

MAN MADE MOBILE

Early Saddles of Western North America



Richard E. Ahlborn
EDITOR

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION PRESS

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S. Dillon Ripley
Secretary
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a



b



c



d

FRONTISPIECE.—*a*, Mexican saddle, ca. 1830 (see also Figures 18, 60); *b*, *vaquero* saddle, ca. 1870 (see also Figure 66); *c*, Sioux pad saddle, ca. 1850 (see also Figure 72); *d*, U.S. western stock saddle, ca. 1880 (see also Figure 68).

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ABSTRACT

Ahlborn, Richard E., editor. *Man Made Mobile: Early Saddles of Western North America. Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology*, number 39, 147 pages, frontispiece, 84 figures, 1980.—This study of early forms of saddles in Western North America features four distinct discussions: major horizons (widespread appearances of historical prototypes) within the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries; Mexican origins of form and associated activities; development among U.S. riders before the professional cowboy era (post-Civil War); and development of equestrian equipment among the Plains Indians collateral to the emergence of the U.S. western stock saddle. The four essays are followed by an illustrated catalogue of the equestrian artifacts drawn from the Smithsonian Institution's holdings and from other important collections for an exhibition at the Renwick Gallery, 1974–1976. There is also a glossary of Spanish and English equestrian terms used in this study. It is projected that this presentation of early saddle forms with many well-documented illustrations and descriptions will provide both a reference source and also the inspiration for additional typological and social studies.

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P R E F A C E

Saddles used (and often manufactured) in what is now the United States south and west of Saint Louis prior to 1865 constitute the ultimate focus of this composite study. The development of this presentation of emerging saddle types depended on three factors: (1) an enthusiasm on the part of the researchers for the unglamorized life sustained on the prairies and plateaus of our Southwest, in large part the northern borderlands of Mexico until the decade after 1836; (2) a serious commitment to the study of the history and cultural geography of the region (extending into present-day Canada and Mexico) in terms of a single class of significant, documented artifacts; and (3) an opportunity to gather together a grouping of historical objects for intense examination. It was a natural outgrowth of such a study project that these choice, finely crafted historical artifacts should be shared with the public through an exhibition.

In 1973, three Smithsonian staffers, John C. Ewers, James S. Hutchins, and I, formed an ad hoc committee to discuss the study and exhibition of early horse equipment as a class of artifacts in the pre-1865, trans-Mississippi West. We realized that this tremendous, geographically diverse territory encompassed three grand-scale cultural complexes, each having a full set of characteristic gear for horse and rider—northern Hispanic-Mexican, Plains Indian, and westering Anglo-Americans. Based on experience common to us and other collectors and curators, the committee recognized from the outset that even this vast area would be unable to provide complete, documented outfits for the mounted rider in the various component cultural patterns. This was presumed true even in the critical 1836–1865 era, the period in which previous experiments in the design of horse gear found culmination in a distinctive type common throughout the southwestern United States. Thus, we chose to concentrate on the single most characteristic piece of horse equipment, the saddle. A second factor in selecting this tighter focus was the up-coming celebration of our nation's bicentennial anniversary, and its urgent requirements for most of our exhibition capabilities.

The project was made possible by Joshua C. Taylor, director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Collection of Fine Arts (NCFA). Dr. Taylor offered display space and exhibit capabilities at the Renwick Gallery through its director, Lloyd Herman, and pledged support for a series of scholarly articles, as well as funds to contract for a project assistant.

The first task was to research and identify artifacts to make up a compelling and historical exhibition. As project assistant, Ann Nelson, a graduate student in American Studies from Utah, was chosen to work under my supervision and to consult with Dr. Ewers and Mr. Hutchins. All the necessary Indian artifacts—saddles, crupper, quirt, and stirrups—were selected by Dr. Ewers from the collections in the Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Smithsonian Institution, with the assistance of George Phebus and his staff. The Anthro-

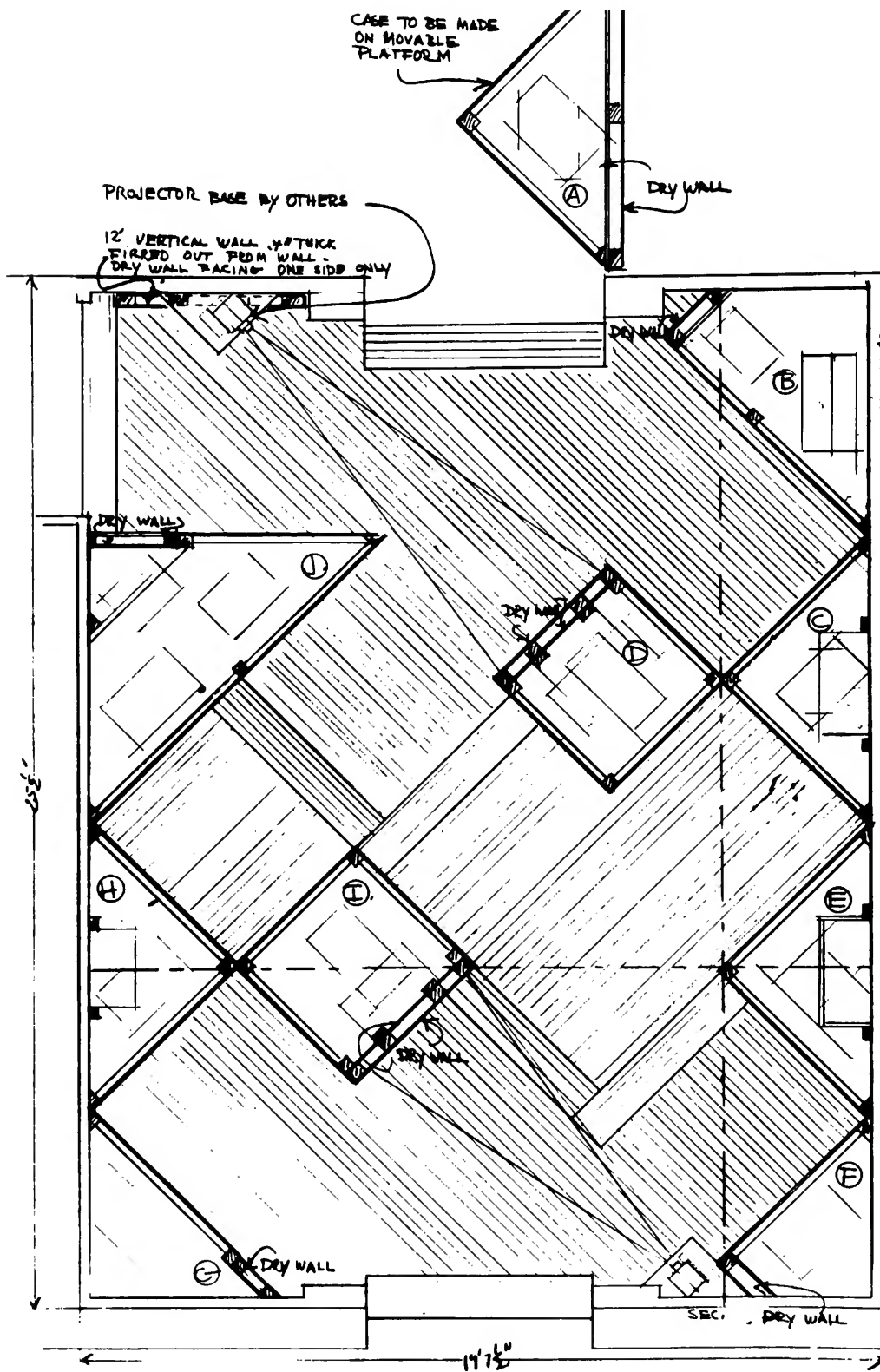
pology Conservation Laboratory (ACL) under Bethune Gibson provided facilities for conservation services contracted from Bettina Raphael.

The selection of Mexican and Anglo saddle types was more involved. Mr. Hutchins and I reviewed the riding gear in two divisions of the National Museum of History and Technology (NMHT), Smithsonian Institution: Ethnic and Western Cultural History, now named Community Life (assisted by Ulysses G. Lyon) and Military History (assisted by Donald Kloster and Dan Stanton). Then, with research notes in hand, Ms. Nelson set off through several western states, examining hundreds of saddles and sending back suggestions for loans. Collections in Arizona, California, Colorado, and Wyoming, as well as the state of Toluca, Mexico, made general loans. By early 1974, all the Mexican and Anglo saddles were selected and received at the National Museum of History and Technology. Because of the dearth of documented saddles pre-dating 1865, we selected several items for exhibition that were made after that date but that represent, we believe, styles in use in the Southwest during the target period.

Within NMHT, the Smithsonian's Conservation-Analytical Laboratory (CAL), under its chief, Robert Organ, undertook fumigation, material analysis, and conservation. Reports were prepared under the supervision of Eleanor McMillan by scientists Martha Goodway, Walter Hopwood, Barbara Miller, and Joan Mishara, and by conservator Mary Lou Garbin, who revitalized tired surfaces of tooled leather and tarnished silver. With conservation completed, the necessary papers were prepared by Undine Jones of the Division of Community Life, and by Virginia Beets, Martha Morris, and Ken Bush of the Registrar's Office. Ann Nelson and Robert Weiss of the project team undertook the delicate task of transporting the saddles to the Renwick Gallery for photography and installation.

At the Renwick, curator Ellen Myette, assisted by Edith Martin, arranged for photography by Lowell Kenyon, and for installation by Frank Caldwell. The design of the handsome exhibition, tailored to fit a single gallery, was the inspiration of Val Lewton (Figure 1). Because horizontal display space was severely limited in the small gallery, emphasis was placed on the use of vertical space. The floor level was varied and large visually open shafts defined by raw wood were set at an angle to the room's walls. These tall transparent "cages" protected the 18 saddles and associated objects while allowing them to be viewed from several angles. A second, closely related room held the magnificent Mexican saddle and provided hanging space for illustrations. Two 35 mm slide presentations were mounted in the main room providing additional historical and modern reference concerning the form and use of the mobile saddle seat. Natural wood, simple colors, and dramatic lighting provided a splendid setting for the saddles that made men—and women—mobile in the early west. The exhibition, entitled "Man Made Mobile: The Western Saddle," opened in July 1974 and was on view for two years.

During the process of selecting, studying, and installing the saddles, authors were writing essays for this study on early saddles of western North America. The task of assembling data for these essays involved many persons in addition to the authors. Several photographs of Mexican saddles were provided for Dr. Borbolla's article by Sr. David de la B. Argüedas. Mr. Hutchins was materially assisted by Dr. Sara D. Jackson of



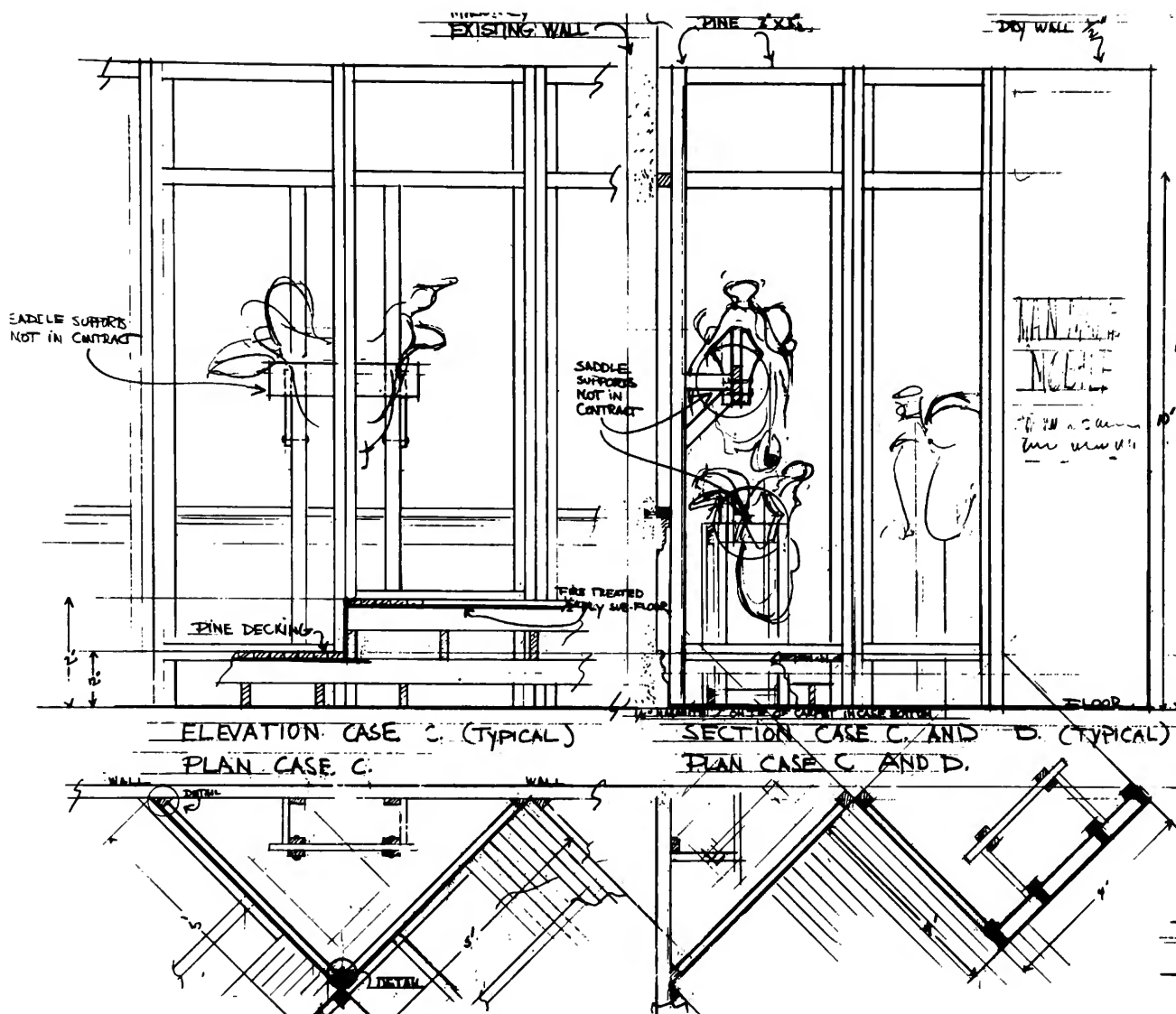


FIGURE 1.—Plan (left) and elevations (above) by Val Lewton for the exhibition "Man Made Mobile: The Western Saddle," held at the Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C., from July 1974 through June 1976.

the National Archives, Mrs. Frances H. Stadtler, archivist of the Missouri Historical Society, and "that large-hearted gentleman" (as the late J. Frank Dobie styled him), Dr. Arthur Woodward. The research for the catalogue section of this study, "Descriptions of Saddlery in the Renwick Exhibition," was compiled by Ms. Nelson.

Without such marshalling of individuals and information, neither exhibition nor publication could have become a commodity for public consumption.

With photographs and drawings, laboratory reports and essays in hand, Carroll S. Clark of NCFA undertook an initial editing. The Borbolla article was translated and re-edited by 1976. It was then time for the exhibition to be dismantled. More photography and examination were required before the return of the saddles to their owners; elaborate crates were constructed; and the on-going schedule of rechecking data, writing, and editing went forward. Additional typing was accomplished by Barbara Lane and Undine Jones. Barbara T. Spann, this study's publication editor and designer for the Smithsonian Press, contributed exceptionally to its logic, organization, and appearance. In short, dozens of conscientious professionals supported the exhibition-publication project for more than three years; my gratitude to each is boundless.

MAN MADE MOBILE

Early Saddles of Western North America

Introduction

Richard E. Ahlborn

This study is composed of four essays, a catalogue of saddlery artifacts, and a glossary of the Spanish and English equestrian terms used in the publication. Its purpose is to establish a perspective, earlier and broader in scope than any previously projected, for the study of western saddles as significant cultural objects. Up to now, descriptions of the Anglo-American stock saddle have featured regional variations in form and name, often drawn from the personal experience of cowboy-authors; Jo Mora and Philip A. Rollins are prototypes. Most writers have concentrated on illustrations of the 1865–1935 era. With such resources there are problems with provincialism or romanticism. Often local terms, such as “Texan” or “Santa Fe” saddle, do not stand up as consistent definitions of unique regional types. At the same time, illustrations by cowboy-artists may reveal more about their creative imagination in combining saddle elements and cultural environments than about the actual historical usage of specific saddle types. Later documents, such as trade catalogues from N. Porter (Phoenix, Arizona), Hamley (Pendleton, Oregon), and dozens of other firms, reinforce the factor of industrialized production and the lessening of individual taste in saddle design. Finally, histories of specific saddlery firms (L. M. Rice and Glenn R.

Vernam, *They Saddled the West*, 1975, is perhaps the best example) seldom convincingly link production models with earlier custom-made types. In contrast to these approaches, this study has chosen to view the western saddle from a more distant vista, and to deal only with well-documented artifacts and illustrations.

In order to realize the basic purpose of this study, three objectives are addressed. First priority is given to artifact-centered research focused on the West prior to the end of the Civil War. The saddles in the Renwick exhibition represent, we believe, the major types from the beginning of our political annexation of the Southwest (1836) to 1865, when the modern U.S. western saddle (stock saddle) began to dominate the scene. This exhibition-publication project makes available to an interested and critical public a comprehensive overview of the matrix out of which the western saddle emerged. Secondly, we draw attention to the problem of the uncertainty of the origins and development of the modern Mexican stock saddle, especially before 1836, a period for which relevant documents and artifacts are scarcer than for the succeeding era. Thirdly, we hope that the emphasis on pre-1865 saddles may help to place in a more accurate historical context the well-known, often-repeated story of American military and stock saddle types. Their full significance can be understood only through a con-

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tinuing effort to study the origins of earlier forms. The discoveries, judgments, and unanswered questions of this study are projected with the desire to stimulate this never-completed process of historical research.

In the first essay I discuss the saddle as an artifact highly descriptive of the culture it serves, and single out the major horizons (widely distributed historical prototypes) in its evolutionary history that eventuated in the American stock saddle after 1865. These horizons involve the transmission of the saddle concept from ancient Persia through Europe and northern Africa to the Iberian peninsula.

After the establishment of the heavy European *estradiota* saddle and the lighter Arabic *jineta* saddle in Spain by 1500, the next horizon of the western saddle lay across the Atlantic Ocean. In colonial Mexico, these two principal Spanish saddle types and riding styles are examined in native sixteenth-century illustrations of the Conquest. From colonial Mexico (1521–1821), however, there are no surviving, fully documented saddles. And specifically from Spain's northern tier of colonial provinces, there remain no more than a few inconclusive illustrations and literary references to the *estradiota*-, *jineta*-, and later *vaquero*-type saddles.

Based on what is known and can be reconstructed, there is projected a model for the development of the western saddle. This model includes the possibility of a northern variant (*norteño*) for the *vaquero* saddle. Such a "*norteño* saddle" might prove to be a useful concept in moving from the *vaquero* saddle of the late 1700s, known only through sketches and literary references, to the U.S. western saddle. Certainly by the next century, northern Mexico had a variety of regional stock saddle types, among them the famous *charro*. Reflections of features of the European *estradiota* saddle are traced through various Mexican types to the U.S. western saddle.

In the contribution on Mexican saddlery Dr. Borbolla maintains a broad focus on typology and social history. He stresses the complexity of the Mexican traditions of riding styles and saddlery. He notes early efforts to organize ranching activity and the effect of the new

environment on Old World practices. He asserts that the nineteenth-century Mexican stock saddle, precursor of the U.S. western saddle, was the end product of modifications (occasioned chiefly by open-range stockhandling) of the Moorish *jineta*-type combat saddle favored by the conquistadors. In describing the basic elements of the saddle, he gives attention also to the variations of the more recent Mexican *charro* and working types.

The latter distinctions imply regional differences that occurred as certain cities became known as saddle-making centers by the 1830s. Through the commercial centers of Monterey and Chihuahua in northern Mexico, production models of saddles as well as handcrafted examples of provincial types entered our southwestern territory, especially Texas. From western Mexico, saddles made in Guadalajara and northward reached into California, providing another regional impact on the western stock saddle. The durability of the skeletal, hide-covered Hispanic-Mexican saddletree was quickly recognized by Anglo-American riders, manufacturers and artists who encountered it.

The essay by Mr. Hutchins carries the story of the "Spanish tree" into the Southwest a generation prior to 1865. In an analysis of the early development of the western saddle "before the cowboy," the author carefully records the evidence for the great impact that the Mexican tree had on American civilian and military saddles west of the Mississippi: virtually every venture by military and commercial expeditions into the new states and territories of the Southwest was made on saddles reflecting direct Mexican influence in form, decoration, and usage. He describes the U.S. military's on-again, off-again affairs with the Mexican saddle, giving special attention to the McClellan saddle. He also notes the influence of saddle forms common in the eastern part of the United States (primarily of English origin) and in European military endeavors.

The paper by Dr. Ewers rounds out the presentation of the saddle as used in western North America prior to 1865. "Saddles of the Plains Indians" is based on artifacts that appear to illustrate the two major theories for the

presence of all cultural traits: diffusion and polygenesis. The presence of the skeletal tree in both pack and women's riding saddles of the Crow nation, as well as the arched form of the stirrups used by several Plains Indian tribes that occupied areas now a part of the United States and Canada, points to an intercultural borrowing from Hispanic Mexico. At the same time, the development of a stuffed pad, or cushion, cinched down and ornamented with trade cloth and beads, independently repeats a "saddle" form used in the East and Old World more than five thousand years ago. While some pads for Mexican open trees may have entered the Indian trade, the Plains Indians used and adapted this form for their own purposes in a totally non-Hispanic fashion. The author demonstrates that the role of women as artisans and riders influenced Indian saddle production and usage. No evidence is presented to suggest, however, that Indian saddle design or construction contributed in any way to the evolution of the western saddle.

Appropriately, the essays are followed by the sort of evidence that supports each of the previous discussions: a presentation of the saddles themselves. In Ms. Nelson's catalogue, we discover that no complete example dates before the 1830s, but that in the extant examples earlier traditions are well represented in elements of varied materials, design, and manufacture. These Mexican, Indian, and Anglo-American saddles record something of substance about the complex ancestry of the western saddle, and about the stamina of our cultural values.

The "Glossary" is a compilation of the equestrian terms, in Spanish and English, that are used in this study. Bilingual equivalents and a brief definition are given along with page references to the major uses of the term in the text and also figure references to illustrations in which the item is depicted.

Under "Illustration Credits" are found the sources for all illustrative material. If the item has been photographed by the Smithsonian Institution, the negative number for the photograph is given in parentheses. Requests for copies of these photos should be directed to the Smithsonian's Office of Printing and Photographic Services. Sources of material quoted in illustration legends are also referenced in this section.

Comments by the volume editor or by one of the publication's contributors are inserted in brackets and bear the commenter's initials.

The dynamics of the interaction of traditional taste and new needs are fully tested in the laboratory of historical study focused on the development of the western saddle. An examination of the myriad of craft technologies, the cultural range in form and ornament, and the overlapping functions of the western saddle reveals some of the components of the shifting matrix of historical human activities and values. In one sense the modern western saddle has regained the image of its own ancient ancestors: a symbol of power and prestige. No longer essential to conducting combat, daily work, or travel—except for a few users—the western saddle is approaching a position of "status symbol" in the current national quest for leisure and display.

The development of saddles in the Southwest is in some senses a pre-historical phase filled with false starts, fossils, and fitful successes. Much work is yet to be done in this later-day process of "western exploration." Hopefully, students of American history and material culture will be inspired to venture further into the archives and collections of Spain, Mexico, and the Southwest for a better grasp of the mechanisms of change that produce the variety of saddles valuable in our cultural, economic, and artistic heritage.

Horizons of the Western Saddle

Richard E. Ahlborn

Global Saddle Horizons

Ever since we succeeded in pushing our national boundaries to the Pacific coast, we Americans have been talking and singing about riding into the West. In 1944, with the nation immersed in global struggle, Cole Porter helped us hum our way to “where the West begins.” We were escaping into what had become a popular tradition of cowboy ballads, movie “westerns,” pulp novels, eye masks, white hats, and sun-gilded vistas. America’s popular culture had come of age in the West of six-guns and silvered saddles.

Today, even with demographic soundings showing a receding tide of westward migrants, many Americans continue to feel a lingering romance for “western” spaces. Amidst unlimited vistas and solitude, one can pose in a sculpted seat mounted on a trusted, tireless steed. Underlying this nostalgic view of the natural world is the reality of an immense, on-going historical process—the progressive development of American culture, speeded up by sophisticated, mobilized equipment. A new horizon (spatial distribution of a historical prototype) of the saddle has emerged. The essence of the western saddle is now embodied in the contoured seats of motorcycle, sports car, and rocket ship, each with its own source of horsepower.

Another utilization for the western saddle is its employment as a modern descriptive device for the analysis of American material and social history. As an artifact useful in describing and symbolizing our western history, the American

stock saddle can take its place beside F. J. Turner’s frontier trio of plough, axe, and gun and W. P. Webb’s revolver, barbed wire, and windmill. Looking back more than a century historians are aware that America’s story owes something of significance to the “western saddle,” even before the Anglo cowboy appeared in large numbers. The western stock saddle of Hispanic-Mexican origin, along with parallel innovations within American Indian societies, can be used as a device to describe and illuminate aspects of nineteenth-century American culture.

Cultural aspects susceptible to such description are both technological and social. The analysis of a saddle’s structure and decoration, in conjunction with paper documents and documented examples of other saddles, reveals its origins in terms of time, place, and purpose, and of subsequent cultural choices in taste and usage. The function of a saddle, whether for daily life or special occasion, can be read in its shape, ornament, and wear. The documentary history of a saddle’s repair, inheritance, evaluation, and disposal can be interpreted as a cultural history of material supplies, available craft skills, family structure, and of economic and social value systems. In short, the biology and biography of a saddle are tools for a wider interpretation of American history from frontier life to modern functions of work and leisure.

If the saddle is a viable tool for describing and interpreting history, a series of examples may suggest its potency as a device for bridging the gap between past and present. A Scythian burial chamber at Pazirik in the Altai range of western Mongolia once held a wall hanging now in the Hermitage Museum¹ (Figure 2a). De-

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picted in appliqued felts is a mounted warrior before the Great Goddess. In her presence, the rider sits in awe, astride a richly caparisoned steed; the bridle and saddle are ornate, as is the costume of the rider. Such a horseman would not feel uncomfortable, despite a journey of thousands of years and leagues, in a formidable German war saddle of the 1500s or a splendid Turkish saddle of the 1600s (Figure 2b,c). Through a 2500-year-old lens, there appears an after-image of Pazirik, Germany, and Turkey at Pasadena, in the "Hollywood cowboy" saddles of the annual Rose Parade (Figure 2d).

Spanish Equestrian Horizons

The Spanish conquest and settlement of North America was undertaken by men who, given the choice, rode rather than walked. And some rode well, with the help of fine horses and highly developed equipment.

This pattern of Hispanic horsemanship is revealed as early as 4000 B.C. in mesolithic representations of halters on domesticated horses. Archaeological evidence of the advent of riding in Spain occurs in rock art dating before 2000 B.C. and in fragments of Celtic weapons, horse-shoes, bridle bits, and prick spurs by 500 B.C. About the same time, bent-knee riders in saddles of concave silhouette appear in Iberian stone carvings, bronze castings, and vase paintings. Examining these ancient arts, Ruy d'Andrade suggests that the leg position indicates the use of stirrups, and that the coverings are fitted over saddletree frames.²

Other authorities, however, place the origin of the saddletree in Han China, no earlier than 200 B.C., and estimate that its use reached the Roman Empire, to which Iberia had close ties, no earlier than A.D. 400. Likewise, the foot-plate stirrup is said to have evolved in China from an east Indian big-toe type, perhaps as late as A.D. 500. Then, "in A.D. 694, Muslim armies in northern Iran [Persia] received the stirrup from Turkestan. Shortly afterwards it was found in Byzantium, and by the early 730s it had arrived in the Frankish realm."³ At that time Arabic invaders from northern Africa were establishing their sophisticated Muslim culture in south-

ern Spain, facilitated by the use of superb horsemanship and advanced riding equipment. Arabian and Barbary horses were mixed with the native Spanish horses and their offspring fitted with Arabic bridles and saddles different from the heavier, indigenous types that were adapted to European styles of combat. Despite their antipathy for the Moorish intruders, Spaniards were fascinated by this exotic equestrian tradition and in some circles its adoption became a mark of fashion.

Thus, by the early Middle Ages, Christian northern Spain was the recipient of several riding traditions: (1) ancient Celtic, (2) late Roman, (3) early Gothic European, and (4) Muslim. By 900, Spain is credited with having invented the rowel spur. Prior to regaining Granada and setting a westward sail for China in 1492, Spain had adopted both the European *estradiota* (or similar *brida*) saddle (Figures 3, 5)—with high bows, heavy construction, extensive leather housings, and long stirrup leathers—and the Moorish *jineta* light-cavalry style of riding and its associated saddle (Figures 11 *upper* and 14 *right*) with less confining bows, fewer trappings, and shorter stirrup leathers. It is virtually impossible to define the original or "pure" *estradiota* and *jineta* types as to the height of the bows, although it is certain that a highly structured tree is common to both, the lighter being the *jineta*. The differences between them lie more significantly in the three-dimensional conformation of the bows and the seat between them. In contrast to the pommel of the *jineta*, that of the *estradiota* is usually larger, more erect, and elaborately curvilinear, providing a simulated battlement behind which the rider is enthroned. Its greater width and thickness is determined by the rider's need for protection and stability.

By 1500, spike and rowel spurs, snaffle and curb bits, closed and open stirrups, and *estradiota* and *jineta* saddles provided Spanish riders with choices consonant with their own traditions and experience. This complex, historical panorama of Spanish saddlery was about to extend across the Atlantic, where new environments and needs would create another horizon within the evolution of the western saddle.

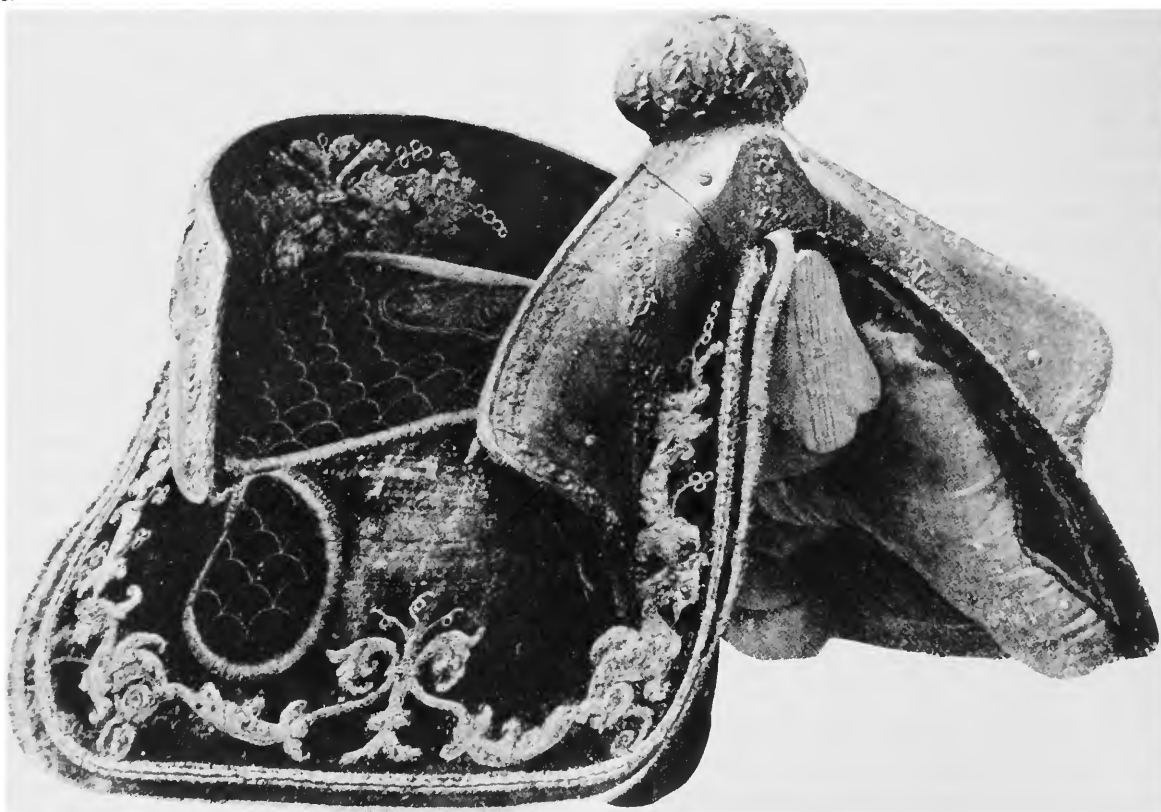
*a**b*



FIGURE 2.—A 2500-year panorama of elegant saddles: *a*, the ornate equipage of a horse and rider from western Mongolia shown in a sixth-century B.C. wall hanging; *b*, a sixteenth-century *estradiota* war saddle made by Desiderius Colman of Augsburg for Philip II of Spain; *c*, a seventeenth-century Turkish *jineta*-type saddle with European raised-silver plates and embroidered velvet trappings; *d*, silver-fitted saddle made by Frank H. Coenen of Alhambra, California, for David E. Llewellyn, who rode it in several Rose Parades at Pasadena from the 1930s until 1958.

Early Mexican Saddle Horizons

From remarkable codices of the mid-1500s, consisting entirely of pictorial records drawn by Indians on local linen, we can study the Spanish types of saddles and other riding gear that equipped Cortés and his cavalry for the conquest of Mexico.

A brief review of the famous Tlaxcala Codex⁴ confirms the continued popularity of the heavy *estradiota* saddle (despite the competition of the lighter *jineta*), and documents a wide range in combinations of saddle elements (cantle, pommel, rigging, stirrups), stirrup length, and spur types. No one combination dominates the early Mexican saddle. Where feet are shown in the codex, 40 display the spur spike, five show rowels and 28 display no spurs. Four of five rowel spurs appear with narrow-sided stirrups. Fifty-five stirrups are equally divided between wide- and narrow-sided.

Girthing includes forward, three-quarter, and center; double-rigged saddles do not appear in the codex despite contemporary illustration of them in Spain (Figure 4).⁵ The girthing arrangements vary between saddle types and riding styles, according to tradition. Less significant factors are the saddle's center of gravity, the degree of stability or flexibility desired, the angle of leverage of the legs, and the ability of different portions of the horse's anatomy to sustain the stresses occasioned by the activities associated with the saddle type. The lighter *jineta* saddles more often used single center rigging, while the heavier types employed single full forward, single three-quarter, or even double rigging.)

Of some 75 riding positions illustrated in the Tlaxcala Codex, 17 are the straight-legged *estradiota* style. In another 36, knees are sharply bent, and in 22, partially bent, suggesting that the Arabic *jineta* riding style was quite popular in the type of combat experienced by the conquistadors. Twenty-five saddles clearly suggest the heavier *estradiota* type, and 11 the *jineta*. Sixteen more can be seen to mix high and low cantle and pommel bows; but "high" *estradiota* cantles outnumber "low" *jineta* pommels 47 to 18.

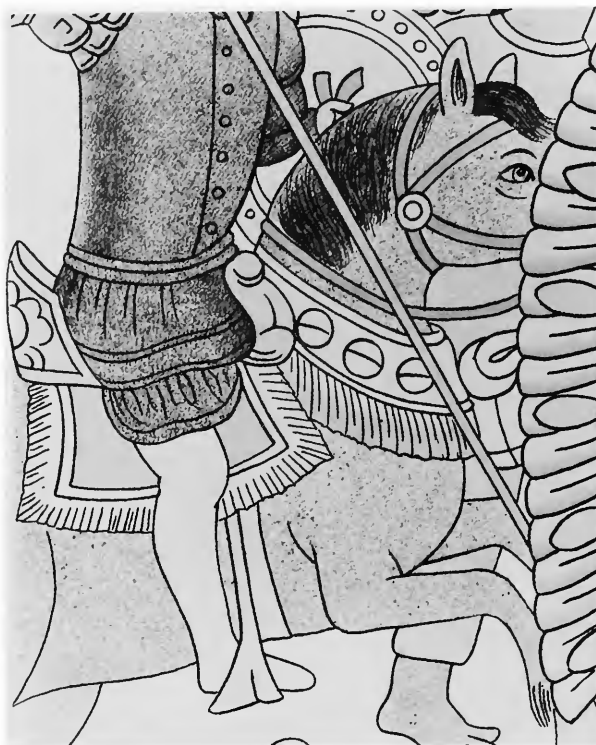


FIGURE 3.—Detail from the "Lienzo de Tlaxcala," a codex of illustrations painted by Mexican Indians about A.D. 1550, showing an *estradiota* saddle with high, encircling cantle, swelling pommel, forward rigging, and wide stirrup on extended leathers.

In general, long *estradiota* stirrup leathers appear on high bowed saddles with wide stirrups (nine out of 14) but without spurs (11 out of 14); riders using short *jineta* stirrup leathers preferred a saddle with one or both bows low, and also with spurs and wide stirrups (22 out of 35). *Jineta*-type saddles with low bows occur more often (eight out of 12) with narrow-sided stirrups. There are 47 complete illustrations of saddles; the most frequent, complete combination of a traditional type (five instances) is the extended stirrup leather on a high bowed saddle, complete with spurs and wide stirrups, the classic *estradiota* style. Other codices support this prominence of the heavier *estradiota* saddle (Figure 5).

The grand impression of these large combat saddles also relied on the attached leather armor or housings. This consisted of a complete *barda*



FIGURE 4.—A Spanish rider as depicted in a sixteenth-century German travelog of Spain; note the double rigging, wide stirrup on long leathers, and spike-type spur. Also of interest are the saddle pad, the breast band, and tight reins.

or *coraza* covering the saddle and much of the horse, later reduced to a set of leather elements, including the front-lying *armas*, the saddle-covering *mochila*, and the rump-covering *anquera*. The pride in this apparatus, originating with the combat saddle, continued in Mexico into the 1800s; the *armas* became a separate pair of *chaparreras* or chaps; the *mochila* evolved into the attached skirts and the “Mother Hubbard”; the rump cover was reduced to an *anquerita*, and finally disappeared. Leather *estradiota* trappings (as well as the heavy saddle with long stirrup leathers) persisted in northern Mexico (Sinaloa) after 1900 (Figure 21).

These variations and combinations in riding equipment in sixteenth-century Mexico suggest that adjustments were being made in response to the new conditions of warfare, supply, and

the land itself. Combat with gunless native infantry encouraged a reduction in saddle weight and leather housings. There was, moreover, the constant problem of repair or replacement of the Spanish combat saddles which required European craft skills in wood, leather, fabric, and metal. Fortunately for the conquistadors, the Indians of Mexico had ancient, native traditions of highly skilled artistry.

