

North  
Dakota  
History

VOLUME 17

JULY, 1950

NUMBER 3

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

## ROOSEVELT AND THE STOCKMEN'S ASSOCIATION

By RAY H. MATTISON

(Concluded from NORTH DAKOTA HISTORY, Volume 17, No. 2)

Much has been written and many stories have been told about Roosevelt on the roundups. Many biographers, largely from the East, have written about his feats as a rider, a roper and a general cowhand. Although some of these stories have been given assistance by Roosevelt himself, by his own admission he "never became a good roper, nor more than an average rider, according to ranch standards."<sup>63</sup> He avoided mean horses. Although most of the old timers who knew him respected him for his willingness to work and do the tasks assigned him, few of them ever praised his ability as a cowhand. He was handicapped by being very near-sighted. Most of the actual work of the roundup was done by the cowboys, men who had spent years in acquiring the skills of cutting, roping and branding efficiently. Since it was desirable to get the work of the roundups over with as quickly as possible, only the most efficient men were assigned this work. In common with most of the employers in Dakota and eastern Montana at that time, Roosevelt lacked the experience necessary to acquire these skills. On the roundups, he hunted a great deal to provide meat for the men.<sup>64</sup> However, he worked hard. In a letter to his friend Lodge, dated June 5, he wrote:

I have been three weeks on the roundup and have worked as hard as any of the cowboys; but I have enjoyed it greatly. Yesterday I was eighteen hours in the saddle—from 4 A. M. to 10 P. M.—having a half hour each for dinner and tea. I can now do cowboy work pretty well.<sup>65</sup>  
On June 23, he wrote to Lodge as follows:

. . . The roundup is swinging over from the east to the west divide; I rode in to get my mail and must leave at once. We are working pretty hard. Yesterday I was in the saddle at 2 A. M., and except for two very hasty meals, after each of which I took a fresh horse, did not stop

<sup>63</sup>Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (New York, 1913) 106.

<sup>64</sup>Usher L. Burdick, "The Life and Exploits of John Goodall," (Watford City, N. D., 1931); Interview with William Follis by the writer, July 13, 1949; "Old Timers Interviewed by Park Historian," *Dickinson Press*, April 6, 1949; Nelson, *op. cit.*, 213-214; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 275-304; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 3-4.

<sup>65</sup>Lodge Correspondence, 1:30.

working till 8:15 P.M.; and was up at half past three this morning . . .<sup>66</sup>

Roosevelt, meanwhile, continued to stock his Maltese Cross and Elkhorn ranches. In March, Merrifield went to Minneapolis and Iowa to buy a herd of cattle for the two outfits. He returned early in May.<sup>67</sup> The *Cow Boy* reported:

Fifteen hundred head of steers yearlings and two's came in Thursday morning for the Elkhorn and Chimney Butte ranches of Theodore Roosevelt. They were in fair condition after their long ride and except for the disadvantage of a large number being yearlings, give every evidence of growing into good beef. The larger majority are steers. A good lot of Short-horn bulls and one Polled Angus were in the herd. A thousand of these cattle will be driven to the Elkhorn ranch and five hundred to the already well-stocked Chimney Butte ranch.<sup>68</sup>

During 1885, the problem of cattle diseases continued to plague the stockmen of eastern Montana and western Dakota. In May of that year, a quarantine was again placed by Montana on cattle believed to be infected with contagious diseases such as Texas fever and pleuropneumonia. The quarantine applied to stock being shipped by rail from east of the Missouri River and those coming in from several southern states. Those coming from the west were found not diseased so were admitted at once.<sup>69</sup>

Following the general roundup, Roosevelt went East. The work on his mansion at Sagamore Hill on Long Island was progressing.<sup>70</sup> His *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* had been completed the preceding May while he was at the Maltese Cross Ranch.<sup>71</sup> On August 26, he was reported as having passed through Bismarck on the preceding day "en route to his ranch in the Badlands."<sup>72</sup> On August 27, he issued a call in the *Cow Boy* for a meeting of the

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, 1: 31-32.

<sup>67</sup>*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, March 12, May 7, 1885.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, May 7, 1885.

<sup>69</sup>*The Montana Live Stock Journal*, June, 1885.

<sup>70</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, July 18, 1885.

<sup>71</sup>Theodore Roosevelt, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (New York, 1891). The introductory note of this book was signed "THEODORE ROOSEVELT, CHIMNEY BUTTE RANCH, MEDORA, DAKOTA, May, 1885."

<sup>72</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Aug. 26, 1885.

Little Missouri River Stockmen's Association to be held September 5.<sup>73</sup>

The meeting was called to order by Roosevelt at 10 o'clock. Nearly all of the members were present or represented. It was the regular meeting for the election of officers. Although Roosevelt "advanced many cogent reasons for the election of to the chair of some resident member and against his own re-election . . . he was immediately and unanimously re-elected president for the ensuing year." Henry Boice was unanimously reelected vice president and J. L. Truscott as secretary. The chief business before the meeting was the planning of the beef roundup for that fall. J. L. Truscott's motion that a committee of three be appointed to consider questions pertaining to it carried. Charles Rowe, Willis Eaton and H. B. Wadsworth were appointed to this committee. The roundup committee, after meeting, recommended that Joseph McCoul be appointed foreman of the roundup which would commence on September 29. It was also recommended that the roundup begin at Medora and work down to and one day below the mouth of the Big Beaver, then up the Little Missouri to Medora. The committee also proposed that the foreman receive \$5.00 per day salary. The recommendations of the committee were unanimously adopted. Benjamin F. Lamb was elected as member. The chairman stated that, from the sale of nine mavericks found in the spring roundup, there was \$213 in the treasury. It was voted that \$100 of this amount be presented to Osterhaut for his "excellent services" in the spring roundup. It was moved by Willis Eaton that the chairman be given authority to call the spring meeting a few days before the one held by the Montana Stockgrowers Association in Miles City.<sup>74</sup> The *Cow Boy* again complimented Roosevelt on his work as president of the organization.

The association can congratulate itself on again electing Theodore Roosevelt as president. Under his ad-

<sup>73</sup>*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Aug. 27, 1885. The call read as follows:

"To the Members of the Little Missouri River  
Stockmen's Association

Pursuant to the request of several members of the Association, and in accordance with the wish expressed at the last meeting thereof, I hereby call a meeting of the Little Missouri River Stockmen's Association, to be held in Pennell's hall, Medora, Saturday, September 5, at 9 o'clock a.m.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT,  
Chairman."

<sup>74</sup>*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Sept. 10, 1885.

ministration, everything moves quickly forward and there is none of that time-consuming, fruitless talk that so invariably characterizes a deliberative assembly without a good presiding officer.<sup>76</sup>

Roosevelt did not participate in the fall roundup of 1885. When he went through Bismarck in the middle of September, the *Tribune* commented:

Theodore Roosevelt, the New York reformer and Dakota ranchman, passed through the city yesterday evening en route to New York. He was as talkative and smiling as ever, and was surrounded by a number of friends, who were enjoying the entertainment of his spicy comments.<sup>77</sup>

The fall roundup on the Little Missouri lasted for twenty-seven days. In an editorial, the *Cow Boy* summarized the results:

The round-up came in to Medora Saturday and ended the work by rounding-up Andrew's creek on Sunday. Taking everything into consideration, the work was done as thoroughly as possible. The principal cause of complaint is that cattle were missed and that there will be an undue amount of mavericks in the spring. How true these reports are, only time will tell. There is no one who says that anyone shirked his duty. On the other hand, as all concur that every man worked hard, we are brought to the facts in the case: there were not enough men on the round-up. The complaint of a year ago last spring, that the riders were not well enough mounted has almost disappeared. The complaint of too few men is as serious as of too few or too poor horses and should be remedied as quickly. Round-up work is no "soft snap" and twenty five men cannot do forty men's work any more than the best kind of cow-boy, with a string of four or five poor horses can do one man's work. This is a matter that should be attended to at the next meeting of the association. The round-up lasted twenty-seven days and worked the Little Missouri and tributaries from below the mouth of Big Beaver on the north to the mouth of Little Beaver on the south and also the Big Beaver and its tributaries.<sup>77</sup>

Roosevelt returned to the Badlands early in October for a short visit. During the latter part of the month he was back at

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Sept. 17, 1885.

