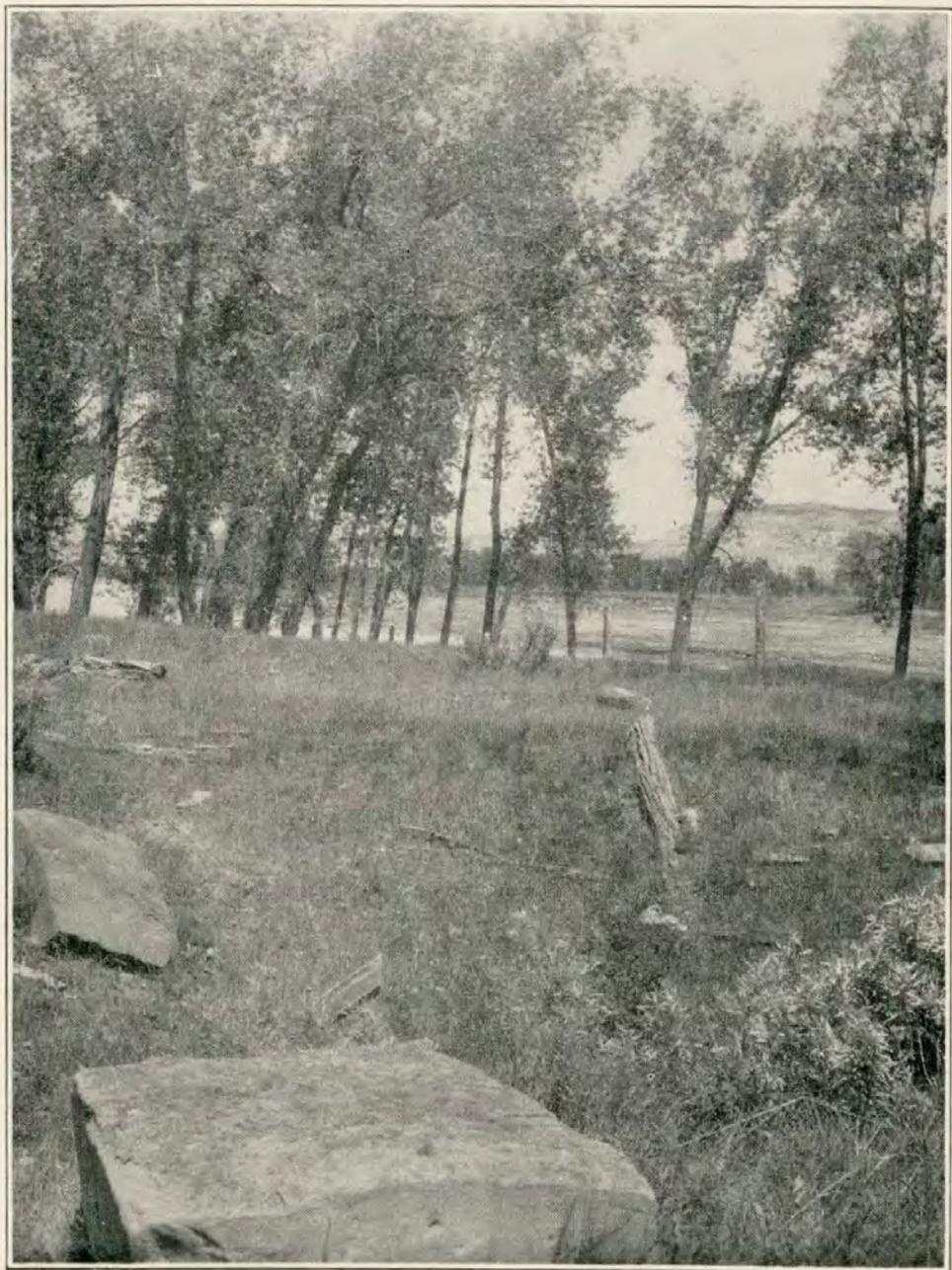
string them up a couple of time in order to get information, is going a little too far, and there is likely to be trouble should they attempt anything like that around here. If a man is caught stealing stock, give him the benefit of the noose; but unless a clear case is against him he should have a chance to prove his innocence. It is hoped that they exercise a little more precaution in the future.³⁰

