



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

December 2020

Official Newsletter for Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation

Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Show Success!

Sunday, September 28 proved to be a gorgeous fall day for a rare live concert in the park. Over 100 people attended the second annual Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry and Western Music Show sponsored by the Medicine Hat Public Library. In beautiful Kin Coulee, the sun smiled, the wind relented somewhat, and the precipitation was praised for its absence!

Chief Librarian, Ken Feser, opened the show; Mayor, Ted Clugston, recited Rudyard Kipling's "If" with passion, admitted it was not a cowboy poem, but suggested it embodies the "cowboy way".

Medicine Cowboy Poetry Foundation President, Jen Zollner read her poem about the "Medicine Hat Horse" (see September's MH Cowboy Life newsletter to learn more).

Ten-year-old 4-H member, Kimberley Straub read the poem written by Jen, based on Kimberley's 4-H speech about her barn, her favourite place in the world! Kimberley is a living example of one of our mandates: to connect seniors and kids so the cowboy/rural stories get passed on.

Celebrated Cowboy Poet Doris Daley, from Black Diamond, shared some of her best poems and delivered, as always, with authenticity and grace. She generously donated the first items for the Cowboy Poetry resource shelf at the Medicine Hat Public Library. (See video on our web site).

Local singer, songwriter, Jessica Schnell, kicked off the second half of the show, with a mix of songs including one she wrote with Jen. Doc Mehl, award-winning singer songwriter, wrapped it up with a variety of thoughtful and humorous songs and poems.

The outdoor venue allowed everyone to maintain their social distance. One note for next year. Bring blankets! Some folks found it chilly.

The food Truck Frenzy added to the festival atmosphere of a concert in the park. To see video and pictures, visit our website Gallery and Events pages and read our blog.

By Shelley Goldbeck, Editor, Publisher MHCL



www.MHCowboyLife.com



From My Perch on the Corral: President's Message

There is much to report this month: I met Will James unexpectedly through Allan Jensen. Of course, Will James died years ago but through his biography I got to know all about him. Little did I know he was born in Canada, that he was a prolific artist and author, and that he spent several years on ranches around Medicine Hat, learning about horses and ranching in our part of the country. I'm grateful the Will James Society republished his books because I've enjoyed rereading them and appreciated them more as an adult. In fact, Smoky, though fictional, is the horse featured in this newsletter.

How often is a movie being shot on the main street of a small town in southern Alberta? Where is the nearest megabonebed (dinosaur graveyard)? Find out in our feature about Hilda, AB.

I was delighted that the staff at Police Point Park were interested in our Senior Stories. They chose to post two of our poems for their Story Walk as well as the work of other local and famous poets.

The weather cooperated for our second annual Cowboy Poetry Event in September. With COVID restrictions on performances, especially singing, we were able to use an outdoor setting to give stage time to Doris Daley and Doc Mehl as well as a 10 and a 20 year-old local performer (and others). None of this could have happened without Ken Feser and the MH Library's strong support. Our thanks to Bill Haysom for buying the Horse Wisdom Blanket at the intermission auction and donating it back to the Foundation! It's on display downstairs at the MH Library along with our steer heads, brand stories and ranch histories.

MHCP has been posting a new senior story every month on our website. The work of making a booklet of the 2020 Senior Stories led me to meet Donna Goldade one of the illustrators, as well as knowing all about Gena LaCoste, also in the booklet and on its cover. You really need to check out all the artwork posted on Gena's website (genalacoste.blogspot.com) and read the commentary she gives for each piece.

It's also a time for me to learn how to post on our website and on Facebook. At the same time the sudden shut-down of my hotmail account has me trying get familiar with G-Mail. Grr!

Through the endeavors of the MHCP many connections have been made: with seniors, with community members, with artists, with families etc. Each month our board meets via Zoom. Many thanks to each of them for all they do: Shelley Goldbeck, Cheryl Dust, Carol Eisenbarth and Ken Feser. Thanks for the support from those who have bought a membership and also the advocates of Cowboy Poetry.



Jen Zollner, President Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation

Consider joining our team. We need a treasurer and people to help us make important decisions about the Foundation.

