

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Weekend rodeos continue decades-old tradition

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Ranch rodeos evolved in the late 19th century.

Cattle raising was a primary occupation in those days and to be successful, a ranch owner had to have good cowboys to take care of his, or her, source of income - the cattle. The working cowboy had little time to take up hobbies and the activities that the cowboys had to perform during a normal day of ranching became the cowboys' source of entertainment.

During the spring round up, cowboys from neighboring ranches helped each other. This gave the cowboys the opportunity to compare their skills, to see which cowboys were the best riders, the best ropers and the best all-around cow hands.

This informal competition eventually turned into organized ranch rodeos.

Ranch Rodeos in Bandera County have at least a 35-year history. The Frontier Times Museum organized ranch rodeos here in the mid 1980s. These ranch rodeos involved actual ranch owners in the area that took on the task of rounding up family members and/or local cowboys to compete in such ranch rodeos.

In 1985 (or 86) Speedy Hicks, the patriarch of the Hicks family and owner of the Hix (aka Hicks) Ranch, rode his horse into the trailer during the Trailer Loading event. Speedy, with roped steer in tow, created a memorable event as the trailer had a roof, and he had to bend backwards and sideways over his horse to keep from hitting the roof. Over the past 35 years, the popularity of ranch rodeos has spread across Bandera County.

This Labor Day Weekend, Bandera ProRodeo Association will host a Ranch Rodeo on Saturday, Sept. 4, and a Women's Ranch Rodeo and Kids' Mutton Bustin' on Sunday, Sept. 5. These rodeos are entered by cowboys and cowgirls who continue to work and raise cattle.

Ranching history comes alive as Bronc Riding, Steer Roping (muggin'), Steer Branding, Wild Cow Milking, Rescue Race, Cowhide Race, Pony Express and Trailer Loading are featured at the rodeos.

Gates for the rodeos open at 6 p.m., and rodeos begin at 8 p.m.

Admission for veterans and active military with ID are \$5, adults age 13 and up are \$10, ages 7 to 12 are \$5 and ages 6 and under are free.

For more information, visit BanderaProRodeo.org.