

23

Reading
Day 26

Vocabulary in Context



dominated

Herds of cattle once dominated the plains. They were often the biggest thing in sight.

extending

This cowgirl wears chaps extending, or reaching, from the hips to the ankles.

TARGET VOCABULARY

- dominated**
- extending**
- sprawling**
- hostile**
- acknowledged**
- flourished**
- residents**
- prospered**
- acquainted**
- decline**



sprawling

This cowboy rides his horse over the vast and sprawling range.

hostile

A farmer who is hostile, or unfriendly, to cattle ranchers can use fences to stop cattle drives.

Vocabulary
Reader



Context
Cards



L.5.4c consult reference materials, both print and digital, to find pronunciation and determine or clarify meaning

- ▶ Study each Context Card.
- ▶ Use a dictionary or a glossary to verify the meaning of each Vocabulary word.

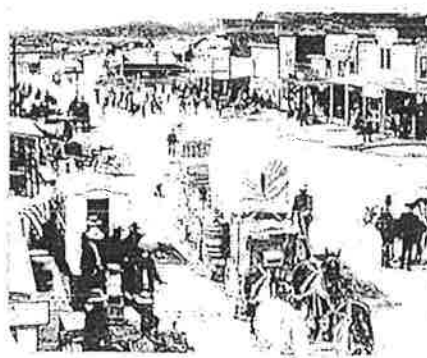
acknowledged

This rodeo cowboy acknowledged, or recognized, his fans with a smile.



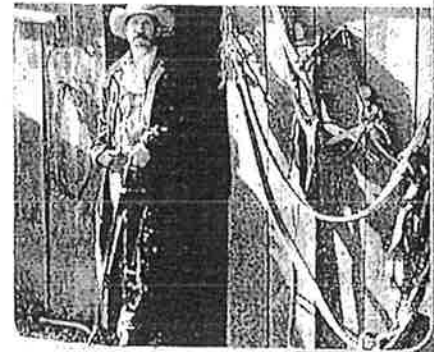
flourished

Cattle were driven to towns near rail lines. These towns flourished and grew rich.



residents

When cowboys were not living on the trail, they were residents in the ranch bunkhouse.



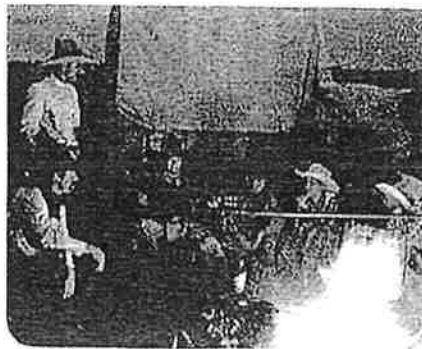
prospered

A cowboy who has prospered, or succeeded, may buy fancy boots and a hat.



acquainted

Cowboys get to know one another on cattle drives. They become well acquainted.



