Texas Cowboy Packet
The Ranching and Farming Fron-
The Cattle Kingdom

The Spanish Conquistadors brought herds of cattle with them from Spain. Soldiers and priests at Spanish missions depended on cattle for the food. Thousands of cattle roamed free until, in the nineteenth century, enterprising Texans rounded up and began marketing the wild cattle. The Texas cattle kingdom was born.

Cattle ranches became important to the Texas economy. After the Civil War the demand for beef grew even greater. In Texas, cattle were selling for $3 or $4 per head. In the cities of the Northeast, the cattle were worth between $30 and $40 per head!

By 1865, stockyards and packing houses were opening in Chicago. Soon more beef processing plants appeared farther west in St. Louis and Kansas City. These plants were built to prepare the beef for shipment to cities in the North and East. Other markets were available as well. Army posts and Indian reservations in the Midwest and West wanted Texas beef. The major problem faced by the Texas ranchers was how to get the cattle to the nearest railroad lines. The tough longhorns provided a simple solution: they could walk.

Bandits, cattle thieves and the possibility of Indian attacks spelled danger. A burst of thunder could stampede thousands of cattle in every direction, trampling everything and everyone in their path. Life on the trail was often a lonely one. But the Texas cattle industry became a booming business.

Long cattle drives ended in the late 1880s, but the image of the cowboy and working cattle continued. Anglos, African-Americans, and Hispanics worked in the cattle industry. Even “calicos” (women) went up the trail. Other women became partners with their husbands or fathers ranching. The cattle industry was very much a part of Texas.

Native Americans were often displaced to make room for the great pasture ranches. Then the ranches were fenced with barbed wire. Windmills and artesian wells brought water to the thirsty cattle.

Texas ranchers, however, were producing too many cattle. Prices dropped. As prices went down, ranches were often broken up and land sold to farmers.

Still many big cattle ranches remained. Improved grasses and crossbreeding of herds helped the industry. Ranching moved onto the High Plains.
The Cowboy and Branding

The art of cattle branding can be traced as far back as ancient Egypt. Brands have been used as marks of identification at some time in all countries and civilizations. Thousands of brands have marked cattle and horses in the American West for over three centuries. Brands in the United States are typically made of letters, shapes and other symbols.

A cowboy had to be an expert at reading these brands so they would know which animal belonged to which ranch.

The cowboy got to know many brands by memory and knew how to read any brand he didn’t recognize.

How to Read Cattle Brands

• Brands are usually read from the top to bottom, left to right.

• Horizontal lines are read as bars.

• Diagonal lines are read as slashes.

Vertical lines can be vertical, horizontal, slanted or at whatever angle.

Some letters and symbols can be used upside down. This is called “crazy”

Some information courtesy of: http://www.barbwiremuseum.com/cattlebrandhistory.htm
Cattle Brand Reading

Now that you’re an expert at reading brands, see if you can decipher these real cattle brands used in Texas from 1836 to 1936. Use the word bank at right. Remember think creatively!

1. ..................  11. ..................  No Key Brand
2. ..................  12. ..................  Christmas Brand
3. ..................  13. ..................  Reverse R R Brand
4. ..................  14. ..................  7 UP Brand
5. ..................  15. ..................  Lazy DJ Connected Brand
6. ..................  16. ..................  V 8 Brand
7. ..................  17. ..................  Wagon Wheel Brand
8. ..................  18. ..................  Cow Head Brand
9. ..................  19. ..................  Arrow B Brand
10. ..................  20. ..................  2 Up and 2 Down Brand
    ..................  ..................  T 4 Connected Brand
    ..................  ..................  M Over W Brand
    ..................  ..................  H H Connected Brand
    ..................  ..................  J R Diamond Brand
    ..................  ..................  Diamond Bar Brand
    ..................  ..................  A Tea Pot Brand
    ..................  ..................  Cross Heart Brand
    ..................  ..................  Boot T Brand
    ..................  ..................  Rocking Chair Brand
    ..................  ..................  Rafter Over 11 Brand
As a new cattle rancher in Texas in the 1880s, you need a brand to set your cattle apart from those of other people, especially on the cattle trails and at market in the railroad towns. You also want to protect your cattle from rustlers. In order to do this, you must create a unique brand that is not easily changed by cattle rustlers with “running irons.”

