

NORRIS, ELSIE A. CHEROKEE STRIP COW PUNCHER'S #8476
ASSOCIATION. 310

NORRIS, ELSIE A.

CHEROKEE STRIP COW PUNCHER'S
ASSOCIATION.

8476

Elsie A. Norris
Interviewer
September 8, 1937

Cherokee Strip Cow Puncher's Association.

The Cherokee Strip Cow Punchers' Association, which meets annually on Cowboy Hill on the banks of the Salt Fork River south of Ponca City, was in session three days, September 4th, 5th, and 6th, 1937. The association is much smaller than when it was organized in 1920, but the members, their families and invited guests formed a goodly crowd.

The Auxiliary of the Cherokee Strip Cow Punchers' Association served a delicious barbecued beef dinner; Sunday at the noon hour, cafeteria style, from a long table on which was everything good to eat. Lines of people, each carrying a plate and each helping himself to the good things on the table, milled around the hall for about two hours.

After dinner, a trio began playing violins and guitars and singing cowboy songs. Several couples started dancing so the long table was moved out and Jimmy Nelson, ex-cowboy and member of the Cherokee Strip Cow Punchers' Associ-

NORRIS, ELSIE A. CHEROKEE STRIP COW PUNCHERS'
ASSOCIATION. 8476

2

ation, undertook to "call" for three sets of dancers in an old fashioned square dance which finally ended with the Grand March. The dancers got badly tangled up and were out of breath but everyone seemed quite happy. Some declared that they hadn't danced a step for twenty years or more.

Later, a memorial ceremony was staged on the west side of Cowboy Hill where a large, rough stone weighing about eight hundred pounds, bearing the simple inscription, "Cowboy Hill," is set in the ground facing the highway. Sacred music was played and short speeches made by O. E. Brewster of Crescent, secretary and co-organizer of the Association, Zack Miller, Ponca City, Gordon Lillie (Pawnee Bill), Pawnee, and Harry Halsell, Lubbock, Texas. The monument was donated to the C. S. C. P. A. by Fred Jones of Wilburton, who brought it by truck from his home to Cowboy Hill.

Seventeen years ago Zack Miller of the 101 Ranch gave Cowboy Hill to the Cherokee Strip Cow Punchers' Association for a period of ninety-nine years, or as long thereafter as there are two original members living to attend the reunion.

NORRIS, ELSIE A. CHEROKEE STRIP COW PUNCHERS'
ASSOCIATION. 8476

3

Near Highway 77, just north of Marland, stands a monument built of stones brought by members and friends of the Association from many different states and parts of Oklahoma. A white eagle is on the top of this monument which is in memory of and marks the burial place of White Eagle, a friendly Indian, Bill Pickett, the only colored member of the Association and three or four other members whose names I did not learn.

The Cherokee Strip Cow Punchers' Association was organized in 1920 by Zack Miller of the 101 Ranch, Ponca City, O. E. Brewster, Crescent and a few other ex-cowboys. It is unique, having neither constitution nor by-laws; its members being held together by loyalty and friendship of long standing.

The members numbered about five hundred at the beginning but it is known that one hundred and thirty-five are dead.

Hugo Milde and Ike Clubb, both of Kaw City, furnish the barbecued meat each year for the reunion from the choicest cattle on the former's ranch north of Kaw City.

NORRIS, ELSIE A. CHEROKEE STRIP COW PUNCHERS'
ASSOCIATION.

8475

4

Mr. and Mrs. Ike Clubb are owners of a fine art collection which can be seen any time at either their hotel or home in Kaw City.