

**ROUND THE
WORLD;
VOLUME V**

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Round the world; Volume V by Various

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Cattle Trail of the Prairies

JOURNEYING through Southern Kansas, one occasionally sees, from the car window, either near Newton, Abilene, Dodge City, or Baxter Springs, a wide trough-like course, whose ridges are being washed down by rain. Occasionally, farm or ranch houses and barns stretch across this great track. If one's neighbor happens to be a Kansan, and is asked as to the reason of the peculiar appearance of the curious, road-like section that goes on into the distance, he will say it is all that remains of the Chisholm, or perhaps the Old Shawnee, cattle trail that, early in the last half of the nineteenth century, formed the avenues over which poured millions of cattle from Texas on their way to Northern stockyards, and the markets of the Eastern and Middle States. It was these trails that made Texas beef a world-familiar term, laid the foundations of colossal fortunes, and created a new title, that of cattle king.

When our Civil War ended, countless thousands of cattle roamed the Texas prairies. There

seemed, at first, no way to get them to market. The vast Rock Island Railroad system which gridirons the old cattle country to-day was then an unborn idea. The market existed, but the question was, how to get the cattle to the points of sale. Plainly they must walk. This fact settled, it was not long until the days of the Northern cattle drive were ushered in.

The first drive of consequence was in the early summer of 1866, as soon as the spring round-up had made calculation of numbers possible. Range operators started northward herds aggregating 270,000 head, the destination being railroad points in Missouri. A look at the map of the country lying between Rock Bluffs Ford on the Red River, and such points as Sedalia and St. Louis in Missouri, even to-day, more than forty years after the first of the great Texas drives wandered into history, gives an idea of the natural difficulties encountered during such a journey. Besides the obstacles created by nature, others were met, such as the outlaws who infested Southern Missouri and Northern Arkansas, and the fear of the deadly Spanish fever, a disease to which Texas cattle seemed peculiarly susceptible.



Trail Outfit crossing Rocky Bluffs Ford of the Red River on the Chisholm Trail.

This first trail led from Kinishi valley, near the Red River in Texas, to Fort Smith, Ark., and thence by a winding route, owing to the character of the country traversed, to and through the Ozark mountains and Southeastern Missouri. The outlaws collected tribute from the drovers on the basis that might makes right. Failure to pay sometimes meant the drover's death, but more often in such a case his cattle were stampeded. This caused days of delay, with a certainty that a considerable percentage of the herd would never be recovered. So the drover usually paid. Danger, and tribute-paying, together with the fact that the cattle reached the terminals in such poor condition that they brought low prices, made the drive almost a failure from the profit standpoint.

About this time the railroads began to push into Kansas, the old Kansas Pacific, now part of the Union Pacific system, being the pioneer. It was half way across Kansas from Kansas City when Joseph G. McCoy, an Illinois stock-raiser, conceived the plan that turned the eyes of the nation on Kansas as a cattle-shipping point. His idea was taken up by the railroads, and great shipping-yards built at Abilene, whose reputation