

The Cowboy Poetry of Orv Alveshere

Four Girls Lost in a Blinding White-Out Blizzard
by Orv Alveshere

CATTLE DRIVE, HORSEBACK, 1928
by Orv Alveshere

WATCHING REAL LIFE, NOT MOVIES

Dad trained, drove and rode horses, and like movie stars, rode tall in the saddle. He told of long rides and cattle drives, with a cow pony to straddle. One cattle drive to Manfred's stockyards to load on the train for market. His Dad was there to pick him up with a Model T, where he'd parked it. His Brother had to lead Dad's horse home. They quizzed an old horse trainer Who told him, "Tie that horse to his horse's tail," it was a 'no-brainer'. Fearing for his horse's tail, he hoped at the rides end...he still had one. Using that suggestion, the ride went well and that cattle drive was done.

A 20 YEAR OLD IN 1928

One year Dad spoke to a young lad, "The first time I came to your town Was on a long cattle drive. The sun was setting to the west at sundown. Two of us rode in like future movie cowboys and rode in on horseback." That lad was shocked, "You did what?" The stunned youth couldn't hold back. "That was a first: I've never conversed with someone who came here by horse." Dad explained, "It was in nineteen-twenty-eight, so consider the source. We'd fed, watered and saddled our steeds. We rose before the fast rising sun. We were half-way through our cattle drive, knowing it had to be done.

HEAD 'EM UP, MOVE 'EM OUT

"We had driven cattle for miles. We'd herded them into the stockyard. Our Brother followed with team and hayrack, so we didn't drive them hard. That was the first night I'd slept in a hotel room," pointing up there. The impatient youth stopped him, "There is NO hotel in Esmond...anywhere!" Reclaiming the conversation, "Listen Son to what I'm about to tell; Upstairs...in that corner building, was originally a hotel. It was hot, I tossed and turned, awakened by the tip of the sun. Yes, we rose, fed horses and cattle, as our cattle drive was not done."

GET ALONG LITTLE DOGIES...TO YOUR NEW HOME

"Many miles to the north, my older Brother had bid and bought some land, A nice house, tall windmill, fenced, plus a new shelterbelt stand. An opportunity to raise horses, cattle, oats and plant some wheat; He sat for hours, days and years behind a team, on a horse drawn plow seat. Our duty...my Brother and I on horseback, drove those cattle north. We had our trained cattle dog following them, moving back and forth. Oh, forgot to mention, the old milk cow...she was the slowest one. Somewhat rested, we were pleased our long cattle drive was nearly half-done."

RATHER STRADDLE SADDLE THAN SEE MOVIES JUBILEE RELIVED HISTORY FROM 1928

His parents arrived, he changed his tune, "Today at our Diamond Jubilee; I learned of a cattle drive, an interesting piece of history. I met this man who sat tall in the saddle when he rode into our town; It was hard to believe, many years ago, on horseback, at sundown. Cowboys arrived here like in the movies, where I've seen cattle drives. We should put up a stone marker, 'A Cattle Drover From Harvey Arrives.'" Dad headed north, the youth convinced, grateful for such rapt attention, Recalling details of years before, when that dusty cattle drive was done.
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DEPARTED HORSES AND WHEELCHAIRS

4-WHEELED 'HORSE' RIDDEN THROUGH HALLWAYS
"I'm riding my horse," he cried. Unbridled enthusiasm, wobbly stride; Zigzag route, using one hand, he powered his wheelchair ride. The hoarse and aging voice had been muffled by a disabling stroke. Right side did not respond. His spirit was determined and God's help he'd invoke. The pseudo-horseback nonagenarian was greeted with, "Hi;" "Go for it;" plus waves and smiles, as at two MPH, he wheeled on by. In that Care Center, coffee cups were too heavy, he couldn't carry it. Fond memories comforted him. His mobility now was his chariot.

In care of HEART OF AMERICA MEDICAL CENTER
It had a double meaning. His address for 2 years was...in care of... That mere phrase delivered their mail, plus a staff provided care with love. While raising horses and grain, he found a loving mate to be his bride. With caring devotion for 70 years, they worked side by side. Like a blessing from Above they now shared the same Nursing Home room. No longer able to fend for themselves, they still smiled like bride and groom. The compassionate staff added parties, meals and treats to vary it. For a time each had a wheelchair. He referred to it as his "chariot."

