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Cowboy Poetry

Special Collections & Archives

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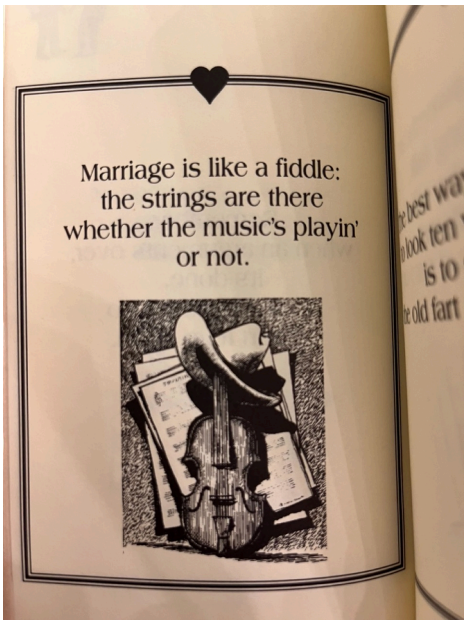
There's something about a person strumming a guitar and wearing their heart on their denim shirt sleeve. Whether you're reminiscing while listening to George Strait's *Amarillo by Morning* or tapping your feet to Hank Williams' jaunty *Hey, Good Lookin'*, cowboy poetry is a uniquely American experience at the core of our country.

What Is The Western Cowboy Poetry Collection?

This collection consists of six boxes of cowboy poetry submitted by poets and collectors across North America. It grew out of a concerted effort by western state folklorists in the early 1980s to collect, document, and present cowboy poetry. The idea for this work grew out of meetings of state folklorists in Washington D.C. at the National Endowment of the Arts Folk Arts Program and at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, a meeting with the Nevada Humanities Committee with various western state folklorists, and meetings of state folklorists at Utah State University in conjunction with the university's Fife Folklore Conference in 1983.

Did you know Special Collections & Archives participated in this year's National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in January? This event, held annually in Elko, Nevada, is a week-long assemply celebrating the classic creativity found in the American West. The Special Collections & Archives team had an exciting opportunity to share a few pieces of from the archives.



What Is In The Collection?

There's a little something for everyone in the Cowboy Collection! Here are only a few examples of what you can find:

- *City Cattle: Humorous Western Political Satire* by Darwin J. Jeffries
- *Western Poems* by Bruce Kiskaddon
- *One Hundred Poems* by Waddie Mitchell
- *The Five Stages of Quitting Farming* by John William Kulm

- *Blood Writing* by Sean Sexton
- *Poems of the Old West: A Rocky Mountain Anthology* by Levette J. Davidson
- *Wild Prairie Roses: A Collection of Verse by North Dakotans* by Shirley J. Mikkelson
- *Brush Poppers: Original Cowboy Poetry* by Dale Page
- *Songs of the American West* by Dale Page
- by Richard E. Lingenfelter, et al.

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