Now's the time to reflect back on how resilient we were in 2020 and wonder what we can do as leaders and as followers to help ourselves and others cope with what 2021 has to offer.

Fitting is the wisdom of a real cowpuncher, our Canadian-born western icon, in what he wrote several decades ago:

"In our general dealings with the world of influences, we now need conductors and now need non-conductors, and wisdom lies in knowing which is which at the appropriate moment."-by Will James taken from Goodreads Choice Awards.

I hope you enjoy our latest issue of Medicine Hat Cowboy Life. We welcome your feedback and your submissions. Happy Holidays!



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

Will James, Legacy of the Open Range

Will James was an author, an artist and a Canadian born cowboy legend that left a legacy of the open range not to be equaled. The public was fascinated by the 'Wild West' and he could tell the real life stories they wanted to hear, and tell it in the colourful language of the working cowboy. His dynamic drawings and paintings resulted in works with a universal and timeless appeal. To keep his birthplace a secret he'd said he was born in Montana. And when he applied for a homestead at Val Marie, Saskatchewan in 1911, he listed his birthplace as Arizona. It's there that he signed his name as W.R. James instead of his real name, Joseph Ernest Dufault. He didn't want anyone to know he was born in southern Quebec (1892).

Even as a youngster he was constantly drawing sketches of cowboys and horses with detail and accuracy far beyond his years. At age 15 he bought a one-way train ticket to Saskatchewan, consumed by dreams of becoming a genuine cowboy. It was a culture shock for him to move from urban Montreal to the sparsely populated prairies, speaking French in an English speaking world and being part of range life that had a culture all its own. He worked on well-known ranches in southern Alberta including the famous '76 Ranch around Medicine Hat. These first experiences from 1907 till about 1912 burned images that he would draw for the rest of his life.

Will James continued his career in the US as an itinerant working cowboy, becoming a skilled cowboy and top-notch horse-breaker. He drifted periodically into Canada to visit friends and seek work. In 1917 he and a number of friends attended rodeos at Calgary, Taber, Moose Jaw, Big Gap, Winnifred and then in Medicine Hat. The fun-loving group put on a street show, even thinking to ride a bucking bronc down main street of Medicine Hat.

In the US a cattle rustling episode landed him in jail where he took the opportunity to resume his love of drawing by decorating the prison walls.

Due to a number of riding accidents and the encouragement of his wife, Alice Conradt, he took up his natural talents of drawing and storytelling. Prominent Western artists such as Charles M Russell were his fans. Even though he had trouble staying enrolled in any of the art schools, magazines were buying his sketches and stories.

One of those magazines published his first book "Cowboys North and South" and thus began a steady line of best sellers, "The Drifting Cowboy" in 1925, Smoky in 1926, "Cow Country" in 1927 etc. They published his prose the way James wrote it, spelling errors, unique turns of grammar and all. The New York Times commented, "When

James draws a bucking horse, the horse isn't merely bucking, he's exploding!" He became a legend when Hollywood made movies with his stories.

He continued to keep his real identity a secret until his death in 1942. Within a couple of generations, his two dozen books were out of print (all except Smoky the Cowhorse) and his drawing and paintings were ignored.

Thanks to the Will James Society (formed in 1992) his life and work has been resurrected with the republication of his books, the filming of documentaries and the display of his art at major exhibitions.
https://www.nfb.ca/film/alias_will_james_en/