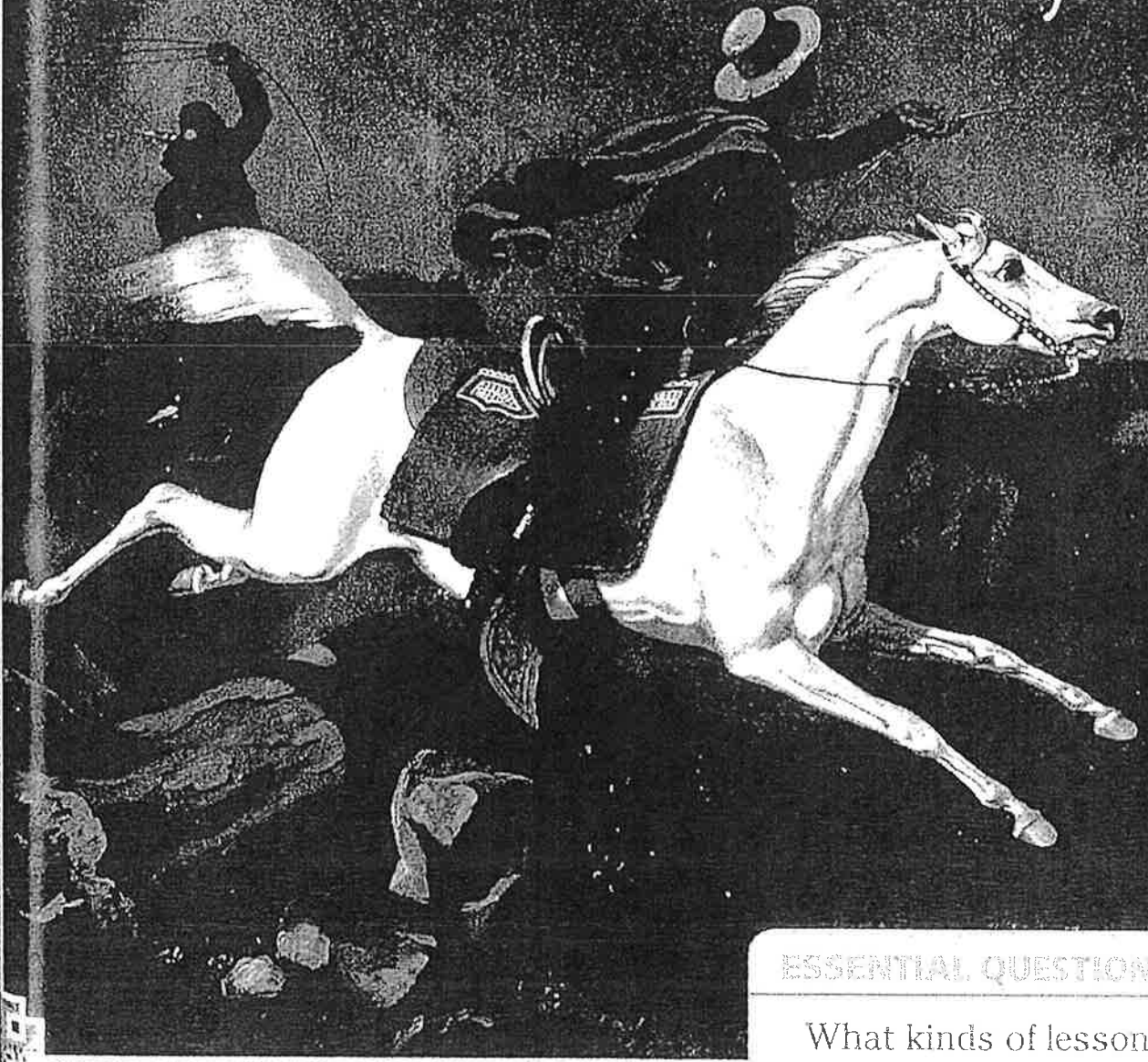
decline

Because there has been a decline in cattle drives, there are fewer cowboys today.



VAQUEROS

America's First Cowboys



by George Ancona

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What kinds of lessons were learned by people who lived in the old West?

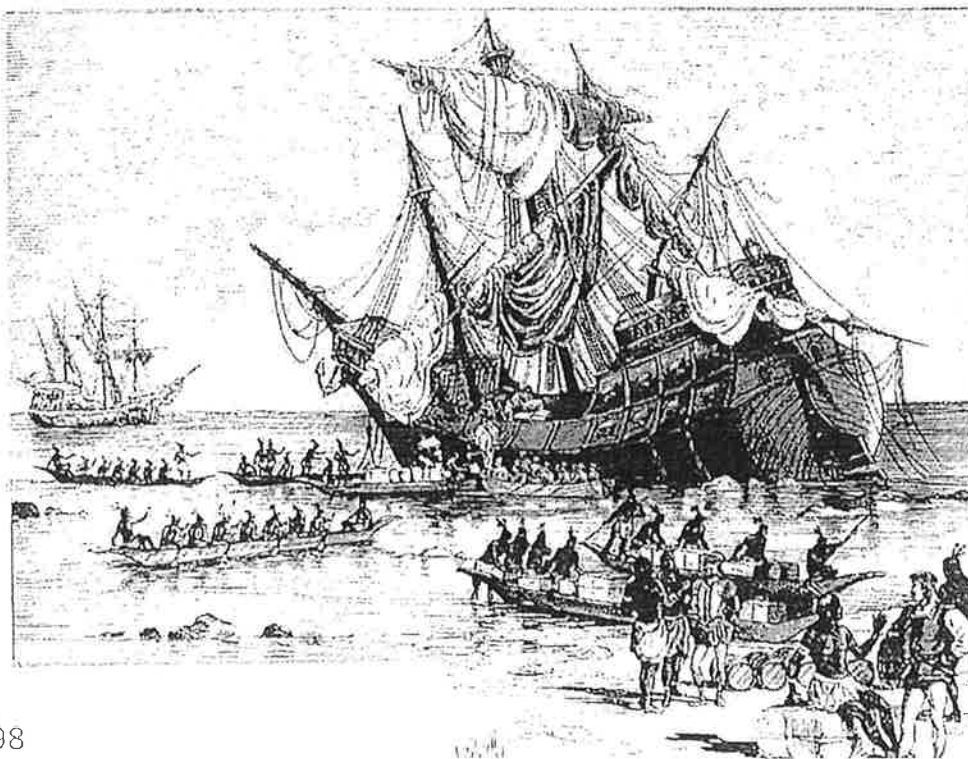
Imagine: five hundred years ago there were no cows or horses in North and South America. Thousands of years earlier there had been horses, but they disappeared. Since there were no cows, there were no cowboys. Of course, today there are cowboys. It is all because of Christopher Columbus.