A special train on the Northern Pacific, bearing the vigilantes and their horses, moved eastward from Billings, Montana. After stopping at various points, the party finally reached Medora where the train was abandoned. The committee was comprised of twenty members and was under the charge of a character known as "Flopping Bill." A French Canadian named Louis La Pache, who was awaiting trial for horse stealing at Miles City, had been engaged as guide. The company's first stop was at the mouth of Beaver Creek, less than ten miles from Roosevelt's Elkhorn ranch, on a ranch operated by William Roberts, George Medlock and James Monroe. The proprietors, when they learned of the coming of the vigilantes, fled. The party, however, found their hired man, Thomas Webb, an Englishman. The vigilantes placed a rope around Webb's neck. He was finally released with the understanding that he leave the country and never return. The company proceeded down the river to the W Ranch, operated by Grisy and Wibaux. There it was ordered to depart by the foremen, Charles Armstrong and Sidney Tarbell. The vigilantes continued their way along the river burning hay of the sheep ranches and of the small cattle ranchers, placing ropes around the necks of innocent men in their efforts to make them divulge information. After the vigilantes had passed through, the cowboys and small ranchers, anticipating another invasion, organized for defense. The vigilance committee, however, never returned.³¹

The results of this expedition along the Little Missouri by the vigilantes are controversial. George F. Shafer, one of the early settlers along the river in what is now McKenzie County, stated that "The real purpose of the expedition into Dakota was not to catch horse thieves but to drive the small ranchers out of the

³⁰*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Oct. 30, 1884.

³¹Shafer, *op. cit.*, 58-61; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 192-198; Osgood, *op. cit.*, 160; Joseph Henry Taylor, *Frontier & Indian Life and Kaleidoscopic Lives* (Washburn, N.D., 1932) 273-280; Huidekoper, *loc. cit.*; Interview with Charles O. Armstrong by Lewis F. Crawford, Aug. 4-6, 1929, ms, State Historical Society of North Dakota.



Elkhorn Ranch Site

country . . . The expedition was in fact, the most notorious example of vandalism known to that part of the region . . .³² However, Packard, who was very much opposed to the methods of the vigilantes, claimed the following spring that the results of their raid, on the whole, had been "wholesome."

Whatever can be said against the methods adopted by the "stranglers" who came through here last fall, it cannot but be acknowledged that the result of their work has been very wholesome. Not a definite case of horse stealing from a cowman has been reported since and it seems as though a very thorough cleanup has been made.³³

The question arises, "Did Roosevelt have any part in the organization and the work of the vigilantes?" While many of the facts concerning the movement are not and probably will never be known, it is highly probable that he took no part. Hagedorn stated that Marquis de Mores knew about the plan of the vigilantes to move against the rustlers. De Mores unfolded the plan to Roosevelt and a young Englishman by the name of Jameson. Together the three went to Glendive to see Stuart and offer their services. Stuart, however, refused to allow them to take part. He pointed out that they were untrained to frontier conditions; that they would get themselves killed for no reason; all were from prominent families; if anything happened to them or if news were spread that they were taking part in the raid, the attention of the whole country would be drawn to the expedition in which surprise was essential to success.³⁴ Wallis Huidekoper, early Badlands rancher and past president of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, claimed that neither Roosevelt nor de Mores was included in the organization because it was feared neither could keep their plans a secret.³⁵ In 1884, Roosevelt was a newcomer to

³²Shafer, *op. cit.*, 60-61. Shafer lists four reasons for this conclusion: "First, it was at this time that the big stockmen of the west fully realized that they were soon to be crowded out of business by the ever increasing number of small settlers, and nothing was left undone to discourage settlement. Second, the expedition was largely one of devastation and not of pursuit. Horse thieves were not interested in grazing conditions, neither were they injured by the destruction of property, for they had none. Third, the campaign seemed to be directed entirely against permanent settlers. Horse thieves in those days were not permanent settlers, engaged in the cattle and sheep business, but instead, were transients of the most migratory character. Fourth, the committee did not catch, or so far as is known, attempt to catch any one suspected of being a horse thief."

³³*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, April 2, 1885.

³⁴Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 146-147.

