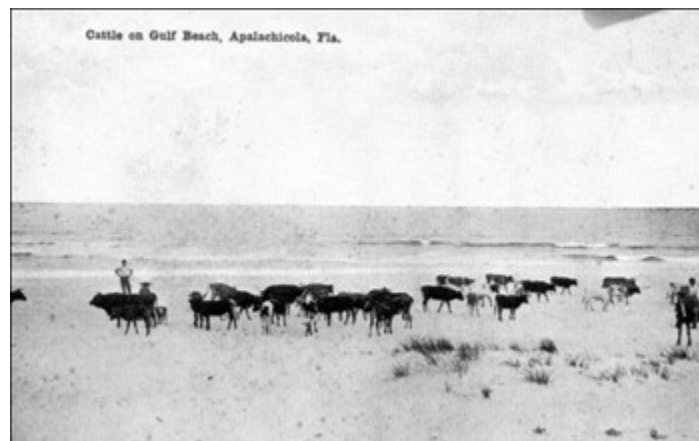


Cow Hunters and Cattle Barons

Florida has the longest history of ranching of any state in the United States. This exhibit celebrates that long history and the continuing importance of cattle and ranching to the Florida economy and culture. This exhibit is presented in support of the Florida Folklife Program exhibit, *Florida Cattle Ranching: Five Centuries of Tradition*, currently on display at the Western Folklife Center, Elko, Nevada from January 18 - July 24, 2010. Images from the State Archives are used, along with information from the exhibit and new photographs from folklorist Bob Stone, to illustrate how cattle, the people who raise them, and the cultural importance of ranching have changed since cattle first arrived with the earliest Spanish explorers more than 400 years ago. This exhibit showcases the work, play, tradition, and artistry that ranching represents in Florida.

Special thanks to Tina Bucuvalas and Bob Stone of the Florida Folklife Program, co-curators of the *Florida Cattle Ranching* exhibit, who provided the historical background and Bob Stone's own images for this presentation.



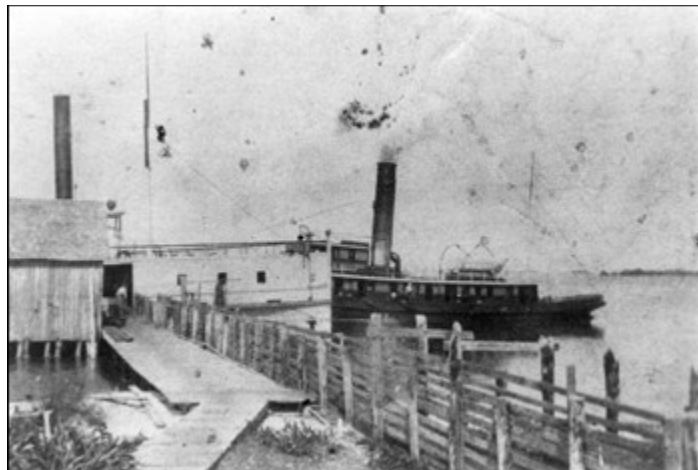
Cattle on the beach: Apalachicola, Florida

Image Number: [N047144](#)



Old Spanish cattle brands

Image Number: [RC05555](#)



Steamship at wharf: Punta Rassa, Florida (189-)

Image Number: [RC19392](#)

Wharf where cattle were hurriedly pushed along chutes and crowded into every available spot on board schooners that plowed the waters between Punta Rassa, Tampa, St. Andrews Bay, Charlotte Harbor, and Cuba. Many ships carried 200 head or more per trip.



Cattle drive at Bartow (189-)

Image Number: [RC02673](#)

At the far left is Crayton Parker, in the middle is Tom Smith on a horse named Boomerang, and at the right is Aunt Jeanie feeding hay to a cow.