The Journeys

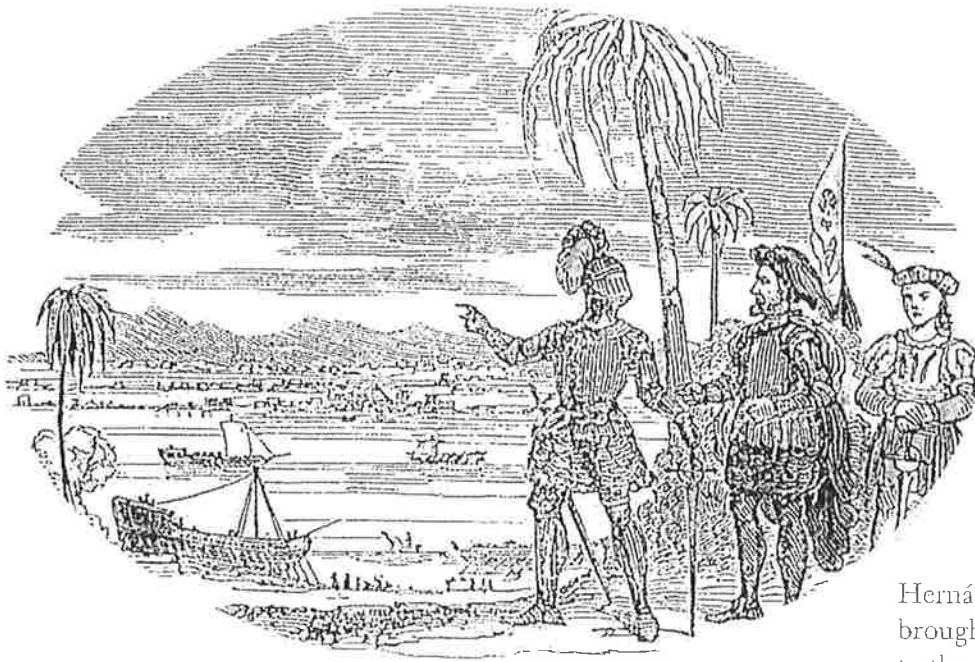
After his voyage to the Americas in 1492, Christopher Columbus returned to Spain. He told the Spanish king and queen of the riches to be found in the paradise he discovered. He described the native people who lived there. The royal couple agreed to more voyages. They needed gold to help pay for their expanding empire.

The following year, Columbus returned to the West Indies. He brought seventeen ships loaded with over a thousand settlers, horses and cattle. The ships dropped anchor at an island they named Hispaniola (ees pah NYOH lah). Today the island is shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

For the next twenty-five years Spanish ships sailed in and out of Hispaniola. The Spaniards explored and conquered the nearby islands. The native islanders were enslaved. Thousands died of smallpox, a terrible disease for which they had no resistance. As the islanders disappeared, they were replaced by the settlers and their animals.



