

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The West DBQ

**Essential Question-** The Long Drive: Will you re-up next year?

### Background Essay:

The glory days of the American Cowboy were like a shooting star- \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ moving, and short-lived. They began at the end of the \_\_\_\_\_ in 1865 and ended with the introduction of \_\_\_\_\_ fencing.

The biggest event of the glory days was known as the \_\_\_\_\_. During the Civil War, many ranches in the Texas went untended. With the young men away, domesticated \_\_\_\_\_ cattle joined wild cattle and made calves. By the end of the war there were about \_\_\_\_\_ million longhorns unbranded and unclaimed. Texans returning from the war along with ex-soldiers, former slaves, and Mexican \_\_\_\_\_ found an opportunity. Ranchers with money hired \_\_\_\_\_ who chased the cattle down and branded them. \_\_\_\_\_ were created and moved to Railroad towns in \_\_\_\_\_ or to northern ranges for breeding and fattening. From railroad towns, most cattle were shipped off to packing houses in \_\_\_\_\_, where they were slaughtered and butchered. \_\_\_\_\_ soon replaced pork as America's favorite meat dish.

To walk the cattle from south Texas to Kansas or Wyoming generally took \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ months. A drive might have \_\_\_\_\_ longhorn cattle, \_\_\_\_\_ cowboys, a wrangler to tend the horses, a cook, and a trail boss. The first day of the drive was the hardest. After a day or two, the herd would settle down. At the head, was a lead \_\_\_\_\_, often a veteran of earlier drives who listened to the trail boss and was dependable. By \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ and other trails had been walked by hundreds of thousands of cattle. The paths were worn and easy to follow.

The end of the trail for many cowboys was a Kansas \_\_\_\_\_ like Abilene, Ellsworth, or Dodge City. The saloon business and other establishments bustled in these towns. \_\_\_\_\_ were few, but cautious trail bosses often allowed cowboys only a couple of hours in town to get a shower and a shave. Then it was back to the cows.

For many cowboys, one trip was enough. Some found work on northern \_\_\_\_\_ and stayed there; others moved to new adventures. Only about a \_\_\_\_\_ of long-drive cowboys returned to Texas to do it all over again next year. The long drive: Will you \_\_\_\_\_ next year?

## The Long Drive: Will You Re-Up Next Year?

The glory days of the American cowboy were like a shooting star – bright, fast-moving, and short-lived. They began at the end of the Civil War in 1865 and ended, in part, with the introduction of barbed-wire fencing, which closed down the open range in the late 1880s.

At the heart of these glory days was an event known as the long drive. During the Civil War, many cattle ranches in south and central Texas went untended. With the young men away at war, domesticated **longhorn cattle** drifted into brush country, joined wild cattle, and got down to the business of making calves. By the end of the war, there were about five million long-horns, many unbranded and unclaimed. Texans returning from the war saw an opportunity. So, too, did a few thousand others – ex-soldiers from the South and North, ex-slaves, Mexican *vaqueros*, a few Englishmen, and some Native Americans. Ranchers with money hired **brushpoppers** who chased down the cattle and branded them. Herds were created and walked north to railroad towns in Kansas or to northern ranges for breeding and fattening. From the railroad towns, most cattle were shipped off to **packing houses** in Chicago, where they were slaughtered and butchered. Beef soon replaced pork as America's favorite meat dish.

To walk cattle from south Texas to Kansas or Wyoming generally took three to four months. A drive might have 2,000 longhorn cattle, ten cowboys, a wrangler to tend the horses, a cook, and a trail boss. The first day of the

drive was usually a hard push. The cattle were nervous about leaving familiar ground and were more likely to stray or be spooked into a stampede. After a day or two, the herd would settle and a rhythm could be established. At the head was a lead bull, often a veteran of earlier drives who, with guidance from the trail boss, marched slowly but dependably north. By 1870, the Chisholm and other trails had been walked by hundreds of thousands of cattle, and the paths were well-worn and easy to follow.

The end of the trail for many Texas cowboys

was a Kansas **cow town** like Abilene, Ellsworth, or Dodge City. There, the saloon business bustled and a number of painted ladies with names like Big Nose Kate and Squirrel Tooth Alice were ready to help celebrate an evening. Gunfights were few, but cautious trail bosses often allowed cowboys only a couple of hours in town to get a shower and a shave. Then it was back to the cows.

The documents in this Mini-Q give us a glimpse of the long-drive experience. It should be said at the outset that the long drive did not become a regular event in the lives of most cowboys. For many, one trip was enough. Some found work on northern ranges and stayed there; others moved on to new adventures. In fact, only about a third of long-drive cowboys returned to Texas to do it all over again the next year. But this Mini-Q concerns you, a cowboy fresh from the trail. Examine the documents that follow and then answer the question: *The long drive: Will you re-up next year?*



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