

# WESTERN CATTLE TRAIL



## ASSOCIATION



### DODGE CITY CHAPTER

DODGE CITY KANSAS 67801

## MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER

"THE MISSION OF THE WESTERN CATTLE TRAIL ASSOCIATION IS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE WESTERN CATTLE TRAIL AND TO ACCURATELY PROMOTE AWARENESS OF IT'S HISTORICAL LEGACY." - AUGUST 27, 2018

### OFFICERS

**President:** Keith Wondra

**Secretary:** Mary Hendrix

**Treasurer:** Joel Herndon

**Newsletter:** Mike King



WCTA has a new website! Visit us at [www.westerncattletrailassoc.com](http://www.westerncattletrailassoc.com) to learn more about the history of the Western Cattle Trail. Also register online for a free WCTA Newsletter.

## DODGE CITY AND THE CATTLE TRADE

### PART II

By Keith Wondra  
WCTA President

This article is the second part of a two part series to help promote the Western Cattle Trail Association Conference in early November 2024.

The abundance of cattle in Texas after the Civil War led to the cattle drives from Texas to Kansas and even up to Canada. Starting in 1867, cattle were led up the Chisholm Trail first to Abilene, then Newton, and then Wichita. Due to "Texas Fever" (a disease carried by a tick) a quarantine line forced the cattle trails west.

In a report to stockholders in 1874 the Santa Fe Railroad described the need for a new shipping point. They wrote "the country about Wichita is becoming so well settled that the tendency will be to drive more cattle to Great Bend...and it may be necessary, the coming season, to prepare a point of shipment still farther west." The Santa Fe decided that Dodge City would be the better shipping center instead of Great Bend. This was due to Great Bend being on the wrong side of the quarantine line (east of the line it was illegal for Texas

cattle to go). The Santa Fe Railroad built stockyards at Dodge City in 1874. From 1875-1876 about 250,000 longhorns were driven to Dodge City over the Western Cattle Trail. The number of railcars loaded with longhorns shipped out of Dodge City in 1875 were 5,826 and 9,540 in 1876.

In 1877, the Santa Fe Railroad built one of the largest stockyards on its system in Dodge City (only Wichita's was bigger). To help entice the cattle trade, local businessmen lowered prices on cigars, liquor, and tobacco while hotels and restaurants prepared for a huge growth of people and men were in ready to show the best pasturage with good water.

Part of the cattle entered Dodge City and headed to the stockyards for transport on railroad cars. The rest of the cattle went around Dodge City pass the point of rocks west of Dodge City north to Ogalla, Nebraska and beyond.



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Due to this Dodge City was mainly a stopover for the drovers and cowboys. In 1885, the Kansas Legislature passed the Quarantine Law which moved the line to the Kansas/Colorado border banning Texas cattle in the state of Kansas and ending Dodge City's claim as the "Cowboy Capital." During its cattle drive years of 1875-1885 over 2.25 million head of longhorns were shipped to Dodge City.

The Western Cattle Trail Association is having a conference on November 1st and 2nd to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Western Cattle Trail that brought the Longhorns and notorious cowboys to Dodge City and points north. The two-day event will feature the history and stories of the longest running cattle trail and of the old west.

The conference will begin at 1:30 Friday afternoon, November 1 at Boot Hill Museum and continue Saturday morning at 8:30. The cost of the Conference is \$75 per person. Dodge City, this is your chance to chat with historians, attend a meet and greet with music by Tom Hawk, chat over a box lunch with new friends and stories to take home.

Learn more about the Conference from Facebook, our website, [www.westerncattletrailassoc.com](http://www.westerncattletrailassoc.com) or listen to Legends of the Wild West Podcast for information and registration.

## **Announcement: The International Chisholm Trail Association, Cattle Trail Showcase**

The International Chisholm Trail Association, Cattle Trail Showcase, happens the second Friday of each month at 10:00. This Zoom event features museums, historical events and interesting places that are of interest to the cattle trails. Let us know if you are interested in participating in the Zoom event or you can watch past features on YouTube.