Christopher Columbus landing on the island of Hispaniola, 1492



Hernán Cortés brought horses back to the mainland of North America.

In 1503, Hernán Cortés (ayr NAHN kor TEHS), a Spanish adventurer, arrived in the West Indies. He spent several years helping to conquer Cuba. Then in 1518, Cortés set out with a fleet of six ships to explore the nearby coast to the west. On board were five hundred men and sixteen horses strong enough to carry a man in full armor.

The ships dropped anchor near where the port of Veracruz, Mexico, is today. The Totonac people who lived there welcomed Cortés. They offered to help him conquer the hostile Aztec empire that had long dominated them. Cortés did so in two years. He claimed all the lands in the name of the Spanish king. He called the land New Spain.

It wasn't long before the Spanish conquerors brought more livestock to the colonies. The animals were allowed to graze on the open grasslands. Many took off into the wilderness, forming large herds of wild horses and cattle.

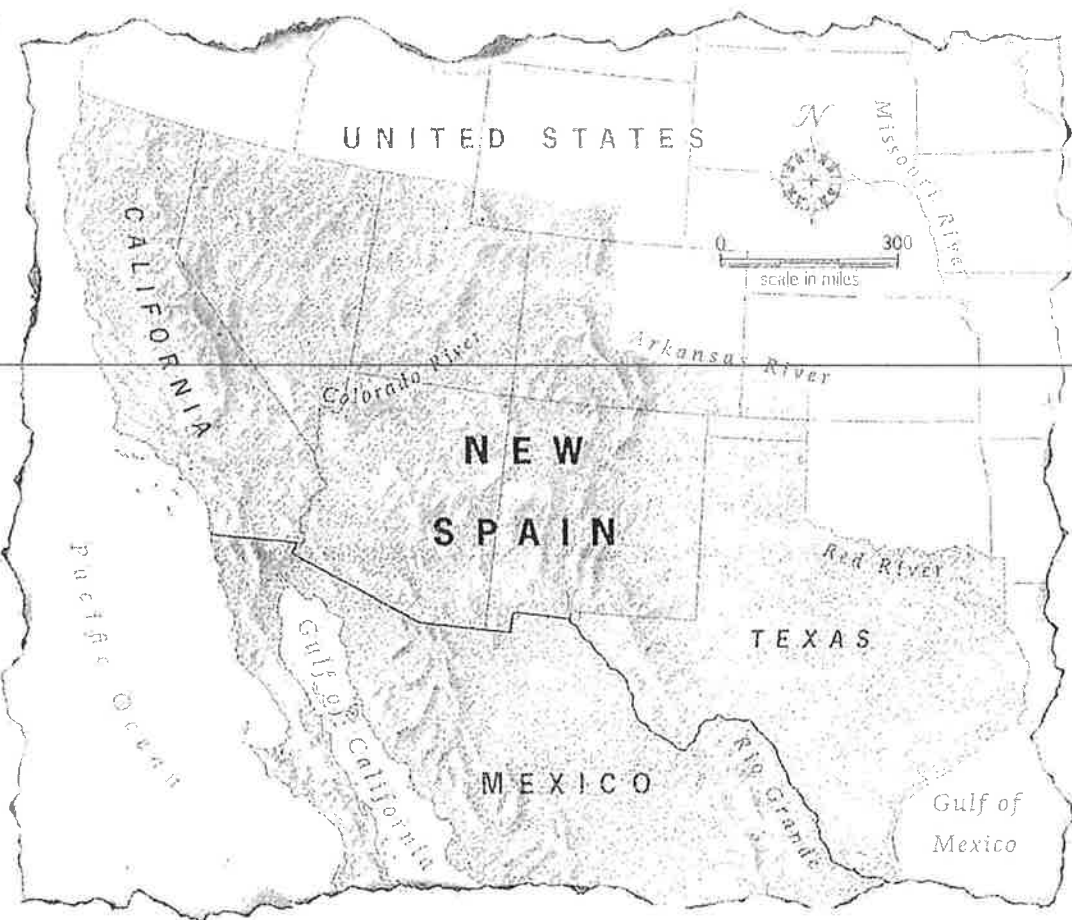


The Expanding Colony

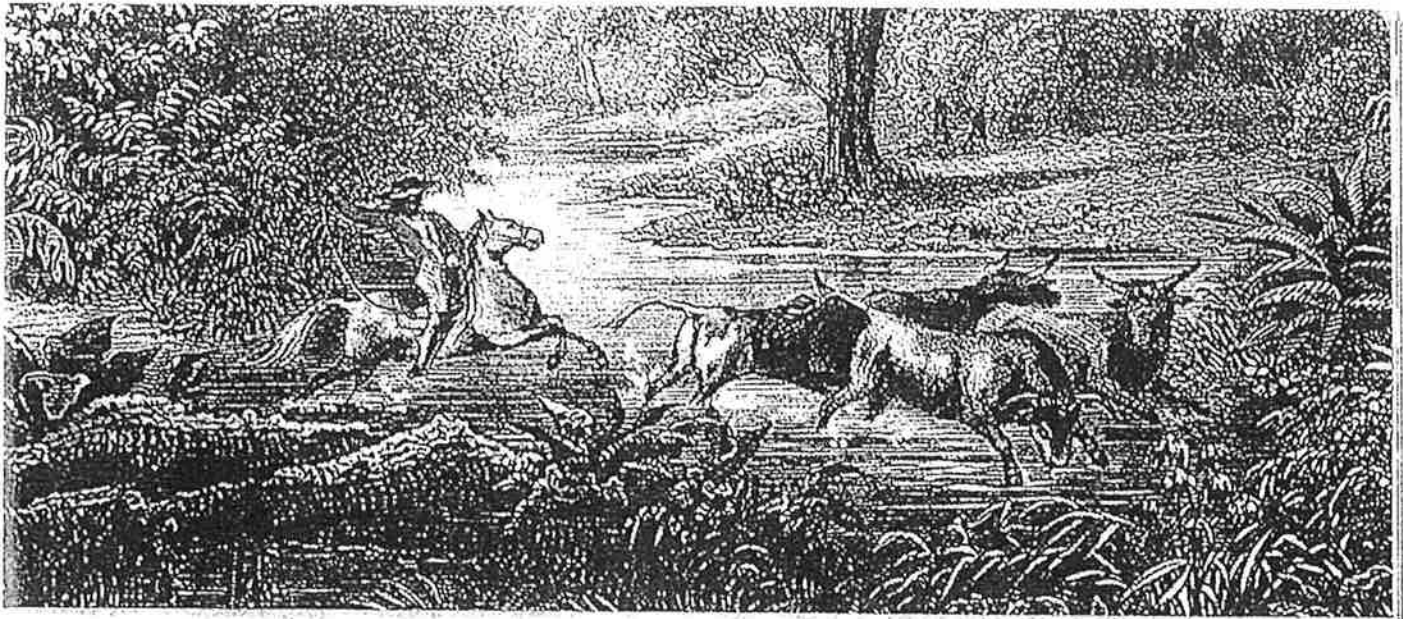
The Spanish king rewarded Cortés and his soldiers with gifts of land. Throughout New Spain they built ranches called *haciendas* (ah SYEHN dahs) and prospered.

Accompanying the soldiers and settlers were Catholic missionaries. They had come to convert the native people. They moved north, building missions and churches along the California coast, extending the lands of New Spain.

In 1540, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (VAHS kehs day koh roh NAH doh) organized an expedition into the northern territories. Coronado was searching for the legendary Golden Cities of Cibola (SEE boh lah). Along with the men and supplies he brought five hundred longhorn cattle to supply meat and hides.



Review the map. What water sources run through the area known as New Spain?