In this activity, you will create your own brand. It must be different from everyone else and have a special meaning to you. Use a combination of letters, numbers or symbols. You can also use the special styles of letters (lazy, crazy, rocking, etc) or numbers discussed on the “The Cowboy and Branding” page.

1. What is the name of your brand? ___________________________________________

2. Explain the parts of your brand ____________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

3. Why did you choose this design? ___________________________________________

4. Modern companies have “brands” that we identify with their products. List 2 of these companies and describe what their brand looks like. ________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
The Life and Times of Texas Cowboys

Life on the Cattle Trail. A trail drive began with a roundup. Cowboys rode the open range, herding the longhorns to a central camp. Cowboys from different ranches usually worked to collect the cattle. Calves and unmarked strays were branded and the animals were separated into herds.

The drive north followed one of the cattle trails. It began when the grass was green so that the cattle could eat as they moved. Some ranchers rode along and used their own cowboys, but most hired others to move the cattle. Charles Schreiner, John Lytle, and John Henry Stephens made large sums of money herding other people’s cattle to market.

Herds on the trail ranged in size from several hundred cattle to as many as 3,000. The larger herds required fifteen to twenty or more cowboys. The cowboys needed fifty to sixty horses to do their work. Each cowboy used several horses in relays of two or three, so a fresh mount was always available. The group of horses on the drive was called the remuda, Spanish for “exchange.” A trail boss was in charge of the entire outfit. The boss had to plan the drive, keep the business records, and handle some fifteen independent cowboys. To help with these duties, the trail boss usually had a ramrod, or assistant.

A good camp cook was also a necessity. The cook usually traveled ahead of the herd and had meals prepared when the outfit caught up. The cook was in charge of a chuckwagon loaded with food. Meals on the trail consisted of beans, beef, cornmeal, molasses, and coffee. Every night the cook pointed the tongue of the wagon toward the North Star. This provided an accurate direction for the next day’s drive. Nearly as important as the camp cook was the scout. The scout rode ahead and reported on trail conditions, water sources, or any signs of trouble.

A day on the trail began before sunrise. After breakfast, the cowboys would choose their horses from the remuda. The two or three most experienced cowboys, known as pointers, rode in front of the herd to guide it in the right direction. Most of the cowboys rode along the side, or flanks, of the herd to keep it together. The least-experienced cowboys rode in the rear, or drag position. A large herd would spread out over a half mile and the good riders in the rear “ate” dust the whole trip. On a good day, a trail-driving outfit could cover fifteen to eighteen miles.

Lack of water and the summer heat were constant problems on the trail. The cowboys always had to be alert for rustlers (cattle thieves), and the possibility of Native American attacks. A burst of thunder and lightning could stampede thousands of cattle in every direction, trampling everything and everyone in their path. In 1882, a thunderstorm stampeded eleven herds of cattle waiting to cross the Red River at Doan’s Crossing. For 10 days, more than 125 cowboys chased some 30,000 frightened cows.
The Cowboys  The famous ranchers and giant ranches could never have produced cattle and profit without the cowboys. Most cowboys were young men, usually in their early twenties.  They faced stampedes, Native American attacks, blizzards, floods, and hours of hard labor. On trail drives, it was not unusual for a cowboy to sleep in the saddle while riding 24 hours at a stretch. For all of their work and hardship, cowboys received wages of twenty to twenty-five dollars a month.