<sup>77</sup>*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Oct. 29, 1885.



The old Macqueen House where cattlemen congregated in Miles City, Mont. Photographed by L. A. Huffman, 1886.



Medora, North Dakota in 1886

Sagamore Hill.<sup>78</sup> In the fall and winter months of 1885-1886, he delivered several lectures in the East on hunting and ranch life in the "Far West." His remarks on western frontiersmen, cowboys, skunks and Indians were carried in several Dakota newspapers.<sup>79</sup> One reported that "Since Theodore Roosevelt gave his lecture on ranch life, he has received about 100 applications for places on his ranch. They have come from clerks, salesmen, professional men, mechanics and laborers, and the evident desire of each one was for an opportunity to lead an easy and careless life away from the hard work of the city. . . ."<sup>80</sup>

In March, Roosevelt returned to the Elkhorn ranch. He wrote to his sister on March 20: "Things are looking better than I expected; the loss by death has been wholly trifling. Unless we have a big accident I shall get through this all right; if not I can get started square with no debt."<sup>81</sup> Early in April he, with Sewall and Dow, captured three thieves who stole his boat. Roosevelt took them to Dickinson where they were turned over to the officers.<sup>82</sup>

The spring meeting of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association met in Medora on April 13. It was called to order by Roosevelt. About sixty-five persons, representing the stock interests in the Little Missouri region, were present. Newspaper men attending were A. T. Packard of the *Bad Lands Cow Boy*, S. A. Marney of the *Stockgrowers Journal* (Miles City), W. D. Knight of the *Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter* (Miles City), W. W. Mabee of the *Glendive Times*. L. C. Hunt of the E. W. Casey Cattle Company was elected as a member of the association. John Goodall was unanimously elected foreman of the general roundup. It was moved that the delegates to the Montana Stockgrowers Association be instructed to lay before that body the desire of the Little Missouri group to date the start of the roundup on July 1 at the mouth of Box Elder creek and that it was

<sup>78</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Oct. 3, 1885; *Lodge Correspondence*, 1: 33; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 348, 359.

<sup>79</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Dec. 1, 1885; Jan. 30, 1886; *Mandan Pioneer*, Dec. 4, 1885; *Dickinson Press*, Jan. 23, 1886.

<sup>80</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Jan. 30, 1886.

<sup>81</sup>Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 72.

<sup>82</sup>*Lodge Correspondence*, 1:39; Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 73-74; *Dickinson Press*, April 17, 1886.

desirable to work up Beaver creek to its source. It was moved and carried that Roosevelt, John N. Simpson and one other be selected by them to be the committee representing the Little Missouri association at Miles City; also that this committee be instructed to have Henry Boice appointed as one of the executive committee for Dakota. The maverick question received considerable discussion. It was decided that since the system of sale heretofore practiced\* had proved unsatisfactory, that the bylaws of the Little Missouri association be made to conform to those of the Montana organization in the matter of branding between roundups.\*\*<sup>85</sup> Roosevelt was criticized for one ruling as chairman of this meeting. According to the editor of the *Glendive Times*, a motion carried by a majority of one. Roosevelt, as presiding officer, "contrary to all parliamentary usage," then voted in the negative and the motion lost in a tie.<sup>86</sup>

The other day I presided over the meeting of the Little Missouri Stockmen here, [he wrote Lodge], preserving the most rigid parliamentary decorum; I go as our representative to the great Montana Stock meeting in a day or two.<sup>86</sup>

One newspaper man, who attended the meeting of the association at Medora, described his return to Glendive with the "cattle kings and merchant princes."

One of the jolliest parties that ever boarded a dining car was that from Medora Tuesday evening after the meeting of the stockmen at that point. The particular assemblage to which we allude consisted of the following named gentlemen: R. B. Harrison, secretary of the Montana Stockgrowers' association; C. R. Kelsey of the firms of J. S. Collins and Company; Pierre Wibaux, Gus Grisby and Sid Tarbell, of the Beaver Valley; W. R. Fountain, merchant of Mingusville, and lastly two innocents, viz: W. D. Knight of the *Yellowstone Journal*, and

\*It appears to have been the practice of the Little Missouri association to turn the proceeds from the sale of the mavericks, collected on the roundups, into the treasury of the association. *Supra*.

\*\*The Montana bylaws provided that no member should gather cattle on the range between November 15 and the date of the general spring roundup without informing the ranchmen in the neighborhood of his intention and giving them a fair opportunity before they were driven from the range.

<sup>85</sup>*Glendive Times*, April 18, 1886.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>86</sup>*Lodge Correspondence*, 1:39. Letter of April 16, 1886.

W. W. Mabee [the writer], of the Glendive TIMES . . . Messrs. Wibaux and Grisy invited the whole party to stop off at Mingusville and take in a grand hunt Wednesday, but this being impossible the party broke up with many regrets, but nonetheless pleasant remembrances of the occasion.<sup>86</sup>

The spring meeting of the Montana Stockgrowers Association was held on April 19 and 20 in Miles City. The meeting was the big event of the year in Montana's "cow capitol." The Minneapolis *Tribune* gave an excellent description of the preliminaries to the meeting.

Promptly at 9:30 A.M. a procession was formed in front of the Macqueen House, with the Fifth Infantry band at its head, followed by carriages containing the officers of the Association and ladies; next a cavalcade of wild cowboys just brought in from the adjacent ranges, followed by about 150 cowmen marching four abreast. The procession was about two and one-half blocks long from end to end, and the line of march was through the principal streets to the skating rink, where the public meetings of the Association are held.

As the procession was nearing the rink, the horses of the foremost carriage, containing the president, vice-president, and secretary, took fright and dashed into the band. Both horses took to the same side of the tongue and made things unpleasant. At this stage of the game President Bryan and others abandoned the carriage, and Secretary R. B. Harrison, with his large minute book, made a leap for life, and the subsequent proceedings interested him no more. The procession then broke up with a wild charge of cowboys, accompanied with such yells as would strike terror to the heart of the tender-footed.<sup>87</sup>

About 500 were in attendance at this meeting, 175 of whom were members.<sup>88</sup> Among those attending from the Little Missouri vicinity were Theodore Roosevelt, Marquis de Mores, John N. Simpson, Henry Boice, Major Towers, William Wadsworth and Pierre Wibaux.<sup>89</sup> John Clay, who is sometimes called the "dean

<sup>86</sup>*Glendive Times*, April 18, 1886.

<sup>87</sup>Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 393-394.

<sup>88</sup>Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 41.

<sup>89</sup>Minutes, 92-95.

of the stockmen," gives this account of his visit to the 1886 convention.

My first appearance at a meeting of the above association [Montana Stockgrowers] was in April, 1886. A bunch of us went up in a special Pullman Car from St. Paul. There were fifteen of us thereabouts. And I had the unique experience of being the only one that paid my railroad fare . . . . The other cowmen joshed me a bit but I have lived through it. At Medora Theodore Roosevelt joined the crowd and traveled with us to Miles City. As I recollect we slept on the Pullman taking our meals at the McQueen [sic] house. It was a most interesting meeting being presided over by Col. Bryan. When you made the census of the attendance I think the members were in the minority. The majority was composed of Railroad, Newspaper, Commission and other classes of men who lived more or less off the cowmen. The leading railroad man was Mr. A. B. Stickney, then busy promoting the Great Western Railroad. He was anxious to have a Stockyards at St. Paul, and the Yards at South St. Paul had their inception about that time . . . . Among the newspaper men, the one I remember best was Mr. Jos. A. Wheelock of the *Pioneer Press*, then as now an excellent paper. Pat Kelly, a famous grocery man from St. Paul was also present . . . .<sup>90</sup>

Unlike in the meeting of April, 1885, Roosevelt took a prominent part in this convention. "Teddy [Roosevelt] and Azel Ames were constantly in the limelight" wrote one caustic stockman, who attended the meeting, many years later.<sup>91</sup> One of the chief matters under discussion was the erection of the stockyards in St. Paul and establishing a market at that point. At that time, the Montana and Dakota stockmen marketed their stock in Chicago. A nearer market was greatly needed by them as much live weight was lost in their cattle by shipping them at such a great distance. At the convention were a number of delegates from the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce, railway executives and representatives of