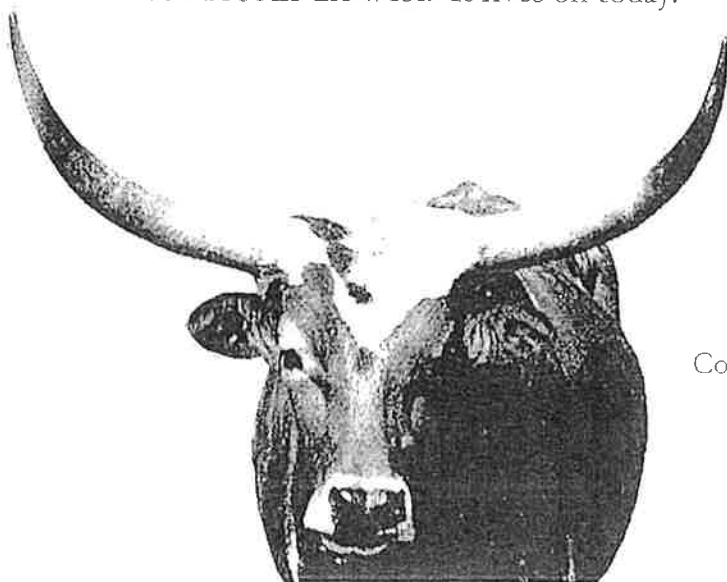


An early vaquero lassoes a steer.

The expedition never found the city of gold. However, it did introduce the first longhorns to what is now the American Southwest. From those first five hundred longhorns, ten million had spread across the Texas plains by the 1800s.

The soldiers and priests of New Spain were already acquainted with raising cattle in Spain. Many were skilled horsemen. Even so, they needed help in rounding up the livestock on their sprawling lands.

At that time it was against the law for any native person to ride a horse. But the ranchers and priests needed help. They taught the native converts to ride and use the *lazo* (LAH soh), or lasso, a looped rope. These men who worked with horses and cattle were called *vaqueros* (vah KAY rohs). In Spanish, the word means “cow-men.” With the vaqueros, a new culture took root in the west. It lives on today.

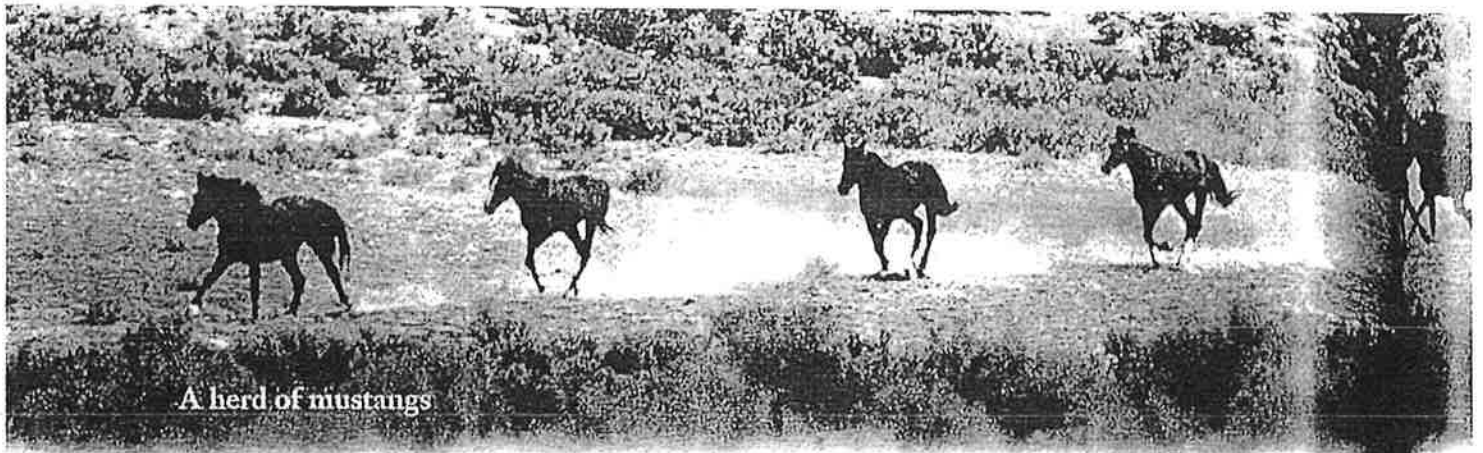


Coronado introduced the longhorn.

ANALYZE THE TEXT

Main Ideas and Details

Summarize the sections “The Journeys” and “The Expanding Colony” on pages 698–701. What is the main idea of each section? What details does the author use to support these main ideas?