³⁵Interview with Wallis Huidekoper by the writer, October 16, 1949.

the Badlands. It was not until later that he won the confidence of such leading stockmen of Montana as Stuart and others. During much of the summer and autumn of 1884, he was absent from the Badlands.³⁶

In 1884, "Texas fever" first appeared on the northern ranges. This disease, also known as splenic fever, was brought in by Texas cattle. Although the cattle from that state were apparently immune to it, they spread the disease to northern cattle with which they came in contact. In some places, fifty percent of the northern cattle died from it. By 1885, fifteen northern and northwestern states had laws refusing entry of Texas cattle between February and November. The disease was also carried in railroad stock cars. In August, 1884, Governor John Crosby of Montana declared a quarantine against all Texas cattle coming into that territory by rail. Texas fever continued to be a problem on the northern ranges throughout the 1880's. The Montana Stockgrowers Association provided for stock inspectors along various points of the Northern Pacific to prevent Texas cattle and those infected with contagious diseases, such as pleuropneumonia, from entering western Dakota and Montana. In his interesting book, *The Outlet*, Andy Adams, the cowboy writer, describes the enforcement of the quarantine in 1884. Adams, in that year, was foreman of a cattle drive from Texas to Fort Buford, Dakota.³⁷

A meeting was again called for September 9 for the purpose of effecting a permanent organization of the Badlands stockmen and to make preparations for the fall roundup. Apparently little was accomplished toward forming an association but plans were

³⁶Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 208-214; Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 62-69. The Cowles correspondence indicates Roosevelt was in New York during most of July; also that he left on his hunting trip to the Big Horn on August 18 and returned late in September. Hagedorn states that from October 7 to November 16, he was in the East, a part of which time he was taking part in the political campaign in behalf of Blaine.

³⁷Osgood, *op. cit.*, 161-166; *Glendive Times*, August 9, 1884; Andy Adams, *The Outlet* (Boston, 1925); T. R. Havin, "Texas Fever," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LII, No. 2 (October, 1948) 147-162. According to Professor Havins, the cause of Texas fever was discovered by Dr. Thebold Smith of the Bureau of Animal Industry in 1886. The disease was caused by a tick. While examining a spleen of a cow which died from the disease, Smith noted, under the microscope, protozoa in the blood corpuscles of the animal. The same type of protozoa was found in the tick. It was found that the tick after attaining maturity fell to the ground where she lays her eggs. The eggs hatch from twenty to twenty-eight days. The young ticks, crawling up the limbs of the animal, live to maturity and then repeat the life cycle.

made for the fall roundup. This roundup, of which John Goodall was foreman, commenced on September 15.³⁸

It is quite probable that Roosevelt became interested in organizing the Little Missouri stockmen soon after he came to the Badlands in June, 1884.³⁹ After his return from the East in November of that year, however, he was very active in promoting the organization. He visited the ranches along the Little Missouri trying to convince them of the necessity and benefits from an association.

. . . I am now trying to get up a stockmen's association [he wrote his sister on November 23] and in a day or two, unless the weather is too bad I shall start up the river with Sewall to see about it.⁴⁰

Several weeks later the *Cow Boy* reported.

Theodore Roosevelt, who is taking an active interest in the coming cattlemen's meeting, was in Medora Tuesday working up interest in that direction. When he knows he is right, Mr. Roosevelt's New York record shows that he is a tireless worker.⁴¹

Roosevelt issued a call for a meeting of the Little Missouri stockmen to be held in Medora on December 19. The notice stated that the proposed meeting was called "At the request of Messrs. [A. C.] Huidekooper [sic], Wadsworth, Eaton, Truscott, the N.P.R.C. Co. and of several other stockmen having ranges on the Little Missouri and Beaver Creek . . ."⁴² The movement received the support of the *Bad Lands Cow Boy*.

³⁸*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Sept. 4, 18, 1884. The issue for September 11 which probably gave an account of this meeting was missing in the files at the State Historical Society of North Dakota. See also *The Montana Stock and Mining Journal*, Helena, Sept., 1884, 84; *Glendive Times*, Sept. 20, 1884.

³⁹Lang, *op. cit.*, 168.

⁴⁰Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 69-70.

⁴¹*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Dec. 11, 1884.

⁴²*The Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Dec. 11, 18, 1884. The call read as follows: "At the request of Messrs. Huidekooper [sic], Wadsworth, Eaton, Truscott, the N.P.R.C. Co. and of several other stockmen having ranges on the Little Missouri and Beaver Creek, a meeting of the stockmen of this river and tributaries is hereby called to be held in Roberts Hall, Medora at 11 a.m. Friday December 19th. The object is to bring together the cattlemen of this vicinity in order that they may discuss certain questions of immediate and pressing interest to them, and in order that they may take measures to provide for a more efficient organization of the stockmen of this vicinity in the future, both so that they may be able to act more as a unit than has been the case in the past, and so that they can combine to protect their interests against unjust interference from the outside.