<sup>90</sup>John Clay, *My Life on the Range* (Chicago, 1924) 351-352. Clay explains the reason for his paying fare to this meeting as follows: "The autumn before [the Miles City meeting in 1886] that the VVV outfit had the temerity to ship part of our cattle from Valentine, Neb., on the Elkhorn road instead of the Northern Pacific. In this way the latter road meted out punishment. In our round-ups we had finished a beef gather near the Nebraska line and we were nearer the one road than the other.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*

the press. These men took an important part in the discussion of this project. Marquis de Mores spoke at length on establishing fatteries in the West. A committee of sixteen prominent members, comprised of Governor B. F. Potts, Major Towers, A. Heller, Major T. H. Logan, Dr. Azel Ames, Theodore Roosevelt, Granville Stuart, Con Kohrs, J. W. Strevell, Joseph Scott, J. N. Simpson, Alfred Meyers, R. B. Harrison, Joseph Leighton, J. J. Thomson and President Bryan, were named to visit with the St. Paul delegates and investigate the feasibility of establishing stockyards and a market in that city. The committee was also assigned the duty of stopping at the de Mores plant in Medora to investigate the fattery project.<sup>92</sup> Roosevelt and de Mores each paid \$20 on Montana's \$1,000 quota of the \$5,000 fund appropriated by the National Cattlemen's association of Chicago "to influence legislation and in other ways looking to the protection of the stock interests at large in the country."<sup>93</sup> Roosevelt, John T. Murphy and Major T. H. Logan were appointed as a committee to investigate the quarantine question. However, due to the shortness of time, Roosevelt reported that it was impossible for his committee to collect data on which to submit a report at that meeting. He, therefore, moved that the matter be referred to the executive committee to investigate and report to the governor. The motion was seconded and carried.<sup>94</sup> The committee on roundups also made a detailed report. John N. Simpson and Roosevelt were named captains of the Little Missouri district.<sup>95</sup> John Goodall had been elected foreman at the Medora meeting several days before. The plans for the roundup of District No. 6, the Little Missouri district, were announced as follows:

Commences at Medora, May 25, 1886; works down Little Missouri to the mouth of Big Beaver creek, thence up Big Beaver to its head, thence across to the Little Beaver at the crossing of the old government road, thence down the Little Beaver to its mouth, thence across to Northern Hashknife camp on Little Missouri and down to Medora.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>92</sup>Minutes, 97; *Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, April 24, 1886; *Glendive Times*, April 25, 1886.

<sup>93</sup>Minutes, 92; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 42.

<sup>94</sup>Minutes, 98, 101.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 101-102.

<sup>96</sup>*Glendive Times*, April 25, 1886.

The same officers, with the exception of some members of the executive committee, were reelected. Roosevelt, Marquis de Mores and Henry Boice were named as members of the committee from Dakota Territory.<sup>97</sup> Reports on the handling of bulls and on inspections by the board of stock commissioners were read. A petition was drafted asking Congress for legislation to aid in the suppression of cattle diseases. A resolution of thanks was also drafted.<sup>98</sup> According to the *Glendive Times*, the meeting "was a success in every way."<sup>99</sup> John Clay summarized it as "a booming meeting." The social life between the sessions was described as follows:

When the meetings adjourned the [Miles City] Club was the great rendezvous. Here we all met, ate roast pig, hard boiled eggs, cheese and bread and drank more than was good for us . . . .<sup>100</sup>

The chief meeting places in Miles City during the cattlemen's conventions were the Miles City Club and the Macqueen House. The Club's "red-letter days were the three days in April of each year when the annual convention of the Montana Stockgrowers Association met here and discussed matters of business. On these occasions the club set forth every day of the session a royal banquet of 'roast pig' and appropriate 'trimmings' that gave the town fame and prestige all over the country."<sup>101</sup> Banquets were held at the Macqueen House and the special feature of each year was the "Stockmen's dance given during the session of the Stockgrower's Association."<sup>102</sup>

Following his return to the Elkhorn ranch, Roosevelt wrote to his sister, Mrs. Cowles.

I have just returned from the Stockmen's Convention at Miles City, which thriving frontier town was for three

<sup>97</sup>Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 41; Minutes, 92.

<sup>98</sup>Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 42.

<sup>99</sup>*Glendive Times*, April 25, 1886.

<sup>100</sup>Clay, *op. cit.*, 352.

<sup>101</sup>S. Gordon, *Recollections of Old Milestown* (Miles City, 1918) 31. According to Mr. A. W. Harris, Secretary of the Club, Roosevelt registered at the Miles City Club once on August 7, 1885 [sic] when he was introduced by A. C. Logan, first principal of the Miles City Schools; the other time on April 29, 1886 when he was introduced by M. C. McGaffrey, Northern Pacific official. On June 1, 1908, Roosevelt presented an autographed picture of himself to the club with the following note: "To the Miles City Club, from a friend who in the past often enjoyed its generous hospitality." Letter to writer from A. W. Harris, Secretary, December 3, 1949.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.*, 33-34.

days thronged with hundreds of rough looking, broad hatted men, numbering among them all the great cattle and horse raisers of the northwest, I took my position very well in the convention, and indeed these Westerners have now pretty well accepted me as one of themselves, and as a representative stockman. I am on the Executive Committee of the Association, am President of the Dakota Branch, etc., all of which directly helps me in my business relations here.<sup>103</sup>

Sometime prior to the semiannual meeting held in Helena late in August of that year, the committee interested in establishing stockyards in St. Paul visited railroad officials and other persons in that city who were promoting the project. Contemporary newspapers do not indicate whether Roosevelt attended these meetings. Marquis de Mores appeared before the committee in St. Paul and outlined his plans for establishing a fattery at Medora.<sup>104</sup>

Following the April meeting at Miles City, Roosevelt spent a part of his time at the Elkhorn ranch writing on his *Life of Thomas Hart Benton* and hunting. His letters, written in late May and during June, tell of the long hours he spent on the roundup.<sup>105</sup>

. . . I have been on the roundup for a fortnight and really enjoy the work greatly [he wrote his sister on June 7]; in fact I am passing a most pleasant summer, though I miss all of you very, very much. We breakfast at three every morning, and work from sixteen to eighteen hours a day, counting night guard; so I get pretty sleepy; but I feel strong as a bear.<sup>106</sup>

A letter of June 19 leads one to believe, however, that he was devoting a part of his time to writing and hunting.

The roundup has been great fun . . . I write steadily three or four days, and then hunt (I killed two elk and some antelope recently) or ride on the round up for many more.<sup>107</sup>

A letter to his sister, dated June 28, reads:

The roundup is now over. I have been working like a beaver; it is now five weeks since I have had breakfast as late as four o'clock any morning . . .<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 78-79. Letter of April 22, 1886.

<sup>104</sup>Fletcher, *op. cit.*, 42, also footnote 170, p. 62; *Montana Live Stock Journal*, June, 1886, 5.

<sup>105</sup>Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 81-86; *Lodge Correspondence*, 1: 41-42.

<sup>106</sup>Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 81.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 84-85.

<sup>108</sup>Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 85. Letter of June 28, 1886.

The prospects for the stockmen looked anything but bright during the summer and fall of 1886. The ranges in the Badlands were already overstocked with cattle. Probably no one in the region was more fully aware of the danger of this practice than Roosevelt. He fully foresaw the results should a severe winter occur in 1886-1887. He pointed out in the autumn of 1886.

Overstocking may cause little harm for two or three years, but sooner or later there comes a winter which means ruin to the ranches that have too many cattle on them; and in our country, which is even now getting crowded, it is merely a question of time as to when a winter will come that will understock the ranges by a summary process of killing off about half of the cattle throughout the northwest . . .<sup>100</sup>

In spite of the overstocked conditions, thousands of cattle continued to be shipped and driven in on the ranges of the Badlands. Frosts continued in 1886 as late as June 10. Grasshoppers plagued the ranges eating what little vegetation that remained.<sup>100</sup> Added to these difficulties, was the prolonged and excessive hot weather in July. Range fires in the late summer and early fall destroyed what little forage that remained. By late summer, the outlook for the stockmen was generally considered as very alarming. Whether their cattle would be able to exist until the following spring was admittedly dependent upon whether there would be a mild winter.<sup>101</sup>

Roosevelt left for New York on July 8 but returned to the Badlands early in August.<sup>102</sup> Following the trial of the boat thieves, which took place in Mandan during August, he went on a hunting trip to the Rockies and returned about the middle of September. Sewall and Dow, his Elkhorn ranch foremen, decided they had had enough ranching in the Badlands so they returned to their homes in Maine. After placing his Elkhorn herds under the management of Sylvane Ferris and Merrifield, Roosevelt returned to New York.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup>Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*, 21-22. This portion of the book was written in the fall of 1886.