A herd of mustangs

A Way of Life

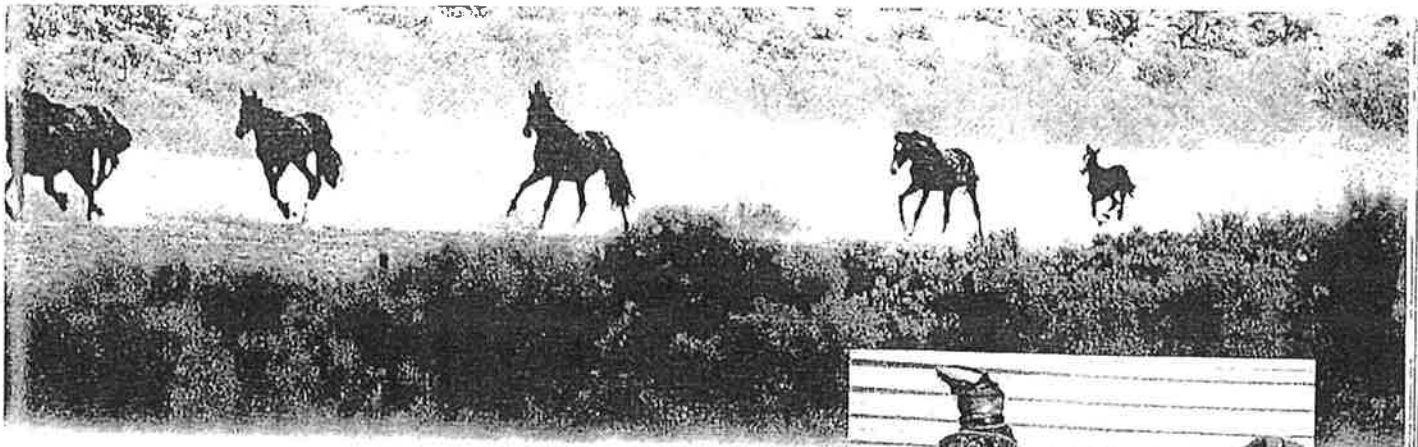
The vaquero's job was to keep tabs on cattle in the wild and round them up. It took many vaqueros to surround a herd so that it could be moved to the hacienda. These roundups are called *rodeos* (roh DEH ohs) in Spanish. Rodeo comes from a verb that means "to go around."

The vaqueros were also needed to capture the wild horses that flourished on the prairies and valleys of the large haciendas. The vaqueros called the horses *mesteños* (mehs TAY nyohs), a word that would become "mustangs."

Vaqueros spent most of their lives in the saddle, riding hard, in all kinds of weather. At night they sat around the fire where they cooked their meals. They told stories and sang songs about their lives. Then they rolled up into their ponchos to sleep. From California to Texas, native vaqueros were acknowledged to be the best horsemen in the world.



An early vaquero with his lariat



Doing the Job

A vaquero had to cope with a rough landscape and harsh weather. He needed the right tools to do his job.

Vaqueros wore wide-brimmed hats called *sombreros* (sohm BRAY rohs). *Sombra* (SOHM brah) means “shade” in Spanish. The sombrero protected vaqueros from the burning sun.

A vaquero also wore *chaparreras* (chah pah REH rahs) or chaps. These were leather leggings, worn over trousers. They protected the vaquero from cactus, thickets of wild brush, and rope burns.

The horses belonged to the owner of the hacienda. The vaquero, however, owned the saddle that he put on the horse. The saddle had to be comfortable for both horse and rider. The vaquero’s feet slid into two wooden stirrups that hung from the saddle.

A vaquero’s most trusted tool was his lasso, also known as the lariat. Often a vaquero would have to gallop after a runaway steer. He would toss the loop of the lariat around the steer’s horns, neck, or foot. Then he would wrap the rope around his saddle horn and rein in his horse. This would hold the steer or bring it to the ground.

Once the herds were together they calmed down and began to graze. Mounted vaqueros would separate the calves from their mothers to brand them with the hacienda’s mark.



A modern saddle

The Vaquero Legend

In 1821 Mexico won its war of independence from Spain. All of New Spain became the independent nation of Mexico. The northern lands of Mexico, however, were difficult to govern. Many American immigrants crossed into the territory that would one day become Texas. Soon there was a large population of Americans in Texas. In fact, they outnumbered the Mexican residents who lived there for generations.