"All gentlemen interested in stock raising both those on the Little Missouri and those on the neighboring waters, are urgently requested to attend.

[By request.]

THEODORE ROOSEVELT"

The notice for a meeting of the cattle men of this district, which we publish for the second time should attract the attention of every man on and in the neighborhood of the river who is interested in stock. The reasons are so manifest that an organization should be formed, that there is no need of enlarging on them. It is imperative above all things that the cattle men should be united to be successful in movements for their good. A number of points will come up for action at the meeting of December 19, and it is important that every cattle man in this district attend, as each should have a voice in the decisions. Should there be only a partial attendance or should the interest be half-hearted the effort to organize will be useless. Unanimous and united action will be of incalculable benefit to our stock men.⁴⁵

Eleven cattle companies and individuals were represented at the meeting. These were: SOHO Cattle Company, Badger Cattle Company, Maltese Cross Cattle Company, Custer Trail Cattle Company, Le Moyne Cattle Company, Elkhorn Cattle Company, Thompson & Company, L. D. & B. Rumsey, H. B. Wadsworth & Company, N. P. Refrigerator Car Company and Casey & Company. The meeting was called to order by Roosevelt. The name adopted for the organization was the Little Missouri River Stockmen's Association. A resolution was adopted designating the officers be the chairman and vice-chairman. These were to be elected annually at the first meeting after the fall roundup. Roosevelt was elected chairman and Henry Boice as vice-chairman. Marquis de Mores was named as a committee of one to work with a committee appointed by the Eastern Montana Live Stock Association to procure legislation from the territorial legislature of Dakota favorable to the interests of the cattlemen. A resolution was passed that if any members of the association had cattle run over by the railroad, for which the company refused to pay full value, the matter should be brought to the notice of the chairman who, in turn, should report it to the next meeting of the association so that a test case might be brought before the courts.

The following resolutions were also adopted:

1st. At the request of three members in writing, a meeting should be called of the association by the chairman, who was required to give one weeks notice.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, Dec. 11, 1884.

2nd. Representation in the association was to be by firm, each having one vote.

3rd. The next meeting was to be held April 1, 1885 at the call of the chairman.

4th. If any of the cattle companies or stockmen along the river refuse to conform to the rules and the bylaws of the association, the latter will refuse to act with them or allow them to take part in the roundup; and that the roundup captain shall see that no stockmen debarred by the association shall be allowed to take part in or derive benefit from the roundup.

5th. No member should gather or brand calves between December 1 and the spring roundup without giving reasonable notice beforehand to the other ranchmen in the neighborhood.

6th. Each member must not have less than ten bulls to every hundred head of stock on his range.

7th. That the chairman draw up a series of bylaws for the association embodying the foregoing resolutions and in other respects following, as far as practicable, the laws of the Eastern Montana Live Stock Association.⁴⁴

The following week the *Cow Boy* expressed its approval of the new organization and its able chairman.

The stockmen's meeting last Friday morning bids fair to be the beginning of a very efficient organization. The utmost harmony and unanimity prevailed, and under the able chairmanship of Theodore Roosevelt, a large amount of business was transacted in a short time . . . A first-rate start was made, and we can now look forward to an efficient organization ruling all stock matters on the river . . .⁴⁵

On the day following the meeting of the Little Missouri stockmen, Roosevelt left for New York. During the winter months he continued to work on his new book, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*.⁴⁶ He was still in New York on March 30, 1885.⁴⁷ During this period, he drafted the bylaws for the Little Missouri River Stockmen's Association.⁴⁸ One change was made in the bylaws

⁴⁴*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Dec. 25, 1884; photostatic copy of Minutes of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association, December 19, 1884, in Roosevelt's handwriting. Located at Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park.

⁴⁵*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Dec. 25, 1884.

⁴⁶Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 239.

⁴⁷*Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1884-1918* (New York, 1925) 1:29.