by Allan Jensen and J. Zollner

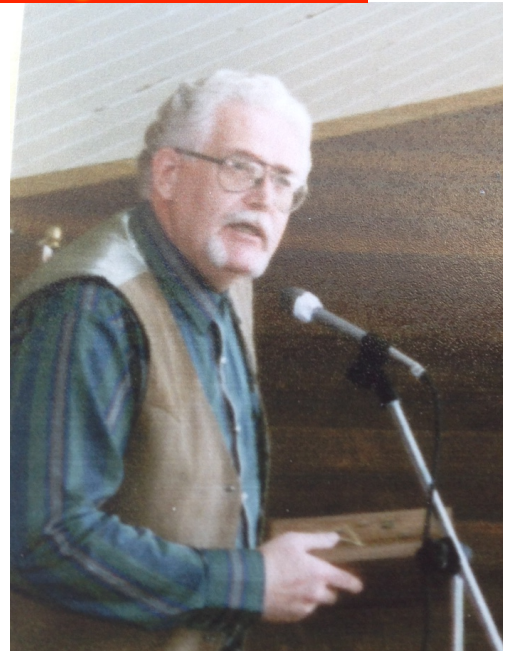




Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

Meet Allan Jensen. You may know Allan Jensen as a well-respected local artist and retired art teacher. He is also a supporter of anything that promotes the western way of life and as such, is a Will James enthusiast. It probably started when he was in Grade 3 and read his first Will James book. Today, as an avid collector, he owns a good representation of first editions and 15 different editions of 'Smoky'.

Jensen has been on the board for the International Will James Society for many years. Their mission is to keep the memory and work of Will James alive. To that end the society has reprinted his books and each year donates a complete set to libraries throughout the US and Canada. It was through Jensen's effort that a set of ten Will James books were donated to the Medicine Hat Public Library. Their 2007 annual convention that Jensen spearheaded in Medicine Hat, was attended by cowboys from 16 US states, five provinces and NWT. Some of James' extended family attended.



Jensen spent many years as an art teacher in MH public schools. (He had a stint teaching secondary art classes in Toronto.) He developed new art courses and arranged art tours as far as Europe and Asia. He's received numerous awards for his volunteer work promoting and teaching art: for the CORE Association and as curator at the Esplanade & Cultural Centre. His 1984 Civic Recognition Award was for promoting cultural activities in our community. Jensen feels strongly about showing contemporary Western art. "So much of the prairies depends on ranching and agriculture. Contemporary Western art provides documentation of what is happening now." He's on the board for MH Historical Society and we're proud to accept his membership in the MH Cowboy Poetry Foundation. By Jen Zollner



Smoky the Cow Horse

Smoky the Cowhorse is the most famous of Will James' books, first published in 1926 and went into ten printings in the first four months!

It was translated into Danish, Russian, Japanese, Yugoslavian, Swedish & Dutch. James received the first Newbery Medal for children's literature in 1927.

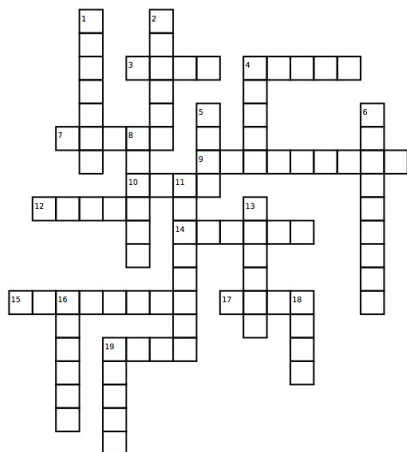
Hollywood made the book into films in 1933, 1945 and 1966.



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

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Smoky, the Cowhorse



Down:

- coiled up, this barely missed Smoky's ankle
- a porcupine left these on Smoky's nose
- grayish ____, Smoky's adult coat colour
- the first thing Smoky shied from
- Smoky's name as the best bucking bronc
- superintendent of the ranch that wanted Smoky
- Smoky's brand
- Smoky saved the colts in the bunch from these 3 enemies
- Smoky's name in a riding stable
- how old Smoky was when he got his first name
- Smoky's colour as a colt

Across:

- Smoky barely missed being attacked by this mountain animal
- what Smoky called his mother
- was the name of Smoky's younger brother
- how Will James spelled 'creatures'
- the skin colour that Smoky learned to hate
- cowhand who loved Smoky and Smoky loved him
- first enemy Smoky encountered
- Big ____ was his equine friend
- foreman of the Rocking R outfit
- was chased by this animal when just a colt

Answers on our web site.