Under the supervision of Spanish or creole *maestros*, natives were brought into the transplanted tradition of European craft guilds as assistants. The guild of harness- and saddlemakers was approved by Viceroy Mendoza in Mexico City on 5 May 1549.⁶ It required that applicants make both a *jineta* saddle and “*una estadiota* [sic] *de cordovan unos asientos de barras, y buenos talles* [sic], *y faldas*” (an-*estradiota*-type saddle of cordovan leather, some saddletrees, saddle covers, and skirts). Also required were a cordovan saddle of French type, a pack saddle for a mule, and a sidesaddle (*el sillón*) with all its housings (*la gualdrapa*).

In those colonial Mexican saddles we can discern the co-existence of European and Arabic crafts. Joined wooden construction, carved leather panels, wrought iron fittings, stamped silver ornaments, and facings of pelts, velvet, and silk proclaim an origin in Spain’s international craft traditions, skills that were transplanted in the New World. The finely crafted saddles also say much about Hispanic-Mexican social organization, reflecting the transmission to the New World of the hierarchial and privileged guild system, which mirrored the social structure at large. Ultimately, the finish and style of the saddle announced the social status, or pretensions, of its owner, as do prized possessions to this day.

The activities of everyday life and of special occasions were equally facilitated and defined by the Mexican saddle. Church and civil processions; military encampments and campaigns; supply trains, country sports and pastimes; and especially the herding of sheep and cattle were distinguished by variations in basic saddle types, which remained intensely Spanish.

It seems likely that many of the Indian helpers in the Hispanic guild shops became proficient in the crafts. In fact, so quickly did the



FIGURE 5.—An *estradiota* saddle from the Mexican Indian codex "Baranda," of the mid-1500s, showing a rump cover, breast band, saddle skirt, and massive stirrup that predicts later wooden types.

Indian learn European ways that the proclaimed laws were futile; forbidding Indians from learning to ride suggests that they were already doing so.

The land itself made previously unencountered demands on riders and equipment. Probably in the 1600s, the vastness of the Mexican terrain began to modify Spanish riding practices and gear. Additional labor, including *mestizos* and Indians, were needed to handle the increasing numbers of sheep and cattle on the open range, a task that could be accomplished only on horseback. At the same time, Spanish combat saddles had to be made more useful to Mexican range work, which demanded long hours of riding and intense activity of a sort different from that of the mounted soldier and even from that practiced by the herdsmen of Spain. A saddle with elements borrowed from both the *estradiota* and *jineta* must have been developed by 1700. Protective leather housing was being adapted to rangeland brush and dust. The rump cover (*la anquera*), the saddletree

covers (*la coraza*, *la mochila*) and a forward piece (*las armas defensas*, later *las chaparreras*), all descendants of Spanish *estradiota* trapplings, were extended by colonial Mexican saddle traditions into our Southwest. Also, the long stirrups and high dished cantle derived from the *estradiota*-type saddle provided a comfortable style of riding for long hours on the ranching frontier.

The familiar, horizontal swelling of the pommel on western American saddles apparently did not occur to Mexican saddlemakers. In Mexico, the persistence of the traditional slick fork, perhaps coupled with disdain for the personal security suggested by a swelled pommel, contrasted with an Anglo-American attitude of progressive improvement through experimentation. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, American saddlemakers were exploring a wide variety of shapes for pommel shoulders, even devising attachments such as the bucking-roll. Nevertheless, the overwhelming influence of stock saddle design

in nineteenth-century North America was from Hispanic Mexico to the United States.

The major innovation during the process of modifying the Spanish combat saddle to produce the Mexican range saddle was the vertical extension of the pommel into a crooked neck, or horn. This structure was developed for holding the lariat (*el lazo*), coiled or stretched out to a stubborn steer that enjoyed the untrammelled freedom of the open range. Mexican cowboys (*vaqueros*) had developed saddles to their taste and needs by the mid-1700s. It was across the immense *ranchos* that spread 2000 km north and west from central Mexico that these horizons of the western saddle materialized. The mixed cultural traditions that made up Spanish saddle horizons in early colonial Mexico, as well as the new horizons of the saddle that developed there spread gradually, penetrating the northern borderland of missions and mines, scattered settlements and presidios of leather-clad soldiers in New Mexico.

Saddle Horizons in the Southwest

The appearance of Hispanic saddle types in what is now the southwestern United States took place only 21 years after their arrival at Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1519. From ample documentation, we know that Spanish saddles and related gear entered New Mexico with the Coronado Expedition in 1540. The captain's own equipment included "*tres o quatro aderezos de armas de la brida y de la jineta*," three or four sets of *brida* and *jineta* arms.⁷ These "arms" included European *brida* or *estradiota*, and Arabic-Spanish *jineta* saddles. Hispanic-Mexican saddles served later expeditions to New Mexico in the 1500s, but their continued presence was not assured until settlement was established by the Oñate Expedition of 1598.⁸ From that time on, Hispanic-Mexican saddles are documented in colonial New Mexico. Sadly, only the paper references survive today.

Beginning in 1595, a wealthy creole living in Zacatecas, Juan de Oñate, undertook the settlement of the northern province, Nuevo México. Seeking the necessary permission from the crown and local authorities to proceed required more than a year. The first inspection took place

in 1596. We learn that Oñate had gathered personnel and equipment near the mines of Santa Barbara in Chihuahua. A representative of the government in Mexico City, Lope de Ulloa y Lemos, undertook an exhaustive inventory of the expedition, as required by law.⁹ The totals reveal about 400 persons, some 83 wagons of different types and more than 7000 cattle.¹⁰ Of the 200 soldiers, 171 declared "complete armor for himself and horse." We may surmise that horse armor included, indeed would have been useless without, a saddle. Counting these 171 saddles and the leader's 14 saddles, the expedition was prepared to march, or rather ride, north.

The 14 saddles owned by Don Juan included the three basic types brought to Mexico from Spain. First, there were six "*sillas estradiotas*," the heavily armored cavalry saddle. Of these *estradiota* saddles, which featured high curved bows and long stirrup leathers, five had been equipped with stirrups, girths, and cinches, poytrels or breast bands, and cruppers. Next, there were six "*sillas jinetas*," the lighter cavalry or riding saddle with less high bows but with little leather armor and shorter stirrups. Its trappings included spurs and poytrels, stirrups, caparison, and saddle coverings.

The third type of saddle owned by Captain Oñate numbered only two and was a heavy war saddle known as "*silla de armas*" or "*silla bridona*." It displayed a very high front bow or pommel covered in steel and probably possessed a full set of leather armor. Only one other *bridona* saddle was listed among all the expedition's equipment.

Additional references suggest the importance of the leather armor for the saddle and horse. Some "300 saddle maker's needles," "18 sets of buckskin horse armor and 10 hides to make more," horses "armored in buckskin, bullhide or calfskin," including a "headpiece for the horse" are noted.¹¹ But despite the carefully constructed inventory, the expedition was delayed another year due to political rivalries.

Records of the second inspection, this one under Juan Frias de Salazar in 1597, provides nearly the same total of saddles: 186. Here, however, are five un-typed "saddles," four of the *arma* or *bridona* type, 13 *brida*, 27 *estradiota*

ta, and 137 *jineta*. Two heavy spurs (*las espuelas bridonas*) and one set of light cavalry spurs (*las espuelas jinetas*) are noted, as well as short, tightly-reined bridles (*los frenos jinetas*) and long reined, loose-in-the-mouth bits and bridles (*los frenos de la brida* or *bridona*). Again, horse armor is recorded, including "some . . . for flanks, breast and forehead," and "one complete set of buckskin . . . lined with rawhide" which also covered "head and neck." Other equestrian equipment mentioned are "three pack saddles with ropes, girths and lariats," halters and, perhaps for a woman of rank, "sidesaddles and bridles of ocelot skin."¹²

With this listing, a distinctive pattern may be suggested for saddle usage on the frontier of New Spain by 1600, a pattern that varies from the earliest days of combat in central Mexico, namely a three-to-one dominance of the lighter *jineta* saddle over the more massive combat types. This pattern resulted from the type of saddle required for day-after-day expedition riding, as opposed to brief combats against well-armed warriors. The continued presence of the heavier *estradiota*-type saddle, however, must not be ignored. The wide-spread occurrence of the *estradiota* saddle in the 1500s as special presentations to the Spanish ruler and as combat equipment (the latter recorded in New World codices),¹³ indicates that the heavy type was associated with the power and prestige appropriate to kings and conquistadors.

As concerns the next hundred years, the 1600s, the search for horizons of the western saddle reveals a great void. There are no documented examples of combat, parade, or range saddles from seventeenth-century Mexico, old or New. Even the illustrations of lively activities in the 1500s do not continue into the next century, except on painted screens (*los biombos*) where the lack of detail and the romanticized approach result in their being records not fully to be trusted. Only the range of sizes in saddle housings and the variation in leg positions hint at the presence of several saddle types in mid-colonial Mexico.

This break in the literary and artifactual evidence for Mexican saddle types is not difficult to understand. The illustrative arts of seven-

teenth-century Mexico ran a narrow range, from religious subjects and official portraits to decorative passages. As for the saddles themselves, such useful artifacts were simply worn until exhausted, and then broken down into metal and leather scraps for the repair of new saddles.

By the 1700s, however, New Mexican inventories list a variety of saddle elements, but too few to suggest an evolution for the missing examples themselves. Personal saddle equipment appears as "*aparejo . . . silla y armas*";¹⁴ "*una silla buena de montar . . . un fuste pelado sin fierros ni corazas y sin estribos*"; and "*una silla de montar completa*"¹⁵ (saddle fittings, . . . saddle and leather housings; a good riding saddle, . . . a plain saddletree without iron fittings, without covers or stirrups; and a completely equipped riding saddle). Goods presented to Indian allies included "*cojinillos . . . anqueras . . . frenos*" (small saddle pads or cushions, rump covers, and bridles),¹⁶ but no saddletrees.¹⁷ By contrast, equipment accompanying 114 saddletrees (*fustes*) at the presidial company in Santa Fe included, and are duly recorded as, "*mochilas, cojinillos, estribos, frenos, jaquimas, cabestros, botas, maletas, and guardapolvos*" (saddle covers, saddle pads, stirrups, bits, halter headstalls, halters, lower leg guards, valises, and dust guards).¹⁸

Saddle types in colonial New Mexico are seldom identified in extant documents, except for infrequent references to the *jineta*. They appear by that name in civil court records, especially in estate settlements with inventories:

[1704] I leave to Don Alonso [son] the two *jineta* saddles

[1711] 12 pesos . . . a well-made *jineta* saddle as [debt] security

[1727] an old *jineta* saddle with stirrups for its use

[1737] a *jineta* saddle (of) saddle cover, pad, rump cover, saddletree, cinch and stirrups of "back" [leather?]¹⁹

After about the first quarter of the eighteenth century, we note in the inventories an increasing lack of the specific terms *estradiota* and *jineta* in preference for the more general *silla de montar* (1732) or *silla de andar* (1761).²⁰ From such meager evidence, we may speculate that the traditional form of the *jineta* saddle

was on the wane, but that elements of leather armor borrowed from the *estradiota*-type saddle were still in wide use.

There is one interesting reference in the will of Antonio Martín of Abiquiú (1770) to "an old cowboy-type saddle (*la silla vaquera*) with iron stirrups."²¹ The identification of a well-used range or stock saddle in a remote frontier village at this date indicates that the evolutionary process from conquistador saddle types to a cowboy saddle had occurred by late colonial times. The iron stirrup could have been either an imported European military type consisting of a simple arch, or it could have been the Mexican parade type in the form of a large, flanged cross (Figure 6).

By the time the first census was taken in New Mexico in 1790, only one saddle-maker was listed, a *mulato* from Mexico living in Albuquerque. This complex craft was not widely known, and with the scattered population the professional saddle maker had to stay on the move to make a living.²²

Although we are not in a position to reconstruct completely the evolution of the western saddle from Mexican combat through *vaquero* types, we can propose a model comprising major horizons in sequence: from the sixteenth-century *estradiota* and *jineta* to the eighteenth-century *vaquero* to the nineteenth-century western stock. Both negative and positive evidence exists for this generalized drift in saddle typology, if not for each regional and temporal variation. Admittedly, some scholars propose the thesis that the sequence originates essentially in the *jineta* saddle. This model's rejection of the *jineta* type as the sole ancestor of the Mexican *vaquero* and western U.S. stock saddles is based on the *jineta*'s form and use. The *jineta*'s less-high bows, short stirrup leathers, and relatively light tree do not lend themselves to the hard, daily usage on the range that includes cutting out and roping cattle.

FIGURE 6.—Cross-form stirrup (*el estribo de cruz*) from Mexico (*upper*) and a flanged arch found in southern New Mexico (*lower*), both probably dating after 1700. These were symbols of status, largely used for show riding. The cast form and decoration recall carved leather and stamped metal work from the Near East. The stirrup tread often was covered with interlaced leather work.



In support of the *estradiota-vaquero* ancestry of the western range saddle, there has already been an accounting (based on the codices and New Mexican inventories) of the lingering, diagnostic elements of leather housings that descended from heavy medieval European horse armor. The popularity of *estradiota* elements in the conservative Hispanic-American culture is also documented elsewhere. Indians at La Purísima Mission in southern California were making *armas* for four to six pesos through the late colonial period (1820).²³ And *armitas*, or *chaparreras*, had evolved from larger forms of leather armor by 1840.

As alluded to previously, not all historians of equestrian affairs grant this much centrality to the *estradiota* heritage. Although noting the characteristic swelled fork and rounded cantle of the western stock saddle, Arthur Woodward states that "the light Persian saddle . . . is in effect the prototype of all present day Mexican and American stock saddles."²⁴ And Charles Colley, another serious student, supports the Persian/Moorish *jineta* origin of the western stock saddle's "high pommel and cantle, high fork, and center fire rigging."²⁵ Colley states that Aztecs "eliminated the swell in the *la jineta* saddle" and "capped the pommel." Sadly, we lack any such examples of Mexican roping saddles securely dated before the 1830s.

A few early illustrations, however, reveal an *estradiota*-type saddle in northwestern Mexico in the 1760s. A Jesuit missionary from Bohemia, Ignacio Tirsch, reached Baja California in 1761.²⁶ In an ink and watercolor rendering of his ranch near San José del Cabo, Father Tirsch depicts two massive, heavily bowed saddles, one with a large housing in place (Figure 7, *upper*).

Another of his sketches reveals *estradiota*-like equipment: a rump cover, a *mochila*-type housing, and long stirrup leathers supporting high cross-form stirrups (*los estribos de cruz*). In our quest for an evolutionary stage from *estradiota* to *vaquero* saddle, we must carefully examine this drawing (Figure 7, *lower*) of "the way a majordomo catches a bull" (by the tail). The elegant rider has dismounted, and details of the working saddle are clearly seen. In front is a leather container and behind, a small,

scalloped rump cover (*la anquerita*). Next, two leather housings lie over the saddle tree. A smaller leather covering like a *mochila*, snugly covers the tree. Next there is a larger, fringed covering. An even larger, third item, perhaps a saddle pad (*el cojín*) appears under the previous arrangement. Between this third item and the larger covering hang long leathers, weighted down by the cross-form stirrups.

Finally, the bull-catcher's saddletree can be studied, and it looks familiar! The cantle is high and curved, and the equally high pommel ends in a large, forward-turned horn. One cannot see if the shoulders swell, but shadowy lines, apparently stitching, suggest a conformation other than a "slick" slope. This rendering of a late-colonial, *estradiota*-type saddle from northern Mexico may be regarded as the earliest known illustration of the Mexican *vaquero* saddle, at least in its *norteño* variation.

There are some other illustrations of saddles from the northern frontier of Mexico that move our study from the colonial era into that of independence. In the Vinkhuisen Collection at the New York Public Library, there is a series of undocumented Mexican watercolor sketches probably dating 1775–1800. They include a "military volunteer" from the "back country." His riding equipment appears to be a saddle with a high front bow covered with a *mochila* or *coraza*, a crupper and long stirrups, and he sports large-rowelled spurs. All of these features were associated with *estradiota*-type saddles in the early colonial period. An 1803 drawing (Figure 8), preserved in the Archives of the Indies and published by Joseph Hefter,²⁷ illustrates a dragoon of the "Internal Provinces," wearing a seven-layered, leather vest. The saddle of this dragoon is even more suggestive of the *estradiota*-type than that of the "volunteer." The neck of the pommel on the dragoon's saddle rises into a volute that resembles a roping horn, and the cantle is very high and dished. The enlarged pommel and cantle are called "*fustes delantero y trastero*" (literally fore and aft trees, in recognition of their branching form). There is also a *mochila*, long stirrup leathers, wooden box-sided or leather covered (pig snout?) stirrups, forward rigging and spurs with very large rowels. To-



FIGURE 7.—Saddles in Baja California, as rendered by the Bohemian Jesuit, Ignacio Tirsch, about 1765: *upper*, heavy, *estradiota*-type saddles appear piled together in the lower left corner in this portion of a painting; *lower*, depiction of features known on western saddles a century later: the bulbous horn, stitching over the pommel shoulder, leather housing, pad and extended stirrup leathers.

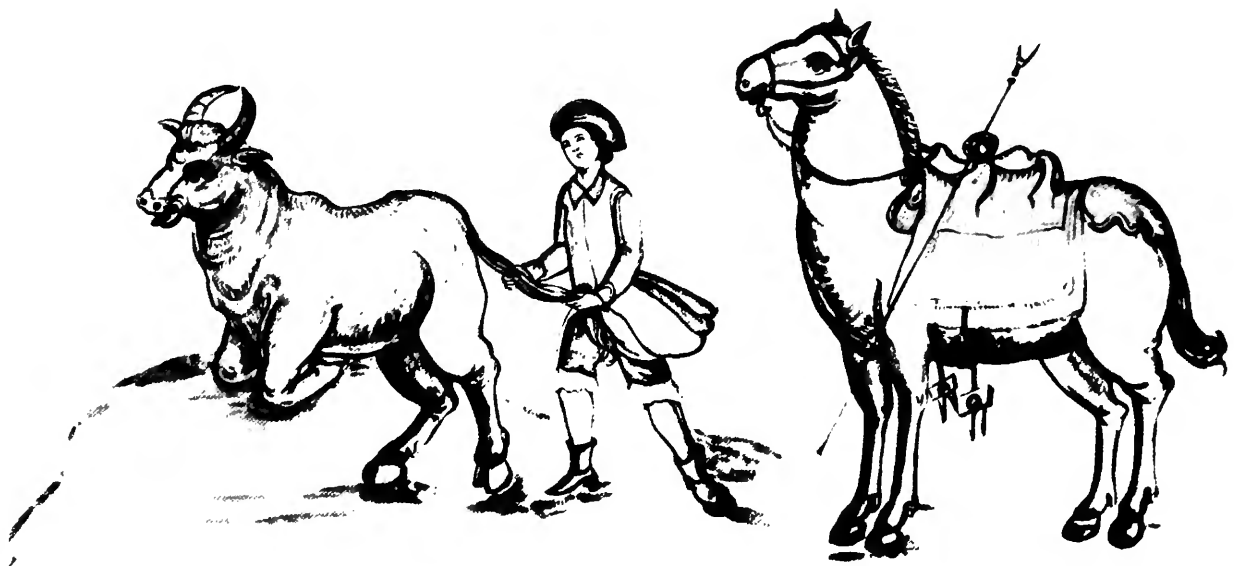




FIGURE 8.—A “leather-vested dragoon of the Internal Provinces of Mexico, 1803” rides a saddle with “bows fore and aft,” “pockets for water and food,” and “stirrups of wood.” He carries a round shield (*la rodela*) and wears “leather leggings and spurs.”

gether these elements indicate conservatism, a retention of medieval European military riding traditions. Even the round shield (*la rodela*) is quartered with Spanish arms long out-of-date. The work is signed “fecit Raymundus a Murillo.”

Before the turn of the century, artists with a scientific expedition illustrated Mexican saddles in Alta (upper) California. The extended (1789–1794) Spanish naval exploration commanded by Capt. Alejandro Malaspina made landfall at Monterey in 1791. At the Mission of San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, the Franciscan *padre*, Fermín F. de Lasuén, offered assistance, perhaps suggesting local subjects to the expedition’s artists, José Cardero, age 25,

and Tomás Suría, about 30. In one rendering entitled “Method of Fighting California Indians,” Suría pictures a charging lancer protected by a shield, *tapaderas*, and scalloped *armas*; the saddle includes an *anquera*, *mochila*, and a roll of material lying over and, unfortunately, hiding the pommel. Another study, this one “invented and drawn by Joseph Cardero,” does reveal two pommels, both slick and horn-less. In this “View of The Friary, Church and Indian Settlements of Carmel Mission” (Figure 9), the two saddles are depicted with an ornately carved *anquera* and a large saddle cover apparently not slit so as to slip over the bows, a heavy saddle pad, and open, wooden stirrups. Finally, in a shadowy sketch, indeed



FIGURE 9.—Detail from a watercolor by José Cardero, 1791, showing Hispanic architecture, costume, and transportation devices in upper California, as well as native building and dress.

a copy of the French original by Gaspard Duché de Vancy of the "Reception of La Perousé at Monterrey [sic]," one pen stroke suggests a high protrusion of the pommel. But is it a roping horn? ²⁸

While the intended use of the saddles pictured at Monterrey's Mission is uncertain (perhaps they were for ceremony and travel rather than working cattle), drawings by Cardero and Tirsch do reveal a variety of saddle types in northwestern Mexico near the end of the eighteenth century. Certainly not all displayed a prominent pommel surmounted by a horn. There is only the one sketch "at Monterrey" that even vaguely suggests a horned saddle north of Baja California before 1800. Was roping from the saddle not yet a practice of California ranching?

These observations give rise to the speculation that the pattern (model) of evolution of the western saddle occurred more than once in the vast ranching regions of central Mexico. These parallel, but not synchronous, developments spread north, and probably had entered New Mexico, Texas and, later, California before 1800. The horned saddletree of Mexican manufacture was well established in these territories prior to the political upheavals in the decade after 1836.

Numerous illustrations of horsemen from the era after independence was achieved by Mexico in 1821 are in existence and do provide some evidence of saddle evolution. Unfortunately, the famous lithographs by the European Claudio Linati (1828) are not very helpful for the study of saddles. A Mexican artist, Lino Sánchez y

Tapia, however, provides some clues in the watercolors he rendered in the service of a border commisison from 1827 to 1831.²⁹ In the representation of both military and civilian riders in northeastern Mexico, including southern Texas, the use of elaborate housing, long stirrup leathers, and stirrup covers (*las tapaderas*) are recorded. Furthermore, five renderings reveal a saddle horn resembling a hemisphere, perhaps a forerunner of the bulbous horn common to some northern Mexican stock saddles after 1840.

The cinch of the "rancher from Nuevo León" is set well forward, while the "ranch foreman" (*el caporal*) and the dashing "Mexican rider" (*el charro*) appear to be using a center-rigged saddle. Other cinch locations are not shown or are hidden by the extended, forward position of the rider's legs. The "Texas rancher" with his jacket, rifle case, and leg-covering *armas*, all fringed, closely resembles the "Mexican presidial soldier." Does this similarity of civilian and military riding dress reflect a smilarity in choice of saddle type? Certainly by 1830 the Mexican *vaquero* saddle was present in the Texas region where it could influence saddle usage by incoming Anglo-American military and ranching populations.

Without doubt, in the generation preceding 1860, properly termed "before the cowboy" by James Hutchins, the *vaquero* saddle of northern Mexico (Figure 20) was established in the southwestern United States. Woodward has noted that although the Mexican *vaquero* saddle's pommel horn began to spread out like a plate after 1860, the saddles of upper California retained the earlier, slender horn and sloping pommel.³⁰ The best Mexican saddles, made in León and Puebla, were "mere skeletons," according to contemporary comment.³¹ For both military and *vaquero* use, unpadded open saddletrees with a minimum of permanently attached leather trappings were common in Mexico. In this skeletal form or as a part of a saddle with complete leather housings, the "Spanish tree" became, through trade and war, familiar to Anglos in the Southwest and beyond.

This tree was the foundation of all Mexican stock saddles from later Spanish colonial times to this day. Its presence in the United States by

1830–60 only documents the reliance of American military and western stock saddles on *some* Mexican prototype; the ubiquity of the Spanish tree does not confirm or deny the sequential model suggested here, a model that credits the *estradiota*-type with contributing as significant elements as the *jineta* to the *vaquero* (and perhaps a northern variant, the "*norteño*"), from which our western stock saddle emerged after 1860.

From our review of New Mexico inventory terminology and illustrations from California and Texas, all prior to 1830, we can only be certain that the Mexican *vaquero* saddle with leather housings, pommel horn, long stirrup leathers, and high, dished cantle—largely *estradiota* elements—was available as a prototype to the western saddle. Whether through a *norteño* variant of the *vaquero* saddle, or more generally from many variations of it, the modern western saddle that appeared after the Civil War clearly displayed structural and decorative elements that were Mexican in origin.

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century there had appeared the horizon of the "western saddle" itself. Drawing on several traditions (at least Mexican, English, and continental European) and adapted to local conditions, it was a product peculiarly of the western United States. Although it has exhibited many variations—regional, temporal, utilitarian, and artistic—it may be identified as a type that displays: a high, forward-hooking horn emerging from a pommel with swelled shoulders; a high dished cantle; the enclosing of the tree by the permanent installation of certain leather work deemed essential (e.g., seat and relatively short skirts); rigging that balances the stress on the horse near the center of the saddle (i.e., either single center or double rigging); and long stirrup leathers suspending uncovered, generously scaled stirrups.

The presence of the more typically Mexican-style saddle in the Southwest, however, persisted long after the Civil War. Drawings made about 1876 in Texas by William Alexander Bowie,³² show a saddletree with an enlarged, flat horn on a thick neck, encircled by rigging straps for a front-fired cinch; an open seat, the rear of which is covered by a cushion; and

fancy fenders tied onto long, wide stirrup leathers. Likewise, we know of Mexican-made trees and *charro* saddles purchased in California well after 1900. The trade continues today, diminished, however, in proportion to the role of the working saddle in an automotive culture.

It may be worthwhile to note that Mexican working saddles, like so many other Hispanic craft objects, gradually evolved into, or rather were resolved into, ideal forms that George Kubler terms "time's perfection."³³ The solution was a *mestizo* product, Spanish in origin but thoroughly Mexican in realization, satisfying both craftsman and consumer. Both the Mexican *vaquero* saddle and the U.S. western

stock saddle surely fulfill the criteria suggested by Kubler for survival and perfection of a form: strong surfaces constructed from ample quantities of raw materials; simple, underlying structure; and "often-repeated performance" in both creation and usage. Ultimately, the historical development, time's perfection, of the modern western saddle from Mexican types is important to our recognition of its cultural significance. The fact of the Mexican working saddle's continental diffusion from the colonial period to the present suggests the capability of certain "ideal" forms to satisfy a variety of human tasks and social values within a continuously extended environment.

Notes

1. Tamara Talbot Rice, *The Scythians* (London, 1957), plate 30.

2. Fernando de Sommer D'Andrade, *A Short History of the Spanish Horse and of the Iberian "Gineta" Horsemanship* (Lisbon, 1973), pages 24-33. "Based on the exhaustive work . . . of Dr. Ruy D'Andrade." The preferred spelling of "*jineta*" will be used throughout.

3. "Harness and Saddlery," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition (London, 1972), volume 11, page 119; also, "Horsemanship and Riding," volume 11, page 712.

4. Alfredo Chavero, ed., "Lienzo de Tlaxcalla," *Antigüedades Mexicanas* (Mexico City, 1892).

5. Christoph Weiditz, *Das Trachtenbuch . . . von seinen Reisen nach Spanien, 1529*, reprint edition edited by Theodor Hampe (Berlin, 1927).

6. Francisco del Barrio Lorenzot, *Ordenanzas de gremios de la Nueva España* (Mexico City, 1920), pages 103, 296.

7. Arthur S. Aiton, "Coronado's Muster Rolls," *American Historical Review*, volume 44 (April 1939), page 560.

8. George Hammond and Agapito Rey, translators and editors, *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, 2 volumes (Albuquerque, 1953). [Compilation of public records from archives in Spain and Mexico.]

9. *Ibid.*, volume 1, pages 94-168.

10. Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History*, 2 volumes (Albuquerque, 1963), volume 1, pages 303-311.

11. Hammond and Rey, *op. cit.*, volume 1, pages 45, 138, 150, 154.

12. *Ibid.*, volume 1, pages 215-301.

13. Albert F. Calvert, *Spanish Arms and Armour* (London, 1907). Illustrates *estradiota* saddles presented to Philip II (1556-98) from Germany, Austria, and

Italy, plates 172, 174. Also, see *Guia ilustrada real armería de Madrid* (Madrid, 1956), page 8; and Francisco Xavier Hernandez, *Carruajes, sillas, jaeces . . .* (Mexico City, 1948), page 6.

14. Microfilms of the original Spanish documents were consulted in the New Mexico State Records Center and Archive (SRC), Santa Fe. In this paper they are organized by year and document number to coincide with Ralph E. Twitchell's two-volume reference, *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* (Cedar Rapids, 1914). Cited here is document 187, dated 1713, in Twitchell's *Spanish Archives*, volume two, by means of the notation: SRC, SA II-187 (1713); volume one of Twitchell is cited as SA I. Other collections at the State Records Center are given by name, preceded by SRC.

15. SRC, SA II-369 (1732); SA II-624 (1767); SA II-889 (1784).

16. SRC, SA II-1670a (1703).

17. By 1783, however, "a saddle, saddletrees, bridle and spurs" were given to Indian men by the missionaries in Texas whenever necessary. See Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, OFM, "Report on the Status of the Mission of Espíritu Santo de la Bahía," in the San José Mission Archive, San Antonio, Texas, unpublished document 3-3481, and his *Guidelines for a Texas Mission* (San Antonio, 1976), item 43.

18. SRC, SA II-1799 (1805).

19. SRC, SA I-1027 (1704), folio 3, "*dejó a dⁿ Alonso de Vargas las dos sillas jinetas*"; SRC, SA II-168 (1711), frame 331-343, "*12p^a . . . en prenda una silla gineta es hiza buena*"; SRC, SA II-344 (1727), frame 519, "*una silla jineta bieja con estribos aluso*"; SRC, SA II-422 (1737), frame 985, "*una silla gineta, coraza, bastos, enguera, fuste, sincho y estribos de lomo*."

20. SRC SA II-369 (1732) "*una silla buena de montar . . . 40 ps. [pesos]*"; SRC, SA II-556 (1761) "*Una silla de andar a caballo.*"
21. SRC, Wills and Hijuelas: Antonio Martín, 1770, page 4.
22. SRC, SA II-1092b (1790), frame 320, lists José Ramírez; interview with Oscar Carvajal, Jr., saddle maker in San Antonio, Texas, June 1977.
23. Arthur Woodward, "The Evolution of the Cowboy Chaps," *Los Angeles Museum Quarterly*, volume 8, numbers 3-4 (spring 1951), pages 5, 10.
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26. Ignacio Tirsch, *The Drawings of Ignacio Tirsch, a Jesuit Missionary in Baja California*, translated and edited by Elsbeth Schulz-Bischof (Los Angeles, 1972). The originals are in the State Library of Czechoslovakia, Prague, listed as XVI B 18.
27. Joseph Hefter, "Crónica del traje militar en México del siglo XVI al XX," *Artes de México* (Mexico City), number 102 (1968), page 51.
28. Donald C. Cutter, *Malaspina in California* (San Francisco, 1960); and Donald C. Cutter and Mercedes Palau de Iglesias, *The Malaspina Expedition* (Santa Fe, 1977), pages 19-41.
29. Richard E. Ahlborn, *European Dress in Texas, 1830, American Scene*, volume 13, number 4 (1972), 20 pages, illustrated.
30. Woodward, "Saddles," pages 2-3. Also see Jean Roemer, *Cavalry: Its History, Management, and Uses in War* (New York, 1863).
31. Domingo Revilla, "Los Rancheros," *El Museo Mexicano* (Mexico City, 1844), volume 3, page 553.
32. Ellen Bowie Holland, *Gay as a Grig: Memories of a North Texas Girlhood* (Austin, 1963).
33. George Kubler, "Time's Perfection and Colonial Art," *Spanish, French and English Traditions in the Colonial Silver of North America* (Winterthur, Delaware, 1969), pages 7-12. Kubler explores the problems of style and seriation in his provocative work, *The Shape of Time* (New Haven, 1962).

Origins of Mexican Horsemanship and Saddlery

Daniel F. Rubin de la Borbolla
(Alicia Edwards, translator)

The Mexican stock saddle is a relatively modern contribution to a saddlery tradition already ancient when Columbus set sail for America. Evolved from Renaissance Spanish combat saddles that were themselves derived chiefly from eighth-century Arabian prototypes, the Mexican saddle is an instructive example of an Old World artifact modified and adapted to fit the needs of the New. The saddle form that evolved in colonial times in response to the demands of the expanding frontiers of New Spain is a distinct North American contribution to the art of saddlery. So successful did it prove that it was taken north to the "Internal Provinces" of colonial Mexico, which are now part of the United States. There the late-colonial Mexican stock saddle was adopted by cattlemen from Texas to California and, in time, throughout the old West.

Much has been written about *charrería*, the art of horsemanship as it is practiced in Mexico. Numerous writers have analyzed the use of the horse as a means of transportation, the design and construction of saddle and harness equipment, and the ethos of the man on horseback—his clothing, speech, customs, and mounted activities. Little attention has been given, however, to the changes in styles of riding that occurred in Mexico between 1600 and 1900. These riding styles helped to shape the form that the Mexican saddle eventually assumed.

Horse equipment and horsemanship had to be adapted to conditions in the New World vastly different from those in Spain. This is especially notable in the area of stock raising

where the collaboration between horse and man is essential. These adaptations can best be understood by focusing upon a historical study of what happened in Mexico, as gleaned from documentary sources and from discussions with historians, *charros*, and riders of all kinds. Attention will be given first to a brief background of the modern horse in America, its early arrival and the conditions established for its use, secondly to a description of the Spanish styles of riding introduced into colonial Mexico and the development of them in this new environment, and lastly to a focus on the equipment used in Mexican horsemanship, special attention being given to the saddle.

The Horse in Colonial Mexico

NEW ARRIVALS. — Fossil evidence demonstrates that much of the evolutionary history of the modern horse occurred in the western hemisphere. An immense variety of species developed over time. In great pulses some of these migrated to the eastern hemisphere at times when land bridges to Asia or northern Europe made this possible. Horses of a modern type were widespread throughout the American continents until about 10,000 years ago when mysteriously they died out totally.

Thereafter, the American continents remained without horses until the arrival of the first Spaniards. For Columbus's second voyage, in 1493, the Spanish crown shipped horses and mares (Figure 10) to establish breeding ranches on the recently colonized islands in the Caribbean. During the first half of the sixteenth century, horses were supplied from Jamaica and Cuba to all the American

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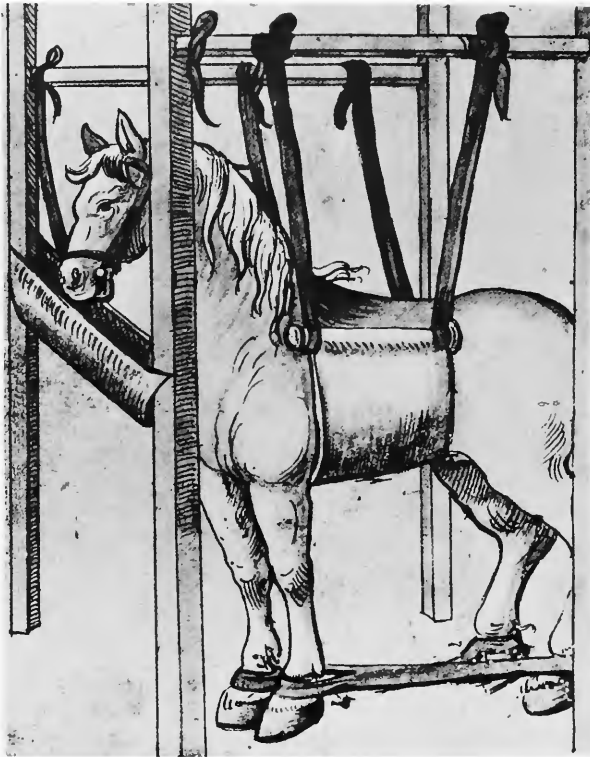


FIGURE 10.—Spanish method for shipping horses to America.

mainlands touched by Spain. Although some of the horses used by the conquistadors were shipped directly from Spain, it is probable that most were born in Cuba.¹

Conquistador Hernán Cortés transported the first horses to Mexico in 1519. From the account of the conquest written in 1568 by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, we know the owner(s) and description of each animal.

Captain Cortés: a solid dark chestnut horse, which died as soon as we arrived at San Juan de Ulúa [Vera Cruz].

Pedro de Alvarado and Hernando López de Avila: a very good sorrel mare, good both for sport and as a charger. When we arrived in New Spain [Mexico] Alvarado bought the other half share in the mare or took it by force.

Alonzo Hernández of Puerto Rico: a gray mare, a very good charger which Cortés bought for him with gold buttons.

Gonzalo Domínguez, a wonderfully good horseman: a very good dark chestnut horse, a grand galloper.

Baena, a settler at Trinidad: a dappled horse almost black, no good for anything.

Ortiz the musician and Bartolomé García who once owned gold mines: a very good dark horse called *El Arriero*, the muleteer; this was one of the best horses carried in the fleet.

Juan Sedeño, a settler at Havana: a chestnut mare which foaled on board ship.²

At the siege that Cortés laid on the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, now Mexico City, almost all of the horses died. But in 1520 more horses were shipped to Mexico from the Caribbean islands and from the Canaries. The continuity of the horse in America was secure.

LANDS, BRANDS, AND SADDLES.—Manuscript illustrations drawn by Indians shortly after the conquest reveal a great deal about early Spanish horses and horsemanship in Mexico. Details of branding, equipment, and styles of riding and combat appear in codices such as the “Lienzo de Tlaxcala” (Figure 11).³

During the first decade of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the brands used on horses merely indicated the animals’ places of origin (Figure 12, *left*).⁴ As the number of horses increased, however, so too did problems of differentiation, and the Spanish authorities soon had to establish a simple system of identification for all breeders and owners using branding irons (*fierros*) or other methods of marking animals. In June of 1529, the municipality of Mexico City issued the first ordinance calling for the registration of brands by each ranch or horse-breeding establishment (Figure 12, *right*). Among the first applicants who requested permission to register their brands were

El Colegio del Nombre de Jesús, for mares and cows. Miguel López for his family, for mares.

Bautista Marín and for Ana María, to brand horses. Bartolomé de Perales, for mares and cattle.

Gerónimo Ruiz de la Mota, for cows, sheep and mares.⁵

FIGURE 11.—Drawings from the codex “Lienzo de Tlaxcala,” made by Mexican Indians about 1550: *upper*, a helmeted soldier riding bent-kneed in a light *jineta*-type saddle; *lower*, a warrior riding straight-legged in a massive *estradiota*-type saddle. Both Spaniards use the open, triangular *árabe* (Arabic) stirrup; one wears the medieval spike spur.