On many Texas ranches, at least half of the cowboys were African-Americans or Mexican-Americans. Bose Ikard, a black cowboy, was one of Charlie Goodnight’s most trusted hands. Jim Perry and Matthew “Bones” Hooks were two other well known black cowboys. Mexican-American Ramon Alvarado was a famous boss on the King Ranch. Daniel Webster “80 John” Wallace was a respected black cowboy who eventually bought his own ranch. The ranch covered 8,000 acres of Mitchell County.

The tradition and style of the cowboys began in Mexico. Many words used by the cowboys came from the Spanish language. Among these are remuda as well as ranch, from the Spanish word rancho. All cowboys used a long light rope called a lariat, from the Spanish word la reata. The lariat was also known as a lasso, from the Spanish word lazo. Contests of roping and riding took the name rodeo, from the Spanish word for “roundup” or “surrounding.”

The Cowboy
Job Descriptions. Write each description below under the heading for the correct job.

Ride along the side of the herd
In charge of the chuck wagon
In charge of the entire outfit
Ride in front of the herd to guide it
Ride in the rear of the herd
Look for water
Travel ahead of the herd to set up camp

Cowboy

Least experienced cowboys
Most experienced cowboys
Assistant to trail boss
Round up and brand cattle
Prepare meals
Look for signs of trouble
Keep the herd together

Trail Boss

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________

Scout

11. ____________________________
12. ____________________________
13. ____________________________

Pointers

14. ____________________________
15. ____________________________

Flank Position

16. ____________________________
17. ____________________________
18. ____________________________

Drag Position

19. ____________________________
20. ____________________________

Camp Cook

8. ____________________________
9. ____________________________
10. ____________________________

Ride in the rear of the herd

1. ____________________________

Word Scramble. Use the clues to unscramble the vocabulary words below.

20. NARBD  design burned into cattle as proof of ownership
21. POUNDRU  the herding of longhorns into a central camp as the start of a trail drive
22. MAEURD  group of extra horses on a cattle drive
23. SESRLRTU  cattle thieves
24. AATILR  long, light rope used by cowboys
25. BBDRRAE EIRW  two wires twisted together and held with small barbs about two inches apart
26. DROMAR  the assistant to the trail boss on a cattle drive
27. GHOONNLRTU  the new breed of cattle that developed from Spanish and Anglo-American cattle
Map: Texas Cattle Trails, c. 1870

Part A – *BE SURE TO USE YOUR MAP RULES!!*

Using the map on pg 415 of your book color and label the following items on the map on the back of this page. *Be sure to include a key in the white box provided. The key should include the colors and any symbols you included on the map. REMEMBER TO CREATE A KEY AND A COMPASS ROSE!*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Rivers</th>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Cattle Trails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Rio Grande</td>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>(Labeling will be in your Key)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>Goodnight-Loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Fort Worth</td>
<td>Great Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Kerrville</td>
<td>Chisolm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Pueblo</td>
<td>Sedalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dodge City</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td></td>
<td>Topeka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Territories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ranches</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unorganized Territory</td>
<td>King Ranch</td>
<td>Baxter Springs</td>
<td>Railroads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Territory</td>
<td>XIT Ranch</td>
<td>Sedalia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Territory</td>
<td>JA Ranch</td>
<td>Denver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyoming Territory</td>
<td>Wallace Ranch</td>
<td>Ellsworth</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Abilene</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cheyenne</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ogallala</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part B – *Answer the following questions using the map and Ch. 18*

1. Through how many states and territories did the Texas Cattle Trails pass?

2. What was the reaction of Missouri farmers to the cattle herds traveling along the Sedalia trail?

3. Which trail began furthest South? Which trail traveled the furthest West?

4. Which trail would the Wallace Ranch most likely use to get his cattle to Ogallala, Nebraska?

5. How far did a cattle crew have to travel to get from San Antonio, TX, to Abilene, KS? If a cattle crew averaged 12 miles per day, how long would that trip take them?
The Cattle Drive Crew