RECOLLECTIONS OF PAST SPOTTED HORSES AND GREAT DRAFT HORSES

He hung up his saddle for the last time, and as a hand-me-down gift; He endowed his last horse. He and his horse were no longer sure and swift. Horses and trains were his only means of transportation in his youth. He could tell the age of a horse just by looking at its mouth and tooth. He'd trained and cared for many horses. A 'well-trained' horse was his desire. He carefully repaired some torn horse-hides that tangled with a barbed-wire. Horses responded easily to him. At flooded roads they helped him ferry it. He drove buggies, plows, wagons, hayracks, stoneboats, sleighs and a chariot.

HORSE'S NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS/WILD HORSES 'COULD' TEAR HIM AWAY

He could recall many a fav'rite horse, some with partiality. A few kicked, bucked, bolted, rebuffed and refused. He'd met reality. He owned many great equines, plus some runaways with his grain drill! One broke his wagon, some un'stable' saddle broncs gave him a spill! "Dirt baths," he called them ..." very painful vertical exits!" We agreed. He found teams for plowing, chores, buggies, bobsleds, caroling and for ev'ry need. Teams pulled him from snowdrifts. Food was put in sleighs so they could carry it. His son's ski lift was his team. Racing? He grinned and told of a chariot.

HORSE HERD IS NOW ONLY A PHOTOGRAPH/HAD CHARLEY HORSES?

Like a cowboy in the movies he drove a herd of cattle to a town; To the stockyards. They had many miles to go. The livestock bedded down. With 19 horses he and his brother operated three plows. An invented PHANTOM 'drove' the third plow with no sweat on his ghostly brow. Near sundown, after supper, there was a combination training /trail ride. He and his sons rode green broke horses, rode with pride, side by side. Once a 23-horse herd grazed his pasture; they'd hurry to brush and curry it. Horses crested the hill to drink. We tried to build a chariot.

SKILLED HORSEMAN HAD A LIBRARY OF FACTS AND MEMORIES

His hands could no longer saddle nor grip the reins to control a horse. His mind was still sharp with many facts, not needing a refresher course. He rode a horse to country school. In blizzards they took him safely home. With horse-tail views, he circled hay fields on hayrakes, like a fine-toothed comb. He pitched to fill threshing bundle racks. His team obeyed his voice commands. Those oat-burners provided muscle for his ag production demands. Winter storms brought snow drifts. Dust storms blew soil over fence lines to bury it. At ninety-six plus, health slowed him. He waited for the chariot.

HE WAS CALLED, THEY WERE CALLED/QUICKER NICKERS

A resolute attitude regained his strength to 'power' his wheelchair. Later, the hallways quieted as his "horse" retired. Their lives ended there. They'd received great care. "Ev'rything we do here," the staff emphasized, "Is worth it!" Soft food, water for their thirst, and hugs were their daily benefit. He was called Home. His loving wife was also called Home to Glory. Pictures of horse-drawn wagons on their last ride linked with the Press story. He trained teams ... he gave us the impression ... and he didn't vary it ... "He expected the Angel to allow him to drive the chariot."
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The country prairies were laden with snow;
There were snowdrifts by the road, ready to blow.
The North Wind combined with many a cloud;
The school teacher's concerns were stated out loud;
The school teacher sent home, the young boys and girls.
The sky darkened despite the white snowy swirls.
Cracking the reins, the team and snow buggy moves;
My aunts had a trusty team, with eight big hooves.
NORTH WIND BLOWS A BLUSTERY BLUR
Dressed head to toe, in their warm boots and snow suits;
They couldn't see the team's heads, just their patoots.
Protected from the wind, while sitting inside,
All four were too frightened to even confide,
The youthful driver, or to each other,
They're heading home to their widowed mother,
Praying that the visibility improves,
Hearing the synchronized sound of the team's hooves.
A BLEACHED-WHITE BLUR/A DARK WHITE-OUT
This snow buggy was truly, a work of art;
A Ford Model 'A' combination sled-cart
Bolted by their brother, onto a bob-sled;
They lost their direction, but couldn't go back,
My aunt let the horses go and the reins go slack.
The sound of runners on snow as the sled moves
And hearing the rhythmic sound of the eight hooves.
DARK DURING THE WHITE-OUT/TRUSTY TEAM
Were they still on course or lost they didn't know,
Visibility zero from blinding snow!
God must have watched over, these four young school girls,
Who heard the wind and saw only snow swirls.
Horses have an uncanny gift and are skilled;
They seem to have a 'homing' instinct instilled;
This was another instance which it proves.
They stopped and so did the sound of the team's hooves.
FREE REIN/HOMING PIGEONS OR HOMING HORSES?
Wonder of wonders! They were at the barn yard,
Such a stroke of luck they would not disregard.
The horses went straight to their 'home' barn by instinct;
The human's and horse's survival were linked.
The storm and fear were severe on the frontier.
Their respect for these two horses sincere.
One more case of heroics I think it proves
The team had homing instincts and eight strong hooves.