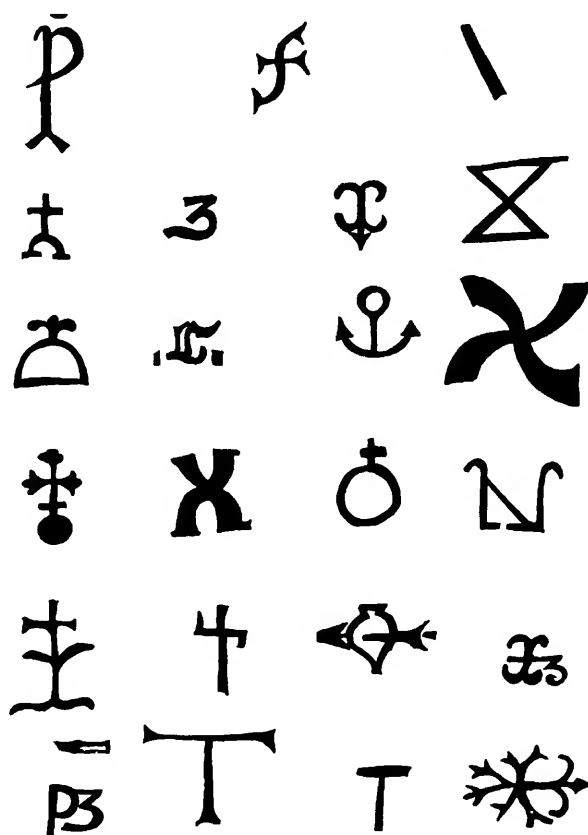
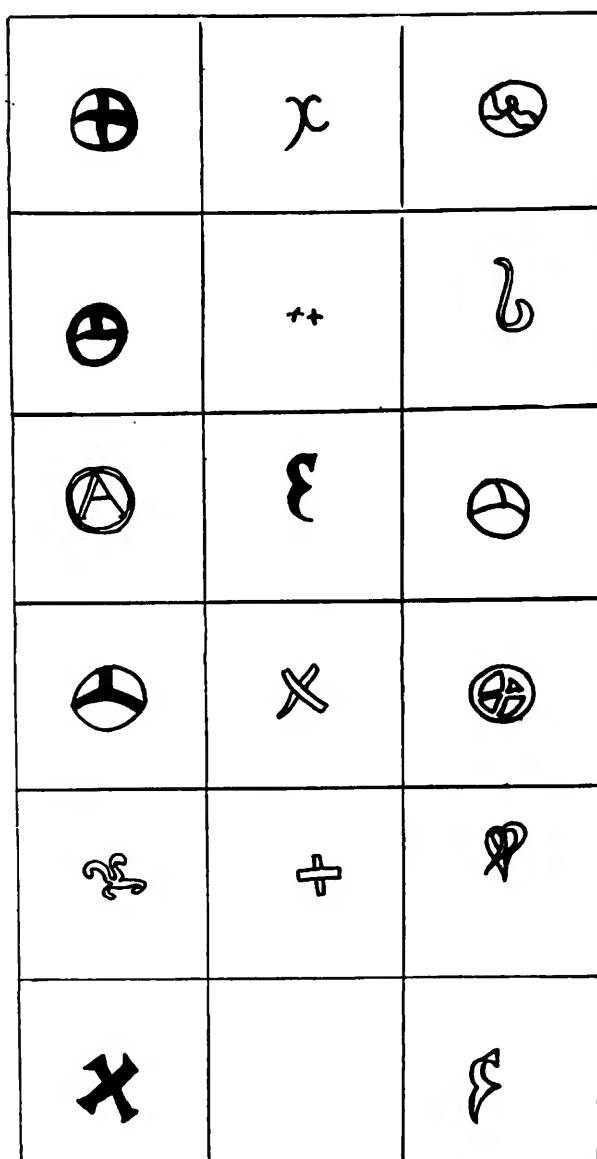


FIGURE 12.—Brands used on horses in early colonial Mexico, compiled from the codex "Lienzo de Tlaxcala": *left*, Spanish brands registered in Cuba and Jamaica and employed in the conquest of Mexico; *right*, brands that were among the first registered in Mexico, about 1530.

The insistence of municipal authorities, from a very early date, on a system of branding was of the greatest importance to the development of a new national saddle form. As the first stockmen were soon to discover, the problem of branding stock on unfenced ranges required the ability to rope from the saddle, a requirement that in turn demanded a saddle horn on which the rope could be snubbed, a sturdy sad-

dle frame that could withstand the strain imposed by the lassoed animal, and stirrups sufficiently long to permit the rider to brace himself against sudden stops and sharp turns.

The need for a saddle with new characteristics was made more acute by the amazing rapidity with which grazing ranges were extended out from Mexico City. *Estancias*, land grants given by the royal crown, became crowd-

ed with cattle as the first conquistadors and other grantees began to devote themselves to stock raising. As extensive fields having ample pasturage and water and lying near the capital were quickly exhausted by the rapid increase of cattle and horses, officials ordered the first land grants extended westward. *Estancias* became located ever farther from the central valleys. Torquemada describes the ranching situation in 1610:

The cattle having increased their numbers greatly and vast lands having been discovered, the ranchers determined to move into more extensive and comfortable places. Many ranches in the valleys of Tepepulco, Zumpango and Toluca were depopulated when ranchers went out to settle new lands. At this time, taking all the ranches together these lands extended more than [500 miles] beyond the valleys called "de Guadiana," now Durango, and including all the Chichimeca lands.⁶

Thus, by the early seventeenth century, cattle raising had reached the semiarid northern plains of Mexico and moved into the areas that would later become Texas and New Mexico. The entire process of extending the activity of ranching throughout colonial Mexico was dependent on the development of new skills and a style of riding suitable for the rugged condition of the advancing frontiers, and on the adaptation of Hispanic horse equipment to the new environment of open-range ranching.

POPULARITY AND CONTROLS.—The horse soon became immensely popular with all classes in colonial Mexico. To meet the demand for horses without relying on uncertain imports from the Caribbean and Spain, Mexican authorities sought to encourage horse breeding even to the extent of taking steps in 1526 to reduce the number of mules on the grounds that they were nonreproductive animals. Mule owners were required to possess at least an equal number of horses. A lack of investigative personnel, however, made it difficult to enforce this regulation. Whatever the effect of governmental action may have been, the number of horses in Mexico City grew rapidly, and their prices rose proportionately.

Corresponding increases were found in the number of horse-related services. Christopher Ruiz contracted with the municipality of Mexico City to serve as the first official farrier or blacksmith (*herrero*) for an annual wage of

fifty pesos. Veterinary services as well as stables and caravan compounds had to be established and supervised. There was also a public demand for establishments where horses could be sold and traded. As early as 1532 the authorities in Mexico City were obliged to establish a brokerage (*correduría*) office for the selling and trading of horses. The first broker, Diego López Gordillo, paid the municipality seventy-five pesos for the right to hold the office of concessionaire for one year.

Rigorous but doomed efforts were made to prohibit the subjugated Indian populace from owning cattle or riding horses. The Elizabethan English adventurer Henrie Hawks, who visited New Spain in the sixteenth century, observed that "the Spaniards keepe the Indians in great subiection. They may haue in their houses no sword nor dagger . . . neither may they ride upon any horse, nor mules, in any saddle nor bridle. . . ."⁷

With the increasing use of Indians as stock handlers, however, it was soon necessary to grant licenses to Spanish owners of sheep and cattle *estancias* so that the Indians could ride, first mules and, eventually, horses. One license granting Indians permission to ride was discovered in the "Instrucciones y órdenes de gobierno a los corregidores y alcaldes mayores" dated by an official in 1619.

Gabriel de Tapia, procurator for the Jesuit College here, has indicated to me that the college owns a ranch for sheep and goats called Santa Lucia [with] 100,000 head . . . there are 20 Indian ranch foremen [*capitanes*] assigned to different pastures, and it is necessary for them to ride horseback, using saddle, bit and spurs; were it possible to give them permission . . . no one would . . . accuse Tapia of breaking the law.

The noted *aficionado* of Mexican *charrería*, Leovigildo Islas Escárcega, has pointed out the extent to which the sixteenth-century priest and agriculturist Sebastián de Aparicio helped to teach the Indians the difficult task of domestication and proper use of animals for plowing and transport and later for riding.

With the failure of the royal prohibitions aimed at keeping the native Mexican populations from owning cattle or riding horseback, all social classes became involved in forging new equestrian traditions. A new saddle form was already evolving during the early seventeenth

century, shaped by the practical necessities of rigorous rural living. Its early adoption as a general riding saddle by people of all conditions of life constitutes a meaningful claim to its being a national saddle.

SADDLERY GUILDS.—The rugged life of stock handlers in the range country required well-crafted saddles that would prove serviceable under difficult and often dangerous circumstances. The existence of guilds of highly skilled saddle and harness makers in New Spain helps to explain the high quality of the new saddle form as it began to emerge in the colonial era.

Modeled after protective associations founded in Roman times, the craft guilds (*gremios*) had functioned in Spain since the fourth century and, through succeeding centuries, had adjusted their structures in accordance with economic changes, new craft techniques, and stylistic shifts. After the conquests, the Spanish government promptly extended ordinances to legalize and regulate the establishment of craft guilds in the New World.

Guild ordinances in Mexico set quality norms and styles for each craft, and spelled out the rights and duties of the artisan members. The first ordinances for makers of saddles and horse trappings (*guarnicioneros de sillas y aderezos de caballos*) was confirmed in Mexico City on 5 May 1549.⁸ The saddle and harness makers (*talabarteros*) gained so much strength that they arranged to have their own chapel for religious services and festivities. Other artisans produced additional kinds of riding equipment and had their own sets of ordinances determining processes and prerogatives.

Saddles made in the middle of the sixteenth century in Mexico City were the richest and most bejewelled in all the Ameican colonies. Indeed, ostentation and expense of saddles reached such a point that the crown ordered discretion and simplicity in their design, but to little avail. Even on saddles used in combat, bits, cinches, and breast bands were ornamented (Figure 13). Metal saddle parts were forged of iron, following traditional Spanish forms, structure, and size. Later, changes were made, especially in surface design. Bits, stirrups, spurs, and saddle buckles noted for their decorative metal inlay were made even after colonial times in Amozoc, a small village near Puebla.

Spanish Riding Styles

In its present form the Mexican stock saddle represents a long process of evolution from older forms developed to fit the needs of traditional Spanish riding styles.

At the time of the conquest of Mexico, Spain had an equestrian tradition that dated back more than eight centuries. Roman saddles and Frankish stirrups are recorded in Spain prior to A.D. 710, but it was the Arabs, in the process of spreading the Muslim faith westward, who were most instrumental in setting the traditions that characterized typical Spanish horseback riding.⁹ On the Iberian peninsula, the skill of riding first became popular as a means of herding cattle cross-country to pasture, and was soon appropriated by the aristocratic and military classes. The riding styles bequeathed to the Spaniards by the Medieval Europeans and by the Arabs—*estradiota* (and the closely related *brida*) and the *jineta*—are of significance to the history of Mexican saddlery (Figure 14).

LA ESTRADIOTA.—The *estradiota* style, also called *croata*, appears to be of ancient origin, inasmuch as a modern authority defines it simply as the manner developed for riding a horse after the invention of stirrups by primitive horsemen. This source describes the saddle developed for the *estradiota* style as follows:

The saddles had a very high pommel and a flatter and lower cantle, also long skirts and very long stirrups, which obliged the horseman to stretch out his legs. The pommel and cantle were very close, scarcely leaving room for the seat and thighs of the horseman. The bits had very long curbs¹⁰ (Figure 15).

An unusual feature of the *estradiota* saddle was the long backward-curved extension of each side of the pommel, often constructed of metal, that protected the rider's thighs (Figures 2b, 11 lower).

[The straight-legged style of riding that employed this type of saddle was appropriate to European forms of warfare, jousting, and gentlemanly display. It was well adapted to the heavy European breeds of horses. R.E.A.]

LA BRIDA.—The *brida* style of riding was introduced into Spain from Italy during the fifteenth century.¹¹ This style had affinities with the *estradiota* style inasmuch as its most important characteristic was the use of "stirrups

as long as the extension of the leg, holding the leg straight and stretched out."¹² Historians confirm that *brida* riding acquired great prestige with working horsemen, and was also adopted by society riders who liked to display their horses and horse trappings with pomp.

The *brida* saddle was also called *de rua*, from the Spanish *ruar*, to ride, because it was particularly suitable for riding for show. Charles V of Spain (1516-1556) rode this way, as did mounted warriors clad in heavy armor, who required long stirrup leathers to support a straight-legged lean. The *brida* saddle was distinguished by its lower pommel and cantle, long stirrups, and bridle bit with wide curbs.

LA JINETA.—An extremely popular style of "light" (non-work-related) riding in Spain at the time of the conquest of Mexico was the *jineta* style. This mode of riding sacrificed the stability and comfort of an enclosed seat with extended stirrups for the speed and close-quarter maneuverability afforded by a less confining saddle and short stirrups. The early *jineta* saddle (Figure 17) displayed a pommel and cantle lower and simpler than the *estradiota* but closer and higher than found on the modern Mexican saddle.

The *jineta* style has been described as "the art of riding a horse . . . with short stirrups and legs bent, but vertical from the knees

FIGURE 13.—A Spanish rider with ornamented reins and trappings, spearing an Indian at "Vitzilapan."





FIGURE 14.—Styles of horseback riding: *left*, rider using the extended-leg *estradiota* style (the only visible portion of the saddle is the forward edge of the saddle cover); *right*, rider using the bent-leg *jineta* style (note the low, curving cantle and small, backward-curved pommel, also the forward rigged cinch and larger stirrup).

downward.”¹³ The Tlaxcala codex includes drawings that show Spaniards riding *a la jineta* (Figures 11, *upper*, and 16; see also Figure 14, *right*). This *jineta* position has also been described by the noted historian of Mexican horsemanship, Señor Álvarez del Villar: “the rider holds his thigh in a vertical position . . . the leg is bent back at the knee to maintain contact with the flank of the horse.”¹⁴

[Spaniards borrowed this riding style from their Moorish neighbors. It was suited to the Arab tactics of warfare and for the light, agile Arab horse. R.E.A.]

OTHER STYLES.—Other Hispanic-Arabic riding styles and associated saddle forms in sixteenth-century Spain were the *bastarda* and the *barda*. The length of the *bastarda* stirrup leathers was between those of the *brida* and *jineta* saddles. In the sixteenth century, the *bastarda* saddle replaced the *jineta* in Spain,

became the source of the French saddle, and was adapted to the classical riding style that came to fullest expression in the Spanish Riding School in Vienna about 1565. The *barda* was a popular traveling saddle that represented an integration of the *jineta* and *estradiota* forms.

STYLES ADOPTED IN MEXICO.—For a Spaniard, the style of riding and the form of saddle selected by an individual were dictated not only by the particular type of activity in which he was engaged but were also influenced by the prevalent mode of riding practiced in his region and by members of his social station. Among the gentry, riding customs were affected by court fashion, with the *jineta* and *brida* saddles having competed for popularity throughout the Renaissance. For those engaged in more rigorous activity, stirrup leathers were partially or wholly extended.

Although several varieties of Spanish riding

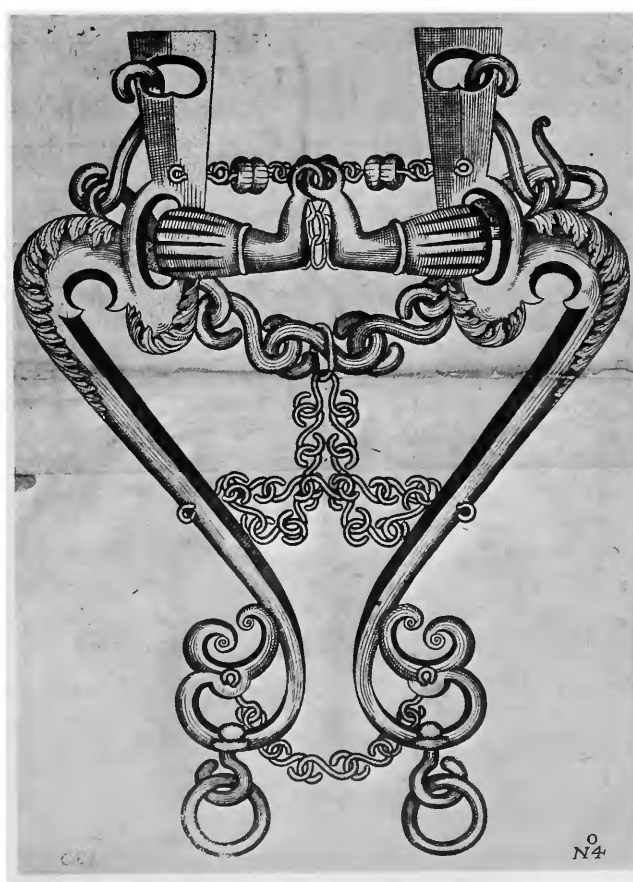
styles and associated equestrian equipage were transported to Mexico, not all innovations and modifications that occurred in Spain found reflection in the New World. Certainly, however, the *jineta* riding style appeared in Mexico with the conquistadors and flourished in the new environment. Colonial officials and others of means and social rank, who imitated the Spanish in everything, scrupulously maintained the rules and form of the *jineta* style as it had been practiced at the peak of its popularity at court. Even when the style had almost disappeared in Spain, it continued in Mexico. In 1580, Juan Suárez de Peralta, writing on the art of traditional riding, remarked about the *jineta*: "That style is no longer natural to her [Spain] and it has gone to New Spain . . . where it has been embraced and esteemed . . ." ¹⁵

In New Spain the colonists' affinity for the *jineta* saddle is reflected in the persistence of the simplicity of its basic form with high pommel and cantle (features that also proved practical in stock handling), modified, however, with the longer stirrup leathers of the *estradiota* and *brida* types that allowed for a riding style more suited to local needs and conditions.

STIRRUPS.—A consideration of the Spanish stirrup that came to the New World is important. One statement purports to describe the type of stirrup used by Cortes and his men:

Stirrups were of Arabic origin and measured some 45 centimeters high by 30 wide, with two lateral extensions of 11 centimeters; [they were] worked and chased with *mudéjar* [Moorish, angular, all over] or *plateresco* [European, curvilinear, clustered] designs and often inlaid with silver, copper or gold.¹⁶

FIGURE 15.—Bits used in the 1600s on the Iberian peninsula: *left*, "Moorish" ring bit with long, curved shanks; *right*, joined curb bit.



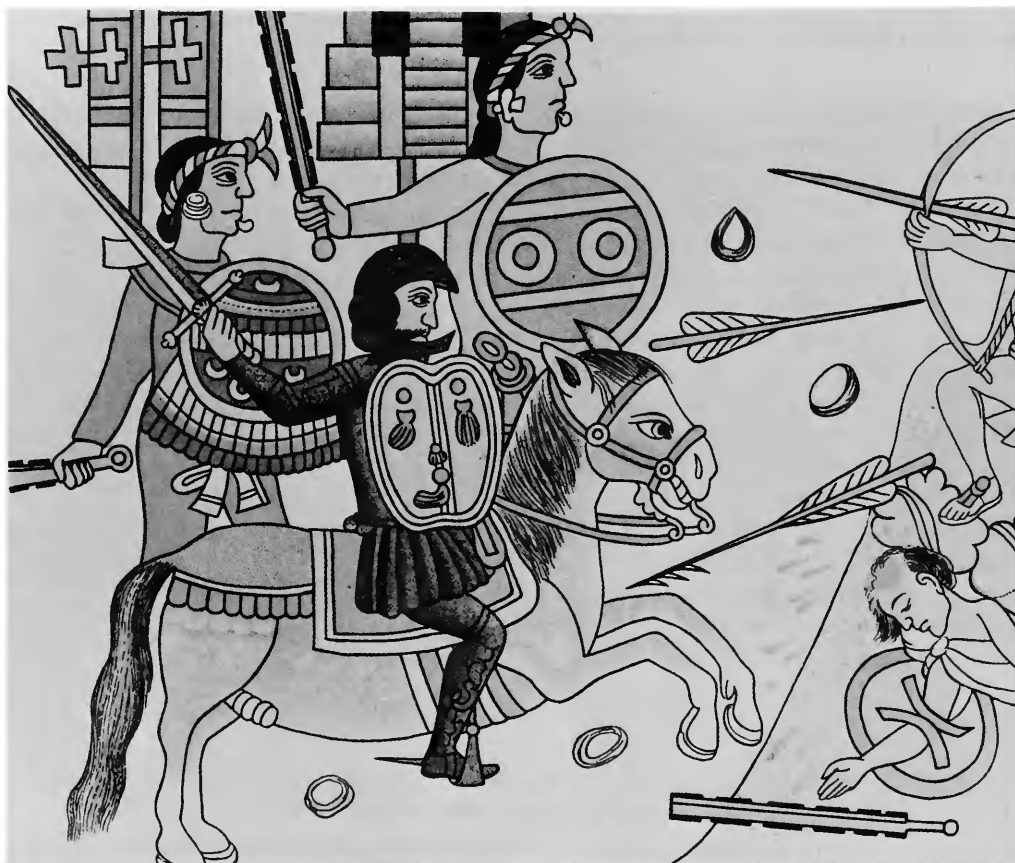


FIGURE 16.—Examples from “Lienzo de Tlaxcala” of Spanish soldiers riding in the *jineta* style: *upper*, an armored soldier at “Piyaztlan”; *lower*, a Spanish rider at “Xonacatla” mounted “a la *jineta*” and also using the sixteenth-century Moorish-Spanish oval shield known as *la adarga*.





FIGURE 17.—Two views (off-side) of a model of an Arabic-Spanish *jineta*-type saddle used for combat in Mexico.

According to my research no stirrups believed to be of an early date have these details.

Tlaxcala codex and other early post-Cortesian codices illustrate a simple, open stirrup constructed of a horizontal rectangular plate and triangular sides joined at the top by a bar under (or through) which the stirrup leather passes (Figures 11, 16).

The Mexican Saddle

DEVELOPMENTS.—The saddle used by the Spaniards in Mexico for cattle raising and general field work was a modification of the *jineta* saddle. By 1600 the original conformation had begun to be modified in response to the challenge of branding and pasturing great herds of animals in unfenced areas of an extent undreamed of in Europe.

No examples of the earliest varieties of the "new" (stock) saddle are now extant. However,

the general lines of its development can be guessed at by comparing a model of a sixteenth-century Spanish combat saddle (Figure 17) with a later Mexican ranch saddle whose tree is one of the oldest extant examples of its type (Figures 18, 60). By the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Mexican stock saddle had assumed the general appearance (Figure 20) of the stock saddle that was to become the standard in the western part of the United States, another vast region where further regional modifications would continue to take place.

Concurrent with the modification of the *jineta* saddle form into the Mexican stock saddle, parallel adjustments in riding techniques emerged during the colonial era. As stirrup leathers of the new saddle form were lengthened, Mexican stockmen began to assume the posture of the *mexicana* riding style (informal, nonacademic, and adapted to range use) used in modern



FIGURE 18.—A Mexican ranch saddle built on an early tree (1800?) but with later nineteenth-century details.



FIGURE 19.—A modern Nicaraguan saddle adapted from a Spanish *jineta* saddle.

charrería, as can be noted in late nineteenth-century paintings.

The Spanish *jineta* riding style and saddle continued in Mexican cities, where horsemen wished to display their fine trappings and outfits in parades and festivals, and in Algeria¹⁷ and Nicaragua (Figure 19). The modified *jineta* saddle that developed in these settings had a rather low silhouette to its tree, with a pear-shaped knob or horn (*la perilla*) in front and a low-rising cantle sloping backwards. The metal *perilla* was sheathed with a strong and resistant vellum, a construction technique still used in Central America. Thus, the modified *jineta* saddle differed from the working stock

saddle that had an all-wood tree lined with parchment-like sheepskin and a large, full-bodied horn set on a thick neck.

By the early seventeenth century, the modified *jineta* saddle utilized by the first colonial Mexican stockmen had evolved into a distinctive national form: *la silla vaquera mexicana*. It became famous in the mid-nineteenth century in the western United States as the *vaquero* saddle or Mexican cowboy saddle. This form displayed many variations, some regional and some occasioned by the taste and uses of its owner. One variety was sometimes called *la silla charra*, or *charro* saddle (Figure 64). The *vaquero* saddle was also the precursor of the "Texas" saddle (Figure 20), which included such modifications as double rigging. Another

FIGURE 20.—A Mexican stock saddle, after 1850, with many similarities to a type common then in Texas.





FIGURE 21.—Stock saddle from Sinaloa, Mexico, probably after 1900; note the *estradiota* features of high bows and leather housing.

variant featured a metal horn and was much like modern stock saddles from Sinaloa and Sonora in northern Mexico (Figure 21).

The one major change within the range of forms typical of the Mexican saddle occurred after 1875 as a result of the efforts of groups of *charros*—Mexican horsemen devoted to the art of the *mexicana* riding style who were anxious to preserve the traditions and skills of authentic Mexican horsemanship. (As a result of their efforts, *charrería* was organized into a national sporting event and is now a traditional part of the Mexican culture.) The plate-shaped horn used on many saddles had grown to exaggerated sizes during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. In the succeeding quarter-century the movement for a return to earlier forms brought a reduction in the size of the horn used on *charro* saddles although it still remained larger than the earliest “dinner-plate” horn of the mid-1800s.

The saddletrees made in Colima and in Silao, Guanajuato, acquired a full hemispherical horn. Because of their overall quality and high finish, the saddletrees that originated in Colima, Nayarit, Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Michoacan spread throughout Mexico. At present, the most popular form of tree is called the “Zaldivar” after the famous *charro* Don Juan Zaldivar; the *Zaldivar* tree has been popularized in the paintings of Don Ernesto Icaza, who is said to have designed it.

The Mexican saddle differs from those developed in other parts of the world. Fundamentally, it is made for the rough work of stock raising and general rural use. The unique pommel, with its characteristic structures of horn, neck, and shoulders, was designed to anchor the lariat by which animals were roped by a mounted rider. The Mexican saddle also allows the horseman to set himself for whatever kind of movement he wishes. Although it is somewhat heavy, it is comfortable for long trips and is excellently adapted to the activities of daily life in all rural areas of Mexico.

SADDLE PARTS.—The saddle used for the *mexicana* style of riding consists of four major systems of parts, each incorporating a range of variation in the details of its execution and in the naming of its parts: (1) the wooden saddletree (*el fuste*), which provides the basic structure; (2) the cinch (*la cincha*) and leather straps (*las reatas* and *los látigos*) connected by iron rings (*las argollas*) that secure the saddle to the horse; (3) the skirts (*los faldones*) and leather ties (*los tientos*) attached to the tree; and (4) the stirrups (*los estribos*) and stirrup leathers (*los arciones*). [Figure 83 is helpful in understanding the parts of the Mexican saddle. R.E.A.]

1. The first system of saddle parts, the tree (*el fuste*), is made in several elements: (a) the pommel (*la campana*), which includes the horn (*la cabeza*), the neck (*el cuello*), and the shoulders (*los hombros*); (b) the cantle (*la teja*); and (c) the sideboards (*las tablas*), which run back past the cantle in rear extensions (*las pajuelas*). The structure and function of the major elements of the saddletree are as follows:

a. The pommel (*la campana*): a wooden fork, whose shoulders support the horn and neck and which arches in such a way as not to

touch the horse, thus preventing the weight of the rider from irritating the withers and allowing both horse and rider complete freedom of movement. [A sample of the variety of shapes that the structures of the foreward fork of the Mexican saddle may exhibit can be discerned in Figures 20, 60, 62-65, 83. R.E.A.]

b. The cantle (*la teja*): a semicircular piece of wood about 4 cms thick, of concave curvature to support the seat of the rider, set onto the sideboards about 35 cms back from the pommel.

c. The sideboards (*las tablas*): two wooden boards, about 50 cms long, each set into a different shoulder of the pommel and running back to notch into the cantle.

2. The second system of parts consists of leathers, rings, and cinch. Leather rigging straps (*los enreatados* or *las reatas*) wrapped around the pommel are connected by a rigging ring (*la argolla*) on each shoulder of the pommel to leathers that, in turn, are secured to the cinch. The second set of leathers in this system (*el contraenreatado*) consists, on the near side, of a strap (*el látigo*) that passes through the cinch buckle (*el hebillón* or *hebijón*) and, on the off-side, of another strap (*el contralátigo*) that is secured to the cinch ring (*la argolla*). In addition, there may be rear rigging straps (*las contrareatas*) that pass behind the cantle and are connected either to the rings joining *los enreatados* to *el contraenreatado* or to a second set of rings for an additional, rear cinch (*la barriguera*). [Various ways in which the forward rigging may be suspended from the front fork of Mexican saddles may be seen in Figures 60, 63, 66, and 83. Examples of Mexican saddles rigged for a single forward cinch are portrayed in Figures 60, 63, 64, and 83; double-rigged types appear in Figures 20 and 66. Single center rigging is not common on *vaquero* saddles. R.E.A.]

The forward rigging straps measure about 65 cm in length while the rear ones run up to 95 cm. The near or on-side *látigo* may be as long as 200 cm, passing the cinch buckle more than once. Most of the leather straps measure about 5 cm in width.

The cinch is a sturdy band of hemp, wool, cotton, or pigskin that runs under the belly of the horse to secure the saddle, whether it is a riding saddle (*la silla de montar*) or a packsaddle (*la*

albarda). The cinch measures about 90 by 10 cm and terminates in metal fittings: usually an off-side ring and an on-side buckle, although both fastenings may be buckles (Figures 18, 21, 62d). These metal fastenings may be tied to the band by "pig knots" (*los nudos de puer-cos*).

3. The third system of saddle parts is less complex but equally functional and more decorative than the rigging and cinch system. The skirts are two pieces of leather lined inside with rawhide, sheepskin, or felt. They serve to protect the horse's flanks from scratches in timbered country (Figures 20, 60a). Their length varies according to the size of the saddletree; the width is about 53 cm. The skirts (*los faldones*) are suspended from the sides of the tree with leather thongs (*los tientos*), which also are useful in tying on personal equipment such as a *serape* or lariat (*el lazo*). Thongs are often made of chamois. Usually there is one on each side of the pommel, and three are placed on each sideboard extension. Leather rosettes and/or metal disks (*los chape-tones* or *las conchas*) with two slits secure the saddle ties and add decoration.

4. The fourth system of parts assists the rider in maintaining a secure seat during any action, and provides more opportunity for decoration. The stirrup leathers (*las arciones*) measure about 300 by 10 cm. Each leather is connected to a sideboard of the tree and forms a loop from which the stirrup is suspended. Often the *arción* is twisted in such fashion that the stirrup hangs at right angles to the saddle (Figures 64a, 83). The *arciones* hang outside of and unconstrained by the rigging system that secures the saddle on the horse.

The stirrups (*los estribos*), formed of iron or wood, square or triangular in shape, dangle from the loops of the stirrup leathers to support the feet of the horseman. The sides and fronts of the stirrups are sometimes covered with curved and carved leather hoods (*las tapaderas*) (Figures 20, 60a,h,i, 66). By the late 1800s, a rich variety of wooden stirrup forms were known in Mexico, but few influenced Anglo-American taste (Figure 22).

In addition to these essential parts of riding equipment, there are other pieces of leather saddle gear of historic importance to Mexican



a



b



c



d



e



f

FIGURE 22.—Carved Mexican stirrups, about 1790 to 1870: *a*, soldier-faces with iron reinforcement, about 1790 to 1830; *b*, bow-shaped with serrated edge, about 1820 to 1850; *c*, Hapsburg eagle with tail feathers, about 1800 to 1840; *d*, simplified Hapsburg eagle, about 1830 to 1870; *e*, base with rosette and chip-carving, about 1820–1860; *f*, base with feathered reserve, about 1810 to 1850.

saddles. The tree may have a lining or separate pad (*el baste*, *el basto*, or *el sudadero*) (Figures 60*j*, 64*e*, 83), perhaps of fine sheepskin. There may be a breast band (*el pretal*) (Figures 63*a*, 83) extending in front of the saddle, which provides an attachment for a half martingale (*la media gamarra*) to the bridle (*la brida*). Various types of pouches might be hung behind the cantle. Saddle bags of carved and stamped leather are named *bolsas* or *cantinas* (Figure 64*a*). A decorative device (*el vaquerillo*), sometimes without pockets, is made of kid with the long hair left on (Figures 18, 60*g*). In rain, the hair helps to keep the contents of the pouches dry. The pouches also give some protection to the horse against goring. When the horseman alights, he throws a pouch over the saddle to protect its seat from rain or sun. Finally, there

is the rump cover (*la anquera*), an indispensable part of the fully rigged Mexican saddle (Figures 9, 16). The *anquera* serves to tame the horse, position its tail, improve its gait, accustom it to bearing weight on its rump, and protect its flanks from being lacerated. It is made of several pieces of heavy, embossed leather, sewn together and lined with sole leather. The *anquera* is joined to the saddle by straps and its sides may hang down a quarter of the way to the horse's hocks. Around the lower edge are set artistically worked iron "buttons" that form an ornamental border (*el ruedo*). These buttons are called *higas* (amulets), or *coscojos*.

[Other leather devices closely associated with the Mexican *vaquero* saddle, and with certain U.S. western saddles, are the loose, separate leather coverings for the tree (*la mochila*) (Figure 62 *a,b*) and for the rider's legs (*las armas*) (Figure 21). R.E.A.]

Not all saddles are equipped with each of the elements described. There is also the Mexican skeletal saddle (*la silla de esqueleto*), a lighter and simpler variety, consisting of merely the rawhide covered tree adorned characteristically by little more than short skirts and fenders on the stirrup leathers.¹⁸

Notes

1. FRANCISCO LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA, *Historia general de las Indias* (Mexico City and Madrid, 1870).

2. BERNAL DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO, *Verdadera notable relación del descubrimiento y conquista de la Nueva España y Guatemala*, translated and edited by A. P. Maudslay (Guatemala City, 1933), volume 1, pages 44–45. [Other editions exhibit variations in translation of color terms. R.E.A.]

3. ALFREDO CHAVERO, editor, "Lienzo de Tlaxcala," *Antigüedades Mexicanas* (Mexico City, 1892), plates 74, 59.

4. JOSÉ ÁLVAREZ DEL VILLAR, *Historia de la Charrería* (Mexico City, 1941), page 26.

5. *Ibid.*, page 33. The extracts are taken from a table of "the first brands registered in New Spain" (pages 34–35).

6. FREY JUAN DE TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana* (Madrid, 1723), book 5, chapter 11; reprint edition (Mexico City, 1943), volume 1, page 610.

7. HENRY HAWKS, "A Relation of the Commodities of Noua Hispania, and the Maners of the Inhabitants."

In Richard Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1589; reprinted Cambridge, 1965), page 552.

8. FRANCISCO DEL BARRIO LORENZOT, *Ordenanzas de gremios de la Nueva España* (Mexico City, 1921), page 294.

9. "Harness and Saddlery," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition (Chicago, 1974), volume 8, pages 657–658; see also LUIS DE SOMMER FERNANDO D'ANDRADE, *A Short History of the Spanish Horse and of the Iberian "Gineta" Horsemanship . . .* (Lisbon, 1973), pages 30–37.

10. CARLOS RINCÓN GALLARDO, *Diccionario ecuestre* (Mexico City, 1945), page 302; also see JOSÉ I. LEPE, *Diccionario enciclopédico sobre asuntos ecuestres e hípicas* (Mexico City, 1972).

11. GALLARDO, *op. cit.*, pages 70, 178.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Diccionario de la lengua Español* (Madrid: Real Academia Español, 1941), page 744. See also Gallardo, *op. cit.*, and Lepe, *op. cit.* Earlier sources for descrip-

tions of the *jineta* style are BERNARDO DE VARGAS MACHUCA, the sixteenth-century expert on equestrian and military matters, who wrote *Teoría y ejercicios de la jineta* (Valencia, 1599); and JUAN SUÁREZ DE PERALTA, the first Mexican to write on horsemanship and veterinary science, *Libro de albeitería* (Mexico City, 1953; ms. 1575-1580) and *Tractado de la jineta y de la brida* (Seville, 1580; reprinted Mexico City, 1950).

14. ÁLVAREZ, op. cit., page 83.

15. PERALTA, *Tractado*. Also Álvarez refers to the Spanish writer Luis Bañuelos y de la Cerda, regarding the deterioration of *jineta* riding.

16. MANUEL ROMERO DE TERREROS, *Las Artes industriales de la Nueva España* (Mexico City, 1923), page 80.

17. J. B. DUMAS, *The Art of Riding "a la Jineta,"* cited by Álvarez, op. cit., page 7. Also ROMERO DE TERREROS, *El Libro del charro mexicano* (Mexico City, 1946), page 7, cites "General Daumas." [Probably E. DAUMAS, *Les Chevaux du Sahara et les mores du désert* (Paris, c. 1851); republished as *The Horses of the Sahara* (Austin, 1968). R.E.A.]

18. GERARDO MURILLO, *Artes populares de México* (Mexico City, 1922), volume 2, pages 237-281.

Western Saddles before the Cowboy

James S. Hutchins

It is probable that a large proportion of modern Americans, if put to the test, would identify an example of the western riding saddle on sight as a "cowboy" saddle. Should this prove to be the case among a people of whom by far the greater number have never had real contact with the horse or equestrian equipage, then much of the credit must go to Hollywood. Most of our notions about the cowboy and his appurtenances have come from the "westerns" of motion pictures and television. And, from the day of William S. Hart down to that of the Cartwright clan, the filmsmiths have rarely if ever failed to insert the western saddle between the cowboy and his galloping steed. In that respect, at least, the present-day image of the American cowboy is true to history.

From a historical viewpoint, however, it is not correct to view the cowboy as either the only one among American equestrian species to use the western saddle or, indeed, even the first to do so. Although men were engaged in the cowboy's craft in Texas for years before 1865, it was only after that date—as open range ranching commenced its spread from Texas throughout the Great Plains—that the American cowboy emerged as a distinct occupational type. Although it is a fact seldom noted, during four decades leading up to 1865, Americans in a variety of callings—trappers and traders, soldiers and explorers, homeseekers and gold-seekers—used the western saddle in one form or another as they ventured into the vast unknown, the "Great American Desert," that lay beyond the Mississippi Valley frontier.

What we term the "western" saddle, Americans of the first half of the nineteenth century generally referred to as the "Spanish" saddle. Thus they showed their awareness of its place of origin. Americans of that time commonly used the term "Spanish" to distinguish whatever related to New Spain—Mexico and her provinces to the north: Texas, New Mexico, and California. And within the locus of the New World, it was specifically in Mexico during her long centuries under Spanish rule that the western saddle originated and underwent a very great deal of its development. By the outset of the nineteenth century the saddle used by the horsemen of Mexico was founded upon a saddle-tree incorporating practically all the elements of design by which the western tree is distinguished even today.

As Arthur Woodward and others have shown, the Mexican *caballero* strove always to combine the practical and, insofar as his purse would allow, the elegant in his riding equipment. Although his saddle trappings had to protect him and his horse amidst rough country and from bad weather, they had, at the same time, to enhance his appearance. Mexican practice was to place large removable leather housings—the *mochila* and the *coraza*—over the saddletree. Back of the saddle extended a leather tailpiece, the *anquera*, which covered the rump and sometimes the flanks of the horse. Such horse apparel was often embellished with gay embroidery and embossed leatherwork. In wide use also were *armas*, long leathers that dangled from the saddle horn for the purpose of being drawn, apron-like, over the rider's thighs in case of rain or as a protection against brush.

