

VAQUEROS

Vaqueros were the original cowboys. Vaqueros had been herding cattle in Mexico long before ranching became part of the United States. The Mexican cowboys were known for their great skills in riding, roping, and their ranch knowledge.

The Spanish arrived in Mexico and began building ranches. They brought horses over from Spain to help work the ranches. The Mexican cowboys were hired to help take care of the cattle. Soon ranching made its way to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

English-speaking settlers moved to the west and started to use the practices the vaqueros had developed and even started to dress like them. These “new” vaqueros were called cowboys. Cowboys came from many different backgrounds including Mexican, Native Americans, and African-Americans.

When the railroads were built, it allowed the cowboys to load the cattle on the trains to be moved to different parts of the United States. The vaqueros used their skills to herd the cattle hundreds of miles in drives to the location of the railroads.

The Vaqueros skills are still in use today. Rodeos around the world show the talents of many of today's cowboys that were developed by the vaqueros. Roping, riding, and steer wrestling events show what it took to be a vaquero of the past.

The Vaqueros' Story | Texas State History Museum. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/discover/campfire-stories/vaqueros>