Cowboy Vernacular

Trail Lingo: Body Parts (just a sampling)

Adam's apple – bread jerker
arms – stems
brain – think tank
buttock - Sunday-face
ears – wattles
eyes – lights
feet – beetle crushers
fingers – muck forks
head – upper story
intestines – trolley bags
legs – timbers
lip – latch pan (lower lip pouting)
moustache – cookie duster
mouth – bazoo
nose – honker
stomach – bread basket



Build your own custom worksheet at [education.com/worksheets-generator](https://www.education.com/worksheets-generator)
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Horse Wisdom Blanket Now on Display at Medicine Hat Public Library.

Want to Order a Blanket Like It?
Personalize it for a gift, for a grad,
a big birthday, or special anniversary.
Choose your own sayings;
add the name, year or occasion.
Contact Jen MHCowboyLife@gmail.com

www.MHCowboyLife.com



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

WILL JAMES

written and performed by Ian Tyson

You Tube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1M4BJces_IY

When I was but a small boy Father bought me many books,
'Bout the creatures of the river banks and the sins of old sea cooks,
But the ones I never left behind with those long forgotten games,
Were the tales of wild and windy slopes by the man they call Will James.

The living of his cowboy dreams or so it seemed to me,
The perfect combination riding high and livin' free,
His heroes were his horses and he drew them clear and true,
And on ev'ry page they'd come alive and they'd jump straight out at you.

Ch: His race towards to sunset was the high and lonesome kind,
Like the coyote always looking back, he left no tracks behind,
So I've memorized those pictures, boys, they're still the very best,
If whiskey was his mistress, then his true love was the West.

I remember up on Dead Man's Creek back thirty years or more,
I hired out to breaking colts which I'd never done before,
A city kid I asked myself, "Now what would Will James do?"
And you know it was the damnest thing but it kind of got me through.

Will James was Ian Tyson's hero. You'll find Tyson's autograph in the Medicine Hat Library's copy of "Smoky, the Cow Horse" which was donated by the International Will James Society when they had their international conference in MH in 2007.

Need Purpose?

Do you have unused skills?
Do you have the desire to contribute?
Consider joining Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation board or as a volunteer committee member.
Make a difference and have fun. Contact
Jen Zollner to volunteer.
MHCowboyLife@gmail.com



All MHCP Foundation members
receive a handsome souvenir coaster

WHY BUY A MEMBERSHIP to the Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation?

1. You'll get a tax receipt and a bonus souvenir leather coaster
2. You'll get our e-newsletter "MH Cowboy Life"
3. You're supporting our 'Stories From Seniors' program
4. You're supporting cowboy poetry workshops
5. You're proud to be part of a foundation that:
 - brings country folk together; brings the young and old together
 - actively promotes a wholesome genre of country entertainment
 - keeps the history of our area alive through story

Annual Membership: Only \$20, (tax receipt). Donations gratefully appreciated and receipted.



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life is the official newsletter of the Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry Foundation, (a registered Society in the Province of Alberta), published four times per year. Our mandate is to preserve, promote and celebrate cowboy traditions and country living. If you wish to submit articles or information of interest to our readers, please email MHCowboyLife@gmail.com, subject Newsletter.

www.MHCowboyLife.com



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

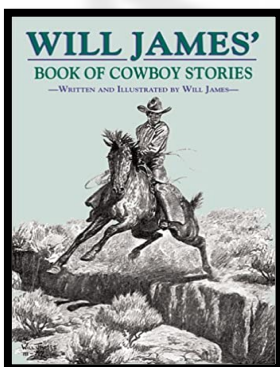
The Medicine Hat Public Library

serves as a community hub, providing equitable and convenient access to books, media, information, and programs that help to educate, enrich, entertain, and inform.