Nearly lost to view beneath such layerings was the saddletree, the article from which the

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FIGURE 23.—In this watercolor of a *caporal de hacienda* ("a keeper of horned cattle on a great estate") are to be seen nearly all the major elements of early nineteenth-century Mexican horse equipment. This is one of a series illustrating frontier types of northeast Mexico, done by Lino Sánchez y Tapia during the middle or late 1830s. Here is seen the saddle housing known as the *mochila*, with its openings through which protrude the horn and cantle of the saddletree. An *anquera* projects rearward from the cantle.

horse equipage of Mexico took its great excellence. It was a model of simplicity and durability. Four wooden parts made up the whole: two bridges, known as the fork (or pommel) and the cantle, and two lateral supports, termed

sideboards. These were joined together by means of mortising, wooden pegs, and glue. The entire tree was covered with rawhide, applied wet and stitched fast with rawhide thongs. The rawhide sheath, drawing up tight as it dried,

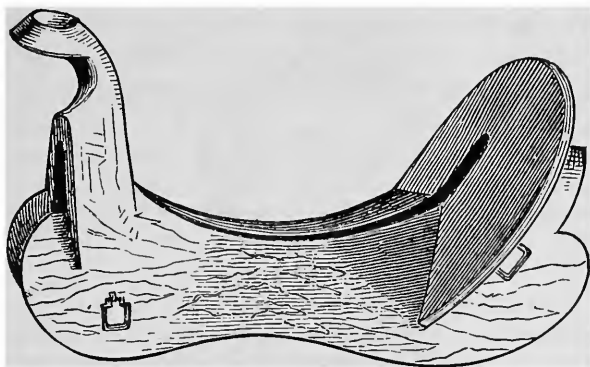


FIGURE 24.—A mid-nineteenth century representation of the "Spanish" tree, as it was known to Americans.

contributed much to the overall solidity. From atop the work there projected upward a horn, capped by a knob. The horn functioned as a holdfast or snub for the lariat in the business of roping, that quintessential act in the craft of the Mexican *vaquero* and his pupil, the American cowboy. Approved practice in the early and middle nineteenth century was to fashion fork and horn out of one solid piece—a Y-shaped tree crotch—as insurance against the wrenching shock when a roped steer yanked the lariat taut.

In marked contrast to the riding saddle of Mexico was the English type in general use in the United States. Produced in a variety of styles, including what was apparently an offshoot called "American," this saddle was in all essentials the one that was brought over from England in the early colonial times. Unlike the Mexican saddletree, which itself comprised the substance of a rider's seat, the tree of the English riding saddle was but a light skeleton upon which to shape a seat. The tree was of wood, generally reinforced with iron plating at stress points. The fork and the cantle were low in comparison with their Mexican counterparts. Over this skeleton tree went webbing, padding, and finally leather, all neatly tucked and tacked and stitched into place to build up a smooth, flat seat. On either side of the tree were small skirts (jockeys) and, beneath them, larger rounded flaps. Padding attached to the undersurfaces of the tree served to protect the horse's back. The girth was attached to the saddle at a

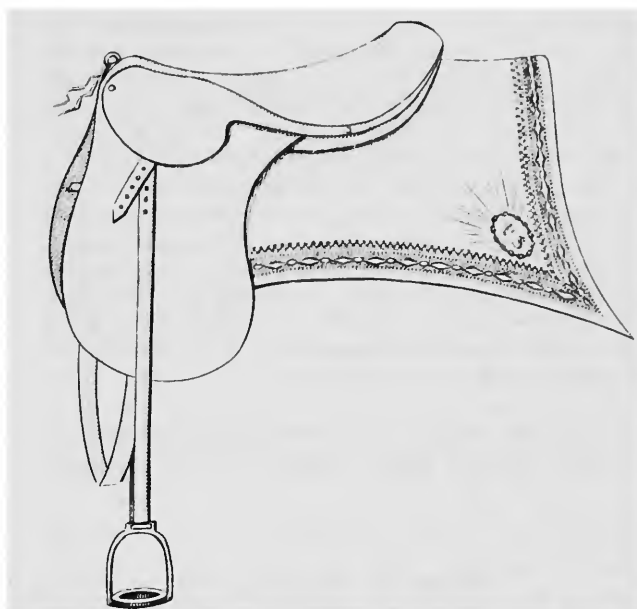


FIGURE 25.—The English saddle, in general use in the settled United States in the early nineteenth century, as it was pictured in an engraving done as an illustration for a military drill manual prepared in 1826 and published at Washington, D.C., in 1834.

single central point. Open D-shaped stirrups, commonly of iron, completed the English saddle.

There is little upon which to form even a conjecture as to when Americans first were aware of the Mexican saddle. Some may have been acquainted with it much earlier than we can now imagine. It is interesting to note that in 1805, as he and his partner in discovery, Capt. Meriwether Lewis, toiled westward across what is now Montana, Capt. William Clark recognized as "Spanish" a saddle that he saw in the hands of a Shoshoni Indian.¹ On the other hand, Lewis and Clark's contemporary in exploration, Capt. Zebulon M. Pike, does not appear to have been familiar with the Mexican saddle before he penetrated the borderlands of Mexico in 1807. Although he thought the saddle a clumsy looking affair indeed, Pike was not slow to perceive its advantages. In discussing the equipment of native troops with whom he travelled through northern Mexico, he described in effect the riding gear in general use:

The equipments of the horses, are to our idea, awkward; but I believe them superior to the English. . . . The

saddle is made . . . with a high projecting pommel (or, as anciently termed, bow) and is likewise raised behind: this is merely the tree: it is then covered by two or three covers of carved leather and embroidered workmanship, some with gold and silver in a very superb manner. The stirrups are of wood closed in front, carved generally into the figure of a lion's head, or that of some other beast, are very heavy, and to us present a very clumsy appearance. The horseman, seated on his horse, has a small bag tied behind him, his blankets either under him, or laying with his cloak between his body and the bow, which makes him at his ease. Thus mounted it is impossible for the most vicious horse ever to dismount them.²

Mexican stirrups, however, were not always as Pike found them, closed in front (Figure

22). On this point Josiah Gregg, an American trader who lived much in New Mexico and Chihuahua between 1831 and 1840, is enlightening.

The *estribos* or stirrups are usually made of either bent or mortized wood, fancifully carved, over which are fastened the *tapaderas* or coverings of leather to protect the toes. Formerly the stirrups constituted a completed slipper, which superseded [sic] the use of *tapaderas*.³

So far as written records show, it is in the 1820s, the decade in which traders and trappers began pushing out boldly from Missouri into the Great Plains, that we find the first evidence of Americans putting the saddletree of Mexico to their own use. To cover rapidly the immense

FIGURE 26.—“Catching Wild Horses,” by William Ranney, 1846. During the latter 1840s and early 1850s William Ranney (1813-1857) produced numerous paintings depicting life on the prairies. Long neglected, he is now regarded as a significant interpreter of the Western scene. As far as is known, easterner Ranney's only personal contact with the West came in 1836, when he went to Texas and bore arms in the struggle for independence from Mexico. From that experience, some think, Ranney may have drawn inspiration for later work such as the one seen here. As it stands, we can only wonder whether the style of saddle depicted here in such detail, represents the sort of thing that came under the artist's own eye in the West.





FIGURE 27.—Thornton Grimsley, St. Louis saddler from 1822 to 1861.

open stretches west of the ninety-eighth meridian, where rivers were few and, apart from the Missouri, unnavigable, Americans had to resort to horse or mule. Amidst the Great Plains environment the Mexican saddletree offered marked advantages. There it was a vital necessity that all of one's equipage be of a sort that could endure, with relatively simple maintenance, the prolonged exposure, endless pounding, and inevitable accidents that were part of life on the trail. To all of these conditions the Mexican tree was, from the manner of its construction alone, far better suited than was its English counterpart. Again, in terms of design, the deep seat of the Mexican tree offered much greater security than the flat English variety to a rider traversing jumbled country, careering after the shaggy buffalo, sticking out the buck-jumps of a fractious mustang.

To whatever extent they may have known of it before the 1820s, certainly more and more Americans became acquainted with the saddle of Mexico as a result of the Santa Fe trade, established in 1821. Sojourning in New Mexico

and in Mexico itself, American traders saw the article in daily use. And outlanders in need of riding gear in those regions had little choice but to acquire the native version. Thus George C. Sibley, United States commissioner for the survey and marking of the Santa Fe trail, bought at Taos, New Mexico, in 1825, "Spanish riding saddles" to outfit a party of homeward-bound employees.⁴ And so, through use by returning Americans and also, to be sure, by Mexican merchants who braved the trail, the Mexican saddle made its appearance in the Missouri settlements. It may be that, as has occasionally been asserted, some traders hauled quantities of Mexican saddletrees or saddles entire up from New Mexico with a view to selling them in Missouri. I do not know, however, of any proofs to that effect and what little evidence I have seen suggests that such importation, if it did take place, could hardly have been very profitable.

Apparently by the middle 1820s, certainly in the latter years of that decade, at least one American saddlemaker, Thornton Grimsley,⁵ was producing at Saint Louis, Missouri, a saddle termed "Spanish." Although this saddle seems to have differed markedly from the Mexican article in most respects, its tree was patterned on that of Mexico, horn and all. Records of the Saint Louis-based Western Department of the American Fur Company show that as early as 1828 the company occasionally acquired the locally-made Spanish saddle for use by members of its field units. At that time the firm would obtain Spanish saddletrees and sometimes complete saddles from Jesse Pritchett, an American maker who lived not far from Saint Louis, possibly in Saint John's Township, Franklin County, Missouri. The trees it acquired from Pritchett the American Fur Company would turn over to Grimsley to be fitted out.

In the middle 1820s, according to Thornton Grimsley, American trappers took the Saint Louis-made Spanish saddle into the fur trade of the Rocky Mountains. It was then that William H. Ashley and Jedediah S. Smith, his lieutenant, turned away from the Missouri River, the traditional route to the mountains, and showed the practicality and utility of taking caravans of mounted men and supply-laden pack animals



FIGURE 28.—“Reaching Camp, Removing the Saddles,” by Alfred Jacob Miller, 1837. The Scottish sportsman Capt. William Drummond Stewart along with Miller (1810-1874), a young American artist in his employ, travelled west over the Oregon Trail with the American Fur Company’s annual spring caravan to the Rockies in 1837. The many field sketches Miller made during that journey constitute a momentous pictorial record of the mountain men, the Indians, and the scenery of the Far West. In the example shown, the artist has caught the essence of life on the trail. Note the high horns of the saddles lying in the grass in the foreground.

overland from Missouri direct to the central Rockies. In a letter to Maj. Joshua B. Brant, army quartermaster at Saint Louis, dated 24 April 1833, Grimsley stated that Ashley had been the first to take the locally produced Spanish saddle into the fur trade and that he had supplied the saddles Ashley used (see Appendix, this paper). Grimsley said, too, that he had furnished saddles of the same kind to Smith and two other Ashley associates, David E. Jackson and William L. Sublette, after they bought out Ashley in 1826 to operate together in the mountain trade, as they did until 1830.

There seems to be no reason to doubt Grimsley’s claims. From 1822 he had been engaged continuously in the saddlery trade at Saint Louis. As records show, Smith, Jackson & Sublette did order from Grimsley, through Ashley, substantial amounts of saddlery in 1829 and 1830. Grimsley’s statement, moreover, was

made in an effort to obtain an army supply contract. As he surely realized (and, indeed, must have hoped) his letter was practically certain to be examined by officials of the War Department in Washington, D.C. And there Ashley, who was then a member of Congress, could be reached easily for verification.

Although the American-made Spanish saddle was surely used in the fur trade of the Rockies, the extent to which it was employed is uncertain. Wintering in New Mexico as some American trappers often did and ranging as far as northern Mexico and California, numbers of them were thoroughly exposed to authentic Mexican saddlery and some may well have come to prefer it. Some, on the other hand, seem to have taken up Indian-made horse equipage. In any case, such were the lives of mountain men that, whatever their preferences, many must often enough have found themselves using

whatever sort of saddle was within reach. Some of them were quite capable of improvising a saddle of sorts out of raw materials if occasion demanded.

The records of the Western Department of the American Fur Company throw some light upon the saddlery preferences of its field forces. During the 1830s, when the mountain fur trade was at its height, this powerful firm purchased many saddles in Saint Louis for its own personnel, for numerous others with whom it had business dealings of one sort or another, and also for trade to Indians. These saddles were of three principal sorts: Spanish, English, and, as they went down in the bulky ledgers, "Indian." The latter, whatever they may have been like, fall outside of the present inquiry. Of the other two types, the Spanish saddle was procured a good deal more often than the English. Although it is generally quite difficult to do so, one can on occasion determine the kinds of saddles that the American Fur Company obtained for

FIGURE 29.—An extraordinary contributor to the pictorial record of the wild West was Rudolph Friedrich Kurz (1818-1871), who lived in America from 1846 to 1852. The young Swiss artist drew pictures, invaluable for their detail, of almost everyone and everything he saw during a sojourn on the Upper Missouri in 1851-1852. Note his fine rendering of a western saddle with D-shaped metal stirrups. This sketch was made on 7 September 1851, at Fort Union, an important trading post of the American Fur Company sited near the confluence of the Missouri and the Yellowstone rivers.



the express use of those who served it. In such cases the Spanish saddle was a clear favorite. In the late summer of 1831, for an extreme example, company representative Lucien Fontenelle, about to depart from Saint Louis with supplies for the firm's trapper brigades in the Rockies, received Spanish saddles for all thirty of the mounted men in his caravan. Although direct evidence is scanty, the preference of mountain men who served other firms was probably little different from that of American Fur Company employees when outfitting in and near Saint Louis. It is known that in 1834 Nathaniel J. Wyeth, already experienced in the mountain trade and then readying for an all-out effort to conquer a place in it, instructed his outfitters at Liberty, Missouri, to procure "riding saddles, Spanish," for him and all his party.⁶

St. Louis was not the only place within America's western boundaries where Spanish-tree saddles were being made. At least by the early 1830s, trees on Mexican lines were being made in southwestern Louisiana and, it appears, at least the capability to produce them was then widespread in the Mississippi Valley. In 1833 when cavalry soldiers (termed dragoons) were about to join the ranks of the United States Army for the first time since the War of 1812, Lt. Col. Stephen W. Kearny and Maj. Richard B. Mason, both of whom had been stationed on the western frontier, recommended as best suited for service there a saddletree patterned on that of Mexico. Presenting to War Department officials a specimen horned tree, one which had been made, they said, in Louisiana's Attakapas region, the two officers remarked that trees such as this could be turned out "in any part of the Western country."⁷ By the late 1830s Spanish-tree saddles were being turned out at various places in the West and were also being manufactured in steadily growing volume in eastern cities such as Philadelphia and Newark, New Jersey, destined for sale as "ready-made" articles in saddlery shops and general stores in the West and South.

It was, as he noted in his journal, astride a borrowed army horse wearing a "Spanish saddle with holsters" that John James Audubon set out from the steamboat *Omega* to visit a camp of United States dragoons beside the upper Mis-

souri River in 1843.⁸ The saddle that the renowned naturalist used on that occasion (and which, as a veteran wilderness traveler, he recognized at once) was then standard equipment for the dragoons.

Ten years earlier the War Department had approved Lieutenant Colonel Kearny's and Major Mason's recommendation that the army's then-new mounted corps should use a saddle with a tree in the Mexican style. Soon afterward, in his letter of 24 April 1833, to Major Brant, Thornton Grimsley had solicited a contract to provide saddles for the dragoons, pointing out that the Spanish saddle, such as he could provide, had "great superiority" for frontier service (see Appendix). And on 27 June 1833, Grimsley had been issued a contract for the initial supply of 715 saddles (see Appendix). The saddles received by the dragoons were as specified in the contract. They had flaps in the English style rather than Grimsley's removable "schabrack" and differed from what he had proposed in certain other details, described elsewhere herein.

Continuously for the 11 years following 1833, the dragoons used the Spanish saddle for western border duty and campaigns in Florida. The army procured its dragoon saddles at Saint Louis until 1836 and then, because of complaints about the quality of the article received there, shifted its trade to Philadelphia. In 1844 the War Department dropped the Spanish saddle for the dragoons in favor of a bungling imitation of a brass-bound saddle in fashion among soldiers across the Atlantic.

In the great burst of emigration that began in the 1840s, when Americans in very large numbers poured across the Great Plains to settle in Oregon and California, some of them came to know the Spanish saddle as produced in Saint Louis and in other trail-outfitting points, such as Liberty and Independence, on the lower Missouri River. John C. Frémont, whose drama-clothed explorations did much to spread knowledge of the Far West, obtained Spanish saddles as a matter of course in outfitting his expeditions during the early and the middle 1840s.

Sarah J. Cummins, who as an eighteen-year-old girl emigrated with her family to Oregon

in 1845, recalled long afterward the moment when she placed her "new Spanish saddle that was bought for me in St. Louis, on my strong and trusty young nag, and, with parting tears and good-byes, we dared the wilderness and the desert."⁹ In 1846 the aristocratic Francis Parkman and his cousin, Quincy Adams Shaw, traveling the Oregon Trail in search of uncorrupted Indians, each bestrode a "plain, black Spanish saddle, with holsters of heavy pistols, [and] a blanket rolled up behind."¹⁰

The popular term "Spanish saddle" served to distinguish any one of a rather sizable family of saddles having in common a tree modelled on Mexican lines. There was a great variety in housings and fittings, even in the details of the tree itself. This diversity was occasioned by variations in the skill and artistry of craftsmen, regional preferences, and requirements of individual buyers.

When we attempt to say just what the American-made Spanish saddle of the first half of the nineteenth century looked like, there is little to go on. Although a few Westward-bound Americans saw a need to preserve details regarding primitive Indian horse equipage, most such travelers seem to have found, as a whole, little reason to record the makeup of such prosaic articles as the saddles they themselves used. Rarely encountered in the literature of Far Western travel and in that of the fur trade is the kind of information that is necessary for a clear idea of saddlery. The same limitation applies, although to not quite such an extent, to the pictorial record left by those few artists who early pushed beyond the Mississippi. And of those things by which so many questions would be answered—well-documented examples of the American-made Spanish saddle—it must be admitted that not one is known to us.

Written and pictorial records afford useful insights into the nature of the American-made Spanish trees. In his letter of 24 April 1833, Thornton Grimsley said that size was the only material difference between the Spanish tree such as he used and its Mexican progenitor. He described the former as being

longer and better proportioned for the Horses of the US than those constructed in the spanish country would be: for the simple reason that in the latter case

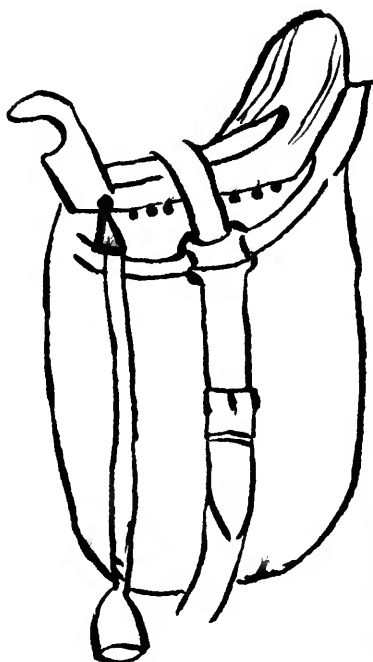


FIGURE 30 (left).—The teamster's saddle that the U.S. Army adopted as part of regulation wagon harness in 1854, as sketched in a draft of army harness specifications prepared in 1864.

FIGURE 31 (right).—An enlarged portion of a photograph taken of a Union army camp at some time during the Civil War, in which can be seen with a fair degree of clarity the army wagon saddle of that time with its Attakapas tree.

they are calculated for small horses and mules and are made very narrow which renders them unsafe and even useless for the horses in this country unless they are so low in flesh as not to be in a usable condition.

Aside from this, Grimsley continued, the two trees were alike even to the solid fork and rawhide cover, "so strong that no horse or mule can when exerting his utmost strength brake them in any part."

Army wagon harness specifications of the 1840s and 1850s throw light upon the configuration of the American-made Spanish tree of that time. Part of the "jerk-line" harness employed in wagoning of the heavier sort was a riding saddle, termed a wagon saddle, for the use of the wagoner or teamster. Up to 1845 the wagon saddle used by the army had a tree on English lines. In that year (very soon, it is strange to note, after dropping the Spanish tree from dragoon horse equipment) the military adopted a wagon saddle built, as the official specifica-

tions ran, "on Spanish tree."¹¹ The change was made for increased durability, to withstand the very worst that men, mules, and nature could mete out. From a crude sketch (Figure 30) of the new wagon saddle, included in a draft of harness specifications drawn up in the office of the Army quartermaster at Philadelphia in 1846, we obtain a fairly good idea of the Spanish tree, noting its tall, slender horn, and high, steep-pitched cantle (and the absence of an English style padded seat). The tree was to be covered with "leather partly tanned," that is, rawhide.¹²

In 1858, for reasons unknown, the army ceased referring to the tree of its wagon saddle as Spanish. According to harness specifications which were issued in that year and which went unchanged through the Civil War and beyond, the saddle was to be "on Attakapas tree."¹³ In an enlarged portion of a photograph of a Union army camp during the Civil War (Figure 31),

the Attakapas-tree wagon saddle is visible upon the near wheel animal of a six-mule team. Upon comparing this photographic view with the sketch in Figure 30, one is led to believe that the only difference between the tree the army knew as Spanish in 1845 and that which it termed Attakapas in 1858 was one of terminology (see also Figure 24). It also seems likely that the saddle tree that the army designated as Attakapas in 1858 was directly related to the tree that, a quarter of a century earlier, the two army officers, Kearny and Mason, had presented at the War Department—one made, as they said, “in the Atakapas, Louisiana, but can be made in any part of the Western country.”

In the Spanish saddle as produced at Saint Louis, English influence seems to have run for a long time so strong that, apart from the shape of the tree, with its high cantle and horned pommel, the article bore probably little resemblance to western saddles of later times. The impression is one of a saddle with a tree modelled on that of Mexico but characterized otherwise by a padded seat and padding under the tree as in the English riding saddle, by flaps and girthing in the English mode, and by the D-shaped metal stirrups common to saddles used in English-speaking America from the earliest times. One can but theorize as to why, if this concept is accurate, so many English features were retained. It can hardly be that Mexican saddle furnishings were wholly unknown in Saint Louis. For a time in 1828 Thornton Grimsley advertised in the *Missouri Republican* a “schabrack saddle,” by which he meant a saddle with a removable housing known as a schabrack covering the tree. That Grimsley’s “schabrack” was in reality a form of the Mexican *mochila* is shown by his letter of 24 April 1833 (see Appendix), wherein he described it as a “leather cover exactly on the spanish plan.”

The seeming persistence of English influence in the Saint Louis-made Spanish saddle may be accounted for partly in that the ways of the saddlemakers of that city, pivot of Far Western trade though it was, tended to remain those of settled America. As newspaper advertisements attest, the Spanish saddle and the English saddle were made side by side in Saint Louis shops. There, and especially in the 1820s and 1830s,

when the numbers of Americans journeying into the Far West were relatively slight, the makers must surely have regarded the Spanish saddle as almost a novelty, an article with appeal to only a very small proportion of the market. With the possible exception of Thornton Grimsley, they probably saw little reason under the circumstances to change of their own volition any more than was necessary from the tried and true.

In addition to the conservatism of saddlers, another factor perhaps contributing to the apparent character of the Saint Louis-made Spanish saddle was the outlook of the men who bought it. Many of them must have been altogether accustomed to the English saddle and only recently or newly concerned with Far Western travel. Having come to believe in the superiority of the Mexican tree, they accepted it, innovation though it was. On the other hand, they probably saw nothing to be gained by adopting outright the whole of Mexican saddle trappings, which must have been strange and cumbersome in their eyes. In the Spanish saddle as made at Saint Louis, English characteristics seem to have endured well into the middle years of the nineteenth century. In the Missouri market deep-seated preference for the English style could affect even the Spanish tree itself. Commencing probably in the late 1830s there appeared a saddletree in which, while the horn was still prominent, there was a combination of elements of the Spanish and English trees. This hybrid was called “half Spanish,” in contrast to what was then sometimes referred to as the “full Spanish” tree.

Once fully aware of the realities of Plains travel, American horsemen appear to have dispensed with certain English features of the Saint Louis-made Spanish saddle. Under hard use, seat padding and underpadding were apt to fall quickly into disrepair and, leagues from any saddler’s shop, were troublesome to restore. In the Spanish saddles used by the United States dragoons, seat padding was omitted from the outset in spite of Thornton Grimsley’s recommendation that it be adopted. Upon his arrival in Saint Louis in June 1833 with full authority to settle all design details of the service saddle, Lieutenant Colonel Kearny insisted—whether because of personal experience or

I. LANDIS,



Main Street, St. Louis,
(Three doors above the Bank of the
United States)

MANUFACTURES and keeps constantly
for sale an extensive assortment of
SADDLERY AND HARNESS:

Comprising nearly every kind, and of a **GOOD QUALITY**. Gentlemen's saddles of the latest approved style, as well as common and plain men's saddles; Spanish and boy's saddles; side-saddles, carpet bags, bridles, martingales, harness, military accoutrements, hames, collars, coach, gig, & dray harness; trunks and valises, and generally every article in his line will be made at the shortest notice, and in the most durable manner.

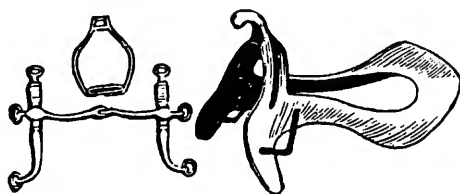
He hopes that **GOOD WORK AND REDUCED PRICES** will ensure him a liberal share of public patronage.

Persons from the country visiting St. Louis to supply themselves with any of the above articles, are invited to call before purchasing elsewhere.
Aug. 21.

Thomas & Miller,

RESPECTFULLY inform their friends and the public in general, that they have commenced the **SADDLE, HARNESS & TRUNK** business, between the *Union and Missouri Hotels*, Main street, St. Louis, Mo. sign of the Spanish Saddle. They intend carrying it on in all its various branches, and keeping a constant supply of gentlemen's Spanish and American Saddles, both quilted and plain. Also, Ladies Saddles, consisting of quilted, quilted fore pieces, buck skin, plush and plush ives, gig, coach and dearbon harness, of every description, plated, brass or black mounting, black and fair leather bridles and martingales, all kinds of travelling, fancy and hair trunks, saddlebags, valieces, carpet bags and portmantaus. Dray, wagon and cart harness, blind bridles, collars, haines, and every other article in their line, coach, gig and loaded whips of every description, and switch whips of the best quality.

All orders in their line thankfully received and punctually attended to.
July 13.



J. B. SICKLES & CO.
MANUFACTURERS OF SADDLERY,
AND IMPORTERS OF
SADDLERY-HARDWARE,
NO. 140, MAIN STREET, ST. LOUIS,
OPPOSITE THE BANK OF MISSOURI.

They have constantly on hand, an extensive assortment of Saddles, Bridles, Martingales, Harness, Trunks, Valises, Carpet-bags, Bits, Stirrups, Harness Furniture, Leather, Webb, &c.

FIGURE 32.—Purveyors of saddlery and harness could anticipate a brisk demand for their wares in bustling Saint Louis, great emporium of the trans-Mississippi West during much of the nineteenth century. The two advertisements at the top appeared in Saint Louis newspapers in an age when the outside front page was still devoted to such matters: that of Thomas & Miller in the *Evening Herald and Commercial Advertiser* of 5 October 1834, and that of Israel Landis in the *Missouri Argus* of 6 November 1835. The advertisement of J. B. Sickles & Co. appeared in the Saint Louis directory for 1842. In it is shown an illustration of the "half Spanish" saddletree.

through foresight is not clear—that the seat be left bare. The dragoons would sit upon a blanket, "properly folded" and secured by a surcingle atop the tree.¹⁴ The use of some such cushioning material atop the bare tree but sepa-

rate from it appears to have been common practice among American equestrians engaged for any length of time in Far Western travel. The custom of mountain men, as depicted in their natural habitat by Alfred Jacob Miller in 1837,

was to deck the saddle with a rope or a blanket or both, articles useful not only to ride upon but for bedding and wearing apparel as well.

Many of the Spanish saddles that the American Fur Company obtained at Saint Louis in the 1830s seem to have had padding on the undersurfaces of the sideboards, at least at the time of purchase. Far removed from the mountains themselves, some of the fur trade nabobs of Saint Louis may have looked upon such cushioning as a likely means of preserving horseflesh and, so, of holding down expenses. One who took their advice was Lieutenant Colonel Kearny. As he wrote in July 1833 to his superiors in Washington, "after conversing with some of the traders, who yearly send parties to the mountains, & seeing letters from others, on the subject of saddles suited to that particular service, I was induced . . . to direct, those made for the dragoons to be padded, in order to protect the horses back."¹⁵

In actual service, however, underpadding proved a distinct hindrance to the dragoons. Reporting in 1835 on the 76 saddles on hand in his company, Capt. David Hunter observed, "I do not think there will be one fit for another campaign, unless they are repadded. I have had them unstuffed several times, but the pad is now so completely decayed as not to admit of its being done again."¹⁶ The army dropped underpadding in favor of a saddle blanket within a few years. Mountain men seem always to have preferred placing beneath their saddles a blanket, a bearskin, or a square piece of buffalo robe, the latter being known, in the various spellings of fur trade literature, as an apishamore, epishamore, apishemeau, or opishomo.

If we are correct in our assumptions regarding the nature of the Spanish saddle that Americans evolved as a result of their early probings beyond the Mississippi Valley frontier, then certainly their saddlery preferences underwent a pronounced change as the nineteenth century neared midpoint. Arriving in ever-growing numbers in the Far West subsequent to the rapid conquest of New Mexico and California in 1846, Americans were introduced to the whole of Mexican horse equipage and proceeded forthwith to make much of it their own. Many of the volunteer soldiers who marched down the Santa Fe Trail to seize New Mexico



FIGURE 33.—"Damn a mule, any how!" quoth Private James Peacock, of the First Missouri Mounted Volunteers, striving to get his refractory beast underway for another day's march. Thus a comrade saw Peacock on the morning of 6 May 1847, with an American military expedition deep in rugged northern Mexico. The western saddle saw much use by American mounted volunteer soldiers in the conflict between the United States and Mexico.

arrived there on American-made Spanish saddles. They marveled at the New Mexicans' feats of horsemanship and lusted for the fancy leatherwork and rich metal fittings with which saddles were embellished there. Adventuring in Taos in 1847, youthful Lewis H. Garrard was moved to purchase from one Le Fevre a saddle from below the Rio Grande. "It came," he recalled, "from Chihuahua originally—high cantle and pommel, with ponderous, fancifully carved wooden stirrups. It suited me well, and I paid a high price for it, though I thought it cheap. It was certainly worth nine dollars, and the sight of Le Fevre's daughter made me consider the remaining nine as nothing."¹⁷

The Americans who thronged into California in 1849 and after in quest of gold found the Mexican populace there, just as in New Mexico, using the saddle of their motherland. Among the *Californios* saddle decoration had attained, it is said, a magnificence unmatched elsewhere in Mexico's border regions. Americans took to much of the native horse equipage with enthusiasm. In the riding qualities of the California tree they found such excellence that within a few years its fame had spread far and wide over western America. As Arthur Woodward points out, the *mochila* gained special attention through its use by the almost legendary Pony Express riders in 1860–61. Where speed



FIGURE 34.—A nice specimen of the Mexican saddler's craft, this saddle was brought home by Franklin Pierce (destined to become fourteenth President of the United States) upon his return from service, 1847-1848, as a brigadier general in the war between the United States and Mexico. The leather parts are embellished with stamping and silver embroidery. The horn and pommel are encased in lustrous white metal and the cantle has a molding of the same material. A non-Mexican addition, doubtless installed by an American saddler at the request of Pierce or another, are plain flaps with knee-pads, one of which is visible in this off-side view.



FIGURE 35.—Jefferson Davis (later president of the Confederate States of America) used this western saddle on active service, 1846-1847, as colonel of the First Mississippi Rifles, in the war between the United States and Mexico. The back of the cantle is marked "BLUNN and WALKER. Saddlers / Austin." This is the earliest Texas-made saddle of which we have knowledge. The stirrups were made by Davis himself.



FIGURE 36.—The tree of this much-worn saddle was made at Sacramento, California, about 1856. Breakage of the rawhide cover has made visible a paper label pasted to the wood of the cantle and imprinted "BUDD & LEHMAN / (Late D. RANSOM), / SACRAMENTO." Duke Ransom operated a saddlery and harness shop in Saint Louis during most of the 1840s. Commencing evidently in 1854 Ransom produced saddletrees in Sacramento. Budd and Lehman succeeded to his tree-making business in 1856. Note the stirrup, carved from a solid block of hardwood.

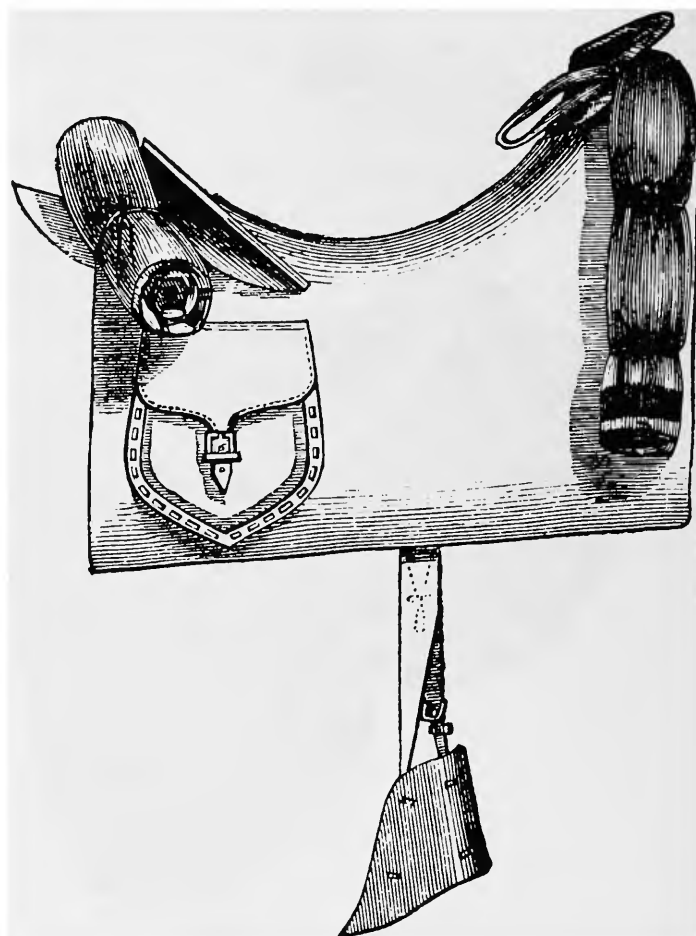


FIGURE 37.—This illustration from a handbook for travelers to the West depicts the California saddle as the one used by many over much of the American West during the 1850s and 1860s. The author, drawing upon his quarter century of experience on the western frontier, recommended it as possessing "at least as many advantages for rough frontier service as any other pattern that has been invented." The leather loop depending from the horn was a means of carrying a rifle (see Figure 33).



FIGURE 38.—“A Forty-niner,” by John Woodhouse Audubon, 1849. The artist, a son of the celebrated naturalist, led a company of gold seekers on a grueling journey overland from the Rio Grande across northern Mexico to California in 1849. A skilled artist in his own right, young Audubon made a number of pencil drawings and watercolors along the way. In this one we see a member of the party and two of their horses. Although both the saddles certainly qualify as western saddles, they differ from one another in many details. As this picture denotes, the party went well armed.



FIGURE 39.—“Don José Andres Sepúlveda,” by Henri Penelon, 1856. The subject is portrayed on horseback—a pose befitting the lordly owner of Rancho San Joaquin, resident of the Pueblo de Los Angeles, and devotee of fast horses and elaborate dress. The artist appears to have taken special pains with the lavish embroidery on the *mochila*, *anquera*, and *tapaderos*. The horn and cantle of the California saddle are embellished with white metal as is the bridle.





FIGURE 41.—Trustworthy in its details is this contemporary depiction of a Pony Express rider by the accomplished California pioneer artist, Charles C. Nahl (1819-1878). Entitled "Swimming the Storm-Swollen Stream," it appeared as an illustration in *Hutchings' California Magazine* of July 1860.

FIGURE 40.—Very few *mochilas* appear to have survived the wear and tear of the years. This example, stamped "T. GRIMSLEY & CO. / MAKERS / ST. LOUIS, MO." in six places, dates no earlier than 1850. In that year Thornton Grimsley was associated with his son John J. Grimsley and his son-in-law George L. Stansbury under the firm of T. Grimsley & Company. The *mochila* is of thick board-like leather, finished black. Overall dimensions are 28¾ by 48 inches (73 x 121.9 cm).

was vital, this leather housing could be snatched from one man's saddle and clapped upon another in a matter of moments. The Pony Express men used a *mochila* fitted with four pockets—*cantinas*—one in front of and one behind each of the rider's legs. In the *cantinas*, under lock and key, rode the mail.

When we compare the saddles illustrated in Figures 42 and 43, we gain a vivid sense of the apparent transformation in saddlery tastes that took place among American equestrians in the



FIGURE 42.—Produced probably during the 1850s, this saddle exhibits almost all of the presumed characteristics of the Spanish saddle as turned out by American makers in Saint Louis. The wing-like projections behind the flaps, simulating a separate saddle cloth, are dark blue cloth, faced with dark brown leather, and bound with red leather. Judging from its manner of construction, the saddle cannot have been intended for hard use and must have sold relatively cheap. (See also Figure 67.)



FIGURE 43.—Made by Edward L. Gallatin, this superbly decorated saddle, seen here without its *mochila*, was presented to Col. Jesse H. Leavenworth, of the Second Colorado Volunteers, by his officers and friends at Denver, Colorado, on 4 December 1862.



FIGURE 44.—Tooled in each corner of the skirts and atop the horn of this saddle is the Lone Star emblem of Texas. Stamped in capital letters between the points of each star is the word TEXAS. The saddle belonged to Robert E. Lee and was used by him, according to family recollection, "just before the Civil War." As lieutenant colonel of the Second U.S. Cavalry, Lee was stationed in Texas during much of 1856-1857 and again in 1860-1861. The saddle is marked "E. L. Hopkins." Present with the saddle is a martingale, decorated with a heart-shaped device of brass.

Far West in the middle 1800s. Undocumented though it is, the saddle in Figure 42 (see Figure 67 for additional views) is unquestionably of American manufacture and was turned out probably during the 1850s. Only in its stirrups and tree covering (coarse cloth, much simpler to apply and so cheaper than rawhide) does this example depart from the seeming characteristics of the Spanish saddle as produced at Saint Louis. The seat padding, underpadding, and girthing all follow English lines.