Cowboy at an open range roundup near Fort McCoy: Florida (c. 1910)

Image Number: [N045020](#)



Fighting over a stolen herd (1895)

Image Number: [RC02054](#)

Included in an article titled "Cracker Cowboys of Florida" published in Harper's New Monthly magazine v.91, issue 543, August 1895.



A bit of cow country (1895)

Image Number: [RC02057](#)

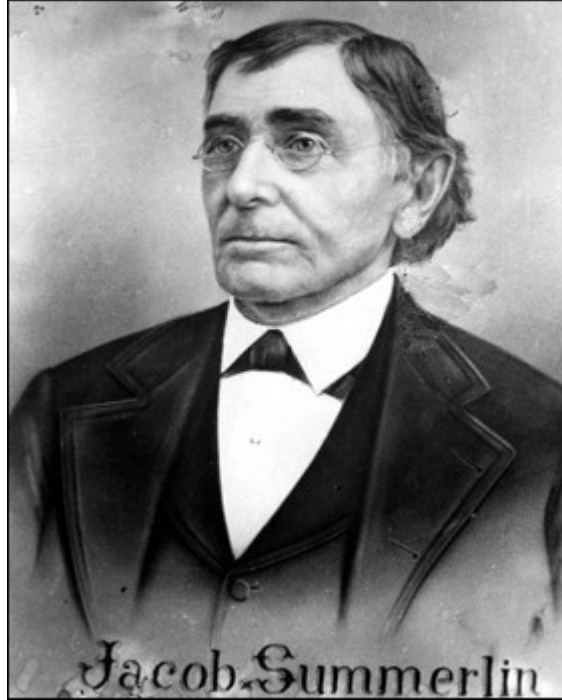
Included in an article titled "Cracker Cowboys of Florida" published in Harper's New Monthly magazine v.91, issue 543, August 1895.



Jacob Summerlin: Bartow, Florida

Image Number: [RC02467](#)

He amassed a fortune in the cattle business and endowed the Summerlin Institute. Jacob Summerlin (1820-1893). Reputedly the first child born in the Florida Territory, Jake Summerlin was said to have started working cattle and cracking whips by seven years of age. At 16, he travelled south to central Florida, where he earned his fortune raising cattle in the Kissimmee and Peace River areas. Summerlin became one of the state's wealthiest men before he reached 40. He and his partners sold cattle to Cuba and the U.S. Naval Base in Key West. He purchased large land parcels in southwest Florida, including a wharf at Punta Rassa. During the Civil War, Summerlin smuggled beef to the Confederates by shipping it out of present day Charlotte Harbor, then later sold cattle to Union soldiers at Ft. Myers. After the war he donated land to establish a school in Bartow. In Orlando, he opened the Summerlin Hotel, donated the land for Lake Eola Park, and became the City Council's first president.



Jacob Summerlin: Bartow, Florida

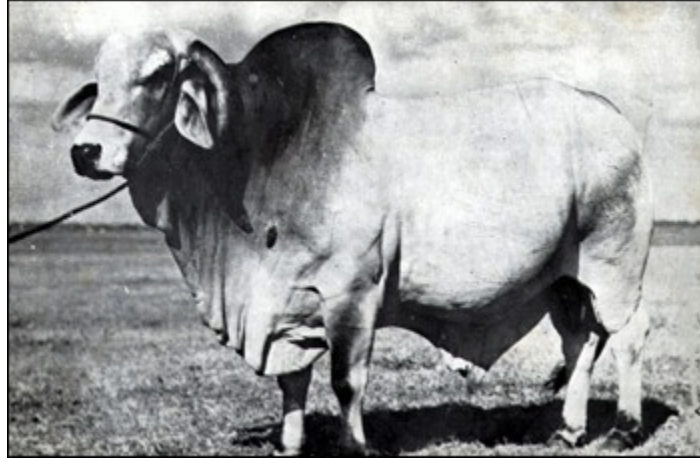
Image Number: [RC12095](#)

He amassed a fortune in the cattle business and endowed the Summerlin Institute.