<sup>101</sup>*Mandan Pioneer*, July 16, 1886.

<sup>102</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, July 17, 1886; *Glendive Times*, Aug. 1, 1886; *Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, Sept. 11, 1886; *Mandan Pioneer*, July 16, 1886; Robert S. Fletcher, "That Hard Winter in Montana, 1886-1887," *Agricultural History*, Vol. IV, No. 4 (October, 1930) 124; Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 212-213; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 431-432; Lang, *op. cit.*, 234-240.

<sup>103</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1886; Mrs. Cowles, *op. cit.*, 86-87.

<sup>104</sup>*Lodge Correspondence*, 1:46; Sewall, *op. cit.*, 92-96; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 419-428.

In September, 1886, there was an outbreak in Oliver County near Mandan, Dakota of what was believed to be either Texas fever or pleuropneumonia. The infected herd was segregated and a quarantine was placed on the stock pens at Mandan. Since there was a question of whether the Territory had funds with which to deal with the situation, Roosevelt and Marquis de Mores volunteered to pay for the condemned cattle in case the territorial officers should decline to accept the responsibility for killing them. Dr. Herbert Halloway, Assistant Territorial Veterinarian for Montana, was summoned. After an examination of the diseased cattle, Dr. Halloway declared them to be infected with contagious pleuropneumonia and recommend the slaughter and burial of the entire herd. Upon the recommendation of the governor and attorney general, this was done, the owner being paid for the cattle after an appraisalment had been made.<sup>114</sup>

The contemporary newspapers of the Badlands vicinity made little mention of the semiannual meeting of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association which was probably held in early September of that year. It is quite probable that Roosevelt did not attend for during that time when the meetings were usually held, he was on a hunting trip to the Rockies. However, he was apparently reelected president of the association.<sup>115</sup> According to the *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, the association decided that, since the ranges in the roundup district were fully stocked, the members in the future would refuse to work with any new outfit bringing in cattle or horses.<sup>116</sup>

Following his return to New York in late September or early October of that year, Roosevelt received the Republican nomination for Mayor of New York City. In November, after being defeated for that office, he went to England where he was married to Miss Edith Carow on December 2. Several months were spent by the couple in England and on the Continent. He did not return to New York until the following March.

<sup>114</sup>"The Pleuro-Pneumonia Outbreak in Oliver County, Dakota," Report of Henry W. Coe to Hon. E. M. Darrow, Superintendent of Public Health, Mandan, ms, State Historical Society of North Dakota.

<sup>115</sup>*Dickinson Press*, April 16, 1887.

<sup>116</sup>*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Dec. 9, 1886. *Stockgrowers Journal* (Miles City), Nov. 12, 1887 (?) quoted in Richter, *op. cit.*, 102, states that this decision was made by the association in September, 1886.

While Roosevelt was in Europe, the worst fears of the Badlands stockmen were realized:

The disastrous winter of '86-'87 that closed down upon the northern range country [wrote Lincoln Lang many years later], like great steel nippers, fully six weeks earlier than winter had been known to strike before within the memory of White Man. It continuously retained its iron grip with a relentlessness of Doom itself for over four months, relaxing at length only to leave ruin in its wake for the cattle ranchers of the region.<sup>117</sup>

Blizzards struck in the middle of November and continued. The snow, although melting and freezing, piled higher and higher. By January the ravines and coulees were almost level with snow. The snow lay for several feet on the plateaus and river bottoms—too deep for the cattle to get through to the grass. Due to the prolonged drouth of the preceding summer, what grass that remained under the deep layers of snow was short and scanty. Blizzards and sub-zero weather continued from late December through January and February. During all of this period, the cattlemen and cowboys, many of whom were marooned in their isolated cabins and without adequate supplies for months, were unable to get outside to care for their stock. Only the most frequented trails were passable. Early in March, however, a "Chinook" came and the snow quickly disappeared.<sup>118</sup> During February, March and April, there was considerable speculation among the cattlemen as to what their losses would be.<sup>119</sup> Only after the spring roundups would the truth be known.

The spring meeting of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association was held on April 16. Roosevelt again served as chairman.<sup>120</sup> Contemporary newspapers give very brief accounts of this meeting. The week following, the *Dickinson Press* carried this item,

<sup>117</sup>Lang, *op. cit.*, 241.

<sup>118</sup>Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*, 77-79; Fletcher, "That Hard Winter in Montana," 124-126; *Glendive Times*, Feb. 5, 12, March 5, 1887; *Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, March 5, 1887; Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 213-217; Osgood, *op. cit.*, 216-223; Dale, *op. cit.*, 117-120.

<sup>119</sup>*Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, Feb. 5, 12, 19, March 5, 19, 26, April 16, 1887; *Glendive Times*, Feb. 26, March 12, April 2, 30, 1887; *Mandan Pioneer*, March 4, 1887; *Dickinson Press*, Feb. 5, April 2, 1887.

<sup>120</sup>*Dickinson Press*, April 16, 1887. This item read as follows:

"Hon. Theodore Roosevelt passed through here yesterday on his way to Medora to attend the annual meeting of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association, of which he is president. The meeting takes place today."

The Little Missouri Stockmen's Association met at Medora on Saturday of last week with a slim attendance. The meeting adjourned without transacting much business of importance. Owing to the heavy losses during the past winter it was not thought worth while to appoint a general round up for the spring but one will take place later in the season.<sup>121</sup>

The meeting was given little attention by the *Glendive Times*.

The meeting was held Saturday April 16 and arrangements were made for four wagons to work the Standing Rock reservation and through to Mandan. The meeting instructed the secretary to call a meeting upon the return of these outfits, when arrangements will be made for the general roundup which will probably begin about July 25. The above action was necessary on account of a big drift of the cattle eastward into the Standing Rock reservation. It will make a very late and hot round-up but this is apparently unavoidable under the circumstances.<sup>122</sup>

Following his return to the Badlands, Roosevelt spent several days going over his range and taking stock of the losses. His letter to Lodge, written soon after his arrival there, discloses that his ranching ventures looked anything but promising.

Well, we have had a perfect smashup all through the cattle country of the northwest. The losses are crippling. For the first time I have been utterly unable to enjoy a visit to my ranch. I shall be glad to get home.<sup>123</sup>

In spite of the severe losses suffered during the winter by the cattlemen, about 100 of the 337 members attended the annual meeting of the Montana Stockgrowers Association in Miles City held on April 19 and 20. Sixty-two new members were added to the organization.<sup>124</sup>

The stockmens convention combined with the usual crowd attracted by the term of court [stated the *Yellowstone Journal*] has filled Miles to overflowing with the nabobs of the east and the cattle kings of the west. Almost

<sup>121</sup>*Dickinson Press*, April 23, 1887.

<sup>122</sup>*Glendive Times*, April 23, 1887.

<sup>123</sup>*Lodge Correspondence*, 1:54. Letter of April 20, 1887. The date of this letter is probably in error for Roosevelt was attending the meeting of the Montana Stockgrowers Association on that date.

<sup>124</sup>Fletcher, "Organization of the Cattle Business," 44; Minutes, 123-124.

every state in the Union has been drawn upon and is represented at this stock meeting and court.<sup>126</sup>

Attending from the Little Missouri region, in addition to Roosevelt, were W. A. Towers, Pierre Wibaux, A. H. Arnett, B. F. Lamb, Henry Boice and Gregor Lang. The report of the secretary, R. B. Harrison, reflected the gloom of the convention.

Since we last met in annual meeting, the range business of the plains has had three severe trials to pass through:

1st: The unprecedented drought that prevailed last Spring and Summer, causing a great shortness of food, and making the cattle poor in flesh for the market and the winter.

2nd: The low price of beef that ruled in Chicago during the fall, shrinking our receipts materially.