Anyone can use the library and its resources. During library opening hours, you are welcome to read, listen to music, access your e-mail and search the library's online magazines and newspapers. If you become a library member, your library card allows you to take home books, e-books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, and audio books. **Current Library Hours Monday to Friday: 10am-6pm**

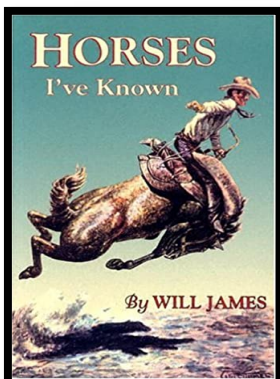
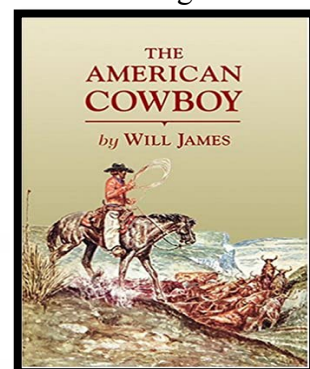
Books by Will James

Available at the Medicine Hat Public Library



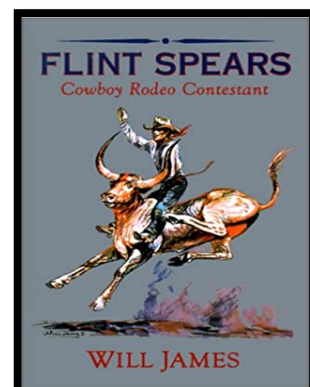
Will James' Book of Cowboy Stories: Will James' Book of Cowboy Stories is a collection of some of the most entertaining illustrated stories of cowboy life from the Will James collection. This long-awaited reprint of the last Will James Book will satisfy readers' nostalgic longing for the freedom, danger, and adventure of life on the open range. So, sit back on your heels, pour yourself a cup of thick, black camp coffee, and let Will James transport you to bygone days of cow punching, cattle rustling, bronc busting, and drifting in the American West. Includes 51 black-and-white drawings.

The American Cowboy: Complete coverage of cowboy lore, legend, life and background, *The American Cowboy* spans three generations of cowboys in the American West, from the young trail boss of the very first cattle drive from Texas north to the railroads, to his grandson, born after the open range had been fenced in. Discover the danger and thrill of life on the frontier as the history of the cowboy unfolds through the expansion of the cattle business, the growth of the railroads, and the coming of the farmer. Will James brings to life the spirit of the American cowboy in his familiar vernacular. (Kirkus Reviews, Amazon)



Horses I've Known: Fourteen stories capture the quirky and peculiar behavior of horses, both good and ornery. You'll meet buckers, tricksters, and trusted partners: Bearcat is not just a plain crazy hardheaded bucker...but a wise, coolheaded cross between a whirlwind and a ton of brick. Joker is full of old nick and plenty of snorts. And Little Eagle is the seeing eye for a blind cowboy. (Fantastic Fiction)

Flint Spears: From the history of the rodeo to the first cowboy contest to its present high place in popular esteem, Flint Spears is full of interesting facts and stories. It is -- as are all Will James' books -- most authentic in feel and stresses the sport of the shows, which in spite of the commercialization, remain the fairest and squarest of entertainments. Join Flint Spears in his quest to be the best all-around cowboy on the rodeo circuit, from busting broncs in the very first rodeo on the range to roping steers in front of royalty in Europe. (Kirkus Reviews)





Horse Treats

Have you ever wondered what horses like for treats? Are treats even a good idea for horses? Wonder no more! See the handy infographic below on safe horse treats. We even have a recipe for home made treats, the perfect Christmas gift for your equine pals!

Homemade Horse Treats

2 carrots
2 apples
1 tbsp canola oil
2/3 cup molasses
2 cups rolled oats
3 cups whole wheat flour
2 tbsp dried peppermint (crushed
candy canes or peppermints)

Preheat oven to 350F. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. Shred carrots and apples into a bowl. Add remaining ingredients. Mix. Beat mixture till it's shiny. Make little balls (They'll be uniform if you use a melon

