

THE HISTORY OF THE LONE PINE STAMPEDE

In 1963 the Stampede show was changed to a non-professional type show due to the increasing cost of procuring stock and professional participation, and the 1964 show will follow the same pattern with some new innovations included. A group of local riders have formed the Lone Pine Stampede Roping club. Plans are under way to stage other events throughout the year including a quarter horse show this fall with tentative dates set for October 3 and 4.

Officers for the 1964 show are Elmer Humphrey, president; Ben Casad, vice president; Marian Medford, secretary; Henry Olivas, stock; Floyd Sweat, grounds; Ted Garcia, tickets; Derald Webb, treasurer; Al Stiller, publicity.

Local citizens 25 years ago made plans to stage these spectacular days of the old west and bring visitors and champion cowboys from the far ends of the country to our unique little town for a chance to relive the wild west in a gala weekend celebration. Many local businessmen may well be credited with its inception.

Through the efforts and community spirit of a few local citizens, the first big show of rodeo fame was instigated. Wilfred Cline, Stockman, and the late Russell Spainhower, Southern Inyo rancher and cattleman, started the ball rolling for what became a traditional spring event. Stock for the rodeo was provided by Cline and by a unanimous vote, at a meeting called for organization, Spainhower was elected Stampede president, a position he held for nine consecutive years. Directors appointed to serve with the new president were Ben Baker, Howard Miller, Fred Reynolds, Otto "Slim" Honerlah, Ted Cook and Wesley Logan. Walter Jones was elected secretary-treasurer, a post he filled continuously for 21 years. Announcer for this first rodeo was Jack Hopkins, this spot is still occupied by him and he continues to cover the shows in paramount form.

After eight years of fine performances the Stampede became an incorporated organization and then became a RCA show of top caliber. The first such show boasted prize money of \$850 plus entry fees and during the years of growing popularity the last purses totaled \$1800 plus entry fees, making prizes running close to \$4000.

As the Stampede continued to grow and become more widely known amongst the professionals such top-notch names in the rodeo world as Casey Tibbs, Rex Connley, Bill Linderman, Ross Dollarhide, Chuck Shepard, Don Adams, Lawson Fore, Bill Hogue, Enoch Walker, famed Canadian cowboy, appeared on the rodeo program. Among other notables who have added much to the local shows with their stellar performances have been Joaquin Sanchez, Fes Reynolds and Wes Curtis.

Let us not forget that along with these professionals, our local businessmen have contributed much in making these shows the pride of the community. Following the nine year term of Russell Spainhower as president, by-laws were amended to read a one year term for each president. The following citizens served well as leaders of the Stampede Inc.: Jack Hopkins, Ben Baker, Fred Reynolds, Tom Noland, Norvil Aigner, Henry Olivas, Lefty Edmonston, C. M. Richards, Bob Rutherford, Gwen Gardner, Bud Slater and Joe Bonham. Other names, to mention a few, who have played major roles in the successful celebrations are Frank Chrysler, Ted Cook, John Morris and Howard Miller.

Calendar of events during these many years of celebrations lists scores of activities as well as the rodeo. Parades have been of first class quality with as many as seven bands competing for prizes and trophies; whiskerino contests, sponsored by the Lions Club, brought keen rivalry; outstanding pet parades for the kiddies have been the pride and joy of youngsters; carnivals too came in for a share in the excitement; a businessmen's burro race for several years was a stimulating part of the annual weekend; barbecues of highest quality, staged by local organizations, drew hundreds of guests and the coveted crown for the "Stampede Queen" was cherished by many popular young belles. Jean Noland was one of the first queens and numerous other young teenagers have since held the honor.

In the beginning rodeos were held on what is now known as the town ball park and as they continued to gain momentum plans materialized for the present grounds which are one of the best. Hundreds of persons may be seated on the fine grandstands, and monies from the annual shows have been used for improving the grounds to the present high standards. What more picturesque setting could any arena boast than the spectacular snow clad peaks of Mt. Whitney fronted by the pictorial Alabamas for a contrasting background? Where in these United States could this be equaled?