⁴⁸*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, March 5, 26, 1885.

relating to the number of bulls to each one hundred cows. The number was changed from ten, as adopted in the resolution at the December 19 meeting, to seven.⁶⁰ The bylaws were published in the *Cow Boy* and Roosevelt issued a call for the meeting of April 1.⁶¹ Roosevelt was not present at this meeting so, in his absence, Henry S. Boice presided. The original members of the association, as taken from the bylaws, were: Continental Cattle Company, St. Louis; Gus Grisy, Mingusville; Rowe, Parker and Easton, Mingusville; Berry Cattle Company, Mingusville; Aberdeen Angus Cattle Company, Cresco, Iowa; Neimmela Ranch, Medora; Towers and Gudgell, Mingusville; Clark and Plum (E.C.), Chicago; Little Missouri Horse Company, Medora; N. P. Refrigerator Car Company, Medora; L. D. and B. Rumsey, Medora; Badger Cattle Company, Medora; Custer Trail Cattle Company, Medora; Le Moyne Cattle Company, Medora; W. N. Thompson, and Company, Medora; H. B. Wadsworth and Company, Medora; Maltese Cross Brand, Medora; Elkhorn Ranch, Medora; E. W. Casey and Company, Medora.⁶² Most of the

⁶⁰See Appendix A.

⁶¹*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, March 26, 1885. The call read as follows:

"A meeting of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association is hereby called for 11 A.M., Wednesday, April 1, 1885, to be held in Pennell Hall, Medora, Dak. Matters connected with the spring round-up will come up for discussion.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
Chairman."

⁶²The Continental Cattle Company, known also as Hughes and J. N. Simpson, operated the "Hash Knife" Ranch on Box Elder Creek and the Little Missouri near Stoneville (now Alzada, Montana). Their cattle were largely bred in Texas and New Mexico and were driven north on the northern ranges. At the peak of their operations, they had from 35,000 to 40,000 cattle on their ranches. Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 197.

Berry Cattle Company, also known as the Berry, Boice Cattle Company, operated the 777 Ranch. Henry S. Boice was the manager. This ranch was located on the Little Missouri River between Horse and Deer creeks. The firm ran about 25,000 head of cattle on its ranch at one time. *Ibid.*, 200, 206; Jennewein, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, No. 8.

The Neimmela Ranch was managed by Gregor Lang. Its range was from Keogh Crossing of the Little Missouri to Pretty Buttes. It had the backing of Sir John Pender, a London financier. *Bad Lands Cow Boy*, April 2, 1885; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 20-22, 25.

Towers and Gudgell's "O X" Ranch was located near the present town of Marmarth, N. D. Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 199.

Clark and Plum (E. C.) operated on the Grand River in what is now South Dakota. Most of their cattle were trailed from Texas. At one time about 18,000 to 20,000 cattle were on their ranges. Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 197; Jennewein, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, No. 7.

The Little Missouri Horse Company, managed by H. R. Tarbell, ranged its horses on the Little Missouri and Davis Creek. *Bad Lands Cow Boy*, April 2, 1885.

The Northern Pacific Refrigerator Car Company of Medora was operated by Marquis de Mores. Its range was between Little Missouri and Beaver Creek. *Ibid.*

L. D. and B. Rumsey's Ranch, operated by J. L. Truscott, was on the Little Missouri River near Bullion Butte. *Ibid.*

The Badger Cattle Company, operated by Howard Eaton, was located on Big Beaver Creek and the Little Missouri, about 40 miles north of Medora. *Ibid.*

members were in attendance at this meeting. New members elected were Griffin Brothers and Ward, J. A. Van Eegan, Pierre Wibaux, E. G. Paddock and John Sawyer. The meeting was devoted primarily to two problems, the spring roundup and the appointment of a livestock inspector. A committee of three, consisting of J. L. Truscott, John Goodall and W. P. Osterhaut, was selected to decide upon the time, the program and foreman of the spring roundup for the Little Missouri region after conferring with a similar committee from Glendive and with the roundup committee of the territorial convention at Miles City. This committee appointed Osterhaut foreman. The roundup was to begin at the mouth of Box Elder, the point where the Little Missouri roundup ended, thence down the river to the Big Beaver, thence up Big Beaver until the southern Yellowstone roundup was met. The time was to be determined by the Miles City convention which was to be held several days later. It was decided at the Medora meeting that the Little Missouri stockmen should roundup the country for about forty miles east of the river and drive the bulk of the cattle back to it before the general roundup.

