

Sep 21 2019 Dwaine and Susan Brown

Left for Bruneau Idaho which is located about 1-1/2 hour drive south of Boise. Bruneau is located in the High Country Desert in the south west corner of Idaho and the Owyhee Mountains. This country is full of sage brush, rocks, sand, scrub juniper and some pine trees. Just about anything that you see that is green is irrigated and water rights are a way of life here.

Because of the irrigation they do raise alfalfa hay for winter feeding, lots of alfalfa (4-5 cuttings per year) and you could see stacks of the big 4x4x8 bales everywhere with some stacks that looked like they were 3-400 feet long stacked four bales wide and four bales high.

We stayed at a bed and breakfast just outside of Bruneau, a little town with one gas station/ food store/fishing-bait store and beer-wine-liquor store, one restaurant, and one watering hole

Sat and Sunday we got to attend the annual Bruneau rodeo. Both were in the afternoon and lasted about 4 hours., (no lights for evening shows)

They had the usual rodeo events but also had wild horse team roping, wild cow milking (using only 2 cowboys), calf tie down where the rider ropes the calf and dallies his rope around the saddle horn, gets the calf stopped, un-dallies his rope, dismounts and pulls the lariat rope around the horn as he goes to the calf keeping the rope tight on the calf, throws the calf to the ground to tie three legs together just like they do on the open range (here we keep the lariat rope tied to the saddle horn).

The other event they have that we don't have here is hide races, This is a ladies event, one cowgirl is at one end of the arena standing beside a piece of cow hide about 4' square with a lariat rope tied to it. At the other end of the arena there is a cowgirl mounted on a horse. The race is started and three horses came running down to the cowgirls and the hides, the cowgirls are all holding up the lariat rope which the horseback riders have to grab, circle the horse around the lady on the ground, while dialing the lariat around the saddle-horn (while this is happening the cowgirl on the ground drops to the cow hide and gets a good hold) and heads the horse back to the other end of the arena dragging the hide and the cowgirl for the fastest time.

Mon We gathered at Martin Black's home to start our cattle work for the day, there were 10 of us and he had horses for all of us from his remuda.

When we had the horses ready he loaded them into a Freightliner tractor that had a 20' box on the back of it and also a 30' trailer that he pulled behind it, I believe he could haul about 15 - 16 horses in this rig.

He trucked us about 5 miles, pulled off on a gravel road that has always been a cattle way (to drive cattle along) for everybody to use. We unloaded and rode into a field for about a mile or so to where we could find the cattle. Half of us stayed on this side of a fence in a half circle. The rest rode further into the pasture to the cattle to gather them and push them back to a fence and gate where we were. The cattle were pushed through the gate and stopped as we surrounded them and kept them gathered.

The object was to separate about 30 head of yearling heifers and the bulls from the cows, turn them back to the pasture they just came from so we could move the cow herd to another pasture.

One person on his horse stood at the open (20') gate to keep any cows from passing back through the gate. As the heifers and the bulls were sorted slowly from the herd by a person on horseback and pushed to the gate the gate keeper would back away to create an opening or escape hole so the heifer would go there instead of trying to get back to the herd.

After we had the heifers and bulls sorted and out of the cow herd we pushed the cows back to the road we started at to move them to a different pasture. As we got near the road two riders went ahead and positioned themselves on the road about 20' from each side of the gate and turned sideways across the road to block any cattle from going down the road as we pushed them across the road into a pasture.

This was all done on horseback.

Tue We gathered at Mr. Black's house, got our horses ready, loaded them again in the big rig truck and went back to the same pasture to sort out the 5 bulls to load in the rig to move to another pasture as he called it (to Sho Fly).

The 5 bulls were with the herd (maybe 75 - 80 head) and we sorted them out in this open field on horseback and moved them away from the herd. We pushed them back to the road that was the cattle way and this time moved them along the road to a set of catch pens that Mr. Black had backed his rig to.

The rig as I said was a box build on a Freightliner truck and he had ramps that folded down between the truck box and the trailer box creating a bridge with high sides between the two. He loaded the 5 bulls first in the trailer box and pushed them into the box on the truck, very slick setup.

We loaded up the horses in the trailer box, and another livestock trailer and went to a town called Grandview for lunch. After lunch we drove about 40 minutes to a pasture back in the hills and unloaded the bulls and horses. The bulls were pushed through a gate and we followed them on horseback.

That was our chore for the day so we rode our horses up the side of this hill that put us on top of what they call a tabletop and you could see in all directions for 30-40 miles or more. Mr. Black gave us directions through the hills to a location and told us he would meet us there with the trailers to go back to his place. Mr. Black and one of our group took off in another direction to check something. This little horseback ride over the hills took us about 3 hours to get to the meeting point which was an old stagecoach station.

Wed. We met at Mr. Black's, loaded up the horses and set off to the Bruneau Sand Dunes for a horseback ride and to also find, and bring back a few cows he knew were there.

We drove over an hour to get to where he wanted to be and unload. The sand dunes were something to see (some 300' high) and we actually rode the horses over some of them.

We found the cattle we were looking for and pushed them ahead of us away from the sand dunes through the hills and over several ridges and came out from this little cattle drive at the entrance to Mr. Black's driveway. This was over an hour by truck but took us about 4 hours coming back by horse.

Thru We met at Mr. Black's (early just after sun up) loaded up the horses in his rig and headed back to open range country. We drove for about 2 hours through open range country and ended up on a dirt road for miles. This brought us to a set of catch pens and a large grazing area down in a valley. We split up with some going around some hills to the left looking for cattle to push down in the valley. The rest of us rode down into the valley grazing area picking up cattle as we went.

As we all came together in the valley we had gathered almost 300 head. This started what they call a RODEAR. The cattle is gathered together and held with the horse riders in position in a circle around the herd but not real close, we were 100-150' away, close enough to keep the cattle together but not close enough to make them nervous and want to flee.

Mr. Black, his son (Will) and a couple of the other riders took turns walking into the herd and sort out certain cows. This was done by pushing that cow and maybe one or two more away from the herd and then letting the ones not needed to return to the herd but other riders would push the one wanted to another area and hold. We ended up with 18 head to push back to the catch pens that were up on top of the ridge and into pens.

We loaded the cattle in his rig for the trip home, turned them out at his place and ended the day tired, this was a long day because how far we had to drive to and back plus work the cattle, we were done about 7 pm.

Fri, Was just a kind of fun day with some work in his arena tracking his mechanical roping steer and a demonstration in his A pen about how to train a horse to keep a cow in a certain area.

Also on Fri Mr. Black hitched up his team of mules, (Poncho and Lefty) for a wagon ride into town for lunch.

Mr. Black is a very well know horsemanship clinician and travels the USA and world with clinics.

Mr. Black's web site is MartinBlack.net

Mr. Black's family settled this land in 1865 and he is the fifth generation to work this land raising cattle and horses