



3-15-1987

Calf Fries - A 1900 Recipe

Dick Chapman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview>

Recommended Citation

Chapman, Dick (1987) "Calf Fries - A 1900 Recipe," *Westview*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol6/iss3/4>

This Nonfiction is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.



Calf Fries--A 1900 Recipe

By Dick Chapman



In the old Cheyenne-Arapaho country as in other parts of the cattle country before the overflow of settlers, a cattleman kept a force of cowhands so that he was independent of outside help except at general round-up time when many misfits banded together to work for everyone's mutual advantage and at which time one well-known and respected cattleman was chosen to oversee the operation of many men--hundreds of horses and thousands of cattle bearing dozens of different brands and marks. But with the advent of the sodbusters or kaffir-corn woolies, wire fences, and herd laws, conditions changed rapidly. The scattered herds of free range and free life came to an end. Smaller herds of more domesticated breeds were kept on the few remaining unfenced areas, and the two-bit cattleman or farmer-cattleman got by with much less help except when branding time came and he had a large corral full of bawling calves and short yearlings to brand and castrate.

He needed more help to get the job done in a reasonable length of time, so word was broadcast by grapevine that

such and such an outfit expected to be ready to start branding on a certain day and could use a few good calf wrestlers that could handle big bull calves. Without fail, there would be some young riders show up to help bring the calves and eat calf fries.

Early some morning, an onlooker might see the dust rising from the prairie and the holding pens; and as the dust rose, the coals of the branding fire grew hotter; and the scent of scorched hair and hide along with the yell of an exuberant cow waddy filled the air, and some anxious helper would yell, "Come on, you longhorns!" The more bulls, the better; and as the male calves or yearlings were divested of their malehood, pocket knives were being whetted keener and a stick sharpened on one end to impale the oyster-shaped delicacy that had been split open and the hungry visitor was ready to partake of genuine calf fries. A small fire was built away from the branding fire; the calf fries were held over the slow fire and slowly turned until brown and slightly crisp. And the feast was on, with the hands taking turns working and eating calf fries a' la 1900 style. ♣