3rd: The very severe winter which has just passed which brought general loss, more or less severe, depending upon circumstances, to every member of the Association and in fact to every Stock man in the North-West.

These reverses were sufficient to try the patience and fortitude of every one throughout the range country, and as you are aware, has demoralized the business and turned the tide of investment from us to other directions. That the trials through which we have passed were remarkable, not only for severity, but particularly because they followed each other so closely, is universally admitted. A drought without parallel; a market without a bottom, a Winter, the severest ever known in Montana, formed a combination, testing the usefulness of our Association and proving its solidity.

Thinking that these trials were not sufficient for our industry, Congress, in its wisdom has added a fourth, the Inter-State Commerce Law, which has seriously interfered with the attendance at this meeting, owing to the difficulty of securing reduced transportation, and which threatens to interfere seriously with the necessary rights and privileges of cattle men of the far West, in transporting their quota of the food supply to the Nation to Eastern markets for consumption.

Yet, notwithstanding these difficulties we have reason to congratulate ourselves upon the very large

<sup>126</sup>*Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, April 23, 1887.

attendance and the Interest taken in the proceedings of our meetings.<sup>126</sup>

"Reformer" Roosevelt objected to the secretary's statement relative to the Interstate Commerce Act. He was against the association going on record as being opposed to the law and, at the first opportunity, moved that that portion of the report condemning the newly-enacted legislation be stricken from the record. A Mr. Connors (probably M. C. Connors who operated a ranch near Spearfish, Dakota) took the opposite view and favored accepting the report as it stood believing it proper "to condemn the law from beginning to end."<sup>127</sup>

. . . The question elicited a lively discussion [according to the *Yellowstone Journal*], Mr. Roosevelt re-asserting his position and affirming that:

The association cannot afford to go before the public as joining with the railroad companies against the bill.

Mr. Biddle seconded Mr. Roosevelt's motion and spoke in favor of it, as also Dr. Ames, who to reach a compromise on the matter offered a substitute for the original motion, which provided for the acceptance of the report of the secretary, with a note appended that the association were not committed to the clause under discussion. This substitute Mr. Roosevelt accepted, first stipulating that the clause should be enclosed in brackets in the report and that the substitute was then adopted by a large

<sup>126</sup>Minutes, 119-122.

<sup>127</sup>Minutes, 135-136. That portion of the minutes pertaining to this discussion reads as follows:

"Mr. Roosevelt. I should like to ask one question. Would it be in order before the report is received and spread on the minutes, to ask for a change in one portion of it or not? I do not think it wise for this Stock Association to appear to go on [record in] relation to the Inter State Commerce law as condemning it. Would it be in order to make any motion or file any protest upon that portion of the Secretary's report?"

"Mr. Connors. I would say, condemn the law from beginning to the end.

"Mr. Roosevelt. Would the Secretary read that part of the report which refers to the Inter-State Commerce bill.

"The Secretary reads that part of the report.

"Mr. Roosevelt. I move that the lines in reference to the Inter-State bill be stricken from the Secretary's report.

"Mr. Biddle. I desire to second Mr. Roosevelt's motion.

"Dr. Ames. I offer as an amendment to the motion made by Mr. Roosevelt, that we accept the report of the Secretary, and append thereto a note, stating that the Association in the acceptance of the report does not commit itself to any expression of opinion as to the value of the Inter-State Commerce law.

"Mr. Roosevelt. I would be willing to accept that amendment if in the report, the lines referred to should be bracketed, and it should be distinctly stated that the Association, in accepting the report, does not commit itself to the sentences enclosed in those bracketed lines.

"Dr. Ames. I accept the amendment.

"Motion as amendment carried."

majority. The idea which was prevalent at first that the expunging of any portion of the secretary's report was a reflection on him, was handsomely and courteously depreciated by Mr. Roosevelt, and having overcome this feeling the good horse sense of his position was promptly realized, although at first the sympathy of the meeting was against the motion.<sup>128</sup>

John Clay, who attended this meeting and opposed Roosevelt's resolution, remarked regarding this incident, "Early in his career our famous Ex-President had his ear to the ground politically."<sup>129</sup> The *Bismarck Daily Tribune* called attention to Roosevelt's action regarding the Interstate Commerce law.<sup>130</sup> The *Yellowstone Journal* described this meeting as a "short but somewhat breezy morning session."<sup>131</sup>

Roosevelt, with Captain William Harmon and Dr. Azel Ames, Jr., were appointed as a committee on resolutions. This committee drafted or acted upon resolutions before they were submitted to the convention. Roosevelt, A. H. Arnett and Henry Boice were named as members of the Executive Committee from Dakota Territory. The following officers were elected: President, Joseph Scott; 1st vice president, B. F. Potts; 2nd vice president, William Harmon; secretary and treasurer, R. B. Harrison. Roosevelt, Granville Stuart and Dr. Ames were appointed as a committee to escort the new president to the chair.<sup>132</sup> Scott addressed the meeting as follows:

Gentlemen of the convention:—It is with feelings of the greatest appreciation that I accept this honor so unanimously tendered. I would rather that some other member of the Association who is more capable, more competent and better qualified to sit in the chair had been elected. However I will endeavor to do my duty to the best of my ability. Since the organization of this Association two years ago, and in fact since the organization of the Eastern Montana Association some two or three years before, it has been my wish, It has been my desire, and indeed it has been my pride to work earnestly and faithfully and conscientously [sic] with you, Mr. Chair-

<sup>128</sup>*Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, April 23, 1887.

<sup>129</sup>Clay, *op. cit.*, 354; *Bismarck Weekly Tribune*, April 22, 1887.

<sup>130</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>131</sup>*Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, April 23, 1887.

<sup>132</sup>Minutes, 137-141.

man, and with your office for the benefit of this industry, and as I have labored I will endeavor to labor in the future, I am glad to see this attendance, notwithstanding the fact that walking is bad [referring to the passage of the Interstate Commerce Act and the elimination of railroad passes]. I am proud that we have such an attendance; I think it is proof to us that we are not to bury this large industry, as some have stated, but we are here to revive it, and we are here to see that it does not die. It is true, the chilling winds of last winter have been felt on the range, and in many places you can smell the dead carcuses in the canyons; but the case is not as bad as it might have been. Had the winter continued twenty days longer, we would not have had much necessity of an Association; we would not have had much left to try to do. As it is, I feel that we are in a fair position to start again and make good the loss we have suffered the past winter. As predicted by some of our members who are pretty well posted, in these matters, the time is not far distant when the prices for beef will be better than they have been for the past four years, I am afraid to go back as far as '82, because that would be expecting too much, but it if gets to where it was four years ago, it will be a happy day for the cow drivers, I wish to state Mr. President, that while I accept this office with sincere appreciation I am not blind to the fact that It has many duties; I am not blind to the fact that the executive committee has many duties, and also the Board of Stock Commissioners. But our duty does not stop here. Gentlemen, in order for this Association to be an effective body, we must all work in harmony and in unison; we must all consider ourselves appointed, self-constituted, members of the detective force to see that everything that is carried on within the limits of the grant our jurisdiction of the Montana Association is carefully looked after. I think that with this bond and with this united effort, as in the past, the work of the Association will be very effective.<sup>133</sup>

At the semiannual meeting of the association held in Helena the preceding August, steps were taken to discourage "horse tramps" who went from ranch to ranch during the winter months, living on the hospitality of the ranchers and riding horses of doubtful ownership. The following resolutions were adopted at that meeting and recommended for enforcement:

<sup>133</sup>Minutes, 141-143.

1st. A register shall be kept at all ranches which shall give the name of any arrival, date and departure.

2nd. All persons arriving at cattle and horse ranches will be required to pay road ranch prices for all accommodations.

3rd. Foreman sending men away on duty will furnish each with a pass, which will entitle them while so employed to stop at ranches.

4th. Foremen are hereby directed to enforce the above regulations.<sup>194</sup>

At the April, 1887 meeting, Roosevelt introduced a resolution for the repeal of these regulations and substituted one asking instead that the members keep a record of all suspicious persons visiting their ranches and the brands of such persons' horses. The substitute resolution carried.<sup>195</sup>

The following resolutions were also adopted:

Resolved: That the owners of stock and their employees upon our ranges, are requested to send to the secretary of the Board of Stock Commissioners, a descriptive list of all stray animals known to be upon the ranges worked by said parties, to the end that the list may be prepared and kept for Inspection, thereby having a central place where persons having lost stock can apply, with a reasonable certainty of ascertaining the whereabouts of such stock.