Seminole Indian cowboy Charley Micco and grandson Fred Smith on horseback in a cattle ranch: Brighton Reservation, Florida. (1950)

Image Number: [C013676](#)



Emperor: registered Guzerat Brahman bull bred and raised on the ranch of Henry O. Partin and sons, Kissimmee, Florida

Image Number: [PC4977](#)



Brahman bull: Bradenton, Florida

Image Number: [PC5941](#)

Accompanying note: "Emperor Jr. 10th owned by T.P. Chaires Jr. of Bradenton, Florida. One of the outstanding Brahman Bulls in Florida. This is the second generation of Florida bred cattle imported from India. Florida rates second in the U.S. in pure bred Brahman cattle."



Two cowboys wearing handguns: Gainesville, Florida (189-)

Image Number: [RC05578](#)

Rough and Ready, two cowboys wearing handguns and boots, are two Gainesville residents. Archie L. Jackson, left, was the son of a Confederate veteran and grandfather of an Alachua County rancher. Thomas McDonald, right, had a son, Harrison H. McDonald, who was a county judge for many years. This photo was taken in the 1890s, after the two men had driven a herd of cattle from Old Town, forded the Suwannee River, and brought the herd close to Gainesville for grazing. This shot was taken about one block west of the courthouse, behind Steenberg's Hardware Store, later Thomas Hardware.



Cowboys on Mr. Burt's Spring Garden Ranch: De Leon Springs, Florida (1917)

Image Number: [RC11292](#)



Group of Florida cattle barons: De Soto County, Florida

Image Number: [PR02647](#)

L-R: Ed Wells, C. C. Carlton, W. N. "Pole" Duncan, Hooker Parker, unknown.



Tom Johnson holding the reins of his horse: Orlando, Florida (189-)

Image Number: [RC02505](#)

Florida Cattle Ranching: Five Centuries of Tradition

Florida's cattle industry, one of the oldest and largest in the nation, is vital to the state's well-being. Ranching is an essential economic activity that preserves many aspects of the natural landscape, protects water resources, and maintains areas used by wildlife or for recreation. Yet few know about Florida's unique ranching traditions, which have been adapted to the subtropical climate and influenced by the state's distinctive history.

In Florida, those who own or work cattle traditionally have been called cowmen. In the late 1800s they were often called cow hunters, a reference to hunting for cattle scattered over the wooded rangelands during roundups. At times the terms cowman and Cracker have been used interchangeably because of similarities in their folk culture. Today the western term "cowboy" is often used for those who work cattle.

Colonial Florida

Florida ranching has evolved from many different cultural traditions, though the most important sources were the marshy coastal areas of Andalusia, Spain, and the hill regions of Britain and Ireland. In Andalusia, ranchers living in towns hired cow hands (vaqueros), who marked or branded the cattle, managed them from horses, and moved them to different locations during the year. They later brought long-horned Andalusian cattle to the Americas. In highland Britain and Ireland, herders marked or branded cattle for identification, penned them at night for protection, and moved them to different pastures during the year. In the fall, the animals were sold to drovers, who used dogs and whips to drive them to markets or slaughterhouses. The Spanish and British took these traditions to the West Indies, where they were adapted to the tropical climate and combined to create ranching systems used throughout the Americas.

Florida's Andalusian/Caribbean cattle were the first in today's United States. Some scholars believe that cattle brought by the expeditions of Ponce de Leon in 1521 and Don Diego de Maldonado in 1540 escaped and survived in the wild. Organized ranching began with the founding of St. Augustine in 1565, when cattle from Spain and Cuba formed the basis of herds that fed the garrison and surrounding communities. In addition to herds owned by the Spanish and Indians, wild cattle flourished in the rangelands and prairies. Eventually Spanish colonists began exporting cattle to Cuba. During the 1600s, Spanish clergy raised cattle at the missions, where many Native Americans learned to tend them.