baller or an ice cream scoop.) Bake for 1 hour or till they're dry all the way through. (If the tops turn dark brown before the centres are done, cover lightly with tinfoil. Cool on a wire rack. Note: baked until soft, horses will love them but they'll only stay fresh for 3 days. Tip: When you measure the oil in the measuring cup, swirl it around before pouring it out. Measure the molasses into the same cup; the molasses will slip out easily. Warning: While they're baking your family will be disappointed they aren't horses in your family! Source: Terry Golson, HORSE TREAT CAUTIONS:-treat sparingly. Horses can have allergies, so test foods in small amounts. Horses can also be insulin resistant. Old horses can choke on foods they have difficulty chewing (e.g. Celery) **NOT FOR HORSES:** chocolate, foods with caffeine, dairy products, maple syrup, baked goods, tomatoes, potatoes, banana peel, avocado, melon rinds, stones or seeds from fruit, rhubarb, meat, animal by-products, cabbage, kale, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, onions, garlic, leeks, shallots, chives, cattle feed, lawn clippings or garden clippings for compost, dusty, moldy or very old hay.



Important Links:

Medicine Hat Cowboy Poetry web site:
www.MHCowboyLife.com

Medicine Hat Public Library web site:
<https://mhpl.shortgrass.ca/>

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newsletter.



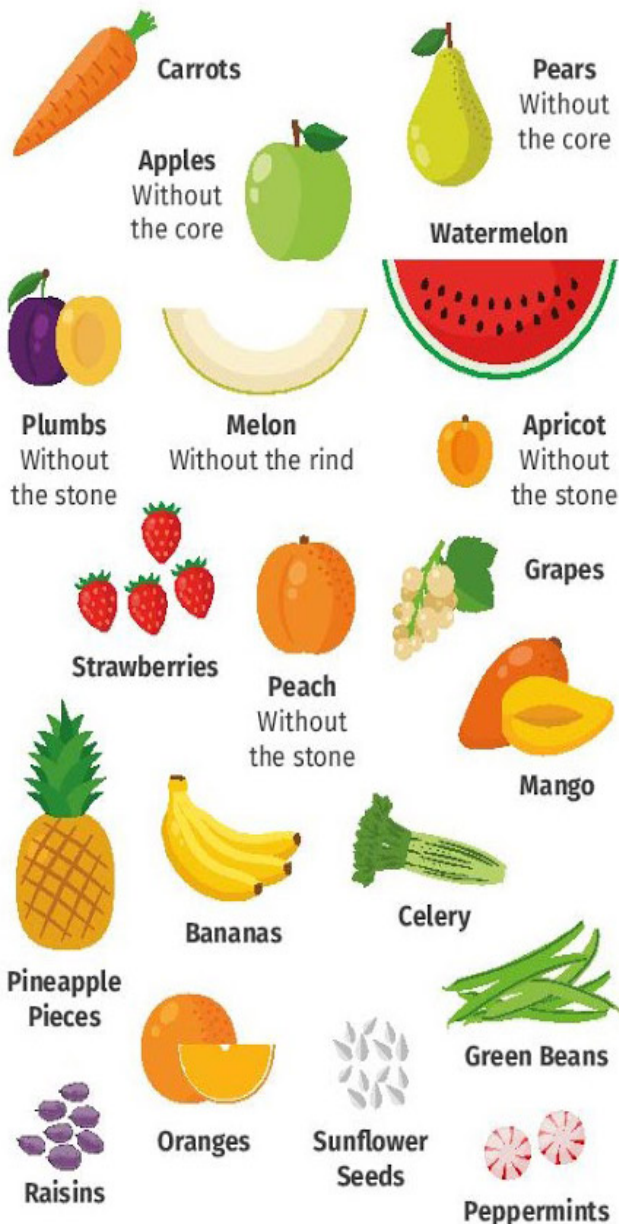
Visit our web site or send an email to
MHCowboyLife@gmail.com