The Leavenworth presentation saddle shown in Figure 43 (see also Figure 69 for additional views) was turned out in 1862 at Denver, Colorado, by Edward L. Gallatin.¹⁸ It is founded, as its maker recounted, upon "the California saddle tree"¹⁹ and it shows much of Mexican influence throughout. Especially when seen, as in Figure 43, without its *mochila*, Gallatin's product of 116 years ago bears in the overall a strikingly modern look when viewed side by side with the saddle in Figure 42. Although both, in that they have horned trees, are of the western saddle type, and despite a probability that they are nearly contemporaneous in their dates of manufacture, these two saddles stand clearly an age removed from one another in terms of design.

The California saddletree unquestionably was popular in the West but it was not without a competitor, however, at least so far as Texans were concerned. This competition came from a horned tree known generally to Texans by the term "Hope"; non-Texans appear to have called it, more often than not, simply the "Texas" tree. Its devotees would hear of no other. In the mining regions of California in 1851, Sam Ward—later to gain fame as "King of the Lobby" in the national capitol—found Texans singing the praises of the incomparable Hope tree. As Ward put it, among the diggings, "the saddletree consisted . . . as in Mexico, of four pieces—a loggerhead [fork]), two side plates and a crupper [misnomer for cantle]. This style of saddle pervades even Texas, where, as in the Golden State, the work of certain masters is more highly prized than the goblets of Benvenuto Cellini. . . . The two rivals in public estimation were Hope of Texas and Graham of Santa Clara, whose naked trees would command from one to three ounces [of gold], either

of which, it must be acknowledged, is a 'fancy price.'"²⁰

Just when the Hope saddletree came into being, why it was called as it was, and whether its place of origin lay in Texas or elsewhere, all have yet to be determined. Americans, present in Texas continuously from the 1820s, were, in that environment, exposed quite early to Mexican saddlery. Their own saddles obviously took on Mexican features eventually but there is little to suggest how soon this began or the rate at which it progressed.

By 1840, according to Walter Prescott Webb, there existed on the Mexican border a considerable trade between Texans and Mexicans and among the wares that the latter brought to San Antonio were saddles. From 1836 to 1845, when Texas was an independent republic, its mounted rangers used, according to an authoritative memoir quoted by Webb, the "Mexican saddle, improved somewhat by the Americans."²¹ What was true of the Texas Rangers must also certainly have been the case with other frontier Texans of the 1830s and 1840s. Ferdinand Roemer, a German geologist who managed to see a good deal of Texas during a sojourn of eighteen months in 1846 and 1847, noted that the "Mexican type of saddles with high pommel and high backs" were in common use among the settlers.²²

By mid-century, then, a great many American users of the western saddle had come to regard it with a degree of sophistication. Certainly, the old all-encompassing term, Spanish saddle, could no longer suffice. Foreshadowing a steady proliferation of western saddle styles in the century's latter decades, there were the California saddle and the Hope (or Texas) saddle and the distinctions between them, now not altogether clear, were well understood then. The primary difference between the two lay unquestionably in the configuration of their trees. In 1860 both sorts came under the appraising eye of Sir Richard F. Burton, the British explorer and orientalist, as he made the long trek between Saint Joseph, Missouri, and San Francisco. Burton's observations provide at least a clue to the distinctions between saddle types. "The civilised saddle," he found, "in these lands varies with every region." With great detail he observed:

The Texan is known by its circular seat; a string passed round the tree forms a ring: provided with flaps after the European style it is considered easy and comfortable. The Californian is rather oval than circular; borrowed and improved from the Mexican, it has spread from the Pacific to the Atlantic slope of the Rocky Mountains, and the hardy and experienced mountaineer prefers it to all others. . . . The tree rests upon a "sweat-leather," a padded sheet covering the back, and it is finished off behind with an "anchero" of the same material protecting the loins. The pommel is high, like the crutch of a woman's saddle, rendering impossible, under pain of barking the knuckles, that rule of good riding which directs the cavalier to keep his hands low. . . .

The whole saddle is covered with a *machila*, here usually pronounced *macheer*, two pieces of thick leather handsomely and fancifully worked or stamped, joined by a running thong in the centre, and open to admit the pommel and cantle. If too long, it draws in the stirrup leathers, and cramps the ankles of any but a bowlegged man. The *machila* is sometimes garnished with pockets, always with straps behind to secure a valise, and a cloak can be fastened over the pommel, giving purchase and protection to the knees. . . .

The advantages of this equipment are obvious; it is easier to horse and man probably than any yet invented. On the other hand, the quality of leather renders it expensive: without silver or other ornaments, the price would vary from \$25 at San Francisco to \$50 at G[reat]. S[alt]. L[ake]. City, and the highly got-up rise to \$250=50£. for a saddle! If the saddlecloth slips out, and this is an accident which frequently occurs, the animal's back will be galled. The stirrup-leathers cannot be shortened or lengthened without dismounting, and without leggings the board-like leather *macheer* soon makes the *mollets* [calves of the legs] innocent of skin. The pommel is absolutely dangerous: during my short stay in the country I heard of two accidents, one fatal, caused by the rider being thrown forward on his fork. . . .

[The] stirrup is sensibly made of wood. In the Eastern states it is a lath bent somewhat in the shape of the dragoon form, and has too little weight: the Californian article is cut out of a solid block of wood, mountain mahogany being the best, then maple, and lastly the softer pine and cotton-wood. In some parts of the country it is made so narrow that only the toe fits in, and then the instep is liable to be bruised. For riding through bush and thorns, it is provided in front with *zapateros* [misnomer for *tapaderos*] or leathern curtains, secured to the straps above, and to the wood on both sides; they are curiously made, and the size, like that of the Turk's lantern,²³ denotes the owner's fashionableness; dandies may be seen with the pointed angles of their stirrup-guards dangling almost to the ground. The article was borrowed from Mexico—the land of character dresses.²⁴

In 1856 the firm of Rice & Childress, then

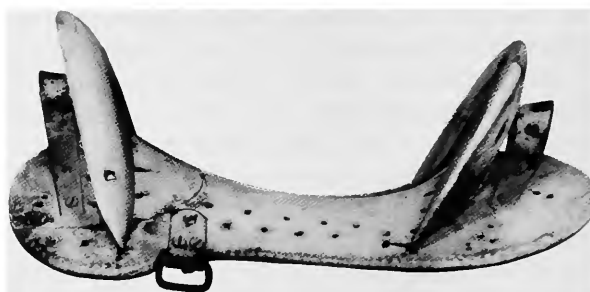


FIGURE 45.—The McClellan saddletree, regulation for United States horse soldiers from 1859 down to World War II, bore—apart from its lack of a horn—a decided resemblance to the western saddletree of the middle 1800s. The example seen here (now lacking the standard rawhide cover) was made during the Civil War. (cf. the "Spanish" tree, Figure 24.)

producing the Hope saddle at San Antonio, Texas, sought to have it tried by the Second United States Cavalry, which had recently taken station on the Texas frontier. In support of this effort there arrived at the War Department missives in which numerous Texans recited personal experiences with the Hope saddle. These documents, comprising an interesting chapter in the history of the western saddle, are quoted in the Appendix.

The War Department, already considering the merits of several saddles proposed for cavalry use, purchased about 400 Hope saddles from Rice & Childress in 1857–1858. The Second Cavalry used them in hard field service, was delighted with them, and said so. For all that, it was not the Hope saddle that the War Department finally settled upon in 1859.

The saddle adopted for United States cavalry in 1859 was one that a promising young captain, George B. McClellan, had submitted for trial. In 1855 the War Department had sent him overseas to observe the Crimean War and to ascertain the best features of European cavalry equipment. Back in America in 1856 McClellan obtained permission to have made, under his personal supervision, a new saddle, one which he claimed, and everyone expected, would embody the most advanced features of European design. Just how it came about remains obscure (McClellan was close-mouthed about it afterward) but the saddle that he produced,



FIGURE 46.—Like many Civil War cavalymen, North and South, Private Luther H. North, of the Second Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry, here pictured on his horse Billy, used a western saddle. The photograph was made on 6 March 1863 (North's seventeenth birthday) at the Pawnee Indian reservation on the Loup River, Nebraska Territory. Late in life, North recalled that the saddle he used on this occasion was "probably borrowed, as I afterward used one of the heavier Mexican or California type." Note the *anquerita*, a diminutive form of the *anquera*.

which the War Department went on to adopt, bore little direct resemblance to anything in use across the Atlantic.

In the form of its tree (except for lack of a horn), its rigging, and its bent-wood stirrups complete with tapaderos, the army's new cavalry saddle bore to the western saddle a resemblance so striking that it can scarcely be ascribed to sheer coincidence. The McClellan saddle, as it has always been known, proved a tough, durable article, well suited to the rough and tumble of field service. Often the butt of grim humor (President Grover Cleveland is said to have opined—probably contemplating those abrupt seat lines—that it seemed to have been constructed especially for the enlargement of the pension list),²⁵ the saddle nevertheless served American soldiers well, enduring as the principal element of United States cavalry horse equipment from the Civil War down to World War II.

In the Civil War the western saddle in various forms was used by numbers of cavalymen, North and South, sometimes through necessity but more often through preference. At the outset of the war, when the McClellan saddle was not yet in full production, Union authorities grabbed for anything with which to outfit the hosts of volunteer cavalymen coming into service. In the summer of 1861 a Union purchasing agent was glad to obtain from Betts, Nichols & Company several thousand western saddles such as that New York house had been producing for export to Texas. These, dubbed "ranger" saddles, were hurried to cavalry camps in the East and Midwest. They were only issued, however, as an emergency measure, and were generally replaced by the McClellan pattern at the first opportunity.

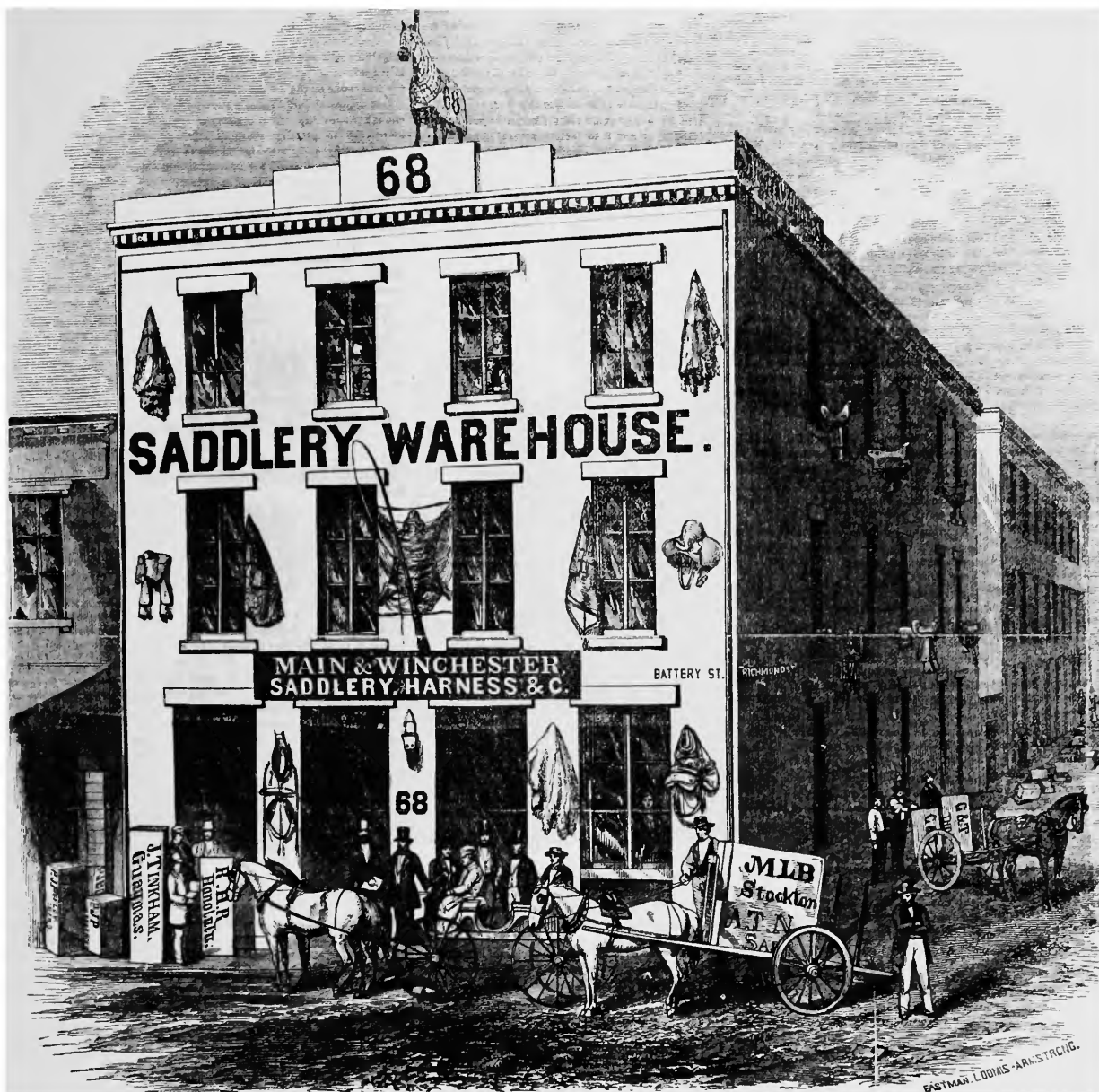
Union volunteer cavalry units raised in California in 1861 scorned to use any kind of saddle but the California variety, to which they were accustomed. It was obtained for them, complete with *mochila* and *anquera*, from Main & Winchester and other firms in San Francisco. Many of the California troopers still bestrode the California saddle in 1865 despite the hard use to which they had put their equipment in Arizona and New Mexico since 1862 and although the McClellan saddle had come into increasing use among them as the war progressed. To men

in need of leather the expansive *mochila* afforded temptation sometimes too much to resist. As an officer of the First California Cavalry complained from a remote New Mexico post in 1864, "Private G. W. Wiley says he cut up his machere to make mocasins for his horse. . . . Private G. S. Parker says he lost his machere . . . alledges it was stolen."²⁶

In 1863 Lt. Col. Sir Arthur James Lyon Fremantle of the British army's Coldstream Guards crossed the Rio Grande into Texas for an unofficial tour of the Confederate States. Finding a Texas cavalry regiment encamped by the border, he paused to look it over. To Fremantle the Texans' approach to soldiering was a source of astonishment. None of them, he discovered, could ride in an English saddle. Neither could any of them jump a fence, as their colonel had to confess, no doubt wondering to himself why anyone should ask such a question in unfenced Texas. Despite such shortcomings the Texans were, Fremantle had to concede, "in their peculiar fashion . . . beautiful riders." All of them used, he noted, saddles "nearly like the Mexican."²⁷

Among Southern cavalry units raised west of the Mississippi, especially those formed in Texas, a great many of the men brought their own western saddles with them into the ranks. The Eighth Texas Cavalry, known generally as "Terry's Texas Rangers," and Lieutenant Colonel R. M. Gano's Battalion of Texas Cavalry, both of which served in eastern theaters almost throughout the war, used the western saddle in all their campaigns. Gano's Texans were merged into a Kentucky cavalry regiment in 1862. Later on, when saddlery supplies were very scarce in the Confederacy, several of the Texan troopers who had been saddletree makers at home made many western saddles for use by their comrades, both Texans and Kentuckians.

Shortly after the end of the Civil War, resourceful Texas ranchers began driving cattle out of their impoverished state toward markets in the North and the Rocky Mountain West. Along the flanks of the dusty columns of longhorns headed for the new railheads rode hardy young men, some still in tattered Confederate gray, sitting deep in their western trees, coiled lariats hung ready beside the fork. At hand was the day of the American cowboy, to last as



MAIN & WINCHESTER'S SADDLERY AND HARNESS WAREHOUSE: 214 AND 216 BATTERY STREET, SAN FRANCISCO.

FIGURE 47.—Charles Main and Ezra H. Winchester prospered from the time they went into business together as importers and manufacturers of saddlery and harness in San Francisco in 1849. This view of their establishment appeared in the *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences* of 12 September 1862. Before the picture could be published a fourth floor had been added to the brick and granite structure. Main & Winchester furnished many of the western saddles used by California volunteer troops on duty in the Southwest during the Civil War.



FIGURE 48.—Mustered into Confederate service at Houston in the summer of 1861, the men of the Eighth Texas Cavalry (better known as “Terry’s Texas Rangers”) furnished their own arms and equipment. Their preference ran to the double-barreled shotgun, the Bowie knife, at least two six-shooters per man and, as seen here, the western saddle. In this oil, done about 1864, Carl G. von Iwonski (c. 1830-1922) chose to depict four of Terry’s Rangers at a carefree canter. The central figure represents Ranger Samuel Maverick. Later, as a Texas rancher, he gave his name to maverick (unbranded) cattle. Perhaps the contents of the canteen Maverick holds on high have had a part in making this ride a joyful one.

long as the vast ranges and the huge cattle herds of the West lasted. “Oh, a ten-dollar hoss and a forty-dollar saddle, and I’m goin to punchin’ Texas cattle,” ran a stanza in one of his songs. To the American cowboy that western saddle was, indeed, both a vitally necessary work tool and a highly cherished possession.

To many it will probably always be known as the “cowboy” saddle. By any ordinary standard that would seem to be distinction enough. In

view of its history, however, it would seem to merit a title carrying a much broader meaning. As has been described, long years before a great range-cattle industry on the Plains was even dreamed of, this saddle was serving Americans well as they rode forth to fulfill a diversity of roles in the stupendous, untamed land that was the trans-Mississippi West. It can be called, with great justice, the western saddle, which is to say the saddle of western America.

Appendix

*Letter from Thornton Grimsley to Major Joshua B. Brant, Quartermaster, United States Army, proposing to furnish saddles for the First Regiment, United States Dragoons, 1833.*²⁸

St. Louis 24th Apl 1833

Dear Sir

In obedience to your request of this morning I herewith enclose you a description of the saddle on which I proposed to mount the U S Dragoons ordered to be raised for the defence of our fronteere.

The tree which may be termed the foundation is constructed of solid timber dressed to suitable thicknesses from the forks of treee selected for this purpose, and in shape is a complete moddle of the much admired spanish saddle, and is covered with raw hide which is put on them wet, and contracts by drying so as to confine every part of the tree compactly together, and renders it so strong that no horse or mule can when exerting his utmost strength brake them in any part. No difference is perceivable to those who are not practical mechanics at the saddling business between the shape of the saddle above mentioned and the real spanish saddle accept that those which I manufacture are longer and better proportioned for the Horses of the U S than those constructed in the spanish country would be: for the simple reason that in the latter case they are calculated for small horses and mules and are made very narrow which renders them unsafe and even useless for the horses in this country unless they are so low in flesh as not to be in a usable condition.

The construction of the seete and pad of the sample which I have made is similar to the common american saddle though the seete combines advantages of ease to the rider and affords facilities for repaires which the common ammerican saddle does not possess. A leather cover exactly on the spanish plan is thrown over the whole saddle which forms the scorts [skirts] and affords a complete protection to the under seete which is made of soft leather and linnen and is stuffed with wool, and it is on this [i.e., the cover] that the Holsters, and other apparatus necessary for the accommodation and convenience of the Dragoon is attached. This cover or schabbrack as it is called is made of thick heavy leather and protects the whole body of the saddle from the wet. The head [horn] and cantle of the tree passes through this cover and of course holds it snug in its place. On each side behind the holsters

the stirrup leather passes through it; so that the rider has from the senter of the seete to the extream lower edge of the scort a perfect smooth surface of leather to ride upon. The saddle treee now proposed to be used was first taken in to the trade to the mountains by Genl Ashley, and has since been continued by his successors: Smith Sublette and Jackson all of whom have tendered and would if I had deemed it necessary have given certificates of there great superiority over any other saddle Tree now in use for constant service.

The greate advantage to be gained by the government in the adoption of the above mentioned saddle . . . is; first there durability and safety to the horses backs as they have in many instances been rode and packed to the mountains and back again without any pad but simply using a blanket or a bairskin under them. . . .

I remain as every yours Truly

T. GRIMSLEY

Majr J. B. Brant

*Thornton Grimsley's contract to furnish saddles for the First Regiment, United States Dragoons, 1833.*²⁹

Articles of agreement made and concluded at Saint Louis, Mo, the twenty seventh day of June Eighteen hundred & thirty three, by & between Major J. B. Brant QrMaster U.S. Army of the first part, and Thornton Grimsley of the said city of Saint Louis of the second part.

—Witnesseth.—

1st . . . That the said Thornton Grimsly of the second part, for and in consideration of the covenants and agreements hereinafter stipulated, promises and agrees by these presents, to furnish and deliver at Saint Louis, Mo, Seven hundred and fifteen Saddles for the service of the U.S. Dragoons, to be made in a workmanlike manner and in strict conformity to the one described in the annexed document dated 27 June 1833 and signed "Thornton Grimsley", said Saddles to be delivered as follows. viz: 200 on the 1st of September next ensuing, 200 on the 15th of September next ensuing, 200 on the 15th of October, 200 on the 15th of November and the remaining 115 on the 15th of December 1833;—the several parcels to be inspected by two disinter-

ested persons mutually chosen by the parties to the agreement, who shall certify whether the Saddles are conformable to the one described in the above mentioned document, and whether they are executed in a workmanlike manner.

2nd . . . And the said Major J. B. Brant of the first part, for and in behalf of the United States, promises and agrees to pay to the said Thornton Grimsley or his assigns, for each Saddle furnished and delivered as above, the Sum of Ten dollars, on his or their producing the Certificate of the Inspectors setting forth the due performance of the first article of the agreement.

In testimony whereof the parties have hereunder affixed their hands & seals the day & years first above written.

Witness

John Haraty	J. B. Brant [Seal]
W. W. Worthington	T Grimsley [Seal]

—Copy—

Saint Louis 27th June 1833

Dear Sir,

You here have a full description of the U.S. Dragoon Saddle as adopted by Lt Col. Kearney and contracted for by yourself. The tree is composed of four pieces of timber put together, and in shape is an exact model of the much admired spanish saddle tree. It is covered with untanned hide, which binds every part of it completely together & forms the high reputation which the spanish saddle tree has for strength and durability. The tree is then skirted and padded, the skirt protects the dragoon's legs from the horse, and the pad for the more effectual preservation of the horse's back. Two iron staples with loops in a triangular form is on each side & receive the stirrup leather. Three iron staples are put behind the saddle and clenched through the cantle of the tree for the crupper and coat pad. The coat pad is of the usual form with two straps & buckles by which the Dragoon attaches his coat or any other baggage which the nature of his service may require. A girth strap 1¼ inches wide is placed on each side of the tree resting on a small flap or skirt which is calculated to keep the buckle and girth from wearing on the lower edge of the pad. Two leather loops is placed in front of the tree on each side to receive the breast plate [band] & two small straps with buckles nearly in the same place by which the holster pipes are to be confined to the saddle.

The above I believe to be a complete description of the saddles agreed for by yourself, and intended for the U.S. Dragoons, and I have no hesitation in saying that they are equal if not superior for the service for which they are intended to any Saddle now in use in any part of the world. For the information of the heads of the War Department, I will at an early date make a sample agreeably to your request which you can forward to Washington for their inspection.

I remain very respectfully
Your ob^t Servt

(Signed) Thornton Grimsley

Major J. B. Brant {
QrMaster U.S.A. }

A true Copy of the original on file in this office
QrMasters Office Saint Louis June 27.1833.
J. B. Brant
QrMr

Know all men by these presents that we Thornton Grimsley, William Carr Lane and Bernard Pratte Sr are held and firmly bound unto the United States of America in the penal sum of Three thousand five hundred dollars, lawful money of the said United States, for which payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors & administrators firmly by these presents, sealed with our seals and dated this Twenty seventh day of June One thousand eight hundred and thirty three.

The condition of the obligation is such, that whereas the above bounden Thornton Grimsley has this day entered into an agreement with Major J. B. Brant Qr Master U.S. Army, to furnish and deliver Seven hundred and fifteen Saddles for the use of the U.S. Dragoons, now, if the said Thornton Grimsley shall furnish and deliver the said Saddles according to the true intent and meaning of said said agreement, then and in that case the obligation to be null and void, otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals the day & year above written.

Signed, sealed & delivered	{	<u>Duplicate</u>
in presence of		

W. W. Woodbridge as to	{	T Grimsley	[Seal]
T. Grimsley & W. C. Lane—		W ^m Carr Lane	[Seal]
John Haraty as to B. Pratte.		B. Pratte Sr	[Seal]

Letters and statements from residents of Texas and others to the Secretary of War in recommendation of the Hope saddle, 1856.³⁰

San Antonio
Nov 30th 1856

Col Jeff Davis

Dear Sir

Messrs Rice & Childress of this place, having called upon me to express my opinion in regard to their new Cavalry equipments, I have no hesitation in stating, that I consider their saddle, bridle & bit in every way adapted to the cavalry service in this country and in all respects superior to the ones now in use by the United States troops.

Very Respectfully
Your obdt Servt
GEO. T. HOWARD

San Antonio, Texas
November 13th, 1856

Hon Jefferson Davis
Secretary of War

Dear Sir

Messrs Rice & Childress of this City are proposing to furnish Saddles for the mounted troops on the western frontier.

Since my removal from Panola Co. Miss. to this country I have used their make of Saddles exclusively, finding in a very short while, that the English and American Saddle would not do for this country: The Texas Saddle has no pads either for horse or rider, must be made of the best materials, as there is no place to work up, waste or refuse leather; they are made of strong wood and very firmly put together, and do not deface and spoil by use in the weather; their great excellency however is, they do not hurt the horse, or tire the rider, a good rider need never be thrown from one; The American Saddle is so hot & galling here, that I have never known a new Settler, to use one through the first Summer.

I have known Mr. Childress for many Years, and Know him to be very responsible for any Contract he may make: by his great industry and energy, he has amassed an ample fortune here;

With great Respect
Your Friend
R. W. BRAHAN

San Antonio, Texas
Novr. 27 1856

To the Honble. Jeffn. Davis
Secretary of War

Sir At the request of Mr. Childress, who will hand you this note, I solicit your attention to the specimens of "Hopes Saddletrees" which he desires to present for the examination of the Chief of Ordnance— He has been engaged some years in the manufacturing of this description of Saddle, known as "Hopes," and carried with him testimonials of their excellence; from my own knowledge of them I concur in the opinion that they are free from serious objections to other patterns—

Mr. Childress is represented to me as a person of good character & standing in this community.

With great respect
Yr. obt. servt

A. S. JOHNSTON
[Colonel, Second Regiment, U. S. Cavalry]

To all whom it may concern!

Certificate
of Citizens to
Rice & Childers
Saddlers
San Antonio Texas

We hereby certify that we are well acquainted with, & have used Hopes Saddle manufactured by Messrs Rice & Childers of this City and have no hesitation in recommending them as superior in every respect to all other Saddles now in use, in point of durability and ease to the Horse, as well as rider, in fact they are entirely adapted to all practical manner of Service.

Vance & Bro Merchts. San Antonio Texas
F. Guilbeau
H. D. Norton & Bros.
B. E. Edwards

I have used the hope Saddle since 1844 in service of Texas and in the ware [sic] of Mexico and have found them superior to all other Saddles used in the servis

Evans Muncey & Co. C. L. PYRON

Merchants San Antonio
RICHD A. HOWARD
JAS R. [illegible signature]

I rode one of Hopes Saddles made by Rice & Childers from San Antonio to Shreveport and back by way of Indianola thence to Elpaso and back to San Antonio,

a distance of twenty four hundred miles. I was hauling with the Large freight train that went up in 1850 under the management of Lt Quinby of the Army. there was several other Hopes Saddles in Company and it was a subject of remark that none of them hurt either man or horse. My weight was then 265 pounds.

J. H. LYONS

I am running the Mail from San Antonio to Santa Fe a distance of over eleven hundred miles and have used the Hope saddle made by Messrs Rice & Childers in said mail service for over two years and can truly say they are the best saddle now in use for long journeys for ease both to man & horse.

I also have been using the same make of saddle since 1844 and take pleasure in recommending them for general use throughout Texas and New Mexico.

G H GIDDINGS

From fifty to fifty two (1850 to 1852) being Dist. Atty upon the Rio Grande was often in the saddle.— have ridden from that place (Fort Brown) to San Antonio 3 several times distance about 300 miles, can say that no saddle is equal to Hope's which Messrs Rice & Childers make well, have used them since 1849.

RUSSELL HOWARD

I have been in the Regular Army of the U.S. as a dragoon, and also employed in other capacity in Government, as Wagon Master &c for the past fifteen years, during which time I have had occasion to test the various Saddles in use including the Dragoon Saddle and can testify that Hopes Saddle as Manufactured by Rice & Childress are the best saddles in use, and would cheerfully Recommend them as the most practable Saddle for the Regular Service.

JONATHAN HACKETT

I have used the Hope saddle since 1845 both as Pack saddles & Riding. In 1849 I rode one to california and I have no hesitation in Pronouncing them the most superior saddle ever made. I would Recommend them as manufactured by Messrs Rice & Childress for general use in Texas

M. MAYS

I have been acting in the capacity of Surveyor on the Frontier of Texas for twelve years and for the last three years bin a Deputy Surveyor under Col

Jack Hays of California. I have had occasion to do a great deal of Riding and can testify that Hopes Saddle Trees Manufactured by Rice & Childers are Superior to any thing that I have ever seen and believe that their could be no Saddle that would compare with them for the Regular Service

J. G. McDONALD

I have been living on the frontier for the last eighteen years, most of that time as a Ranger under Capt Jack Hays. I have known & used the Hope Tree as Made by Mess Rice & Childress nearly all that time & consider them much Superior to any other that I have ever seen or used.

J M CAROLAN

I have used Hope Saddle Tree since 1848 and rode on one from San Antonio to California. I concider them the best Trees now in use and would recommend those Manufactured by Rice & Childers in preference to all others.

WM G. M. SAMUEL

I have used the Hope Saddle for many years, both as a Ranger in the service of the old Republic & since, and consider it the best for hard service & also for the protection of the Horse. I cheerfully give this certificate to Messrs Rice & Childers who are the Manufacturers of the same—

GEO. D. MCGRATH
Chief Justice
B[exar]. C[ounty].

I have for several years used the "Hope Saddle" and can certify to its superiority over all others made or in use in Texas, Mississippi or Florida.

THOS. J. DEVINE

I have used no other than the Saddle known as the Hope Saddle for the last Eleven years and can testify that it is the best that I am acquainted with for a man travelling on the Frontiers—and incomparably superior to the saddle now in use in the Cavalry of the U.S.

F. GIRAUD
Dist[ri]ct. Sur[veyor].
B[exar]. D[istrict].

I have used the Hope Saddle for several years, both as a Ranger in the Service of the old Republic, on surveying campaigns and crossing the plains to

California, and I take pleasure in certifying that I believe it superior to any other within my knowledge.

San Antonio Oct 29th 1856 Jos. A. Tivy

I do hereby certify that I have served in the U.S. Ranging service for several years both as a Private and Officer during which time the Hopes Saddle trees were in general use and I take pleasure in certifying that I believe them to be better adapted to frontier use than any other now in use.

O. H. MARONEY.

I do hereby certify that I have served as a Ranger, and in most all kinds of service on the frontier, where Hopes Saddles were used and found them superior to any other Saddle, and cheerfully recommend them as best adapted to the U.S. Dragoon Service.

W. R. HENRY
Sheriff B[exar]. C[ounty].

I have used the Hope Saddle as manufactured by Messrs. Rice & Childress in this City for the last 8 years. I have a Large stock of Cattle & Horses Requiring men constantly in the saddle and fine none Equal to them for man & beast and durability &

believe them better adapted for Hard service than any saddle that I am acquainted with.

JNO. S. M CLELLAN

I have been keeping a Livery Stable in San Antonio for the last seven years, and have had an opportunity of testing the different manufacturies of saddles. I have no hesitation in saying, that the Hope Saddle manufactured by Rice & Childress of this City, is preferable for service and ease, both to horse and rider, to any within my knowledge and would recommend it as such.

B R SAPPINGTON

I have lived in the state of Texas twenty years & Probbably have been on Horse back as much as any person during that time Leading generally an active life in the saddle, my business being such as would naturally suit me to examine what kind of saddle would suit a majority of Horses back the Best, with Refference to Ease for the Rider and I have no Hesitation in Pronouncing the Hope Saddle as manufactured by Messrs Rice & Childress in this City superior to any within my Knowledge.

ROBT S. NEIGHBORS
Supervising agent
Texas Indians

Notes

1. MERIWETHER LEWIS and WILLIAM CLARK, *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, edited by Bernard DeVoto (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), page 210.

2. ZEBULON M. PIKE, *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike with Letters and Related Documents*, edited by Donald Jackson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), volume 2, pages 86-87.

3. JOSIAH GREGG, *Commerce of the Prairies*, edited by Max L. Moorhead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), page 150.

4. GEORGE C. SIBLEY, *The Road to Santa Fe; The Journal and Diaries of George Champlin Sibley and Others Pertaining to the Surveying and Marking of a Road from the Missouri Frontier to the Settlements of New Mexico, 1825-1827*, edited by Kate L. Gregg (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1952), page 147.

5. Thornton Grimsley (1798-1861) was a manufacturer of saddlery and harness in Saint Louis from 1822 almost continuously up to his death. A master saddler and harnessmaker in his own right, he is reported to have had from sixty to seventy hands in constant employment by 1848. During the 1830s and for many years

afterward, a part of the time in partnership with John Young, his former apprentice, Grimsley managed, despite growing competition, to fill nearly all the wants of the American Fur Company's Western Department in the way of horse equipment, including many Spanish saddles. His clientele included many, such as Jim Bridger, William Bent, and Jedediah Smith, who figure large in the history of the American West. Grimsley was for long conspicuous in Saint Louis civic, political, and military affairs, holding the rank of colonel in the Missouri militia.

6. NATHANIEL J. WYETH, *The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-6; A Record of Two Expeditions for the Occupation of the Oregon Country*, edited by F. G. Young (Eugene, Oregon: University Press, 1899), page 95.

7. Proceedings of the Military Board, 13 April 1833 (Record Group 108, records of the Headquarters of the Army, National Archives and Records Service, Washington).

8. JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, *Audubon and His Journals*, by Maria R. Audubon, with Zoölogical and Other

Notes by Elliott Coues . . . (London: John C. Nimmo, 1898), volume 1, page 479.

9. SARAH J. CUMMINS, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of Sarah J. Cummins* (n. p., n. d.), page 43.

10. FRANCIS PARKMAN, *The Oregon Trail* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1948), page 10.

11. Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794–1890 (Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives and Records Service, Washington).

12. The saddle was specified to be “ironed in gullet [fork] with plate extending . . . to point of head back and front—candle ironed with strap running from seat over the cantle and secured at back of bar.” The stirrup leathers were to “buckle at the stirrup iron (Spanish fashion)” and the “surcingle” was to be “put on Spanish fashion.”

13. See note 11.

14. Proceedings of the Military Board, 13 April 1833 (Record Group 108, Records of the Headquarters of the Army, National Archives and Records Service, Washington).

15. Lt. Col. Stephen W. Kearny to Maj. Gen. Alexander Macomb, 4 July 1833 (Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Letters Received, National Archives and Records Service, Washington).

16. Capt. David Hunter to Brig. Gen. Roger Jones, 20 November 1835 (Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives and Records Service, Washington).

17. LEWIS H. GARRARD, *Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail; or Prairie Travel and Scalp Dances, with a Look at Los Rancheros from Muleback and the Rocky Mountain Campfire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), page 179.

18. Edward L. Gallatin, who had learned the saddler's craft under Thornton Grimsley in Saint Louis, was, at this time, manager of a Denver saddle manufactory owned by John Landis, of Independence, Missouri. For this saddle Gallatin was paid \$350, half of which went to cover the cost of the silver and gold ornamentation. Soon after this, for presentation to their colonel, John M. Chivington (later to become notorious for his role in the Sand Creek massacre), the officers of the First Colorado Volunteers had Gallatin produce a saddle that must have made Leavenworth's seem, in comparison, but a modest affair. The splendor of the saddle made for Chivington may be judged by its price, \$550. Sad to say, it dropped from sight long ago.

19. EDWARD L. GALLATIN, “Two Famous Saddles”

(manuscripts, VI, 117, The State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver).

20. SAMUEL WARD, *Sam Ward in the Gold Rush*, edited by Carvel Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), page 66.

21. WALTER PRESCOTT WEBB, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935), page 82.

22. FERDINAND ROEMER, *Texas with Particular Reference to German Immigration and the Physical Appearance of the Country; Described through Personal Observation by Dr. Ferdinand Roemer*, translated by Oswald Mueller (San Antonio: Standard Printing Company, 1935), page 56.

23. Perhaps the “Turk's lantern” is the same as the “Turkish lantern” referred to by Burton's English contemporary, Lt. Col. A.J.L. Fremantle, in his diary of a three-month sojourn in the southern United States. He defines it as “a lantern for a candle, made of white linen and wire, which collapses when not in use. They are always used in the streets of Constantinople.” Fremantle had one of these with him in San Antonio, where it was admired greatly. (ARTHUR JAMES LYON FREMANTLE, *The Fremantle Diary: Being the Journal of Lieutenant Colonel . . . Fremantle, Coldstream Guards, on His Three Months in the Southern States*, edited by Walter Lord (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), page 26.)

24. RICHARD F. BURTON, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), pages 31–33.

25. As procured by agencies of the War Department for issue to mounted troops, the McClellan saddle was, from beginning to end, without seat padding. During the Civil War seat padding in various forms, sometimes elaborate, was present on McClellan saddles that private makers got up for sale to individual officers.

26. Capt. Thomas A. Stombs to Commanding Officer, Fort Bowie, dated Camp Mimbres, 11 July 1864 (Record Group 98, Records of United States Army Commands, National Archives and Records Service, Washington).

27. FREMANTLE, op. cit., pages 9, 19 (see note 23).

28. Record Group 92 (Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General), National Archives and Records Service, Washington.

29. Ibid.

30. Record Group 156 (Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, United States Army), National Archives and Records Service, Washington.

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Saddles of the Plains Indians

John C. Ewers

Cavalry officers who served in the American West during the mid-nineteenth century praised the Plains Indians as "the most expert horsemen" and "the best light cavalry in the world." Such judgments seem the more remarkable when we consider that these Indians, who lived in the open grasslands between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, had no long tradition of horsemanship. None of their ancestors had seen a man on horseback before Coronado's conquistadors explored the vast interior grasslands in 1541. These Spaniards observed that the nomadic Indians hunted the huge wild cattle (buffalo) on foot and moved their tipis and meagre personal possessions with only dogs to help bear their burdens.

A century passed before any of the more than thirty tribes we know as Plains Indians began to acquire horses. Throughout the remainder of the colonial period horses were diffused northward from tribe to tribe from the Spanish Southwest, primarily through intertribal trade. The Sioux were known to French fur traders and missionaries as pedestrian warriors during the 1680s; more than a half century elapsed before this tribe obtained horses. The Cree and Assiniboine on the northeastern plains did not acquire horses much before 1750.