My aunt, the source of this story (circa 1935)
Or was it a Model T that my uncle bolted to a bobsled?

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4 HORSES PULLING A LONG NOISY 'TRAIN'

RENTER BRINGS PLOW, DRILL, SEED, HAY & FOOD
He rented some farmland, several miles down the road,
My father hitched 4 horses to pull the long, heavy load.
All of the farm implements needed to plant the grain,
Were extending down a township road like a train.
He rode on a horse plow, pulling a packer & drill,
Pulling a wagon of wheat seal, so full it could spill;
A 'rack of hay, a barrel of oats...let me explain...
All had steel wheels, that made sounds like a 'Train'.

THE LANDOWNER'S DAUGHTER CALLED IT THE 'TRAIN'

Four horses snorting their breath, 16 hooves going clip-clop;
They had only 2 more miles until they made their way.
The farming equipment was hooked together, like a chain;
And the noisy, clanging steel wheels, sounded like a 'Train'.
Six of the widow's 7 daughters skipped through the trees;
To watch...they were lined up like a full pcd of 6 peas.
Meanwhile, the oldest daughter had a case of eye-strain.
She's the person, who first called this procession, the 'Train'.

BOUND FOR THE CLAIM SHACK AT 2MPH/ONLY 1 TRIP

It took him an hour to travel down that length of road;
He drove 4 horses, pulling that long & noisy load.
That rural road, was not like 'life in the fast-lane'.
It was 1932, when my dad drove the 'Train'.
All the rocks & the gravel, on that primitive road;
Bumped & rumbled & clanged & chirped under that load.
Perhaps, the deliberate, slow pace, annoyed his brain;
As wall as, the continuous racket, of the 'Train'.

PLANNING TO PLANT WHEAT/A SUPPLY TRAIN/MOVING DAY

He brought oats for the horses, cured bacon, bread & eggs; *
He walked alongside, for a while, just to stretch his legs;
With dependable horses...a loose grip on the rein;
And 16 hooves, in cadence...were pulling the 'Train'.
Ertin under the plow seat, a frying pan was hanging;
And adding another sound, with it's constant clanging.
Ev'ry piece of metal clanged, on this farming terrain;
It's understandable that 7 girls heard the 'Train.'

RENTING FARMLAND TO RAISE A WHEAT CROP

They had ample time to count each piece of machin'ry;
He had ample time to observe the prairie scen'ry.
He had greased all of the wheels, but the fact did remain;
All of his efforts, had failed to quiet the 'Train'.
He crossed the river, where there was a barn & claim shack;
He mended the fence, to protect the loaded hayrack.
While a lovely young farm girl, stood at the window pane;
Intently watching each move...of the guy on the 'Train.'

PLOWING & PLANTING & OTHER CONNECTIONS

The horses whinnied, as they pulled the plow at dawn.
They were rested ev'ry 2 rounds, til daylight was gone.
On the departure day, the oldest girl would remain;
Standing at the upstairs window, watching the 'Train'.
After a month of plowing & seeding...a late start;
He hitched his tired horses to the 'Train'...& they'd depart.
About the young girl, who watched the 'Train' let me explain...
She later married...the man she watched...driving the 'Train'.
*eggs in the oat barrel

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