Initial steps were also taken to obtain a livestock inspector for Medora. It was decided that in case the convention at Miles City should refuse to make a selection that the Little Missouri association should appoint one, the expense for which would be borne *pro rata* by the members. A committee, consisting of J. N. Simpson, George Towers and Howard Eaton, was named to see that an inspector was appointed.⁶²

Custer Trail Cattle Company, of which Howard Eaton was superintendent, was located about four miles south of Medora. Its range was between Deep and Davis Creeks. It had the financial backing of A. C. Huidekoper. *Ibid.*

Le Moyne Cattle Company was located at "Tepee Bottom" along the Little Missouri. It was about fifteen miles south of Medora. D. K. Wade was the manager. It was financed by Julius Le Moyne, Washington, Pennsylvania and others. *Ibid.*, April 2, June 5, July 24, 1884.

W. N. Thompson and Company's ranch was managed by William Dantz. It was located on the Little Missouri about twenty miles south of Medora.

H. B. Wadsworth and Company's ranch was located on the Little Missouri River about fifteen miles north of Medora. It was managed by M. Wadsworth. Many of its cattle were shipped from Minnesota. *Bad Lands Cow Boy*, May 15, 1884.

Roosevelt's Elkhorn Ranch was managed by William W. Sewall and Wilmot Dow. It was located on the Little Missouri River about thirty miles north of Medora.

The Maltese Cross Ranch, also financed by Roosevelt, was managed by Sylvane Ferris and A. W. Merrifield. It was located about seven miles south of Medora on the Little Missouri River.

E. W. Casey Company's range was on O'Donnell Creek. It was managed by Frank S. Moore. *Ibid.*, April 2, 1885.

⁶²*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, April 2, 1885; *Glendive Times*, April 4, 1885.

Roosevelt apparently arrived in or passed through Medora within several days after the meeting of the Little Missouri stockmen for he attended the convention of the Eastern Montana Stockgrowers Association which was held in Miles City on April 3 and 4. Also attending from Medora and the Little Missouri region were Marquis de Mores, Howard and Willis Eaton, John Goodall, W. P. Osterhaut, A. T. Packard, Henry S. Boice, and H. R. Tarbell.⁵³ About 150 representatives of the cattle businesses were present of which 63 were members of the Eastern Montana association.⁵⁴ The meeting was called to order by the president, Colonel Thomas J. Bryan. The applications of 55 persons were considered for membership. One of the applicants was Theodore Roosevelt who was recommended by Marquis de Mores. After the names had been submitted to a committee of three and approved, they were then read to the members and voted upon. All, with the exception of one who had not paid his initiation fee, were elected to membership.⁵⁵ One of the main objectives of this meeting was to effect a consolidation of the two leading stockmen's associations in the territory, the Montana Stockgrowers Association, of which Granville Stuart was president, and the Eastern Montana organization. Prior to the meeting, the executive committee of the eastern association had selected a group of five members to meet in conference with a similar committee from the Montana Stockgrowers Association to devise plans for consolidation. This joint committee, after meeting, recommended:

- 1st. That the two associations consolidate.
- 2nd. The name of Montana Stockgrowers Association should be given to the new consolidated organization.
- 3rd. That the officers consist of a president, 1st vice president, 2nd vice president and a secretary and treasurer combined.
- 4th. That the executive committee of the association consist of one member from each of the counties in the territory, except Custer County, which should have four members, Meagen and Choteau three members each, Lewis and Clark, Yellowstone and

⁵³*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, April 9, 1885; Minutes of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, 1885-1889, (ms) Historical Society of Montana, 1-2. This work hereafter will be cited as "Minutes."

⁵⁴Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 36.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*; Minutes, 1-6.

Dawson two members each, and the territory of Dakota two members.

5th. The annual dues for members should be \$10.00.

6th. The new association should assume all debts and liabilities of the old associations and that the treasurers of each of the old ones should pay over all monies in their possession to the treasurer of the consolidated association.

7th. Meetings should be held semiannually, the spring meeting to be held in Miles City and the fall meeting at Helena.

8th. That in the election of officers for the consolidated organization for that year, the president should be elected from the Eastern Montana Live Stock Association, the 1st vice president from the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the 2nd vice president from the former group, and the secretary and treasurer from the latter organization.

The above resolutions as well as the bylaws for the consolidated association were read and adopted.⁶⁶ Accordingly, the following officers were elected: Colonel Thomas J. Bryan, president; Governor B. F. Potts, 1st vice president; Captain William Harmon, 2nd vice president; and R. B. Harrison, son of Benjamin Harrison, secretary and treasurer. Marquis de Mores and John N. Simpson were named as members of the executive committee from Dakota Territory.⁶⁷ The following resolutions were adopted regulating the range and the roundups:

1st. Members of each roundup district were to meet and elect a time and place for commencing work in their districts and name a captain. This information was to be reported to the association so it might be published.