Yet by 1803, when the United States purchased Louisiana—that vast region between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains—all of the plains tribes were horsemen. They hunted buffalo and rode to war astride well-trained mounts; they used less valuable horses for pack animals. Nineteenth-century white observers marveled at their skill in killing buffalo

from horseback with bows and arrows, and at their will-of-the-wisp mobility as mounted warriors (Figure 49). Horses were individually owned property among these Indians. Men counted their wealth in horses, some owning several hundred head. They increased their holdings by breeding, trading, and raiding the herds of enemy tribes. Wealthy Indians, among them many chiefs, enhanced their social and political prestige by loaning or giving horses to the poor. Horses became standards of value, and Indians became expert judges of horses. They were, in fact, horse traders, with all of the keen bargaining abilities that term implies.

If any horse under 14.2 hands high at the withers is a pony, then the typical Indian's horse of nineteenth-century buffalo days was a pony. Capt. W. P. Clark, a cavalry officer stationed at various posts of the western frontier, was of the opinion that through hard usage, close inbreeding, and change in climate the Indian pony had become somewhat reduced in size from that of its Barb ancestors in North Africa.¹ These animals exhibited a wide range of solid and mixed colors. They were not beautiful, but they were tough, sturdy, long-winded horses, possessing great powers of endurance. Colonel de Trobriand, in 1867, was impressed by the superiority of the grass-fed Indian pony over the horses used by the United States Army on the Great Plains. He found that "the movement of Indian horsemen is lighter, swifter and longer range than that of our cavalry, which means that they always get away from us."²

Even though their horses were of Spanish origin, the Indians were not content merely to adapt Spanish equestrian usages to their own needs. Although some of the commands they used in starting and stopping their mounts may

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FIGURE 49.—“The Buffalo Hunt,” by Charles F. Wimar. In this lively painting of the dramatic action in a buffalo chase, the bowman in the left foreground is pictured astride a pad saddle decorated with quilled rosettes. Although the German-American artist executed this scene in 1860, it appears to have been based upon field observations and sketches made during his travels up the Missouri River during the preceding decade.

have been of Spanish origin, the Indians mounted their horses from the off (right) side, which seemed most natural to them, and Indian women always rode astride. The Indians also showed their ingenuity in making three distinct types of saddles from materials readily available to them in their own territory: animal hides, hair, wood, and antler. All types could be constructed without the use of metal or adhesives.

Indians could and did ride bareback, but it is doubtful if many of them did so for long distances if they owned saddles. Some of the elderly Blackfoot veterans of intertribal horse raiding told me of the painful chafing and discomfort they had experienced while riding captured horses rapidly over rough ground while making hasty get-aways from enemy camps. They said that some raiders minimized this discomfort by throwing over the horse's back a single thickness of buffalo hide, hair side down, which was

held in place by skin straps pendant from each side and tied under the horse's belly. Even this makeshift substitute for a saddle was better than none at all.

Saddlemaking was women's work, although not all women made saddles. Some older women who were skilled at this craft made saddles for trade or gifts to other Indians as well as for use by members of their own families. They preferred to make frame saddles in warmer weather because of the inconvenience of working wet rawhide in the cold. To an extent, saddles were tailor-made—larger for persons of heavy build, and smaller than average for children. Because saddles were valuable property they were kept inside the owner's lodge when not in use. If a man had several wives, it was the duty of one of them to look after the family's horse gear.

Probably the oldest of the three major types of Plains Indian saddles was a soft skin pillow, stuffed with animal hair. This “pad saddle,” as



FIGURE 50.—Rudolph Friederich Kurz, a Swiss artist, drew this pen-and-ink sketch of a saddled Blackfoot Indian pony at or near the trading post of Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone River during the winter of 1851-1852. A hide saddle cloth underlines the pad saddle, which is decorated with small rosettes and a transverse piece of hide or cloth. The stirrup straps are adjustable in length. The two-reined bridle is a single length of rawhide looped about the pony's jaw.

the Indians knew it, may have been adapted from the Spanish pack saddle, such as was described by a contemporary observer in Sonora during the mid-eighteenth century as two cushions of tanned cowhide, four cornered and stuffed with hay, and attached to one another in the middle. [Here "Spanish packsaddle" refers to the padded leather device used on the northern border of Mexico, where it is still known as *el cojinillo*, rather than to the more familiar double-saltire form. R.E.A.] Clark Wissler has suggested that the pad saddle may have been diffused northward among the Indians along with the horse.³ A Hudson's Bay Company trader may have had it in mind when he wrote laconically of the riding gear used by Indian buffalo hunters in the Saskatchewan Valley in 1754: "They have . . . Buffalo skin pads, and stirrups of the same."⁴ Certainly it was well described by a trader who saw it in use among the Blackfoot, Assiniboine, and Cree north of the 49th parallel prior to 1809.⁵ Many examples of Indian pad saddles are preserved

in museums in this country and abroad, but it is doubtful if any antedate the period 1800-1830.

To make a pad saddle (Figures 71, 72), two pieces of soft-tanned buffalo, deer, elk, or antelope skin were cut with a knife to the same size in a roughly hourglass shape. A man might cut the pattern, but he turned the skins over to a woman to assemble into the saddle. After placing one skin on top of the other so that their edges were in contact, she sewed the skins together with soft skin or rawhide cord in two nearly parallel lines extending lengthwise of the center. She then began to sew the edges of the top and bottom skins together with sinew thread, leaving sufficient openings at each side for stuffing the saddle before completely closing the edges. Buffalo or deer hair was preferred for stuffing material, although some women used grass.

The girth—most commonly a rawhide strap two to four fingers wide (Indians employed the finger width as a common unit of measure-



FIGURE 51.—“Sioux Warrior Charging,” by Peter Rindisbacher. A lithographic reproduction of this watercolor by a young Swiss artist appeared in *The American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* for October 1829. It may be the earliest portrayal of a pad saddle ridden by an Indian warrior. The pad is decorated with a large rosette of porcupine quills. A saddle cloth, probably of buffalo hide with the hair side out, underlies the pad, which is held in place by a leather girth and fringed crupper. The warrior rides with his feet in stirrups, and is armed with a lance, bow and arrow, and a knife.

ment)—was suspended from U-shaped tabs sewn to the center of each side of the saddle. This strap was doubled over the tab on the left side and sewn with sinew, passed under the barrel of the horse, and secured to the tab on the right side of the saddle with a rawhide latigo strap. Horses were customarily saddled as well as mounted from the right side by the Plains Indians.

Many pad saddles were furnished with a rectangular piece of rawhide four or more inches wide, transverse across the top of the center of the saddle and sewn to the skin base. This piece hung down at the sides and concealed the girth tabs. In some cases the stirrups were hung from holes near the ends of these rawhide pieces. In other cases an additional pair of tabs

were sewn to the saddle forward of the center for hanging the rawhide stirrup straps and stirrups of bent wood.

Fully rigged, with girth and stirrups, the pad saddle might weigh no more than three pounds. It provided a light, resilient seat for an active young man to use in hunting buffalo, riding to war, or racing horses. A number of white artists who had opportunities to observe the Plains Indians in their own country before the end of buffalo days pictured men riding pad saddles. Peter Rindisbacher's “Sioux Warrior Charging,” published as early as 1829 (Figure 51), may be the earliest depiction of this saddle in use. Probably the best portrayal of the use of the pad saddle by a mounted buffalo hunter appears in Charles Wimar's painting (Figure

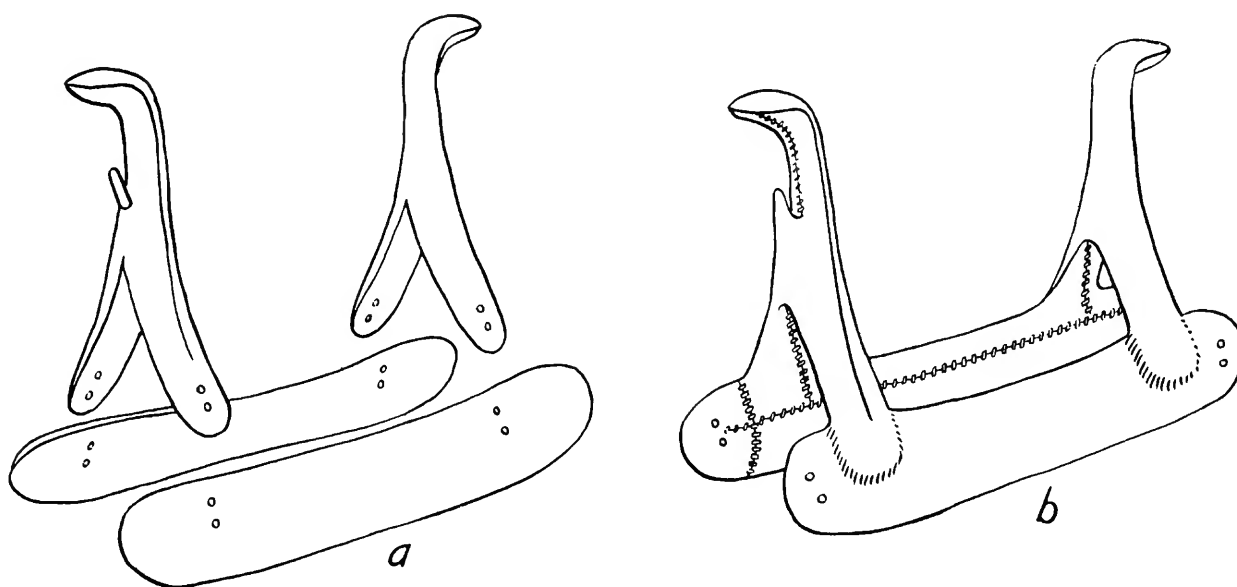


FIGURE 52.—Construction of a woman's saddle: *a*, the wooden pommel and cantle are fastened to the cottonwood sideboards by rawhide cords passed through holes burned in all three pieces with a hot iron rod; *b*, the entire saddle is then covered with wet rawhide, which is fitted, cut, and sewn in place; as the rawhide dries it shrinks and helps to hold the saddle firmly together.

49) in the collections of Washington University in Saint Louis. The forms and decorations of these saddles and the way they looked upon a riderless horse were clearly pictured in 1851 by the Swiss artist Rudolph Freiderich Kurz, who carefully sketched Crow and Blackfoot horses while he was at Fort Union, near the mouth of the Yellowstone River (Figure 50).

Many of the pad saddles of the tribes from the northern plains collected before 1860 are handsomely decorated with rosettes and other geometric designs in porcupine quillwork near the four corners of the pads. Later examples of pad saddles are decorated with beadwork, some of them in intricate floral designs.

My elderly Blackfoot informants told me that during their young manhood they preferred using pad saddles to riding bareback while chasing buffalo. With their feet in stirrups they could move their bodies more freely and securely than they could when riding without saddles. A white missionary who accompanied one of the last large Sioux buffalo-hunting parties in 1881 noted that many of the Indian hunters rode pad saddles.⁶ But after the buffalo were gone the white men's heavier stock sad-

dles rapidly replaced the pad saddles among the Indians.

The typical woman's saddle among the Plains Indians, the second major type evidenced by them, was composed of a wooden frame covered with rawhide (Figures 73, 74). It was known to the Blackfoot simply as "wood saddle." Alexander Henry saw this saddle among the tribes of the Saskatchewan Valley prior to 1809. He described it as "made of wood well joined, and covered with rawhide, which in drying binds every part tight. This frame rises about ten inches before and behind; the tops are bent over horizontally and spread out, forming a flat piece about six inches in diameter."⁷

To make one of these saddles a woman split a green cottonwood log and trimmed to equal length two pieces about one-half inch thick, 16 to 20 inches long, and three or four inches wide. These pieces formed the sideboards. Two forks of green cottonwood were carefully selected for pommel and cantle. Care was taken that they should be nearly the same size and that both prongs of each fork should be of equal thickness. The top of each fork was bent and trimmed with a knife to a flat disk-shaped ex-



FIGURE 53.—The Swiss artist Rudolph Friederich Kurz had a penchant for juxtaposing idealized female nudes with precise drawings of the details of Indian-made objects. The young woman in this 1850 sketch may have been the Iowa girl who became his wife. The clearly defined saddle on the horse behind her rests upon a hairy animal hide and is held in place by rawhide girthing and a strong, hide crupper tied to the cantle and passing under the horse's tail. The high pommel of the saddle is bent forward and flattened at the top and is fitted with a wooden pin.

tension almost at a right angle to the prongs, which were rounded at the ends. With a red-hot iron rod, a small hole was burned in the front of the piece that was to form the pommel just above the junction of the prongs. A straight wooden spike was then tightly fitted into the hole. Two holes were burned in the lower portions of each prong to match holes burned near the ends of the sideboards. The pommel and cantle were tied to the sideboards by buckskin thongs passed through the holes. This completed construction of the saddle frame.

Buffalo rawhide used for covering this frame was first soaked in a pond or stream for several days until it became green and foul smelling. Then it was stretched on the ground hair side up, boiling water was thrown upon it, and the hair was taken off with a rock. The maker then turned the hide over and scraped the flesh from the underside of the hide with a metal-bladed tool such as she used in dressing buffalo hides for other uses. The hair side was not scraped, as that would make the hide too thin. After being stretched tightly over the saddle frame, the hide was fitted, cut, and finally sewn with a rawhide cord. The stitches were made on the underside of the sideboards where they would not be seen when the saddle was in use.

Great care had to be taken that the saddle did not warp as the tough rawhide cover dried and shrunk. Some saddlemakers pegged the saddles to the ground during the drying process. Others tied a newly sewn saddle over a log about the size of a horse's back until the raw hide dried. Still others rolled an old tipi cover tightly and forced it between the sideboards, then bound saddle and lodge cover together tightly with a cord, leaving this cord secured until the rawhide saddle covering dried thoroughly.

After the saddle cover dried, two more holes were burned near each end of both sideboards for tying on grass-stuffed skin pads, which ran parallel to and underneath the sideboards, and the rawhide rigging straps, which were attached to the outside of the sideboards. The rigging straps on the left side led to and looped around the cinch ring. This ring was originally of rawhide; however, Indians preferred metal rings when they could get them. The cinch band was about four fingers wide or wider. One end



FIGURE 54.—Detail from "Indian Warrior and His Squaw," by Alfred Jacob Miller. The Baltimore artist based this watercolor upon his field observations in the Wyoming country in 1837. It portrays the elaborate horse trappings of the wife of a wealthy Crow or Shoshoni leader. Doubtless Miller has exaggerated the height of the horns of her woman's saddle, which is held in place by long-fringed crupper and breast band, as well as by its girth. The red trade blanket around her waist provides an additional cushion for the rider.

was doubled and tied around the cinch ring on the left side. On the right side a rawhide latigo strap was attached to the ring suspended from the rigging straps. The horse was saddled from the right side, the cinch being fastened to the latigo strap, usually by tying.

Some women's saddles also were furnished with a rawhide strip that served as a seat. One end had a hole punched in it that was passed over the pin at the front of the pommel; the other end was attached at the back of the cantle by a wooden pin passed through a loop in the rawhide strip. Some women's saddles, however, lacked these suspended seats. They were not

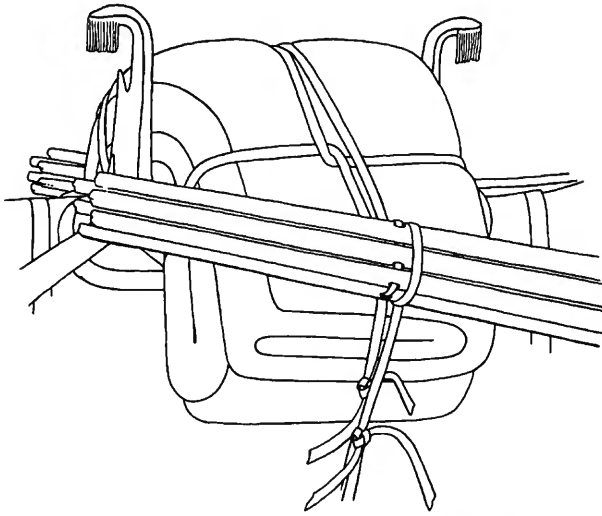


FIGURE 55.—A tipi transported by horse power: the skin cover of the lodge is carefully folded and tied on top of the saddle; the foundation poles are divided into two groups of equal weight and securely tied, one on each side of the horse, by passing a rawhide line through holes bored in each pole near its top end, around the group of poles, under the belly of the horse, and over the top of the center of the load. As depicted here, a woman's saddle sometimes was used for this purpose instead of a packsaddle.

considered essential because women commonly placed a folded buffalo robe over the saddle and rode upon it.

There were regional variations in the forms of the pommels and cantles of women's saddles. The large disk-shaped projections were most characteristic of the women's saddles of the northern plains and of the horse-wealthy tribes of the Columbia Valley, such as the Cayuse and Nez Percé. Women's saddles among the Comanche and Kiowa of the southern plains, however, had pommels and cantles that simply curved outward near the tops and were concave in section.

Women loved to decorate their saddles. Some were painted and ornamented with rows of round-headed brass tacks. Many women's saddles from the northern tribes had long triangular flaps pendant from the disks of both pommel and cantle, which were colorfully decorated in geometric designs in beadwork (Figure 73). Many of the most elaborate saddles were made by the Crow Indians of the Yellowstone Valley, a tribe rich in horses, whose wom-

en were skilled craftworkers. Some saddles were equipped with long wooden stirrups in which the entire ball of the foot rested. The stirrups were covered with trade cloth and decorated with beadwork. The more common Plains Indian stirrup was but a narrow strip of green cottonwood or poplar bent to shape and covered with buffalo rawhide or the scrotum of the buffalo bull.

Saddle blankets were placed under all types of saddles to prevent the saddles from chafing the horses' backs. These blankets were originally of buffalo hide and were probably undecorated. But during the latter half of the nineteenth century canvas blankets richly bordered in beadwork were occasionally made, especially by the Crow and Sioux. Breast bands and cruppers had both practical and ostentatious value for Indian women. They kept saddles from sliding forward or backward and furnished additional surfaces for decoration. During the late nineteenth century, beaded cloth cruppers replaced painted rawhide ones. Crow women made an elaborately beaded breast band. It must have been a striking sight to see a party of wealthy Crow Indians on a visit to a trading post or to a neighboring tribe with their horses gayly bedecked with brightly colored trappings.

The high horns of women's saddles made it impossible for them to mount their horses by swinging one leg over the cantle. A woman placed one foot in a stirrup and thrust the other leg through the opening between the horns. This, in turn, influenced clothing design, for to mount and to ride astride a woman needed a dress that was very full in the skirt. Pregnant riders wore adjustable belts as supports for the abdomen.

Women's saddles sometimes were used instead of a packsaddle for transporting a tipi. These saddles served another purpose in teaching children to ride at a tender age (Figure 56). Securely tied between the horns of a woman's saddle on a gentle horse, the small child received his or her first lessons in riding alone while being led around camp by an adult astride another horse. By the time children were six or seven years old they were good riders—bareback or in saddles. A small boy might tie a short rawhide rope to his horse's mane to aid him in climbing onto his horse's back. Girls and

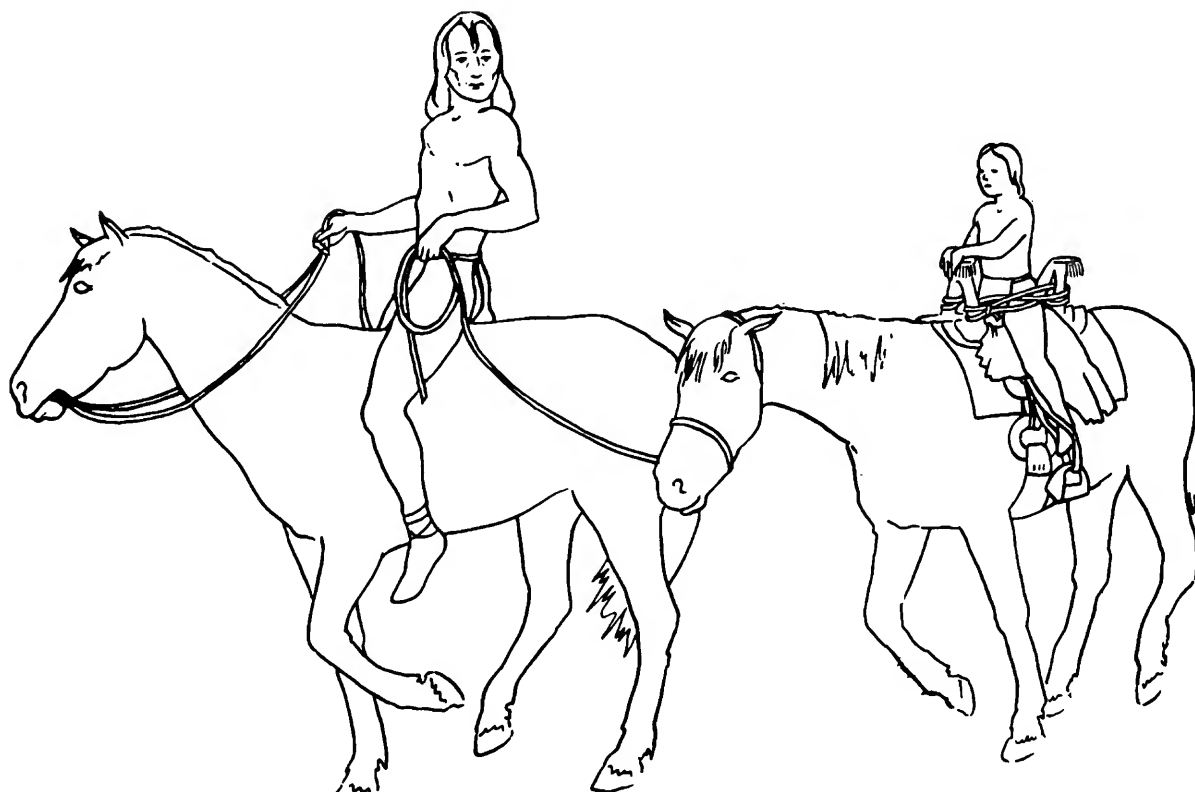


FIGURE 56.—This drawing by a Blackfoot Indian artist shows how the people of his tribe gave their first instruction to a small child learning to ride alone some 100 or more years ago. The child is tied into a high-horned woman's saddle on a gentle horse, and can hold on to the pommel to steady himself. The horse is led slowly around the camp by a man on another horse.

women, like boys and men, became expert in riding and managing horses. White artists who knew Plains Indians at first hand before 1850 pictured women chasing buffalo, lassoing wild horses, and even charging the enemy on horseback. There are accounts of several women who were active participants in, even leaders of, war parties.

Some artists exaggerated the height and curves of the horns of women's saddles, as did Alfred Jacob Miller, who saw Crow and Shoshoni women at and near the annual rendezvous of the mountain trappers in present-day Wyoming during the summer of 1837. Even later artists did not always seem to understand that the high-horned wood saddle was a woman's saddle among the Plains Indians. Such famous pictorial interpreters of earlier Indian life as

Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell sometimes pictured male warriors using women's saddles. Doubtless they had examples of women's saddles in their studio collections, and thought of them as *the* Indian type of saddle. William R. Leigh's dramatic painting of the Custer battle (Figure 58) is flawed by the rendering of feathered and breechclouted warriors astride and falling from high-horned women's saddles.⁸

A third type of Indian saddle employed by Indians of the plains appears to have been a modification of the woman's saddle. It may not have come into common use until the middle decades of the nineteenth century. George Bird Grinnell, famed writer on the Cheyenne Indians, considered the framed saddle with low-arched horn, pommel and cantle a comparatively



FIGURE 57.—“The Smoke Signal,” by Frederic Remington. In this 1905 oil painting, by the renowned western artist, a woman’s saddle is shown on a riderless horse presumably the mount of one of the two men on the ground. This was a not uncommon error in the works of some very able painters of the western scene who sought to picture Indian life in an indefinite but presumably earlier past than the period of their own first-hand observation.

modern invention of the Kiowa.⁹ If so, the type appears to have spread rapidly to other plains tribes. Its sideboards and girthing were like those of the woman’s saddle. The Blackfoot referred to this type as a “prairie chicken snare saddle.”

In making this saddle (Figures 76, 77) a woman softened two sections of antler from fresh-killed elk or blacktail deer in warm water to rend them pliable. The sections were then bent and cut to the desired shape, one for the pommel and the other for the cantle. Some women burned holes near each end of the section of antler for tying it to the wooden sideboards; others made two horizontal grooves and passed the tie strings through these grooves and holes burned in the sideboards. The saddle

was then covered with green rawhide and protected from warping while the rawhide was drying by the same methods used in making all-wood saddles.

This type served both as a riding and a pack saddle. It was the nearest approach to an Indian-made all-purpose saddle known to the plains tribes. After a buffalo hunt, butchered animals were packed on it. It served as a pack animal’s saddle in moving camp. Some people sewed D-shaped rawhide flaps to the centers of the pommel and cantle. They punched holes in these flaps, and after the load was in place, passed a rawhide line back and forth over the pack and through these holes, then tied it to keep the load securely in place. Older men, children, and some women used this type as a



FIGURE 58.—“Custer’s Last Fight,” by William R. Leigh. In this lively painting, an interesting reconstruction of the historic 1876 conflict by a twentieth-century artist, the Indian warriors are shown riding women’s saddles, and the saddle on the riderless horse at the right is depicted as being fitted with a pommel pin at the rear of the cantle as well.

riding saddle. Young men preferred it for long journeys. It could be made more quickly than either the pad or wood saddle and it was less expensive in trade. These factors encouraged its wide use in the waning decades of buffalo days among the horse-using tribes of the Great Plains and Rockies.

Women were skilled workers in rawhide, and consequently made the majority of bridles as well as the saddles used by the plains tribes in buffalo days. Some were a single length of rawhide, others braided of three strands. The single, continuous piece of rawhide was cut from a buffalo hide. Simply looped about the horse’s lower jaw in two half hitches, it provided a two-reined bridle for the control of the horse. Horse raiders carried one or more of these bridles in their packs when they journeyed on foot to capture horses from enemy camps.

Ingenious as were the Plains Indians in making saddles from materials available to them in their homeland, they recognized that white men’s saddles were superior to their own: stronger, better fitted to the backs of horses, and more comfortable seats for riding. A few Spanish saddles reached the tribes of the northern plains even before 1800.¹⁰ In nineteenth-century buffalo days Indians obtained more white men’s saddles through capture, trade, and

FIGURE 59.—“Comanche Chief,” by Theodore Gentilz. In this oil painting, executed in Texas about 1850, a chief of the large, most aggressive Indian tribe of the southern plains is pictured riding a horned saddle, which more closely resembles those used by Spanish and Mexicans in Texas than the saddles ridden by Indians of tribes farther north at that time.



as part of their annuity payments after they made treaties with the United States. In 1856 the trader Edwin T. Denig at Fort Union wrote, "the Blackfoot and Crow . . . will pay well for a good saddle."¹¹ Two years later the Blackfoot requested strong saddles (at least enough for their chiefs) to be included in the annuities due them in their first treaty with the United States in 1855.¹² In 1877 Lt. Hugh L. Scott observed that some of the Crow Indians on the Yellowstone were riding saddles made by Main & Winchester of California.¹³

After the buffalo were exterminated and the

Indians settled upon reservations, Indian saddlemaking tended to become a lost art. Indians rode commercial stock saddles; they even mounted them from the left side, as did whites. Even so some Indians preserved the picturesque high-horned women's saddles as family heirlooms. Women rode them in Fourth of July parades, during Indian fairs, and in Indian portions of such large expositions as the Calgary Stampede. On these occasions buckskin-clad Indian women and their feather-bonneted menfolk sought to recreate the romance and the color of the Old West.

Notes

1. WILLIAM PHILO CLARK, *The Indian Sign Language* (Philadelphia, 1885), page 306.

2. PHILIPPE RÉGIS DE TROBRIAND, *Military Life in Dakota* (St. Paul, 1951), page 64.

3. CLARK WISSLER, "Riding Gear of the North American Indians" (*American Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Papers*, volume 17, part 1, New York, 1915), page 36.

4. ANTHONY HENDRY, "York Factory to the Blackfeet Country: The Journal of Anthony Hendry, 1754-55," edited by Lawrence J. Burpee (*Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, series 3, volume 1, section 2, Toronto, 1907), page 338.

5. ALEXANDER HENRY and DAVID THOMPSON, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, edited by Elliott Coues (New York, 1897), volume 2, pages 526-527.

6. THOMAS L. RIGGS, "Sunset to Sunset" (*South Dakota Historical Collections*, volume 29, 1958), page 233.

7. HENRY and THOMPSON, op. cit., page 527.

8. The judgments of misrepresentation detailed in this paragraph are based on documented artifacts in museum collections, on the oral testimony of old Indian informants, and sketches made in the field by serious observers.

9. GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL, *The Cheyenne Indians* (New Haven, 1923), volume 1, page 207.

10. DAVID THOMPSON, "David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812," edited by J. B. Tyrrell (*Champlain Society Publication*, number 12, Toronto, 1916), page 371.

11. EDWIN T. DENIG, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, edited by John C. Ewers (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), page 95.

12. COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, *Annual Report*, 1858, page 438.

13. HUGH LENNOX SCOTT, *Some Memories of a Soldier* (New York, 1928), page 57.

Description of Saddlery in the Renwick Exhibition

Ann Nelson

Terminology used herein in descriptions of saddle parts has been standardized, with full recognition that the saddles represent three vast and non-exclusive cultural complexes: the Hispano-American, the Anglo-American, and the American Indian. Figures 83 and 84 present pictorial identification of these terms and the glossary defines them. In this catalogue the term "rosette" denotes a circular device with or without ties; when the rosette is a metal piece, the term "concha" is used. "Metallic-thread embroidery" refers to the employment of a thin tape or wire of silver or other metal alloy wrapped around silk thread. When referring to saddles of the Plains Indians the terms "left" and "right" are used in place of "on-side" and "off-side," the designations employed with all other described saddles. This is occasioned by the fact that Plains Indians customarily mounted from the horse's right side. Measurements (expressed to the nearest 0.5 cm) have been defined as follows:

length (L): from the foremost point of the pommel to the top of the arc of the cantle

width (W): the cantle at its widest point

depth (D): from the highest point of the pommel, often the horn, to the base of the skirts, or if skirts are lacking, to the base of the tree

horn height (HH): the distance from the top front of the pommel to the highest point of the horn

Two Smithsonian laboratories prepared reports on the artifacts in the Renwick exhibition. The six Indian saddles and associated horse gear, all from the Department of Anthropology

in the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), were successfully treated by Bethune M. Gibson, supervisor of the Anthropology Conservation Laboratory (ACL). The ACL reports on all of these items are identified by the artifact's NMNH catalogue number, given here with the item's description, and are preserved by the Department of Anthropology.

The 11 remaining saddles, Mexican and western in origin, were referred to the Smithsonian's Conservation Analytical Laboratory (CAL). Seven of these saddles were borrowed from outside the Institution and four from divisions in the National Museum of History and Technology (NMHT). Each saddle was subjected to laboratory procedures. It was carefully studied and its condition recorded. Basic cleaning and preservation was then carried out and recorded. The reports generated by these procedures were given CAL report numbers, which appear here with the saddle descriptions.

It should be noted that the cleaning and preservation treatment applied to individual artifacts was the result of first-hand study and professional judgment; there is no "formula" treatment for saddles in general. The Institution cannot be held liable for the results of any application by other parties of the procedures and materials described in the laboratory reports. Some procedures extend into scientific processes not previously reported for the examination of saddles. Radiograms and stereo-x-rays of the saddle from Toluca, Mexico, suggest the usefulness of those procedures in structural analysis. The joining of parts and the placement of nails reveal not only the craftsmanship of the individual saddler but also his attitude

toward "hidden" construction versus surface finish.

LIST OF DESCRIPTIONS:

1. Mexican Saddle (owned by Barbabosa family)
2. California Saddle (made for Forster)
3. Mexican Saddle (awarded to Harney)
4. Mexican Presentation Saddle (for Sheridan)
5. Charro Saddle (by Rodriguez)
6. Charro Saddletree (by Gonzáles)
7. Vaquero Saddle (acquired by Bourke)
8. Hybrid Saddle (from Missouri River region)
9. Stock Saddle (by Meanea)
10. Anglo Presentation Saddle (by Gallatin)
11. Western Sidesaddle
12. Sioux Pad Saddle for a Man
13. Sioux Pad Saddle for a Boy
14. Crow Saddle for a Woman
15. Cheyenne Saddle for a Child
16. Indian Presentation Saddle (for Whipple)
17. Sioux Packsaddle
18. Cheyenne Saddle Forks
19. Sioux Stirrup
20. Crow Stirrups
21. Crow Crupper
22. Cheyenne Rope
23. Sioux Quirt

1. Mexican Saddle

FIGURES 18, 60

DATE.—Tree, about 1800 (?); housing, about 1825 to 1850.

ORIGIN.—Mexico.

MAKER.—Unidentified.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, copper and silver alloys, iron, animal hair, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 47 cm (18½"); W, 36 cm (14"); D, 52 cm (20½"); HH, 12 cm (4¾").

LENDER.—El Museo de la Charrería, Toluca, Estado de México, Mexico.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—Renwick Loan, TL. 20.1974.22; CAL Reports, 1789, 2562.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is partially covered with stitched rawhide, the horned pommel with stitched fine-grained black leather, and the cantle with coarse-grained black leather. The pommel is covered with a black leather piece adorned with embroidered silver florets and stamped grid design that functions as part of the forward rigging (*las reatas*). The upper housing consists of three pieces stitched to-

gether: a quilted seat-cover of black leather with forward extensions shaped to close around the base of the horn; and two rear pieces (each with a small jockey) joined behind the cantle. Silver-thread embroidery runs behind the cantle, across the forward extensions of the seat cover, and around the jockeys. The square skirts are carved and embroidered in floral patterns, lined with fine-grained black leather, and laced together behind the cantle. Two rosettes with ties flank each jockey and two appear on each side behind the cantle (on-side ones missing). Two rosettes and ties are indicated for each pommel shoulder (some are missing).

The single forward rigging consists of replacement latigos (pierced for cinch buckles) and leather-covered latigo rings that hang from wide rigging straps, which are adorned with silver- and brass-thread embroidery and are attached to the pommel cover and behind the cantle by a strap (*la contrareata*). The cinch is missing.

Replacement stirrup straps are threaded through rectangular cuts in the tree under the jockeys and buckled (Figure 60f). Stirrup leather buckles have a ferrous body plated with nickel. Holding the top of each fender to a loop through which the replaced stirrup strap passes are two-pronged fasteners of the same metals (Figure 60f). The carved black leather fenders, embroidered with silver thread, are attached at the bottom to the straps by replaced loops (Figure 60h). The wooden stirrups, covered with fine-grained red leather, hang by round wooden bars. Stamped and carved black leather stirrup covers are bordered with silver-thread embroidery in the same floral design used on the fenders (Figure 60a,h,i). Replacement rosettes on the stirrup covers anchor hide ties.

The animal fur (goat?) ornament is lined with suede and textile. On the upper side it

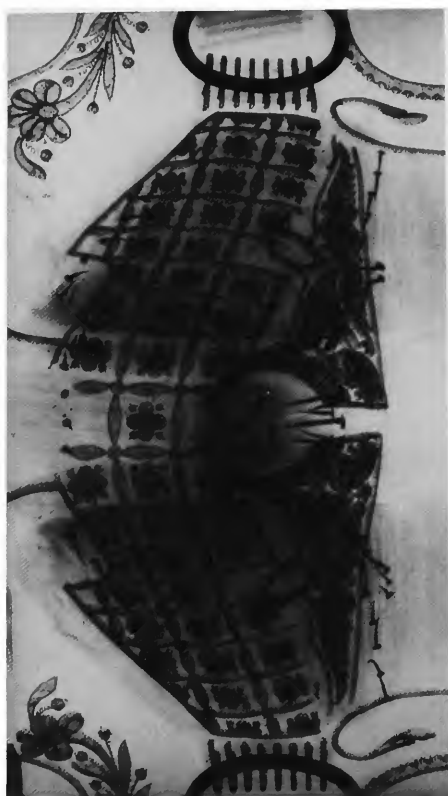
FIGURE 60.—Mexican saddle owned by Barbabosa family: a, on-side; b, top view; c, d, X-rays of pommel and cantle construction; e, pommel, off-side; f, off-side stirrup leather passing through sideboard of saddletree; g, underside of hair ornament (*vaquerillo*), see Figure 18 for upper side, h, on-side stirrup cover (*tapedera*); i, rear of off-side stirrup; j, underside.



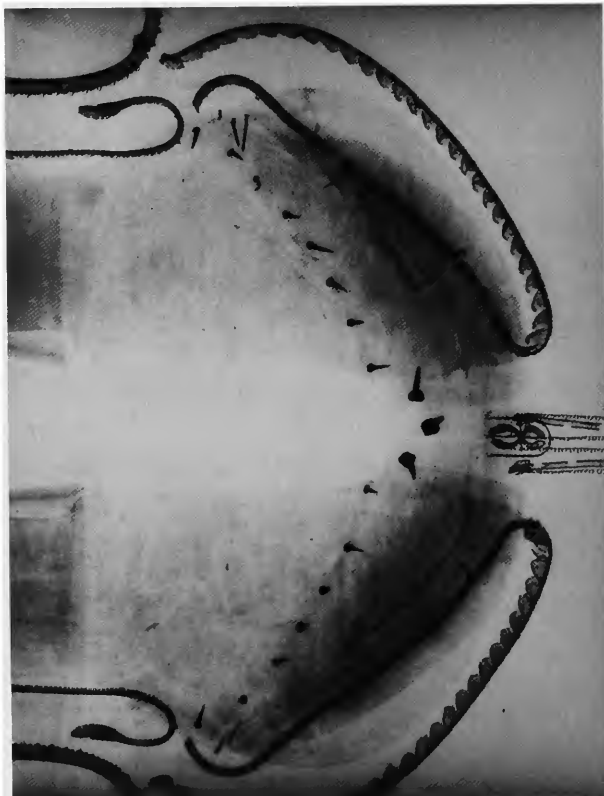
a



b



c



d



e



g



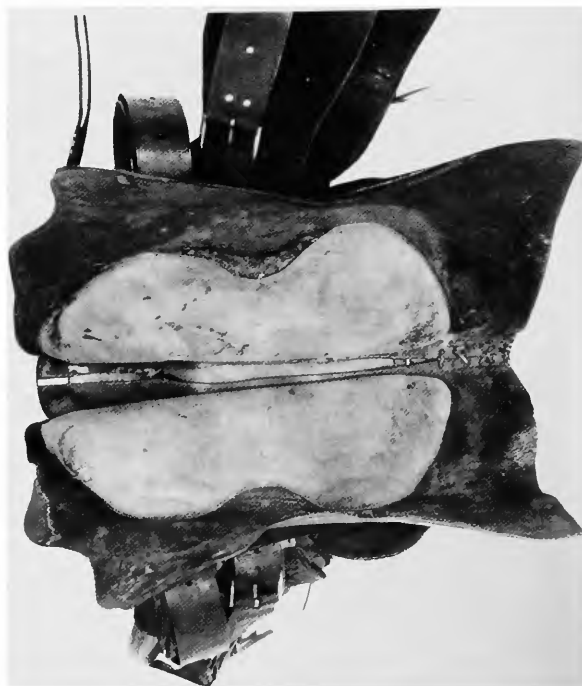
f



h



i



j

bears a leather border on the rear edge and is topped with a leather panel, both of which leather trims are solidly embroidered with silver thread in floral designs (Figures 18, 60g).