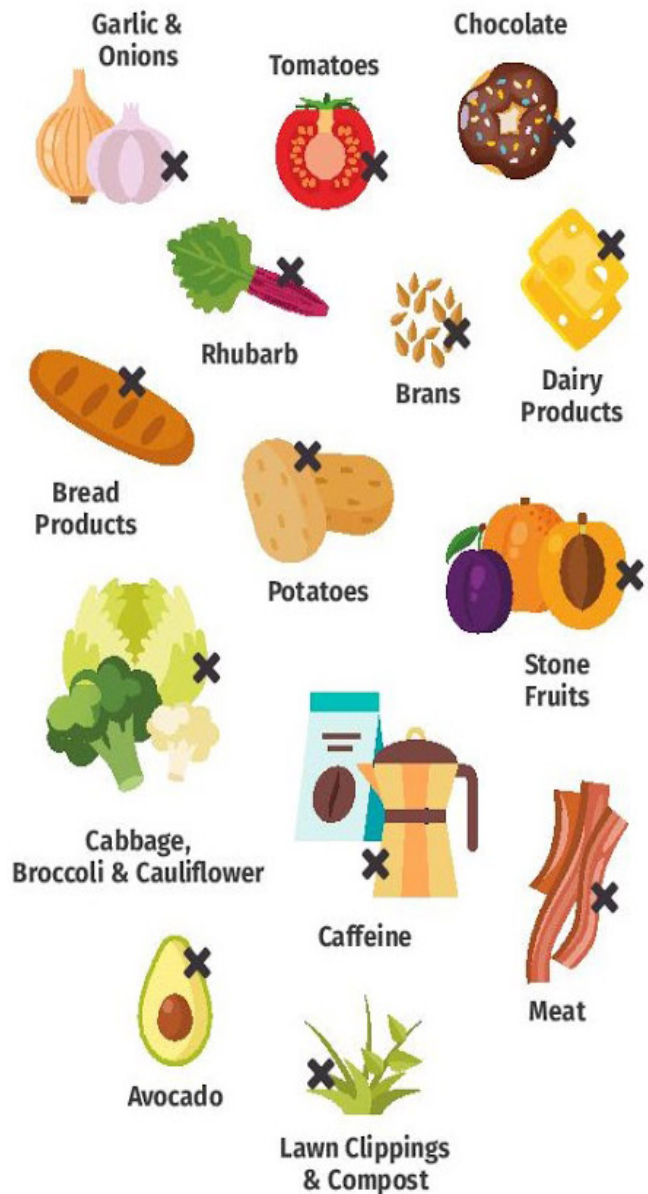
Medicine Hat Cowboy Life



Foods that your horse can eat:



Do not feed your horse:



Important note: All foods should be fed in moderation, over feeding your horse can cause upset to a balanced diet.

horsemart



Medicine Hat Cowboy Life

'Round Medicine Hat, *Featuring a Local Destination*

Hilda, AB: Megabonebed and More!

Hilda, Alberta is North of Medicine Hat and for a small community, it has some big claims to fame! In the late 1950's a Megabonebed, which is a dinosaur graveyard, was discovered near Hilda. It is thought to be one of the largest in the world, including Drumheller.

Thousands of *Centrosaurus apertus*, cow-sized species of horned dinosaurs that lived 76 million years ago, were caught in a sudden tropical storm. All the conditions were perfect for preserving many of those bones.

Hilda is the scene of a sci-fi movie shoot, which has employed locals as extras in the film. The movie, *Father of Nations* will be released next year.

To learn more about Hilda, visit our 'Round Medicine Hat page on our web site at www.MHCowboyLife.com



Centrosaurus apertus

COWBOY WISDOM

Insist on a hackamore instead of a bit
Take life's hurdles in stride
When you're down, get back up, shake it off
Only let someone catch you if you want to be caught
Give it all you got to win the race
Swish your flies by swishing them off someone else
Carry your friends when they need it
Life is a journey, enjoy the ride
Too much debt and another holds the reins

Seniors Stories

Each month we add a new Senior Story to our web site. Each mini-documentary has an introduction, a video of the senior telling the story, and a poem or song, inspired by the story. Our goal is to connect seniors and their stories with younger people so those stories are not lost.

If you have (or someone you know has) a story to tell from country life, I'd love to connect with you. We are interested in using your photos and videos to complement your stories.

Watch for new 'Stories From Seniors' on our website every month, under Cowboy Stories.

September:	Harold Jackel, Harvey Beck
October:	Don Geisler
November:	Edgar Boschee
December:	Evelyn Trieber

Merry Christmas!
from the
Medicine Hat
Cowboy Poetry Foundation