



## Reading Cattle Brands

On the open range, there were no fences to keep one ranch's cattle from mixing with another's. Ranchers solved the problem of telling which cattle belonged to which ranch by *branding* them. They used branding irons to burn letters, numbers, shapes and symbols onto their cattle. Like you write your name on things belonging to you, each rancher had their own brand to show which cattle belonged to them.

### Cowboy Code Talking











Cowboys had to be very skilled in reading brands. Like reading a secret code, there are rules to reading brands. A brand is read:

- From left to right.
- From top to bottom.
- From outside to inside.



*Branding Irons used by Conrad Kohrs*

Some brands used special symbols, which had special names. The table below shows some of those symbols and how to read them.

	"Lazy" Letter or Number		"Hanging" Letter or Number
	"Tumbling" Letter or Number		"Bar"
	"Rocking" Letter or Number		"Walking" Letter or Number
	"Swinging" Letter or Number		"Crazy" Letter or Number
	"Flying" Letter or Number		"Block" or "Box"