HISTORY.—The animal fur piece (*el vaquerillo*) served multiple purposes: to be ornamental, to protect the horse's flanks from brush and goring, and, when pockets were present on the underside, to provide storage. In this case there are no pockets.

This saddle was originally owned by the Barbabosa family of central Mexico. Their family tradition holds that portions of the saddle date back to colonial times. It was donated by the Barbabosa family to the Museo de la Charrería.

Although showing several repairs and replacements, this saddle displays the traditional design, fine craftsmanship, and tasteful ornamentation typical of equestrian equipment used over the years by the well-to-do *rancheros* of Mexico. Two radio-graphs (Figures 60c,d) taken from directly above the pommel and the cantle reveal the exact location of the saddletree, the metallic braid and hand-forged nails, documenting an attitude toward craftsmanship that ranged from casual to careful.

2. California Saddle

FIGURE 61

DATE.—About 1830 to 1860.

ORIGIN.—Southern California?

MAKER.—Unidentified.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, silver and copper alloys, iron, natural fibers, textile.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 49.5 cm (19½"); W, 33 cm (13"); D, 60 cm (23½"); HH, 9 cm (13½").

LENDER.—Jerome Forster, Ione, California.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—Renwick Loan, TL. 20.1974.4; CAL Reports, 1713, 2582.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with stitched rawhide. Engraved and chased silver trim is screwed to cap of horn and rim of cantle; stem of horn and faces of cantle are covered with tanned black leather; silver garland ornament and two plain conchas are screwed to back of cantle. The stuffed and quilted removable seat pad of tanned maroon leather and mattress ticking is tied to the rear rigging straps.

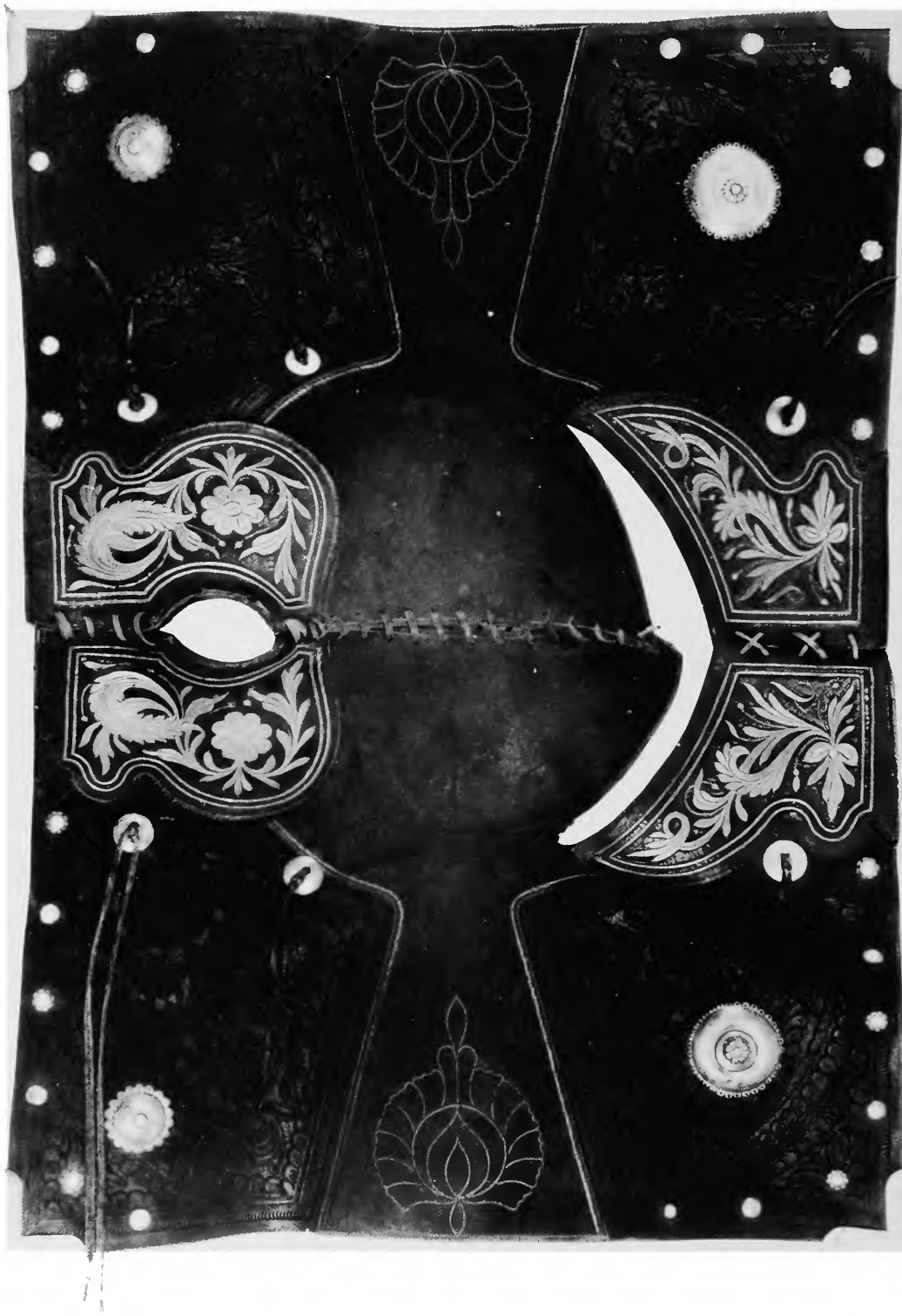
The tanned black leather *mochila* (Figure

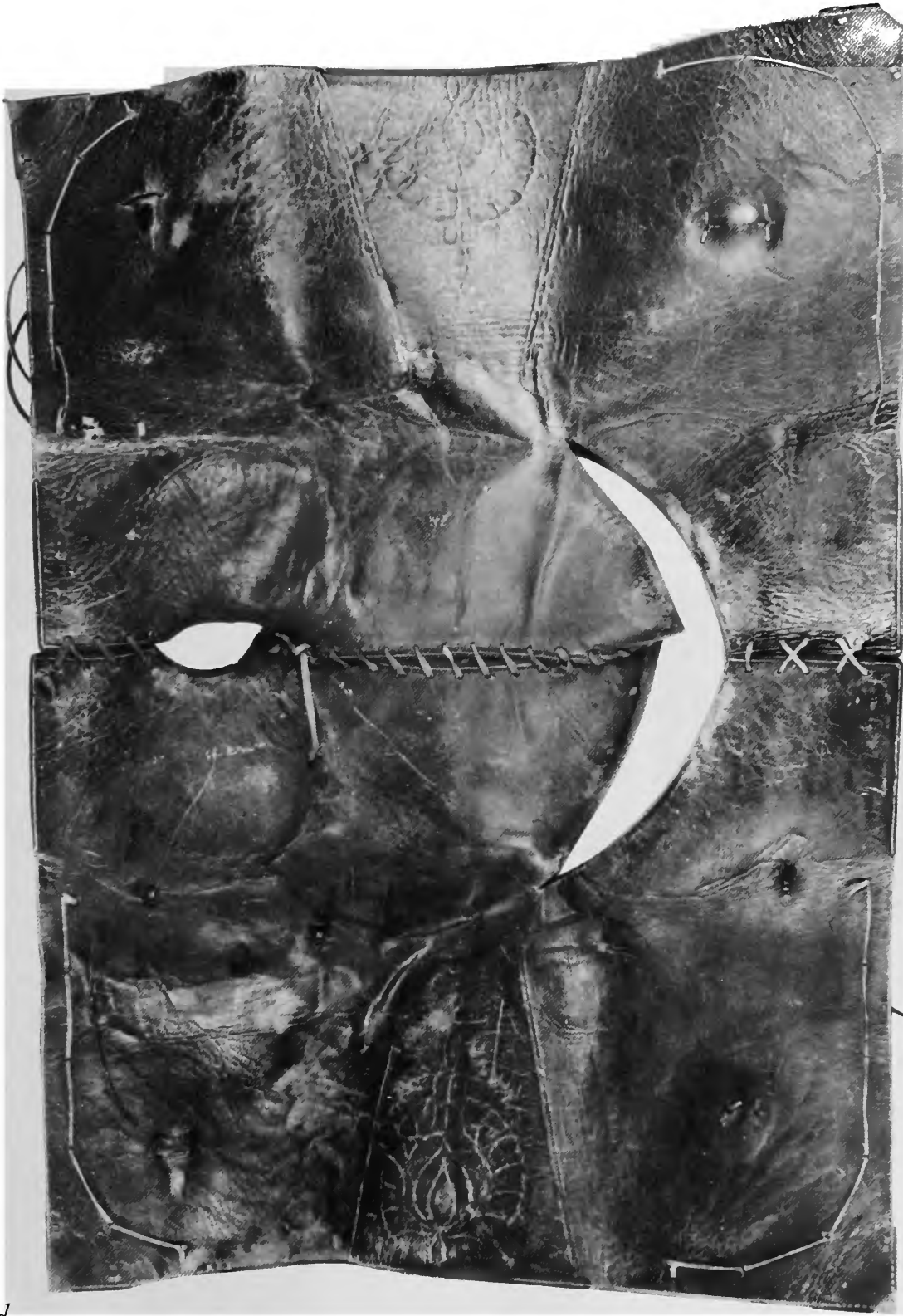
61c,d) is made from two separate pieces, now secured by replacement lacing, adorned with stitched, stamped and carved leaf and flower designs, and lined with fine-grained maroon leather; a center suede piece that crosses the

seat flares at the base of the cantle. Silver-thread embroidery in leaf and flower designs appears in front and rear scalloped reserves. Twenty-six small silver buttons, of two different styles, are attached to the *mochila*'s edge by

FIGURE 61.—California saddle made for John Forster: *a*, on-side, with *mochila*; *b*, on-side, without *mochila*; *c*, *mochila*, top; *d*, *mochila*, underside; *e*, off-side view of rigging, stirrup strap (rear strap is incorrectly hung behind the rigging straps), and fender on saddletree; *f*, underside; *g*, off-side stirrup from rear; *h*, off-side stirrup cover (tapadero).







d

*e**f**g**h*

means of a single hide lacing (Figure 61d); two plain conchas (larger than the buttons) with leather ties occur over each pommel shoulder and behind the cantle; each corner bears a large scalloped and chased silver medallion, the front ones being of one design and the rear ones of another. The corners are terminated by ball-tipped silver corner plates.

The components of the three-quarter single rigging are as follows: a forward strap that crosses the pommel just in front of the base of the horn and is nailed in place; a rear strap that passes over the sideboards behind the cantle and is nailed to the rear of each side board; a metal latigo ring on each side through which the rigging straps are threaded and then secured with metal fasteners. The latigos and cinch are missing.

The carved and stamped tanned-leather fenders, lined with fine-grained maroon tanned leather, are attached to the stirrup leathers at the top with metal fasteners and at the bottom with leather loops; the stirrup leathers pass around the side boards of the tree and are secured with laces (Figure 61e). Single-piece taps (tapaderos) of tanned leather are decorated with carved leafy designs, silver corner trim, and two conchas with leather ties (Figure 61g,h). Pear- or lyre-shaped bent-wood stirrups employ round wooden suspension bars (Figure 61g).

HISTORY.—This saddle was made (in California?) for John (Don Juan) Forster, an early settler in the Capistrano Valley and has been in the continuous possession of the Forster family since the time of its manufacture. It shows ample evidence of wear but its *mochila* marks it as primarily an ornamental rather than a working saddle.

The saddle shares characteristics of those used by other prosperous *hacendados* in the horse-oriented culture of Hispanic California, including the removable *mochila*, the slender horn, and the use of finely crafted leather carving and silver trim and embroidery. Meticulous workmanship, artistry, and pride in the manufacture of equestrian equipment was a Hispanic tradition in California that influenced incoming Anglo saddlemakers.

3. Mexican Saddle

FIGURE 62

DATE.—About 1835 to 1845.

ORIGIN.—Mexico.

MAKER.—Unidentified.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, silver and copper alloys, gold, iron, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 47 cm (18½"); W, 35.5 cm (14"); D, 48 cm (19"); HH, 7 cm (2¾").

LENDER.—Division of Military History, NMHT.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—NMHT Catalogue and Accession, 5,664 and 22,920; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.19; CAL Report, 1745.

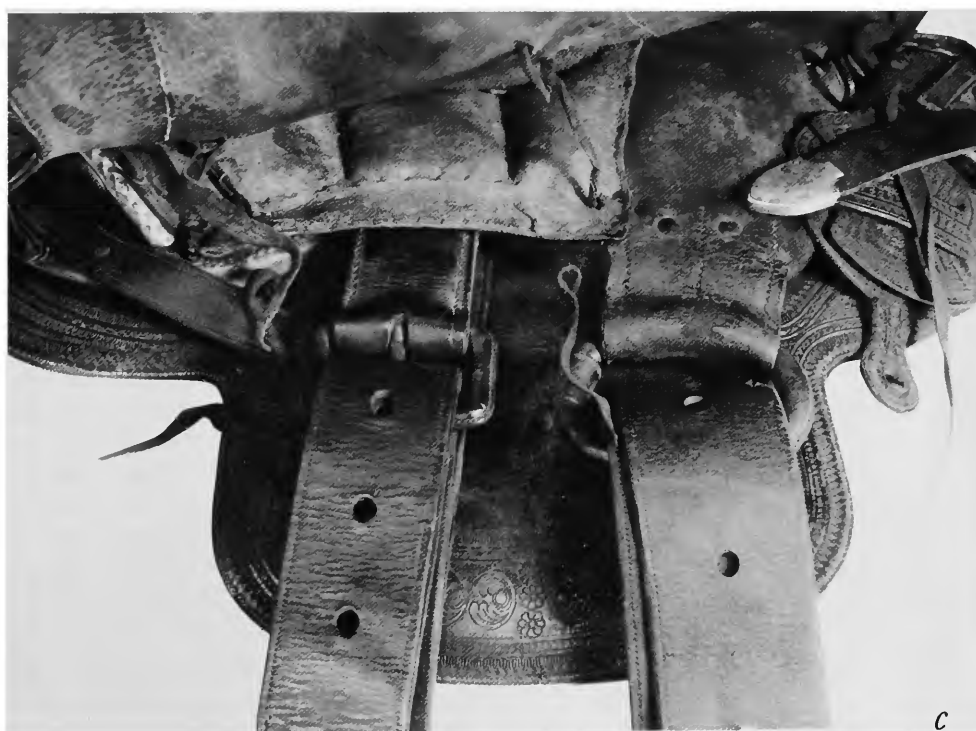
DETAILS.—The saddletree is wood, covered with stitched rawhide. Chased yellow metal coverings are screwed to the narrow-horned pommel and cantle rim. Cantle surfaces are covered with black leather. Two white metal (silver alloy) medallions are screwed to the base of the cantle and two to its outer plane, where screw holes in the metal trim of the rim indicate a missing ornament or name plate. There are short, stamped leather skirts; the sideboards are covered by tanned and padded leather.

The boldly carved, tanned black *mochila* (Figure 62b), which laces behind the horn is made up of a padded seat panel stitched onto a larger, embroidered under-panel. The seat panel is decorated with stitchery of florals; the national emblem of Mexico (eagle holding serpent, perched on cactus), a Liberty cap, bow, arrow, and drum. Metallic-thread embroidery appears in leaf designs behind the cantle, and in a national emblem on the shoulders of the pommel. Outlining trim of metallic thread ends at the front in laurel sprays. There is piercing over the pommel for strings to attach the missing pistol holsters.

Single forward rigging is used. Rigging straps bearing an oval metal latigo ring hang from the forward fork; a rigging strap is nailed to each sideboard behind the cantle. Leather tabs on the ends of the cinch hold the buckles and are adorned with metallic thread embroidery resembling work on the Barbabosa saddle (Figure 60).



FIGURE 62.—Mexican saddle awarded to Brig. Gen. W. S. Harney: *a*, on-side; *b*, top view; *c*, off-side rigging seen with *mochila* raised; note untied *mochila* thongs run through padded “underseat” that covers the Mexican tree (not visible); *d*, cinch; *e*, rear.





d

Tanned black leather stirrup straps thread through black leather tabs on the sideboards. Pear-shaped stirrups of embossed metal employ metal suspension bars and stamped leather foot pads.

Yellow metals on stirrups, horn, cantle, and embroidery threads are gold-plated copper alloys.

HISTORY.—This type of militarized stock saddle was used in the mid-nineteenth century by Mexican officers. Documents accompanying this saddle indicate that it was a battlefield presentation. Col. William Selby Harney was brevetted Brigadier General in 1846 for his actions at the battle of Cerro Gordo, the battleground on which he acquired this saddle. It was donated to the Smithsonian Institution by Mrs. Mary Harney in 1890.

4. Mexican Presentation Saddle

FIGURE 63

DATE.—About 1865.

ORIGIN.—Mexico City

MAKER.—"Fustería de Felipe del Aguila[r], Calle de la Buena Muerte, . . . ra D. Mexico" (inscription stamped in ink on front of cantle).

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, silver and copper alloys, iron, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 52 cm (20½"); W, 35 cm (13¾"); D, 30 cm (12"); HH, 20 cm (8").

LENDER.— Division of Military History, NMHT.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.— NMHT Catalogue and Accession, 35,293 and 89,849; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.18; CAL Report, 1674.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with stitched rawhide. A chased and embossed silver cap in floral and geometric designs is nailed to the "dinner-plate" horn. The center of the cap is engraved: "L. Galvan to Maj. Gen. P. H. Sheridan / Feb. 20th, 1866."

Grooved and embossed floral designs in silver trim are nailed to the cantle rim and screwed to the gullet rim. Embossed silver medallions in floral design are mounted on leather discs on the pommel shoulders. Incised, tanned leather with metallic thread embroidery covers the sideboards just in front of the cantle. Tanned leather pads are nailed to the underside of the



e

sideboards. Two plain silver conchas with rawhide ties are affixed to each sideboard behind the cantle; an embossed silver concha mounted on a leather disc with rawhide ties is attached to the front edge of each pommel shoulder.

Single forward rigging is used. Stamped leather rigging straps bearing floral silver-thread embroidery hang from the pommel and carry incised metal latigo rings with decorative silver plating. The tanned-leather latigos are pierced for a buckled cinch. The tanned-leather breast band stuffed with horsehair is attached to the latigo rings.

Incised and embroidered tanned stirrup leathers run over the side bars, through the open seat, and are laced together. Metallic embroidery appears in a medallion design above each stirrup. The box-shaped stirrups with round wooden suspension bars have metal plates with embossed floral design screwed to the outside



FIGURE 63.—Mexican presentation saddle for Maj. Gen. P. H. Sheridan: *a*, on-side; *b*, top view showing elements of silver bridle below saddle; *c*, underside.





of their surface; their stamped-leather foot pads end in metallic-embroidered, lunette-shaped flaps.

The metallic tape wrappings of the silk thread used for embroidery on this saddle are "almost pure silver with traces of copper, zinc, gold and lead detected" (CAL Report 1674). The silver-thread embroidery is often raised into relief, similar to stump work.

HISTORY.—This saddle has many components duplicated in the richly adorned saddles used by gentlemen riders of Mexico after 1850. The exaggerated shape of the horn; exposed frame; single forward rigging, stirrup leathers of wide, decorated bands; and metal covered box-shaped stirrups with leather foot pads are elements frequently repeated in written descriptions and artistic renderings of the late 1800s. Characteristic of that era is the assemblage of the splendid efforts of the woodworker, silversmith, and leather carver in the construction of Mexican equestrian equipment demonstrated by this saddle.

According to an entry in the *Army and Navy*

Journal, 24 March 1866, this saddle, "valued between two and three thousand dollars," was presented to Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan by a friend in Mexico—a wealthy gentleman who was a great admirer of General Sheridan. Sheridan commanded a military division along the Texas coast of the Gulf of Mexico between 1865 and 1867. During this unsettled period in Mexico's history, liberals were engaged in struggles with the troops of the French-imposed emperor, Maximilian, and occasionally received support from United States troops.

The saddle was donated to the Smithsonian Institution by Mrs. Philip H. Sheridan in 1926.

5. Charro Saddle

FIGURE 64

DATE.—About 1905 to 1935.

ORIGIN.—Mexico City.

MAKER.—" . . . [Fustes?] de Dionysio Rodriguez . . . Calle del Topacio, 3 . . . Mexico"

*a*

FIGURE 64.—Charro saddle by Rodriguez: *a*, on-side; *b*, mark of maker Dionysio Rodriguez on cantle face; *c*, silver-horn cap; *d*, stirrup turned back in leather strapping; *e*, underside.

*b*



(from the inscription stamped in ink on the front of the cantle; see Figure 64b).

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, copper and silver alloys, sheep's wool, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 53.5 cm (21"); W, 33 cm (13"); D, 53.5 cm (21"); HH, 15.5 cm (6").

LENDER.—Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, Los Angeles.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—Los Angeles Museum, A.5933.50-74; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.1; CAL Reports, 1747, 2564.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with parchment-like rawhide. Domed horn, pommel shoulders, gullet, and grooved cantle rim are trimmed with silver-alloy plates embossed in floral designs and screwed to the tree. Square, tanned-leather skirts are lined with

sheepskin and fitted with borders of twining-rose designs embroidered with silver thread on stamped and scalloped leather panels; the same motif of embroidered panels is repeated on the pocket flaps of the tanned-leather saddle bags. Four silver-alloy conchas of chased spiral design are attached with suede ties to the saddle bags immediately behind the cantle. A larger spiral concha with suede ties appears on each flap. On each side of the saddle a concha of the smaller size appears (with ties) at the front of the pommel and two others of the same size are employed in the fastening of the *reatas*. On the off-side, the pommel concha and the lower concha behind the cantle, hold a leather tab and loop for accoutrements such as a sword, quirt, or rope.

The components of the single forward rigging are: embroidered tanned-leather rigging straps (*las reatas*) hanging from the pommel; blued-iron latigo rings with silver inlay, each with a dee loop (welded to the upper rear of the latigo ring), which secures the embroidered rear rigging straps (*las contrareatas*); and tanned-leather latigos, pierced for the cinch buckles. The cinch is missing.

Tanned and embroidered stirrup leathers run over each sideboard, and are stitched together with rawhide lacing. Box-shaped, iron stirrups employ a round, wooden suspension bar and an inner facing of leather; embossed lyre and rosette elements are rivetted to the outer surfaces (Figure 64d).

HISTORY.—In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, skilled, well-to-do Mexican horsemen (*charros*) banded together in organizations with the purpose of preserving traditional Mexican riding practices and equipment. This saddle incorporates most elements of charro saddles made from 1870 to 1920. These elements include the squat, domed horn; flattened cantle; exposed, single, forward rigging; open seat boxlike stirrups; squared rear saddle bags (*cantinas*); and elaborate silver ornamentation.

The maker's stamp on the cantle of this saddle gives notice that the saddle shop of Dionysio Rodriguez won prizes at Milan in 1884-5, Paris in 1889, and St. Louis in 1904. This saddle has been in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History since 1937.

6. *Charro Saddletree*

FIGURE 65

DATE.—About 1950.

ORIGIN.—Jalapa, Mexico.

MAKER.—Manuel Gonzales.

MATERIALS.—Wood, animal glue.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 49 cm (19½"); W, 30.5 cm (12"); D, 23.5 cm (9¼"); HH, 14 cm (5½").

LENDER.—Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, Los Angeles.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—Los Angeles Museum, L.2100.53-197; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.3; CAL Reports, 1714, 2583.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is made of carved and fitted parts, dowelled and glued together. The circular, flattened horn with a bevelled perimeter and swelled shoulder are shaped from a single piece of wood. Separate pieces form the front of the pommel and bracings down to the side bars. The sideboards are notched for stirrup leathers. Surface sheen is created by glue sizing.

HISTORY.—This saddletree was purchased in Zapotlanejo, a village east of Guadalajara, Mexico, in 1950 for the Los Angeles County Museum. Its cost was 25 pesos, slightly less than three dollars at that time.

The tree incorporates most of the *charro* characteristics of the late-nineteenth century, demonstrating the enduring popularity of the type. The use of a single piece of wood for the horn and forks displays awareness of the strain put on the tree by the single forward rigging. The availability of this unriggered tree emphasizes the fact that saddles are composed of distinct parts. Each element is manufactured separately, and may be assembled to conform to individual taste within a single regional tradition.

7. *Vaquero Saddle*

FIGURE 66

DATE.—About 1860 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Northern Mexico.

MAKER.—Unidentified.

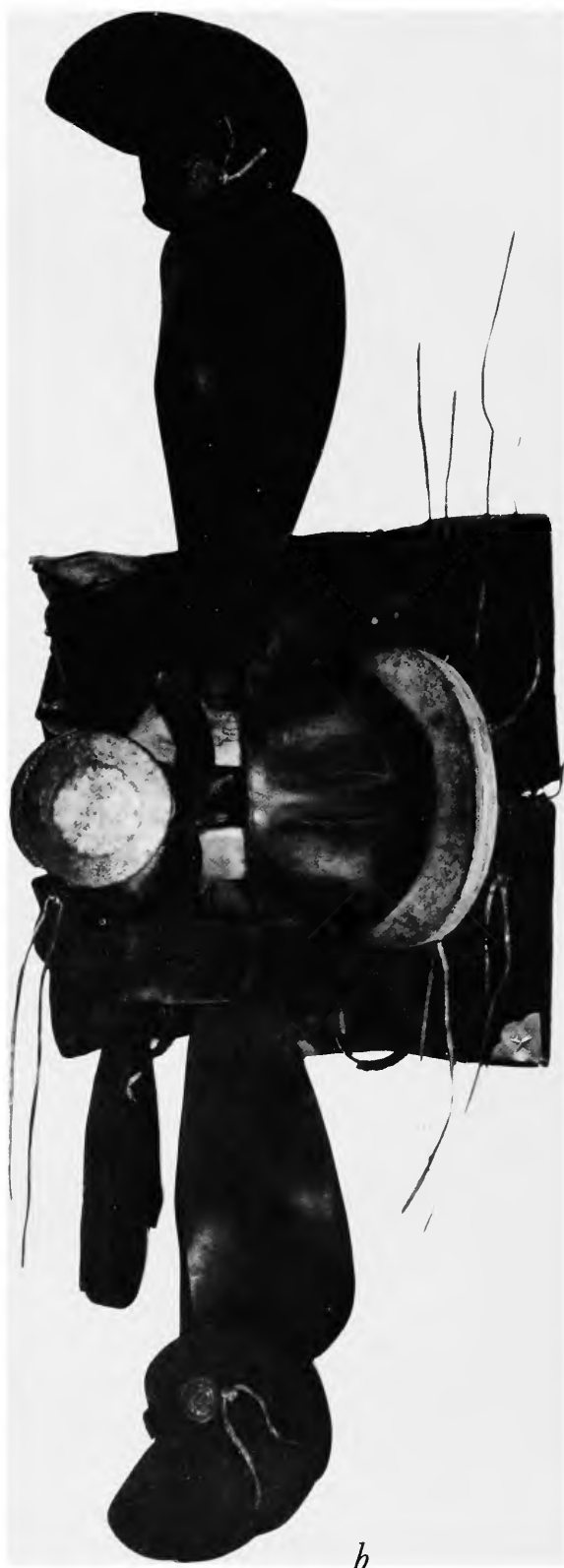
MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, copper alloys, iron, natural fibers.



FIGURE 65.—Charro saddletree by Gonzales: *a*, on-side; *b*, on-side from rear; *c*, underside.



FIGURE 66.—Vaquero saddle acquired by Bourke: *a*, on-side; *b*, top view; *c*, on-side from front.



DIMENSIONS.—L, 51 cm (20"); W, 35 cm (13 $\frac{3}{4}$ "); D, 48.5 cm (19"); HH, 17 cm (6 $\frac{3}{4}$ ").

LENDER.—Department of Cultural History, NMHT.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMHT Catalogue and Accession, 165,092 and 26,024; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.20; CAL Report, 1673.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with stitched rawhide. The wide, flat horn sits on a short, narrow stem; there is no swell to the pommel shoulders. The low cantle displays a grooved rim. The rectangular, tanned-leather "jockeys" are attached to the pommel with rosettes, and laced together behind the cantle. Two leather rosettes are affixed to the "jockeys"

on each side behind the cantle. There are two rectangular leather pieces that serve the functions of a skirt and of a pad (*el basto*) under the tree. These leather pieces are lined with canvas and appear to have been stuffed originally; each rear corner is fitted with nickel-plated brass trim decorated by chased edging and an embossed star (off-side corner trim missing). A separate tanned-leather piece that covers most of the seat opening in the tree is nailed to the sideboards.

Double rigging features front rigging straps, one passing over the front of the pommel, the other wrapped around the horn, both nailed in place and running beneath the jockey to the forward, leather-covered latigo ring. A similar rear latigo ring, attached to the rear jockey, is joined to the forward ring by another strap. The tanned-leather forward latigo is pierced for a tongued buckle. The off-side latigo, both rear latigos, and the cinches are missing.

Tanned-leather fenders and stirrup leathers are threaded through a slot in each sideboard. Iron stirrups employ a round wooden suspension bar. Snouted *tapaderas* are stamped with spiraling border designs and are adorned with embossed brass medallions on the sides and leather rosettes in front (some of the rosettes missing).

HISTORY.—In its combination of elements, this *vaquero* saddle is an excellent example of the anglicized Mexican saddle used on both sides of the Rio Grande in the later part of the nineteenth century. The exposed tree fitted out in leather parts that are easily added or removed, the wide “dinner-plate” and the *tapaderas* are typically Mexican in character. Double rigging and leather pieces serving the function of jockeys have been identified as Anglo-American in origin. This saddle displays in its present form an ingenious innovation in the leather component that combines the functions of jockeys and rear rigging suspension. Originally the saddle may have been without this feature, depending solely on single forward rigging. It may also have sported Mexican-type silver trim.

Bvt. Maj. John G. Bourke of the Third United States Cavalry Regiment commanded the cavalry post at Fort Ringgold, Texas, between 1891

and 1893. During this period, Bourke was engaged in punitive operations against Mexican *bandidos* led by Alberto Garza, from whom he took this saddle. Its anglicized elements probably appeared after this change in ownership. By 1896, Bourke, himself a pioneer ethnologist in the Southwest, donated this *vaquero* saddle to the Smithsonian Institution.

8. Hybrid Saddle

FIGURES 42, 67

DATE.—About 1840 to 1860.

ORIGIN.—Probably in the Lower Missouri River Region.

MAKER.—Unidentified.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, copper alloys, iron, animal hair, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 46 cm (18"); W, 31 cm (12¼"); D, 75 cm (29½"); HH, 6.5 cm (2½").

LENDER.—Southwestern History Museum, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

REFERENCE NUMBER.—Arizona Historical Society, ST 1120/7879; Renwick Loan, TL.20. 1974.23; CAL Reports, 1763, 2565.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with sized fabric. The upright, horned pommel and deep, squared cantle and seat are covered with fine-grained, tanned black leather. The seat is quilted in star and spiral designs, stuffed with cotton and attached to the saddletree with copper-alloy and iron tacks in the following places: around the perimeter of the cantle; two tacks on the horn; and seven at the front base of the horn stem. The round-cornered rear inner skirts are of blue fabric, woolen weft-faced with cotton warp. They are edged with red leather piping and trimmed with dark brown tanned leather behind the cantle. Two leather tabs appear on the leather trim behind the cantle. Beneath the tree is a saddle pad of leather lined with fabric and stuffed with Rocky Mountain mule deer fur. Outer skirts of coarse-grained, dark brown tanned leather are screwed and tacked to the upper surface of the sideboards beneath the edge of the quilted seat (Figure 67b).



FIGURE 67.—Hybrid saddle from Missouri River region: *a*, on-side from front; *b*, attachment of on-side stirrup leather; *c*, back of stirrup; *d*, underside; *e*, off-side from rear.



b



c



d



e

Single center rigging employs a tanned leather cinch strap attached to the off-side sideboard beneath the outer skirt. On the on-side, it is secured by a square buckle suspended from a leather loop attached to the sideboard beneath the outer skirt. A rectangular leather flap attached to the sideboard lies just beneath this loop and buckle.

Stirrup leathers hang from a sleeve on a triangular iron ring (dee) secured beneath the quilted seat by an eye screwed into the tree (Figure 67*b*). These straps are adjusted above the stirrups by cast brass buckles. Medium-grained, tanned black leather *tapaderas* are tacked to the pear-shaped bent-wood stirrups (Figure 67*c*).

HISTORY.—This east-west hybrid is representative of work by some mid-nineteenth century saddlemakers, perhaps in the lower Missouri River region. Inventories and letters of the period indicate that these manufacturers sold "Spanish saddles" to a variety of westward-bound individuals. The cities of Saint Louis, Saint Joseph, and Independence, serving as supply depots and trail heads for the western territories, apparently produced horse gear combining popular traits from two geographical areas of the United States—east and southwest.

This saddle combines elements found on the western saddle—the horned pommel and deep cantle—with those frequently associated with the equestrian equipment of English origin—the flap-like outer skirts, padded inner skirts, and girthing arrangement.

The saddle was acquired by the Arizona Historical Society in 1971.

9. Stock Saddle

FIGURE 68

DATE.—About 1875 to 1900.

ORIGIN.—Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory.

MAKER.—Frank Meanea.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, copper alloys, iron, sheep's wool, plant fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 54 cm (21¼"); W, 34 cm (13½"); D, 50 cm (19¾"); HH, 10 cm (4").

LENDER.—Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, Cheyenne.

REFERENCE NUMBER.—Wyoming State Museum, 69.180.00; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.2; CAL Reports, 1744, 2584.

DETAILS.—The saddletree of wood is covered with stitched rawhide. Tanned leather covers the horned pommel, cantle, and seat; the jockeys, fenders, saddle bags, and stirrup leathers are also of tanned brown leather. The pommel displays a high, slick fork with a prominent gullet. The high, upright horn stem is wrapped with a buckled leather strap. The high arched cantle is dished. The leather covered seat, slit for stirrup leathers, terminates in oval jockeys. Light border stamping of parallel lines and florets appears on the edge of sheepskin-lined skirts and on the fenders. Rounded saddlebags, each with a double leather rosette with leather ties, are affixed to the flank skirts by means of hide lacing. A double rosette with ties occurs at the bases of the pommel and the cantle. Detachable leather bucking rolls, stuffed with sheep's wool, are fitted across the rear base of the pommel and are attached by two double rosettes (Figure 68*c*). Copper rivets are used on these rolls and in the rigging leathers.

Double rigging (Figure 68*e*) features leather-covered forward and rear latigo rings and a latigo pierced for a tongued cinch-buckle (the cinches and three latigos are missing). The attachment of front and rear rigging straps is covered by the jockeys. Fenders are incorporated in the stirrup leathers, which are cross-stitched together with hide lacing and pass beneath the seat jockeys and around the sideboards. There are narrow, curved, pierced-iron stirrups with iron suspension bars (Figure 68*d*). A maker's mark is stamped into the lower rear corners of the skirts, beneath each saddle bag and on the seat.

HISTORY.—The maker of this saddle, Frank A. Meanea of Cheyenne, was one of a group of saddlemakers working in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and Utah in the latter part of the nineteenth century. These men formed an extended family, with ties of blood or apprenticeship, including Theodore Meanea, John S. Collins, John Francis and S. C. Gallup, John Landis, R. T. Frazier, and Edward L. Gallatin. Their innovations and adjustments made their wares particularly popular with horsemen in the northern plains and mountain states.



FIGURE 68.—Stock saddle by Meanea: *a*, on-side; *b*, front view; *c*, back of pommel with bucking rolls; *d*, front of stirrup; *e*, on-side rigging for cinches.



The invention of detachable bucking rolls, devices designed to hold the rider firmly in his seat, is often credited to Frank Meanea. The function of these rolls paralleled that of swelled pommel shoulders. Other innovations, sometimes patented, such as rolled cantle handholds, deeply dished upright cantles, and the use of metal in saddletrees, changed the look of the western stock saddle in the late nineteenth century.¹

This saddle, which shows evidence of long use, was purchased by stockman John Shephard Day in the late 1880s in Wyoming Territory. It was donated to the Wyoming State Museum in 1959 by the heirs of Mr. Day.

10. *Anglo Presentation Saddle*

FIGURES 43, 69

DATE.—1862.

ORIGIN.—Denver, Colorado.

MAKER.—Edward L. Gallatin.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, silver and copper alloys, iron, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 52 cm (20½"); W, 30 cm (12"); D, 75 cm (29½"); HH, 10.5 cm (4").

LENDER.—State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—Colorado State Museum, CH 546; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.5; CAL Reports, 1269, 2577, 2578.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with stitched rawhide. Chased silver trim fits on the rim of the cantle, and a circular silver horn cap bears thirteen raised, gold-colored stars, an eagle, and the inscription: "Col. J. H. Leavenworth / 2nd Regt. Col. Volunteers / Presented by his / Officers and friends at Denver City / 1862." Thirty-two similar stars encircle the rim of the horn. The cantle and pommel are covered with stamped and carved tanned black leather; the housing (*mochila*), seat, jockeys, *basto*, crupper, valise, holsters, fenders, cinch fittings, and stirrup covers are of similar leather, many lined with fine-grained tanned red leather.

The *mochila* (Figure 69f) consists of two pieces of leather that are joined together in front of the horn and behind the cantle (each of these joinings covered by a leather tab) and

they are laced together across the seat with hide cord that runs through metal eyelets. It is carved and stamped with floral and leaf designs, a scalloped border trim, and a portrait of George Washington surmounted by an eagle. The border braid is made of gold-plated copper wire wrapped around cotton thread. The rear corners are trimmed with red leather under silver alloy plates engraved with vines and pierced with a design of bars and stars. A silver, interwoven "2R" monogram appears above this corner trim (Figure 69h).

The front and side jockeys and the seat are made from a single leather piece carved in floral design that is laced together down the length of the seat with hide cord run through metal eyelets. The rear jockey is nailed to the sideboard of the tree in front of the cantle (Figure 69e). The skirt is squared at the rear corners and rounded at the front. Two silver conchas with rawhide ties occur on each of the front and rear jockeys.

The metal-tipped leather pistol holsters are sewn to leather pockets that are covered with leather shield-shaped flaps, bordered with gilded copper-on-cotton braid (Figure 69j). These pockets are laced together in such a way that the pair may be slipped over the horn. [Figure 69a shows these holsters incorrectly pointing backward. R.E.A.] A cylindrical valise intended to be fastened on behind the cantle is carved with the motto "E Pluribus Unum" and an eagle on the lid. The valise and the padded leather crupper are secured by two metal tipped buckled straps that pass through metal staples on the rear of the cantle (Figure 69e,g).