Resolved, That the practice which has heretofore been indulged in of roundups and individuals rounding-up portions of an adjoining round-up districts, either for beef or the collection of stock cattle, without the consent or cooperation of the owners comprising said district is a practice greatly to be reprehended as very injurious to the cattle, discourteous to the owners upon said invaded district, and calculated to produce ill-will and dissensions among our stockmen who should strive to act in unity and harmony thereby best promoting the interests of all parties concerned, therefore

Resolved. That this Association strongly condemn such practice, and ask all persons in future to refrain from it and use all their influence to prevent others from

<sup>194</sup>Fletcher, "Organization of Range Cattle Business," 43.

<sup>195</sup>*Ibid.*, 43-47; Minutes, 144.

indulging in such practices, and we as members of our Association pledge ourselves to use all our influence to that end.<sup>136</sup>

Stuart spoke at length on the subject of overriding and overdriving the cattle on roundups. He, J. W. Strevell and Fitzgerald were appointed to assist the committee on resolutions on the matter. As a result the following resolutions were prepared and adopted by the convention:

Whereas, There has been a growing tendency on the part of those employed in the cattle round-ups to overdrive and rush the cattle for the sake of getting them to the round-up grounds in too short time, to the very great injury of the cattle and also of the horses ridden in the drive, and

Whereas, the round-up corrals have either very poorly constructed wings or none at all, thereby causing the cattle to be jammed and bruised against the corral walls and against each other, and also causing the cattle to break away, either singly or in small bunches, to their very great injury, and also of the horses ridden and

Whereas, in handling and branding the calves undo haste is used, causing much unnecessary suffering and cruelty to them and

Whereas, Many of the employees are needlessly harsh and brutal in the treatment of horses ridden by them to the manifest injury of the animals themselves, and thereby to the financial interests of the owners, therefore be it

Resolved, That we earnestly recommend that the foreman of each district round-up be instructed by the owners in such districts to use every means to protect the calves, horses and cattle from all abuse herein named by using every precaution and we pledge the fullest support of this association to carry out the sentiment of these resolutions.<sup>137</sup>

Roosevelt reported the decision of the Little Missouri Association not to lay plans for the roundup or appoint a foreman until sometime in July and the intention of the members of the roundup to work the Sioux Reservation first.<sup>138</sup> Before the meeting

<sup>136</sup>Minutes, 150-151.

<sup>137</sup>Minutes, 152-155.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, 144-145.

adjourned, he gave a short complimentary talk on the "ability, and indefatigable energy" with which Secretary Harrison had served the association. His motion that a vote of thanks be tendered Harrison for his work as secretary was seconded and approved by the body. After a number of complimentary remarks by several members and an address by Stuart on the subject of encroachments of the sheep men, the meeting adjourned.<sup>139</sup>

The comments on the meeting are interesting. John Clay summarized it as "a scrappy sort of a meeting."<sup>140</sup> The *Glendive Times* observed:

The meeting of the Stockgrowers association at Miles City was not characterized by the hilarity and champagne drinking as in the past. Most of the stockmen were way down in the mouth and husbanded their resources. As for the meeting it was a good one and lots of business was transacted.<sup>141</sup>

However, in spite of the reverses suffered during the preceding winter, the customary social life connected with the convention was not entirely overlooked.

One of the greatest social events of the year was the stockmen's ball at the Macqueen Hotel last Tuesday given by the citizens of Miles City to the visiting stockmen. It was given in honor of the visitors and was the second annual reception, banquet and ball given by the citizens to the stockgrowers, members and their friends, and was an event of more than ordinarily successful character. The surroundings and appointments of the entertainment were elegant in the extreme. It was largely attended by the followers of this great industry, and was an occasion of unrestrained gaiety. Like its predecessor, it elicited a very large attendance. L. C. Dear was master of ceremonies. There were seventy-five couples in attendance. Under the direction of Major Macqueen, the large dining room was superbly decorated with flowers and festoons. The music was excellent and the programme contained sixteen numbers, which were very elaborate. . . . The basement, where a splendid supper was served, also presented a rich scene of floral beauty. Many charming cos-

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, 156-157.

<sup>140</sup>Clay, *loc cit.*, 354.

<sup>141</sup>*Glendive Times*, April 23, 1887.

tunes were displayed by the ladies in attendance. Taking it into consideration that so brief a period was allowed the committee on arrangements to prepare for the banquet, it was most successful.<sup>142</sup>

An interesting sidelight to the convention was the discharge of Fred A. Willard as livestock inspector of Medora. In June, 1885, following the annual meeting of the Little Missouri Stockmen's Association, Willard was appointed to that office by the Montana organization.<sup>143</sup> It was his duty to inspect all the brands of cattle shipped from Medora to Chicago. During the fall of 1886, Willard, as sheriff of Billings County, had gone to Ohio to arrest a cowhand of Roosevelt's for cattle stealing. Bringing his prisoner back to Medora, Willard was sharply criticized by Packard, Ferris and Merrifield, upon whose range the cattle were allegedly stolen, and by Roosevelt. Apparently the evidence against the prisoner was very flimsy as his case was never tried. It received considerable attention, however.<sup>144</sup> Roosevelt and Henry Boice preferred charges against Willard before the Board of Commissioners in Miles City on April 18. Roosevelt complained that the inspector was of no use to the stockmen of Dakota, but was an injury; that Willard was not qualified to fill the position he held; that in many cases he had taken the word of another regarding cattle brands. The Dakota men, Roosevelt claimed, would rather have no inspector at all than Willard. Boice supported Roosevelt's charges. Willard was then called in and made statements in his own defense claiming it was a personal matter with Roosevelt. The board, thereupon, notified Willard that he could not serve as inspector at Medora any longer; it extended to him, however, the thanks of the association "for his efficiency and faithful performance of duty."<sup>145</sup>

The spring roundups gave a true picture of the losses during the winter of 1886-1887. Roosevelt's outfit, apparently, took part in the roundup in the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The *Mandan Pioneer* for May 27 reported:

Sylvane Ferris, foreman [Roosevelt's Maltese Cross ranch], and twenty two men, who are on the round up,

<sup>142</sup>*The Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, April 23, 1887.

<sup>143</sup>*Bad Lands Cow Boy*, June 18, 25, July 2, 1885; Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 324; 444-445. Hagedorn calls Willard "Joe Morrill."

<sup>144</sup>*Ibid.*; *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Dec. 14, 19, 22, 1886; *Mandan Pioneer*, Jan. 14, 1887.

<sup>145</sup>Clay, *op. cit.*, 342. From the Minutes of the Board of Stock Commissioners.

were in town Monday on their way west. They made their headquarters at Charley Sublette's—the popular resort for cowmen and old-timers, and it is needless to say that they were well taken care of. They behaved themselves nicely while in town.

The Little Missouri Stockmen's Association began its spring roundup in the Standing Rock Reservation with "Three-Seven" Bill Follis as foreman. Years later, Follis related:

It was hard for the ranchers to believe they had actually such a heavy loss in the winter of '86-'87, and in the spring, the Hashknife, Roosevelt, 777's and the Stockmen's Association sent 65 to 70 men, with four wagons, to start work in the Standing Rock Reservation, thinking the cattle had most likely drifted south and east with the storms. We started work on the 25th of May. The first day we found three steers of the Hashknife outfit, which had been brought in [to Dakota], in 1882. We killed a steer for food. We stayed there two weeks and during our stay we killed another Hashknife steer. At the end of our two week's work, the 65 to 70 of us came off the reservation with one old Hashknife steer to show for our work.<sup>146</sup>

In late July, the *Mandan Pioneer* estimated the losses for the Territory of Dakota at 75 percent.<sup>147</sup> Granville Stuart, perhaps, summarized the situation for the stockmen in Montana as well as anyone. He stated that his own losses were about 66 percent of the herd. "In the fall of 1886 there were one million head of cattle on the Montana ranges and the losses in the 'big storm' amounted to twenty million dollars. This was the death knell to the range cattle business on anything like the scale it had been run before."<sup>148</sup>

Roosevelt's days as a rancher were over. Although he ran small herds of cattle in Dakota until 1898, he spent little time in the Badlands after the winter of 1886-1887. In May of 1887 he was again back in New York. His visits to his Dakota ranches thereafter were brief ones. He spent short periods there in the late summers or early falls of 1887, 1888, 1890, 1892, 1893 and 1896.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup>Interview of Bill Follis, WPA Files on History of Grazing, ms, State Historical Society of North Dakota.