## **Announcement: The Santa Fe Trail/Fort Dodge/Cimarron Chapter April 27th 2025 Lunch**

Santa Fe Trail/Fort Dodge/Cimarron Chapter and the Wet/ Dry Routes Chapter will meet in Dodge City at Don Taco Cowtown, 12:00 for lunch, 503 East Trail, to honor Carol Sharp. Her husband, Dan, will present a program on the Santa Fe Trail remains that are found on their ranch near Boise City, Oklahoma including Autograph Rock and Cold Springs. Please join Dr. Leo Oliva and the Sharp family for an enlightening presentation.

## **DEALERS IN EVERYTHING-THE WRIGHT, BEVERLEY & CO.**

By Keith Wondra  
WCTA President

In 1872, Robert M. Wright left Fort Dodge for the growing buffalo trading post, Dodge City. He partnered with Charles Rath and A. J. Anthony to form the Rath General Store in a wood building on the northeast corner of Second Avenue and Front Street. The store's early customers were buffalo hunters who traded hides for goods and money. They advertised as dealers in everything including ammunition, clothing, groceries, and liquors along with paying the top price for furs, hides, and meats. Soon it became Dodge City's biggest mercantile business. In 1876, Rath and company built a brick building and for many years it was the only brick building on Front Street.

A year after building the brick building Charles Rath sold his interest in the store to Henry M. Beverley and A. J. Anthony. The business was renamed the Wright, Beverley & Co. and the owners advertised it as the "Headquarters for Cattlemen and Drovers." In 1880, Robert Wright connected the store to his home with Dodge City's first telephone line. Four years later the store was renamed R.M. Wright & Co. after Beverley and Anthony dissolved their partnership with Wright.

On December 7, 1885 a fire started on Front Street and damaged Wright's brick building and the entire business block. After the fire Wright moved out all the merchandise safely out of the damaged building and allowed bystanders to take what they could. Before the building collapsed many people took several goods. Wright rebuilt in the same location with brick and decorative Victorian details. Wright operated the store until around 1905. Later on the building housed the Santa Fe Railroad offices, the Globe Clothing House, and a F.W. Woolworth's store. The building was torn down in 1970 during Dodge City's Urban Renewal phase.

On March 19th at 4pm, Boot Hill Museum Curator, Keith Wondra, will talk about Wyatt Earp's Dodge City years. The presentation will include his time in Dodge City, Tombstone, and Wichita. Also included will be his portrayal in Hollywood movies and television shows. Come celebrate Wyatt Earp, arguably the most famous lawman in the Old West on his 177th birthday!

## WCTA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



## WCTA NEWSLETTER

Thank you to everyone who has remembered to send in their membership dues for this year. The Western Cattle Trail Association is a volunteer organization that depends on your support to fund our website ([www.westerncattletrailassoc.com](http://www.westerncattletrailassoc.com)), and Facebook page. Our newsletters are volunteer articles printed and distributed by the Dodge City CVB. Additionally your donation goes to fund speakers we can bring to Dodge City during the Western Cattle Trail Wrangle throughout the Dodge City Days celebration. We have been fortunate to have the support of the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas through their grant program to

supplement our funds and promote our mission. It has been cost prohibitive to have an online payment for membership dues, please continue to send your dues by check or pay cash at a meeting.

Please share our message and newsletter with your friends! Check out our website that is updated regularly! And follow us on Facebook! Thank you for your support, we appreciate your commitment to western cattle trail history!



# Become a Member! Make Checks payable to Dodge City Chapter, WCTA

Mail your Dodge City Chapter of WCTA Dues to  
 WCTA, PO Box 398, Dodge City, KS 67801

As a member of the WCTA, your contribution safeguards our heritage for generations to come. This will allow our children and our children's children to enjoy the history of the WCT. Each membership is an important voice as an advocate for Trail preservation and education.

The Western Cattle Trail Association can continue only with your ongoing membership support. You may use this form or, if you have already renewed, thank you!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZipCode: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member  Renewal

Student.....	\$5
Individual.....	\$50
Family.....	\$75
Corporate (contact for benefits).....	\$250

When sending dues, please include a note and, on the memo line, the chapter of which you are a member.

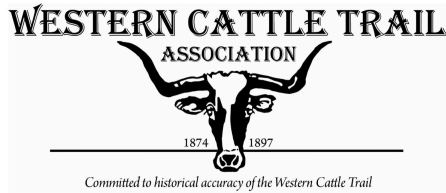
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