2nd. Roundups were placed under the strict orders of a foreman. The refusal of a man to follow the foreman's or captain's orders would result in his being prohibited from further participation in the roundup.

3rd. Eight serviceable bulls must be provided for every one hundred cattle on the range.

4th. Members were forbidden from gathering cattle during the months between November 15 and the general spring roundups

⁶⁶Minutes, 1-13; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 36-38; Appendix B.

⁶⁷Minutes, 25-26; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 38; *Bad Lands Cow Boy*, April 9, 1885.

without informing the ranchmen in the neighborhood of their intention and giving them an opportunity to examine the cattle before they were driven from the range.

5th. Members were required to supply the association within 30 days as to the number of cattle, horses, mules and asses owned or controlled by him or his firm with all brands and marks on such stock; also, each member was required to give the names of the individuals comprising the firm and the names of all officers, if a company, and the post office address.⁵⁸

A committee of fifteen, which included John Goodall and Henry Boice, was appointed to district the roundups for 1885. No. 6, the Little Missouri district, was defined as follows:

Beginning at a point on the N. P. RR, where said RR crosses the Divide, Big Beaver Creek and the Little Missouri River; thence southerly along the said Divide, and on the same course crossing Little Beaver to a point on the Divide between Little Beaver and Box Elder Creek, ten (10) miles from the mouth of Little Beaver, thence Easterly to the mouth of Box Elder; thence due East to a point on the Divide between the Little Missouri and the Big Missouri; thence Northerly across said Divide to a point thirty miles below the mouth of Big Beaver; thence Westerly across the Little Missouri to a point on the Divide between Little Missouri and the Yellowstone River, thence southerly along said Divide to the N. P. R. R.; thence Easterly along said R. R. to the Divide between Big Beaver and the Little Missouri, the Point of beginning.⁵⁹

Osterhaut, the foreman of the Little Missouri district, named May 25 as the day for the beginning of the roundup which would start at the mouth of Box Elder Creek.⁶⁰

A committee of five was appointed to assist the secretary in compiling a brand book. Secretary Harrison read a report on bulls and recommended legislation requiring ranchmen to keep them off the range at certain times of the year. The matter of the

⁵⁸Minutes, 19-24, 87; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 38-39. The original fifth resolution, passed at this meeting, provided that no member of the association should have in his employ any person who owns cattle on the range or who had a brand separate from that of his employer. At the fall meeting of the association in 1885, however, this resolution was rescinded because it did not give the employees a chance to make a start in the cattle business.

⁵⁹Minutes, 40.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 48.

depredations of Indian thieves was also brought before the meeting.²¹

During this convention of April, 1885, Roosevelt took a very inconspicuous part. The minutes do not indicate that he voiced his opinions once nor was he appointed on any of the committees.

No other contemporary writer described the general roundups in the Badlands better than Roosevelt himself. The purpose of the general roundup, which was held in the late spring and early summer, was to brand cattle. The horses needed for it, which usually grazed on the range throughout the winter, were gathered early in April and fed grain to give them added strength. The captain or foreman, upon whom the efficiency of the roundup depended, was chosen in advance of the date on which it commenced. He was in complete control and everyone owed him obedience. Since the Little Missouri group was affiliated with the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the boundaries of its roundup district were determined by the latter organization. The Little Missouri roundup worked partly in conjunction with the adjoining district in Montana. Usually, it was necessary for each ranch to have representatives in other districts, in addition to those in its own. Each outfit had its own wagon, driven by the cook, which carried the bedding, food and other provisions for its men. The actual work of the roundup was done by the cowboys or "cow-punchers" as they were frequently called. There were at least twelve cowboys and several representatives from other roundup districts. The number of men ranged to fifty or more men. Each cowboy had a string of eight or ten ponies. Taking charge of the horses were the "horse wranglers." There were at least two of these since one herded during the day and the other at night. Much of the work on the roundup consisted in cutting out, roping and branding the calves. The "beef roundups" were held later in the year for the purpose of gathering steers intended for immediate shipment.²²

(To be concluded in Volume 17, No. 3)

²¹*Ibid.*, 29, 30-38; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 39.

²²Roosevelt, *op. cit.*, 46-71; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 5-14.



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