<sup>147</sup>Pelzer, *op. cit.*, 217.

<sup>148</sup>Stuart, *op. cit.*, 1:236.

<sup>149</sup>Hagedorn, *op. cit.*, 453-465; *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1887; *Dickinson Press*, Sept. 13, 1890, Aug. 13, 1892, Sept. 30, 1893, Sept. 12, 1896.

Most of the Dakota members in the Montana Stockgrowers Association either resigned or dropped out within a few years after 1887. Roosevelt paid his dues and remained a member in good standing during 1888 and 1889. In both of these years he was the only member on the executive committee from Dakota Territory.<sup>150</sup> In 1890, he resigned from the association. With the exception of 1905, this was the last time his name appeared on the records. At the latter date, his name was loudly cheered when it was read in the roll call of members.<sup>151</sup>

Writing his *Autobiography* years later, Roosevelt described the meetings which he attended of the Montana Stockgrowers Association.

In those years the Stockman's Association of Montana was a powerful body. I was the delegate to it from the Little Missouri. The meetings that I attended were held in Miles City, at that time a typical cow town. Stockmen of all kinds attended, including the biggest men in the stock business, men like old Conrad Kohrs, who was and is the finest type of pioneer in all the Rocky Mountain country; and Granville Stewart [sic], who was afterwards appointed Minister by Cleveland, I think to the Argentine; and "Hashknife" Simpson, a Texan who had brought his cattle, the Hashknife brand, up the trail into our country. He and I grew to be great friends. I can see him now the first time we met, grinning at me as, none too comfortable, I sat [on] a half-broken horse at the edge of a cattle herd we were working. His son Sloan Simpson went to Harvard, was one of the first-class men in my regiment, and afterwards held my commission as Postmaster at Dallas.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>150</sup>*Glendive Independent*, April 21, 1888; Minutes, 163-181, 209-248.

<sup>151</sup>Fletcher, "Organization of the Range Cattle Business," 51.

<sup>152</sup>Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, 109.

## APPENDIX A

### BY-LAWS OF THE LITTLE MISSOURI RIVER STOCKMEN'S ASSOCIATION\*

#### 1

This Association shall be known as Little Missouri River Stockmen's Association.

#### 2

The object of this Association is to advance the interests of stockgrowers and dealers in livestock of all kinds in western Dakota, and for the purpose of the protection of the same against frauds and swindlers, and to prevent the stealing, taking, and driving away of horned cattle, sheep, horses, and other stock from the rightful owners thereof, and to enforce the stock laws of the Territory of Dakota.

#### 3

The officers of the Association shall consist of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman, elected annually at the first meeting held after the fall round-up, and a Secretary, elected at each meeting, whose work is to be superintended by the Chairman.

#### 4

The representation in the Association is to be by firms, each firm being entitled to but one vote.

#### 5

There shall be at least two meetings of the Association annually; to be held at the time and place appointed by the Association; and at the request in writing of any three members of the Association a special meeting shall be called by the Chairman, who shall, however, give at least one week's notice thereof. Seven members shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business.

#### 6

##### ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Calling the roll.
2. Reading minutes of last meeting.
3. Election of new members.
4. Unfinished business.
5. Reports of officers and committees.
6. Election of officers.
7. General business.

#### 7

No member shall gather cattle on any range not his own during the months between December 1st and the date of the

\*By-Laws of the Little Missouri River Stockmen's Association, (New York, 1885).

general spring round-up, without giving due notice a reasonable time beforehand to the other ranchmen of the neighborhood.

## 8

In order to attain greater efficiency in round-ups, we hereby agree to place our men under the orders of the foreman of the round-up, so long as they remain with it, and in case of refusal by any man to do faithfully and well the duty assigned to him, or to obey the orders given to him by the foreman in driving, cutting out, and other work, we hereby authorize the foreman of any round-up to prohibit any man so offending from any further participation in said work.

## 9

It is the sense of this Association, and is hereby made binding on its members, that any man who shall hereafter turn out any female neat cattle upon the range shall place with them, at the time of turning loose not less than seven (7) serviceable bulls for every one hundred (100) head of female cattle which are two years old and upward at that time; and that on or before July 1st, of each year thereafter, every member shall supply the same proportion of bulls of the same usefulness and quality to all female cattle of the above age of which he may then be the owner. Proved violation of the above rule shall be deemed a proper subject for complaint, the penalty to be decided by a majority of the Association present at the next meeting.

## 10

If any of the cattle companies or stockmen along the river refuse to obey the rules and by-laws of this Association, the Association will refuse to act with them or allow them to take part in the round-up; and the captain of the round-up shall see that no stockman debarred by action of this Association from participating in the round-up is allowed to take part in it, and he shall further see that no third party, acting in the interest of said stockman, is permitted to take part in or derive benefit from the round-up.

## APPENDIX B

### BY-LAWS OF THE MONTANA STOCKGROWERS ASSOCIATION\*

Section 1. This association shall be known as the Montana Stockgrowers Association.

Section 2. The object of this association is to advance the interests of the stockgrowers in Montana and adjoining territories and for the protection of the same against frauds and swindlers, and to prevent the stealing and driving away of cattle, horses, mules and asses from the rightful owners thereof, and to enforce the stock laws of Montana Territory.

Section 3. Election of Officers. The affairs of the association shall be conducted and managed by a president, first vice president, a second vice president, a secretary and treasurer combined and an executive committee. The executive committee shall consist of one member for each county in the Territory, except Dawson, Yellowstone, Lewis and Clark which shall have two (2) members each, Meaghen and Choteau which shall have three (3) members each, Custer County shall have four members and the Territory of Dakota two (2) members. Seven (7) members shall constitute a quorum. All regular officers of the association shall be *ex-officio* members of this committee. These officers and the above named committee shall be elected on the first day of the semiannual meeting in April of each year and shall serve until the spring meeting following their election, or until their successors have been elected. Written proxies, approved as genuine by the executive committee, and made within sixty (60) days may be voted at elections.

The executive committee is empowered to fill any vacancies that may occur by death or otherwise in their own body or among the officers of this association, and the person so appointed shall hold office until the next regular election.

#### DUTY OF OFFICERS

Section 4. The president shall preside at all meetings of the association. He shall see that all the by-laws, resolutions, and regulations thereof, are faithfully executed, and perform such other duties as may be required of him in these by-laws, as well as such as may be necessary to secure the objects and best interests of this association not herein otherwise provided for.

Section 5. The first vice president in the absence of the president shall perform the duties of the latter, and if he shall be absent the second vice president shall act, and if both be absent at any meeting a president *pro-tem* may be elected.

\*Proceedings of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, 1885-1889, ms, Historical Society of Montana. Adopted April 3, 1885, pp. 13-19.

Section 6. The secretary and treasurer shall keep accurate minutes of the transactions of this association. He shall keep a roll of members and a correct account of all moneys received. He shall write and send all communications for the association and such as he may be directed to write and send by the association or the executive committee. He shall pay all bills, when directed by the executive committee and he shall make a full report of all the transactions of his office at each semiannual session and at such other times as the association may direct, producing therewith vouchers for all moneys paid out. He shall deliver to his successor, all books, papers, moneys and other property in his possession belonging to the association, and perform such other duties as may be required by these by-laws, resolutions and regulations or by the association. He is authorized to employ such assistance as he may deem necessary at a reasonable rate of compensation. He shall keep a record of the brands and such other information concerning the members, stock, range, etc., as may be furnished him by the members. He shall give bond to the association in such sum and with such sureties as may be required by the executive committee, conditioned that he will faithfully perform all acts and things required of him in this section. And he shall receive such compensation as the executive committee may determine.

