

The Santa Clara Thanksgiving Day Rodeo



The Old Rodeo Grounds were up on the hill about where Canyon View Park is now located. Every Thanksgiving Day our town held a rodeo. The profits went towards the LDS Ward budgets. This allowed all the kids to be real cowboys or cowgirls. It was not uncommon for two or three kids to ride out on the chutes on the back of a steer, Landon Frei was the rodeo announcer. He always had great stories to tell concerning the local cowboys. Many of the young men in the Shivwit band of the Southern Paiute Tribe participated in the rodeo.

The younger contestants looked forward to the chicken chase. Many young people took home chickens to their own coops as a reward for our efforts.

Those who grew up in the 1940's and 1950's remember the rodeo included a horse race. Anyone could enter, and the race began somewhere north of the rodeo grounds, and the finish line was in the rodeo arena. One 88-year-old man recalls that his horse didn't like being in the confines of the rodeo grounds and when the race entered the last phase he stopped abruptly, and the rider flew over the head of the horse onto his back on the ground.

As the Santa Clara Heights housing area developed, the rodeo arena was moved downtown to Boot Johnson's nice new rodeo grounds among the black lava rocks. It continued to be held there for many years. Local cowboys from all over the country came to compete for prizes.

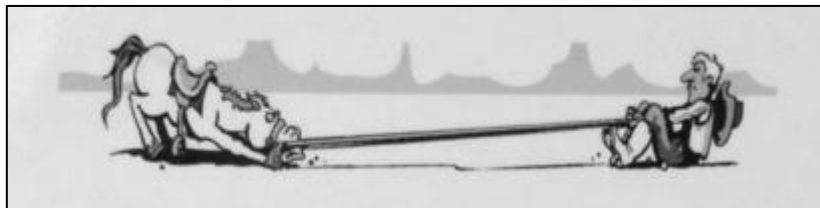
This is one of our cherished hometown traditions from the past.



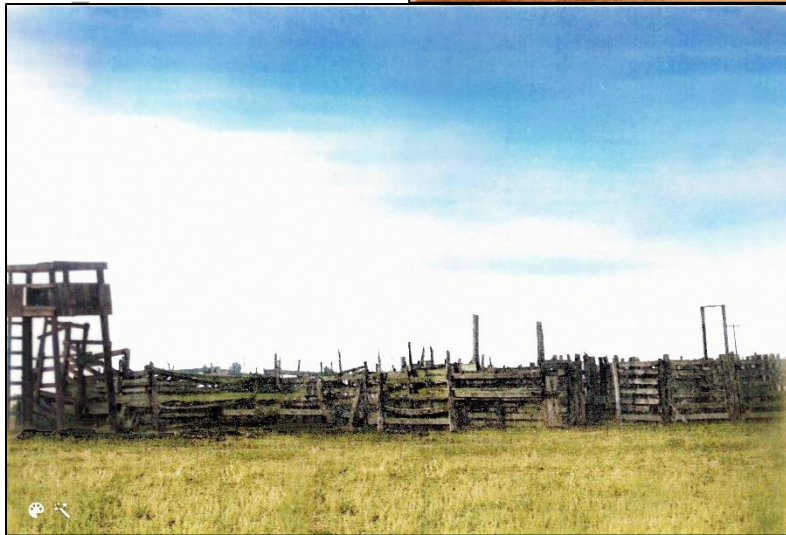
The 1968 Rodeo Committee:

Front- Sylvan Graf, Lester Wittwer, Creighton Leavitt, LaVar Bracken

Back: Verl (Si) Graf. Victor Frei



The Bleachers



The announcer's stand
and the stock pens and
chutes

The crowd—best seats
in the house!