With the Americans came changes in the culture of the vaquero. Even the word changed. When the Americans tried to say *vaqueros* it came out “bukera.” Later the word became *buckaroo*. It was only after 1860 that men who worked with cattle were called cowboys.



Cowboys continued the culture of the vaquero.



In 1836 Texas declared itself independent from Mexico. Nine years later it joined the United States. Then, in 1847, Mexico lost a war with the U.S. As a result, it lost its northern lands. They would become the states of California, Nevada, Utah and parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming.

After the end of the Civil War, the vaqueros were joined by freed slaves and young men from the east. These newcomers wanted a new life in the wide-open spaces. They had to learn what the vaqueros had been doing for centuries.

The large ranches needed many men to manage the huge herds of cattle on the vast prairies. Cattle drives would take weeks to travel from ranches to railroads. From there, the cattle traveled to the markets in eastern and western cities.

The invention of barbed wire made it possible to build fences to keep cattle in pastures. The vaquero was not needed to ride the wide-open spaces. Long cattle drives became unnecessary. The decline of the vaquero began.

Yet the vaquero's traditions did not fade from the American imagination. At the turn of the century the cowboy became the hero of the west. Books, magazine stories, and the early movies featured the brave exploits of the American cowboy.

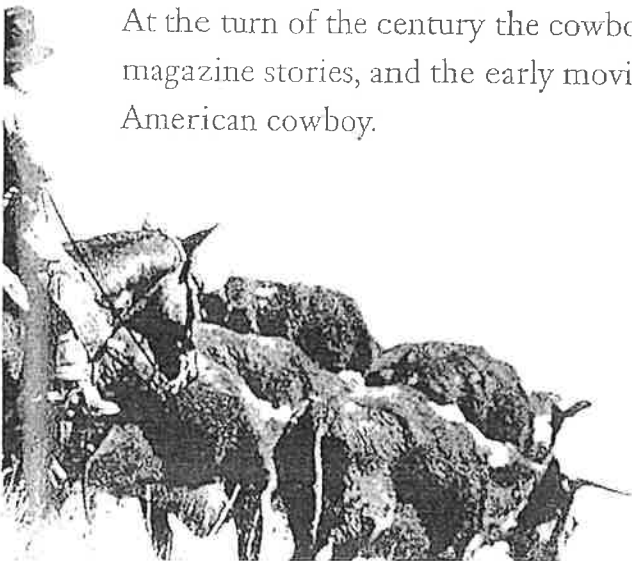


Cowboy movies were among the first movies made.

ANALYZE THE TEXT

Text and Graphic Features

Identify the photos, illustrations, map, captions, and headings that the author uses on pages 698–705. What do these features help you understand about the vaqueros?



A horse rears, throwing
its rodeo rider.



Celebrating Traditions

Today the arts and skills of the vaquero can be seen in two countries. They appear in the *charrerías* (chah ray REE ahs) of Mexico and the rodeos of the United States. Both vaqueros and cowboys pride themselves in their skills. They keep alive the traditions and cultures of their past.

On September 14th, Mexicans celebrate *El día del charro*. It is a holiday of parades, church services, music and *charrerías*. The *charrería* is a rodeo where vaqueros can exhibit their skills. They perform with *charros* (CHAH rohs) and *charras* (CHAH rahs), gentlemen and women riders. The men dress in their elegant silver-buttoned outfits and large sombreros. The women wear the traditional dress of the *China Poblana* (CHEE nah poh BLAH nah).

Many of the events performed in rodeos and *charrerías* are similar. Both may include riding a bucking horse or bull and getting thrown off, for example. But like the first vaqueros, the riders are ready. There is an old saying in the corrals. It goes: "There's never been a horse that can't be rode. There's never been a cowman who hasn't been thrown."

The grammar may not be right, but the idea is pure cowboy.

ANALYZE THE TEXT

Adages The author uses an **adage**, or a traditional saying, in the third paragraph on this page. Why do you think he chooses to end the selection this way? What do you think the author means when he says "the idea is pure cowboy"?