Section 7. The executive committee shall meet immediately after their election and at such other times as they may be called together by the president. The president or vice president shall preside at all meetings. The secretary and treasurer shall act as secretary of the committee. This committee shall have entire control of the employees and all the business of the association during its adjournment. It shall audit all accounts and order the secretary and treasurer to pay all bills. They shall represent the association before the territorial board of stock commissioners, boards of county commissioners, and the legislature, and other similar positions during adjournment of the association. At each annual spring meeting this committee shall make a report to the association in regard to matters requiring their attention and shall recommend such measures as they deem necessary. Each member shall report at the meeting such matters as require attention in his locality and shall look after and give attention to the interests of the association for the county he represents.

Section 8. The semiannual meetings of this association shall be held on the third Monday in April at 10 o'clock a.m., in Miles City, Montana at such a place as the executive committee shall determine, due notice thereof being given. The fall meeting of the association shall be held each year on the third Monday in August at Helena, Montana at 10:00 a.m., at such place as the executive

committee shall determine, due notice thereof being given. Special meetings may be called at any time by the president or in his absence by either of the vice presidents and shall be called whenever requested by seven members. Twenty-five members shall constitute a quorum for business at all meetings. The call for a special meeting shall state the object and place of such meeting, and no other business shall be transacted at such meeting.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS AT MEETINGS

1. Calling the roll.
2. Reading minutes of last meeting.
3. Election of new members.
4. Unfinished business.
5. Report of officers.
6. Election of officers.
7. Election of executive committee.
8. General business.
9. Adjournment.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Section 9. No person shall be a member of this association except a stockgrower, as defined by the following—*viz*: a person owning or controlling cattle, horses, mules or asses and engaged in the business of breeding, growing and raising the same for profit. To become a member of this association all persons must be proposed by a member, each proposition shall be accompanied by the fee of admission hereinafter specified together with a statement of the number of cattle, horses, mules and asses owned or controlled by such person or his firm or his firm or company with all the brands and marks of such stock, also the names of the individuals comprising his firm or names of all the officers, if a company, and the post office address of each, and his application shall be referred to a committee on membership consisting of three members of the executive committee and the secretary and treasurer of the association, who shall examine said application and if they deem the applicant a proper person, the secretary shall so notify him and place his name upon the list of members. All persons admitted as members bind themselves and their employees to the observance of all bylaws, resolutions and regulations of the association that are now in force, or that may hereafter be adopted, in a penalty of forfeiture of membership. Memberships shall be personal.

Section 10. The admission shall be fifteen dollars (\$15.00) payable at time of election, and no one shall become a member without such payment. Any member failing to pay his dues on or before the next spring meeting, when the same shall become due,

shall cease to be a member until such payment has been made. Any member who shall be in arrears for more than one year for dues or assessments, shall be dropped from the roll of members. All members shall be subject, not oftener than once per annum to an assessment not exceeding one cent a head on seventy percent of all cattle, horses, mules and asses at which each person may at that time be the owner, and no resignation shall be accepted until all dues and assessments are paid. This assessment may be levied at the discretion of the executive committee, and shall be payable when called for. Failure to pay on or before the next semiannual meeting following date of such assessment shall work a forfeiture of membership. The fund so assessed shall be collected by the secretary and treasurer and shall become a part of the common fund of the association, subject to the same regulations as before provided.

Section 11. Any member who shall divulge the proceedings of or action taken in any meeting of this association or officers thereof, that may be instituted for the purpose of its protection or that of any of its members under the laws of this territory or of their by-laws, resolutions and regulations or that may be subversive of the interests generally of the association, shall have a fair and impartial hearing at a special meeting called for that purpose, or at a semiannual meeting, and if found guilty by a majority of the members present, shall be expelled.

Section 12. Any member of this association who shall be expelled therefrom as aforesaid, shall not again be received as a member thereof and the stockgrowers generally shall be notified of such expulsion.

Section 13. Whenever it shall come to the knowledge of any member of this association that any person or persons are engaged in stealing or killing stock of any kind, he shall immediately notify the executive committee of the association, who are hereby empowered to act in such manner as will, if possible, bring such person or persons to justice and recover said property.

Section 14. These bylaws, regulations and resolutions shall not be annulled or amended except at a semiannual meeting, and then by only a vote of two-thirds of the members present.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### GENERAL

- Clay, John, *My Life on the Range* (Chicago, 1924).
- Cowles, Anna Roosevelt, *Letters from Theodore Roosevelt to Anna Roosevelt Cowles, 1870-1918* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924).
- Dale, Edward Everett, *Cow Country* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945).
- Gordon, S., *Recollections of Old Milestown* (Miles City, 1918).
- Hagedorn, Hermann, *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921).
- Lang, Lincoln A., *Ranching With Roosevelt* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Company, 1926).
- Lodge, Henry Cabot, *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1884-1918* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924). In two volumes.
- Montana Stockgrowers Association, *Brand Book of the Montana Stockgrowers Association for 1886* (Helena, 1886).
- Nelson, Bruce, *Land of the Dakotahs* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1946).
- Osgood, Ernest Staples, *The Day of the Cattleman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1929).
- Pelzer, Louis, *The Cattleman's Frontier* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936).
- Pringle, Henry P., *Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931).
- Roosevelt, Theodore, *An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920).
- Roosevelt, Theodore, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (New York: The Century Company, 1899).
- Sewall, William Wingate, *Bill Sewall's Story of T. R.* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919).
- Stuart, Granville, *Forty Years on the Frontier* (Paul C. Phillips, Editor, Cleveland, 1925). In two volumes.
- Taylor, Joseph Henry, *Frontier & Indian Life and Kaleidoscopic Lives* (Washburn, N. D., 1932).
- Wister, Owen, *Roosevelt, The Story of a Friendship, 1880-1919* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930).

### MANUSCRIPTS

- Minutes of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, 1885-1889. (ms), Historical Society of Montana, Helena.
- Richter, William B., "A Historical Study of Beef Bonanza Ranching in Billings County, Dakota Territory" (ms), Master of Arts Thesis, Montana State University, 1941.
- W.P.A. Writers' Project, Files on History of Grazing (ms), State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck.

### ARTICLES AND BULLETINS

- Briggs, Harold E., "Ranching and Stock-Raising in the Territory of Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Volume XIV (Pierre, 1928), 417-466.

Burdick, Usher L., "Life and Exploits of John Goodall" (Watford City, N. D., 1931).

Fletcher, Robert S., "Organization of the Range Cattle Business in Eastern Montana," Bulletin No. 265 (Bozeman: Montana State College, 1932).

Fletcher, Robert S., "That Hard Winter in Montana, 1886-1887," *Agricultural History*, Volume IV, No. 4. (October, 1920), 122-130.

Goplen, Arnold O., "The Career of Marquis de Mores in the Badlands of North Dakota," *North Dakota History*, Volume XIII, Nos. 1 & 2 (January-April, 1946).

Hagen, Olaf T., "Lessons in Democracy in the Badlands of North Dakota," *North Dakota Teacher*, April, May, 1949.

Huidekoper, Wallis, "The Land of the Dacotahs," (Helena: Montana Stockgrowers Association, 1949).

Shafer, George F., "Early History of McKenzie County," *Collections of the Historical Society of North Dakota*, Volume IV, 41-61.

#### NEWSPAPERS

*The Bad Lands Cow Boy*, Medora, Dakota. Incomplete files from 1884-1885 are in the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

*Bismarck Daily Tribune*, Bismarck, Dakota. Incomplete files in State Historical Society of North Dakota.

*Bismarck Weekly Tribune*, Bismarck, Dakota. Incomplete files in State Historical Society of North Dakota. †

*Dickinson Press*, Dickinson, North Dakota. Complete files from 1883—in office of Dickinson Press.

*The Glendive Independent*, Glendive, Montana. Incomplete files in Historical Society of Montana.

*The Glendive Times*, Glendive, Montana. Incomplete files in Historical Society of Montana.

*The Mandan Pioneer*, Mandan, North Dakota. Complete files in Mandan Pioneer Office.

*Montana Stock and Mining Journal*; later changed to *The Montana Live Stock Journal*, Helena, 1884-1885. Historical Society of Montana.

*Weekly Yellowstone Journal and Live Stock Reporter*, Miles City, Montana. Incomplete files in Historical Society of Montana.



STATE  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
OF NORTH DAKOTA