Label the positions on the cattle drive as described in the reading.
Terms to use:
Pointers, Remuda, Flank, Wrangler, Chuckwagon/Cook, Drag, Trail Boss, Point
When cattle are first started, the risk of stampedes is great. They are nervous and easily fright-ened; the slightest noise may startle them into running. Some cattle are stampeder by nature. The greatest losses occurred in the night when all was utter confusion. A herd was more likely to run on a dark night than on a moonlight night. The remarkable thing about it was that the whole herd started instantly, jarring the earth like an earthquake. We could not divide the course they were taking until they had gone far enough for the sound to guide us—unless they were coming toward us. In that case I led the herd, holding them back as much as possible. As soon as the herd was strung out, we would turn the leaders back. They would circle and go into what was called a "mill," invariably moving to the right (if any old trailman ever heard of a herd moving to the left, I would like to hear from him).

The cattle would run until they were tired and we gradually spread them and they would settle down. We never took the cattle back to the same bed ground, for we knew that they would run again. We always tried to find the highest ground. Once settled they would generally be quiet. As a rule it took several days to rid the cattle of the effects of a stampede. The most successful way I found was to drive them all night. This way had them under control with the men all around them. I placed two of my most skillful men behind at what we called the corners and four more in front. If it was dark and the cattle had been badly stampeded they would not go far until they began to run again; not all of them would be running, however. Strange to say, there would be about one-half the herd that were marching along as though nothing had happened, while the rest of the herd would be going at a mad rate. The stampeders would come up one side at full speed, but when they reached the front the men in the lead would catch them and turn them back on the other side; then the men on the corners would drive them back again. These cattle would run until they were in great distress.

We followed this method again the next night and the cattle were cured. They never stampeded again. On nights when an electric storm was in progress, we could see the lightning playing on the horns of the cattle and on the horses' ears, resembling lightning bugs.


1. When is the risk of stampede the greatest? Why? 
2. When do the greatest losses occur? Why? 
3. When could the leaders of a stampede be turned? 
4. What is a mill? 
5. In what direction do cattle circle? 
6. How long will they run? 
7. Why were they not returned to the original camping place? 
8. How did the cowboys cure the stampeders? 
9. Where was lightning visible during the electric storm?
Using the packet about cowboy clothes, dress the cowboy. He needs a hat, bandana, shirt, chaps, boots and spurs. In the area around the cowboy, tell the purpose and uses of each piece of clothing and equipment.
Chapter 18 Review Questions
Use Ch. 18 (pp 410-427) in your textbook to answer the following questions

Section 1
Answer the following:

1. Who brought the first cattle to Texas? __________________________________________

2. Why did the cattle industry become profitable after the Civil War?  
   _______________________________________________________________________

   Name four important cattle trails  3. _______________  4. _______________
   5. _______________  6. _______________  

   Name 3 difficulties faced by cowhands on the cattle drive.  7. _______________
   8. _______________  9. _______________

10. What came to Texas that ended the need for long cattle drives?  
   _______________________________________________________________________

Section 2
Identify the following

11. Charles Goodnight -

12. J.F. Glidden –

13. Henrietta King -

Answer the following

Name four major Texas cattle ranches.  14. _______________  15. _______________
   16. _______________  17. _______________

Name two other livestock industries that merged on the Texas Range.  
   18. ___________________________  19. ___________________________

Name three reasons why the cattle industry changed in the late 1880s.  
   20. ___________________________  21. ___________________________  22. _______________

Section 3
Answer the following

23. Why did the westward movement of farmers increase after the Civil War?  
   _______________________________________________________________________

24. Name the most important crop grown in Texas after 1870.  
   _______________________________________________________________________

Name 2 problems faced by tenant farmers and sharecroppers after the Civil War ended.  
   25. ______________________________________________________________________
   26. ______________________________________________________________________