Single center rigging is employed. The forward rigging strap is wrapped once around the stem of the horn (the off-side end passing through a slit in the strap centered over the forward base of the horn) and nailed to the base of the fork; the rear rigging strap is an extension of the rear jockey (Figure 69e). The leather covered latigo ring and the unpierced latigo hang beneath the fender. The buckled stirrup leather and carved fender are of one piece. An extension of the lower end of the fender passes under the suspension bar of the stirrup and is terminated with a buckle. The upper end of the fender passes under the seat, over the sideboard of the tree, and through a



a

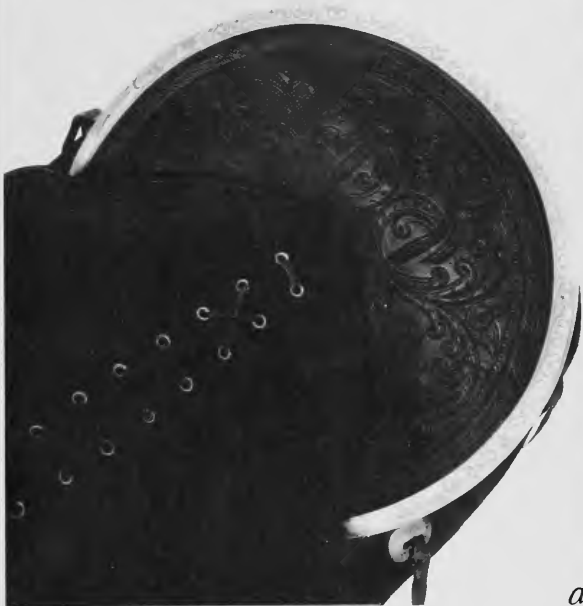
FIGURE 69.—Anglo presentation saddle by Gallatin: *a*, on-side with *mochila*; *b*, on-side from front without *mochila*; *c*, detail of on-side of seat; *d*, front of cantle; *e*, on-side rigging, fender folded back at top, stirrup strap folded back at left; *f*, *mochila*; *g*, valise and crupper; *h*, rear, off-side corner of *mochila*; *i*, English lock on valise; *j*, holsters with one flap removed for back view, double straps pierced for buckles of martingale projecting from under each holster; *k*, front of on-side stirrup; *l*, rear of on-side stirrup; *m*, outer side of cinch; *n*, underside of cinch; *o*, underside; *p*, martingale; *q*, detail of bit; *r*, bridle and reins.



b



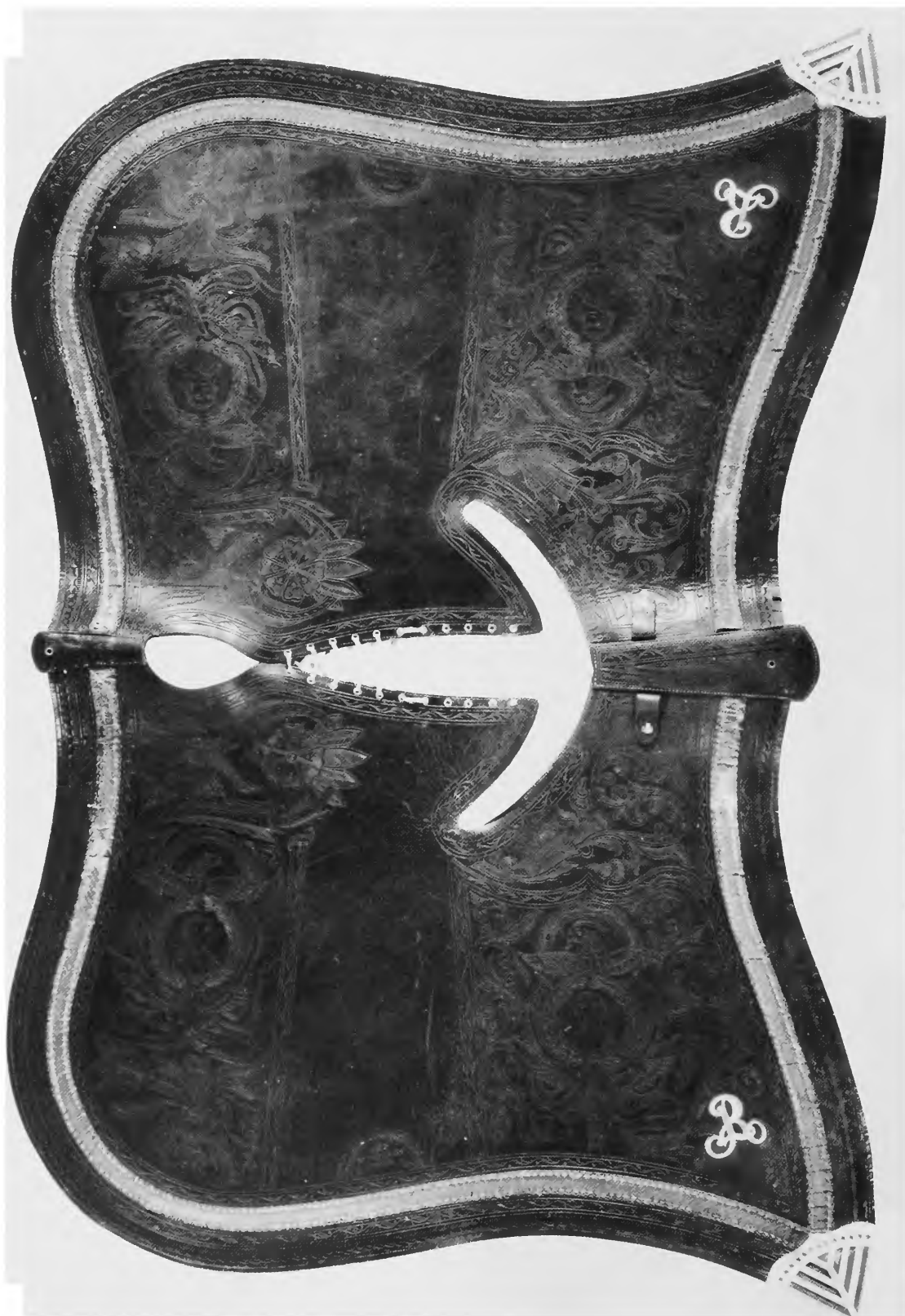
c

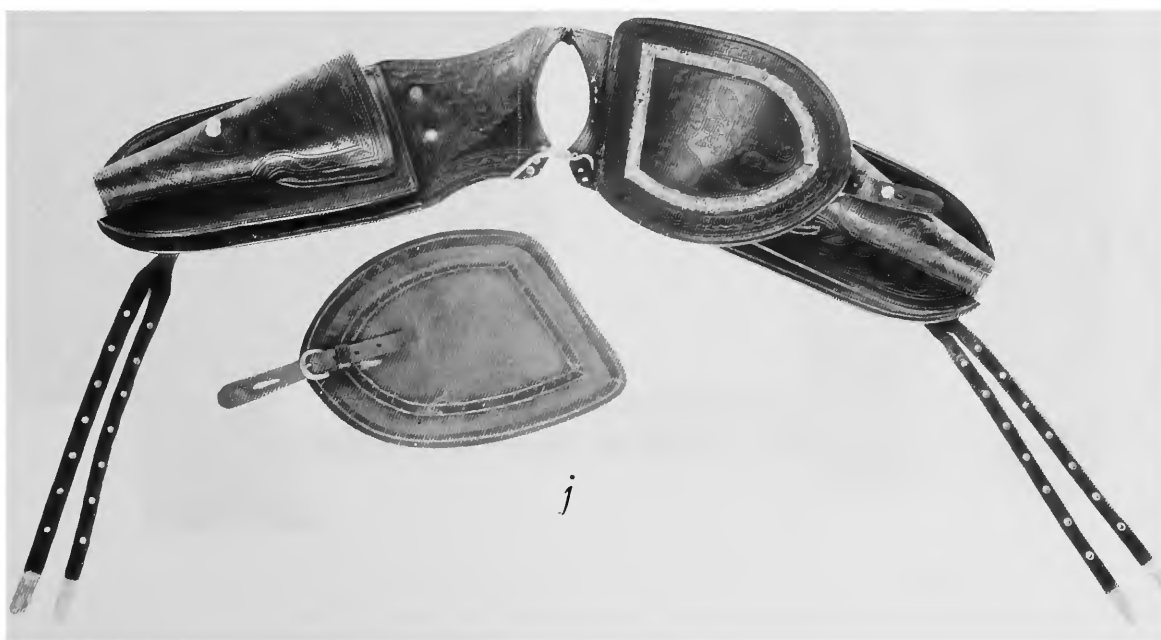
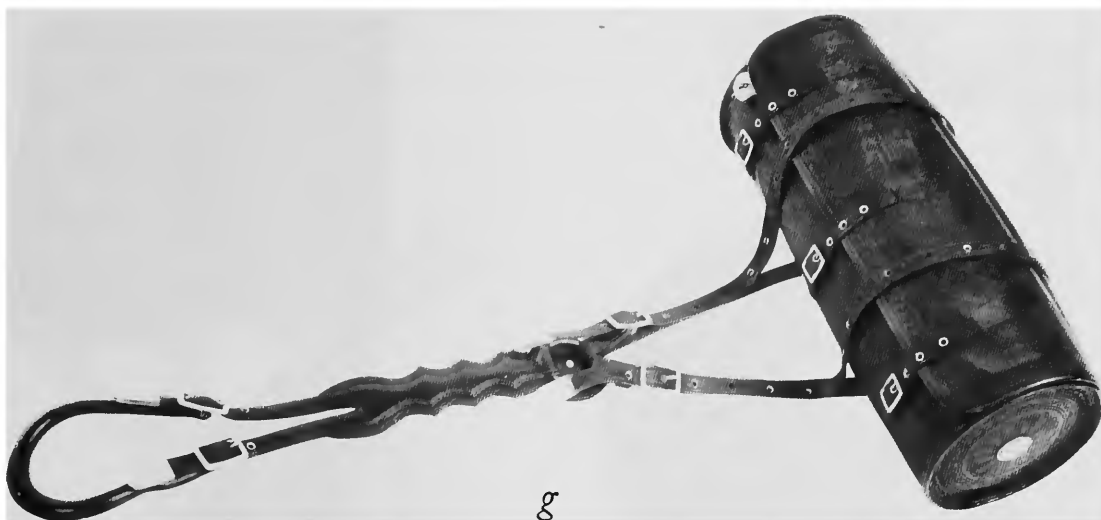


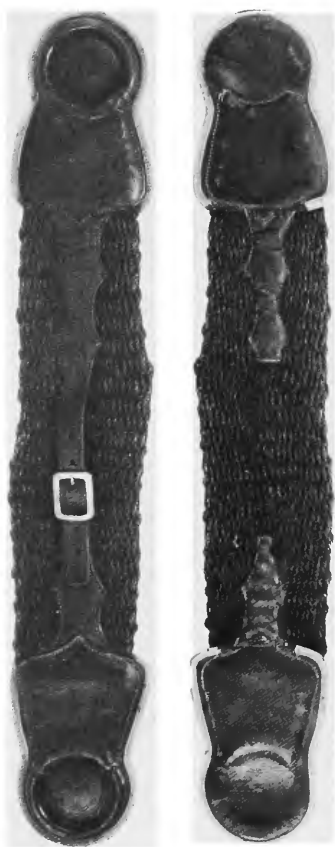
d

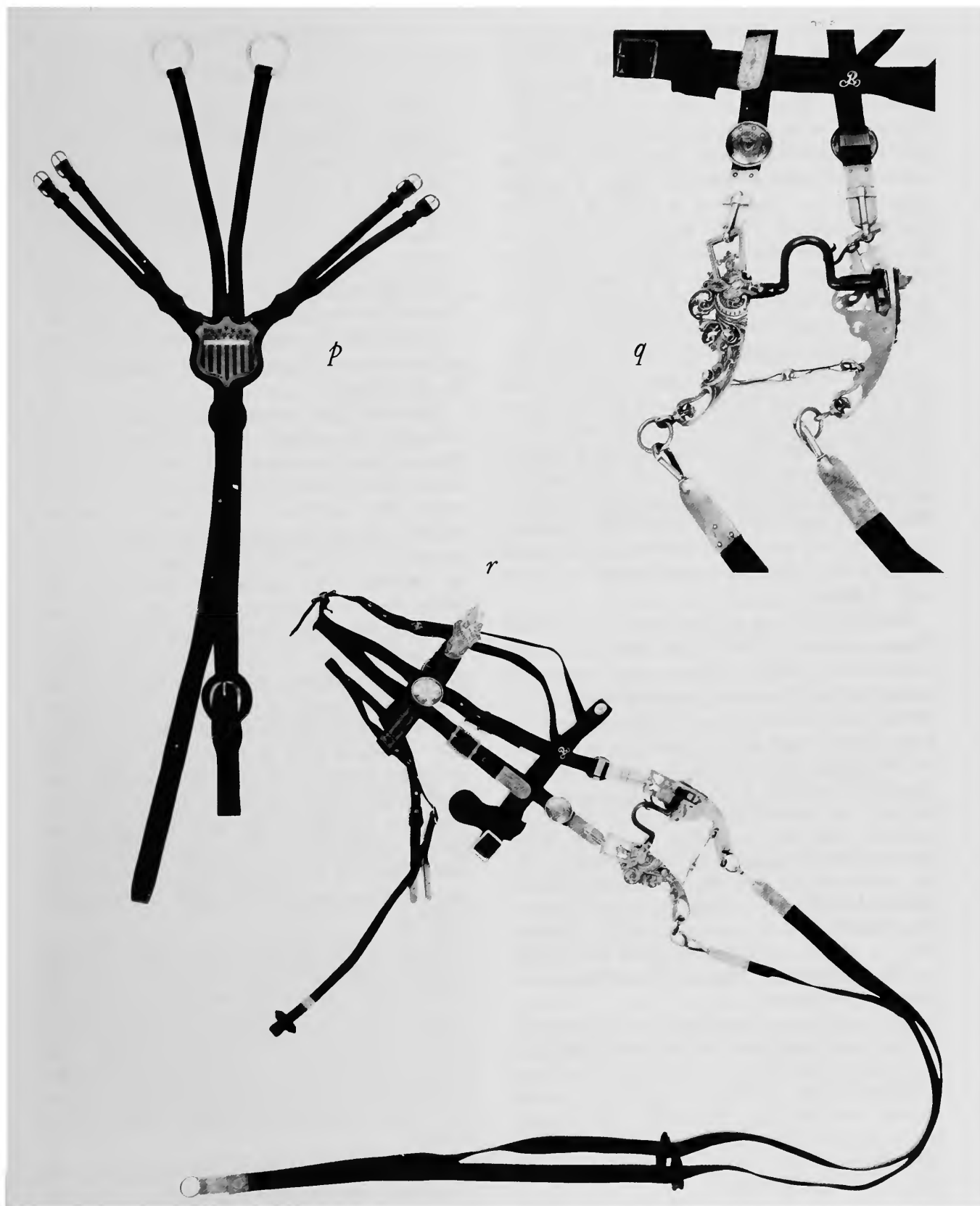


e

*f*







slit in the skirt. Narrowed to normal stirrup strap width, it emerges from under the *basto* and is pierced to receive the buckle just above the stirrup (Figures 43, 69*b,e,o*). Leather stirrup covers or *tapaderas* are adorned with silver star and shield medallions; the leather covered, pear-shaped wooden stirrups employ a wooden suspension bar. The cinch is made of a woven band of twisted horse hair terminating in carved leather tabs; these tabs are joined on the outer side of the cinch by a buckled strap; and the leather covered cinch rings are mounted on the outer side of the tabs (Figure 69 *m, n*).

The carved leather straps of the martingale are fitted with ivory rein rings, and are joined in a shield of red leather under a silver plate pierced with a pattern of stars and bars (Figure 69*p*). Finally, the bridle has silver fittings of "2R," square slides, and rounded tips, all chased, bossed, and set with stars and shields. The plated branches of the arched bit, imported from England, are decorated with boar's heads (Figure 69*q* [cheek plate hook should not catch curb, R.E.A.]).

HISTORY.—It was not uncommon for United States cavalry officers in the West to use the western stock saddle, militarized to a greater or lesser degree. This type of saddle frame was referred to by Gallatin as a "California tree," a form that enjoyed great popularity with western horsemen in the mid-nineteenth century. The heavy *mochila*, a device of Mexican origin, displays the sophisticated shape of European and American dragoon saddle skirts. The cylindrical valise represents another European military convention in America. In civilian life, saddlebags would have fulfilled the same purpose. The saddlemaker worked with great effectiveness in combining Mexican stock and Anglo military elements in this massive and decorative presentation piece.

This saddle was commissioned by members of the Second Regiment of Colorado Volunteers for their colonel, Jesse A. Leavenworth. It was purchased from Edward L. Gallatin, a noted Denver saddlemaker, for \$350. The Leavenworth presentation saddle was donated to the State Historical Society of Colorado in 1942 by Mrs. J. H. Leavenworth.

11. *Western Sidesaddle*

FIGURE 70

DATE.—About 1860 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Western United States.

MAKER.—Unidentified.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, copper alloys, natural fibers, textiles.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 54 cm (21¼"); W, 30 cm (11¾"); D, 68 cm (26¾").

LENDER.—Department of Cultural History, National Museum of History and Technology.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—NMHT Catalogue and Accession, 6,554 and 65,484; Renwick Loan, TL. 20.1974.21.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with stitched rawhide. It is probably a typical Mexican tree from which the horn was removed to permit the modifications necessary for a sidesaddle. The interior of the horns and seat are finished with green fabric while tanned leather, carved and stamped in floral design, is nailed to the interior of the cantle and underside of the horns. The on-side leather skirt is carved and stamped with floral, butterfly, and bird motifs. The floral design is repeated on both kidney-shaped side jockeys, affixed to the tree with brass-headed nails, and on the rear jockey, which appears only on the on-side. The on-side skirt of sheep skin is lined with fabric and continues across in front of the pommel to conclude in a flap secured below the off-side horn. The deep, curved off-side skirt is stamped and carved with a scene of a woman riding sidesaddle beneath trees with birds. Two conchas are set at the base of each horn, one (on-side) with ties.

Single center rigging is employed: forward and rear rigging straps are nailed to the side boards; the round latigo rings hold unpierced latigos. The cinch is missing. A buckled stirrup leather hangs from a hole cut in the lower edge of the on-side sideboard, and passes out through a slit in the skirt and beneath the jockey. There is a slipper stirrup of fine-grained red moroccan leather.

HISTORY.—Fabric seats are frequently seen on ladies' western-style sidesaddles of the late

nineteenth century; carpet seats were a feature of mail-order sidesaddles available in that era. The slipper stirrup was probably obtained from an eastern United States source; it is not unique. The double horns, elaborately and individually carved skirts, and an absence of silver trim characterize this and other women's saddles manufactured in the western United States during the nineteenth century.²

Apparently, this saddle was manufactured in the West, as it bears an ink inscription: "Laramie, Wyo. [or Takoma, Wash.] . . . T. H. Witters [or Walters] Agent." Despite this uncertain reading, the character of the saddletree and the carving of the housing support the assumption of the sidesaddle's western origin. It was donated to the Smithsonian Institution by Miss Forrest M. Grosthwaite in 1920.

12. *Sioux Pad Saddle for a Man*

FIGURE 71

DATE.—About 1840 to 1860.

ORIGIN.—Northern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Sioux Indian.

MATERIALS.—Rawhide, tanned leather, sinew, metal, glass, textile, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 55 cm (21¾"); W, 34 cm (13¼"); D, 3 cm (1¼").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—NMNH Catalogue, 1,942; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.6; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—Two hourglass-shaped pieces of tanned hide are stitched together at the center with sinew in two parallel lines, joined around the perimeter with woolen stitching, and stuffed with animal hair. Glass trade beads in red, yellow, blue, white, green, and pink are worked into floral, leaf, and lozenge patterns at each corner. Hanging from the sides near the corners are designs each composed of two tapering, rawhide strips with alternating bands of green and white bead work, separated by thongs with larger blue and green beads.

Crossing over the pad is a stiff, rectangular

piece of hide painted red and green to which are attached cinch straps of commercially tanned leather, pierced to receive the metal buckles of the cinch. The cinch is of commercial cotton webbing. Triangular holes in the painted hide piece indicate the previous attachment of stirrup leathers.

HISTORY.—The pad saddle is one of the oldest forms of equestrian equipment found among the Plains Indians, possibly developed prior to 1800. Despite individual variations in girthing and ornamentation, Plains Indian pad saddles display considerable uniformity of size and construction.

This saddle was collected by Lt. Gouverneur Kemble Warren, the author of the first comprehensive outline map of the trans-Mississippi West. It has been in the Smithsonian Institution since 1866 and thus is one of the earliest documented Plains Indian saddles in the collections.³

13. *Sioux Pad Saddle for a Boy*

FIGURE 72

DATE.—About 1840 to 1860.

ORIGIN.—Northern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Sioux Indian.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, sinew, metal, glass, textile natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 45.2 cm (17¾"); W, 30 cm (11¾"); D, 3 cm (1¼").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS.—NMNH Catalogue, 72,580; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.12; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—The hourglass-shaped pad is composed of a piece of tanned hide on top and one of natural-colored fabric below; it is stuffed with animal hair. The top and bottom pieces are stitched together in two parallel lines along the center with sinew and are joined around the perimeter with woolen stitching.

Glass trade beads in red, yellow, blue, green, pink, clear, and brown are worked into floral, leaf, and geometric patterns at each corner

*a*

FIGURE 70.—Western sidesaddle: *a*, on-side; *b*, off-side.



b

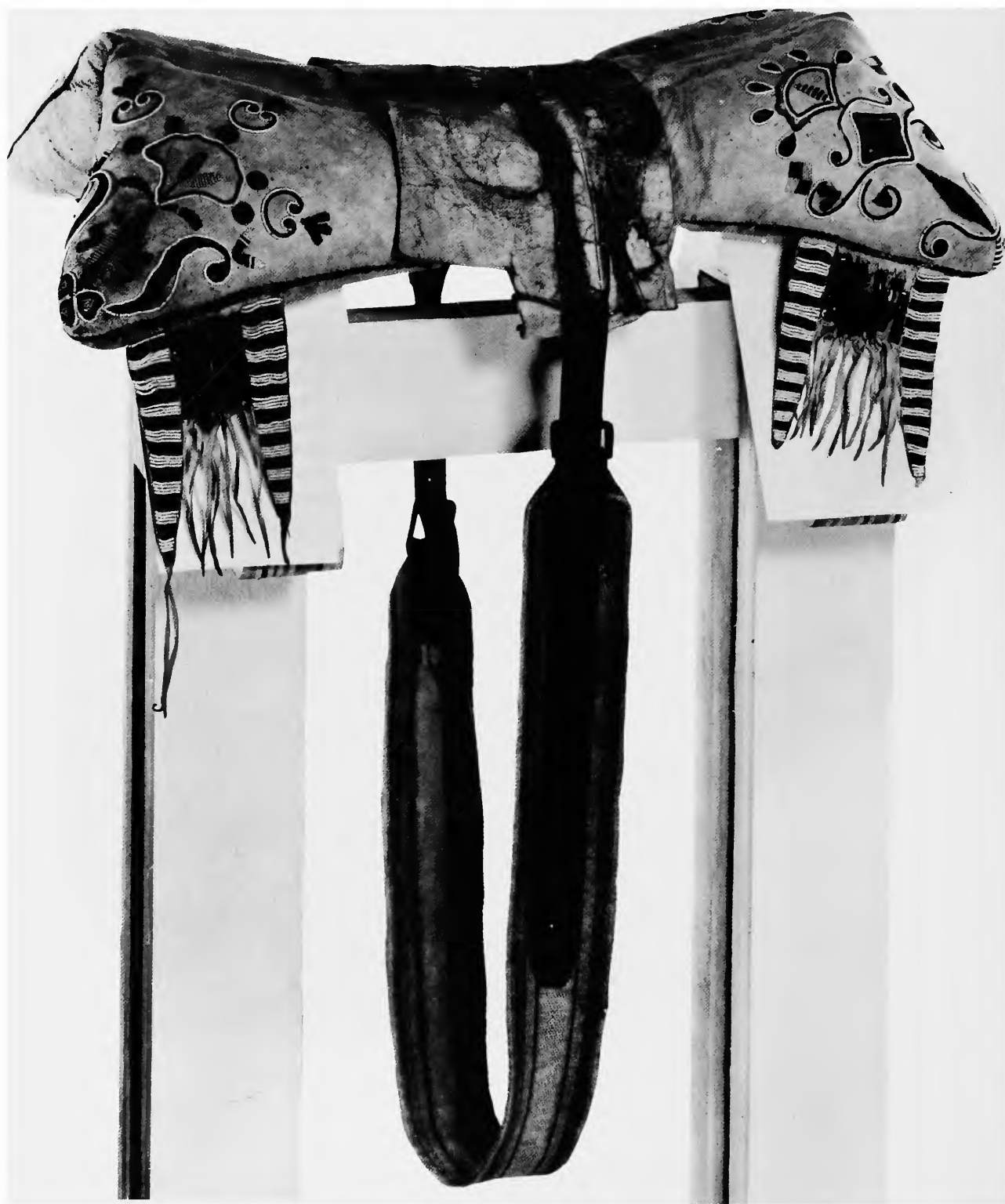


FIGURE 71.—Sioux pad saddle for a man, right side.

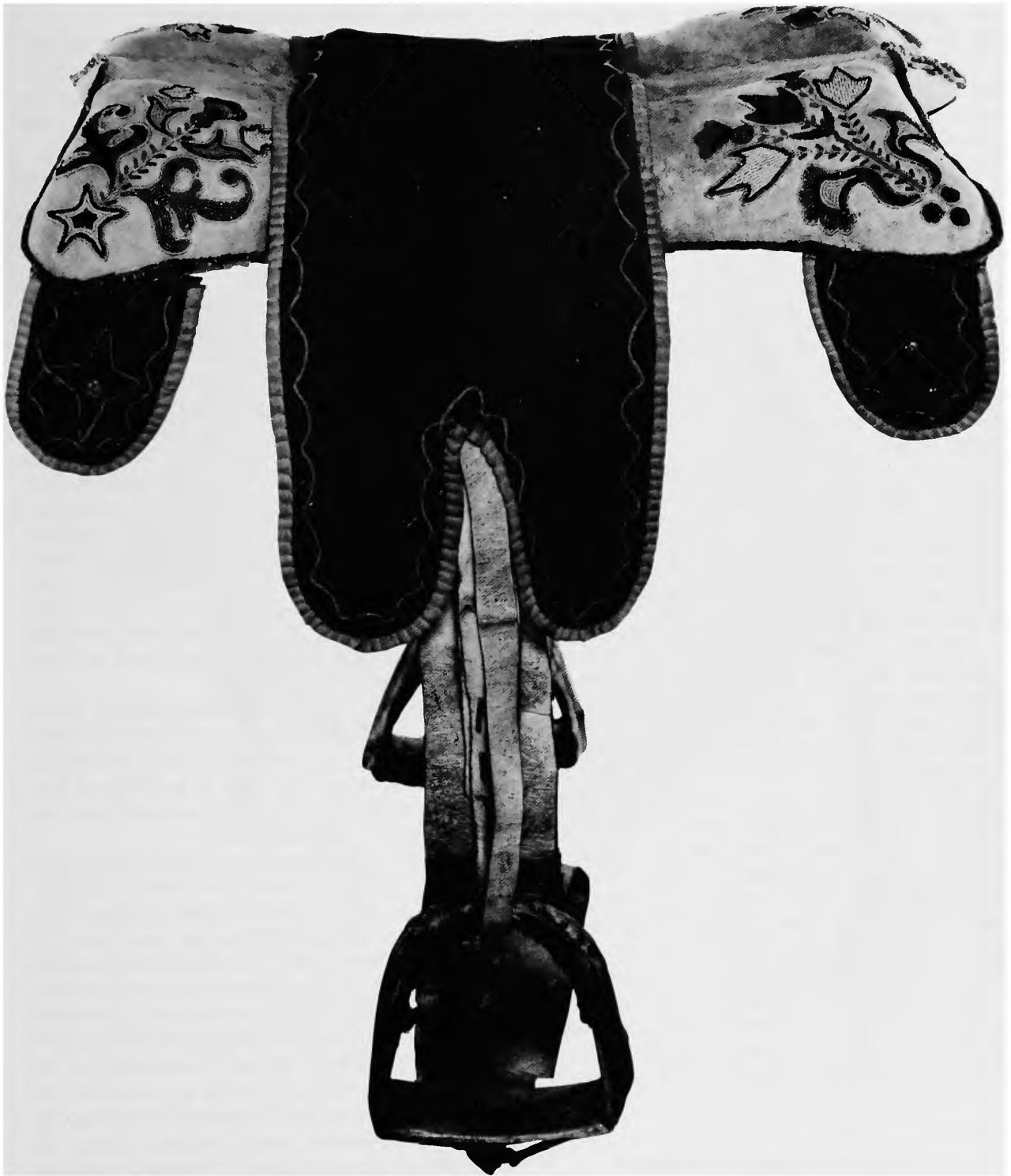


FIGURE 72.—Sioux pad saddle for a boy, left side.

(cf. Figure 71). Hanging from the sides near the corners are U-shaped blue felt tabs, each ornamented with a commercial, domed brass button in a four-pointed star and wavy line worked in cotton thread; the edge is bound with commercially woven cloth. Running across the pad is a rectangular piece of blue felt terminating in a double scallop; there is the same wavy line and trim along the bound edge as that found on the tabs.

Stitched beneath the pad is a stiff, rectangular piece of rawhide, which is triangularly pierced for the stirrup leathers to pass through and to which one end of the staff, rawhide cinch is stitched. On the opposite (right) side the leather and fabric facings are stitched together and extended to form a tab from which an oval metal latigo ring is suspended. The cinch is fastened to the ring with rawhide lacing. Each stirrup leather is a single rawhide strip threaded through the open stirrup and stitched together at the ends with rawhide lacing. Arching, bent-wood stirrups are covered with rawhide, which is stitched together with sinew beneath the base and under the arch.

HISTORY. — Although primarily used, and sometimes designed, by men and boys, pad saddles were usually constructed by women. They were made from tanned buffalo, deer, or elk hide; sinew; and buffalo or deer hair or, less frequently, grass. Other hide objects might be cut and adapted for saddle construction. Trade goods, particularly glass beads, cloth, leather straps, brads, and metal latigo rings and buckles, were often sought by Indian artisans. Porcupine quill work, more frequently beadwork, decoration was common. Pad saddles were almost always ridden with stirrups of bent-wood, but metal stirrups were also used.

This saddle was collected by R. H. Pratt, founder of the famed Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania; it has been in the Smithsonian Institution since the late-nineteenth century.

14. *Crow Saddle for a Woman*

FIGURE 73

DATE.—About 1870 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Montana.

MAKER.—Crow Indian woman.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, sinew, copper alloys, glass, textile natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 60 cm (23½"); W, 25 cm (10"); D, 45 cm (17¾"); forward HH, 13.5 cm (5¼").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 154,368; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.9; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with stitched rawhide that is painted red. The pommel and "cantle" (the latter is actually a rear fork) are covered with soft, pale tanned hide and terminate in large, flat discs. Hanging from each disc is hide fringe, and a triangular flap of red and blue fabric, backed with hide and worked with glass beads in red, yellow, blue, white, green, and pink geometric designs. A hide-covered wooden peg projects up from the forward fork. A rectangular piece of fabric is stitched on to cover the seat. A rawhide piece is tied under each sideboard with hide lacing that runs through holes burned near each end of the sideboard. Stirrup leathers and stirrups are missing.

Single center rigging features rigging straps of stiff rawhide tied with hide lacing through holes burned near the end of each sideboard. Tied to the rigging straps is a cinch of Levi denim fabric adorned with characteristic machine-stamped metal buttons.

HISTORY.—The form and construction of this splendid saddle is typical of those manufactured and used by Plains Indian women of the Crow tribe. The saddletree was constructed of naturally forked wood covered with rawhide stitched over it. The sideboards were pierced by burning to allow for the attachment of rawhide flaps and rigging flaps. The large elevated discs provide a striking design characteristic and identify this type of saddle as a valued and significant possession. Whenever possible, commercially-produced metal, leather, fabric, and glass elements were used in decoration and construction, the latter especially in the cinching.

This saddle was purchased from Dr. W. J. Hoffman in 1892 by the Smithsonian Institution's former Bureau of American Ethnology.⁴



FIGURE 73.—Crow saddle for a woman, left side.

15. *Cheyenne Saddle for a Child*

FIGURE 74

DATE.—About 1870 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Southern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Cheyenne Indian.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, sinew, copper alloys, textile, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 28.5 cm (11 $\frac{1}{4}$ "); W, 22 cm (18 $\frac{3}{4}$ "); D, 28.5 cm (11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 165,906; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.14; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with rawhide, stitched together with sinew on the underside of the sideboards and forks. The forks terminate in outwardly curved, flared ends, painted red; they are adorned with brass-headed tacks and a fringe of twisted fabric. A rawhide-covered wooden peg projects from the forward fork. Over this peg is incorrectly knotted a crupper of rawhide with a padded center section. Commercially tanned leather pads are secured on the underside of the tree with rawhide lacing through holes in the sideboards.

Single center rigging is employed. Front and rear rigging straps are affixed to the tree by hide ties that run through holes in the ends of the sideboards; the left side rigging straps are knotted together; the narrow rawhide cinch is knotted directly to the right side rigging straps, and tied to the left side rigging straps in what may not be the original arrangement for the Indian habit of cinching and mounting from the horse's right side. [The crupper appears to be incorrectly attached to the peg projecting from the front bow. R.E.A.]

HISTORY.—Children often learned to ride by being tied in their mother's saddles (Figure 56). This small saddle, however, was designed specifically to be used by a child. Children became expert riders at an early age in the horse-oriented Plains Indian culture.

This saddle was collected by the Reverend H. R. Voth, a Moravian missionary to the Southern Cheyenne Indians in the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). It has been in the Smithsonian Institution since 1893.

16. *Indian Presentation Saddle*

FIGURE 75

DATE.—About 1888.

ORIGIN.—Minnesota.

MAKER.—Sioux (or Menominee)⁵ Indian.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, tanned leather, sinew, copper alloys, iron, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 77 cm (30 $\frac{1}{2}$ "); W, 23.5 cm (19 $\frac{1}{4}$ "); D, 83 cm (32 $\frac{3}{4}$ ").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 415,511; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.17; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—The wooden saddletree is covered with stitched rawhide. Tanned black leather covers the pommel, cantle, and side bars, and comprises a seat (center missing), skirts, and rigging straps. The horn is carved as a horse's head (ears missing) with brass-tack eyes. A wooden peg (broken) projects from the forward fork. The cantle curves out and narrows to a blunt end. Brass-headed tacks outline the cantle and pommel, various red-painted design motifs and the remnants of the slung seat. Rectangular holes in the skirts expose the iron dees suspended by leather loops that are nailed to each sideboard with iron tunnel rivets. Curved, tanned leather pieces are nailed to the underside of each sideboard. Rigging straps are nailed to the outer face of the sideboards and support cinch rings. [Large, tanned leather coverings that came with the saddle are not shown as their use is undocumented. It is supposed that the left side originally had an outer skirt like that on the right side and that this was subsequently cut away. R.E.A.]

Single center rigging is employed. Front and rear rigging straps are nailed to the saddletree at the base of the fork and in front of the cantle and support a narrow iron latigo ring. A tanned leather latigo is pierced to receive the cinch buckle. The cinch is leather. The stirrup leathers (originally hung from the dee rings) and stirrups are missing.

HISTORY.—The saddle displays a combination of widely disparate elements. The saddletree recalls a Mexican type, but obvious Indian construction methods may be hidden under the leather covering; certainly the carrying peg is an Indian innovation. The tanned leather skirt



FIGURE 74.—Cheyenne saddle for a child, right side.



FIGURE 75.—Indian presentation saddle for Whipple: *a*, left side; *b*, right side.



resembles those on the hybrid saddle (Figures 42, 67), probably made in the Missouri region; also, the iron dees, latigo ring, and cinch buckle are all non-Indian products. But the use of trade goods—brass-headed tacks and commercial red paint—combined in decorative designs is characteristic of many Plains Indian saddles and the anthropomorphic carving—here, a horse's head—are well within the traditional skills of Plains

Indian culture.

This saddle was presented in 1888 by Santee Sioux Chief Cut Nose to Bishop Henry Benjamin Whipple, a man regarded by the Indians as a friend. Its unusually large size and somewhat fragile decoration suggest that it was primarily a symbolic gift rather than a functional form.

Mrs. Margaret J. Gilpin donated this saddle to the Smithsonian Institution in 1972.

17. *Sioux Packsaddle*

FIGURE 76

DATE.—About 1875 to 1885.

ORIGIN.—Northern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Sioux Indian.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, sinew, bone.

DIMENSIONS.—L, 38 cm (15"); W, 28 cm (11"); D, 20 cm (8").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 76,883; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.7; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—Bone forks and wooden sideboards are covered with rawhide which is stitched on the underside of the sideboards and forks; bone "pegs" project from the apex of forks. A pair of holes are pierced through the extreme end of each sideboard. The presumed single center rigging and side flaps are missing.

HISTORY.—Saddles of this design were not widely used among the Plains Indians until after 1850. This type of unadorned saddle is sometimes called a "prairie chicken snare." It would have been used primarily as a packsaddle, possibly in conjunction with a travois. The double holes pierced in the ends of each sideboard served for tying on leather rigging



FIGURE 76.—Sioux packsaddle, right side.



FIGURE 77.—Cheyenne saddle forks.

straps, and perhaps protective side flaps.

This saddle was obtained by the Smithsonian Institution in 1886.

18. *Cheyenne Saddle Forks*

FIGURE 77

DATE.—About 1870 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Southern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Cheyenne Indian.

MATERIALS.—Antler of North American elk.

DIMENSIONS.—Right fork: vertical, 28 cm (8"); horizontal, 21 cm (8¼"); thickness, 2 cm (¾"); left fork slightly smaller.

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 166,000; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.16; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—Forks are carved from the end and next-to-last branching of antlers. Double parallel grooves encircle the lower arms, the heads are flared.

HISTORY.—The making of a saddletree with bone forks was a Plains Indian tradition by the 1880s. Natural forks of elk or deer antler were selected with care and cut to shape. Grooves were incised in the lower ends of the forks to correspond to holes burnt through the ends of the wooden side bars. Moistened rawhide thongs were threaded through the holes and around the grooves. When the thongs dried, the saddletree was covered with moistened rawhide, stitched



FIGURE 78.—Sioux stirrup.

together with sinew, and allowed to dry into a taut, binding covering.

These bone forks—collected by the Reverend H. R. Voth, a Moravian missionary to the Southern Cheyenne Indians—have been in the Smithsonian Institution since 1893.

19. *Sioux Stirrup*

FIGURE 78

DATE.—About 1870.

ORIGIN.—Northern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Sioux Indian.

MATERIALS.—Wood, plant fiber.

DIMENSIONS.—Width, 14.5 cm ($5\frac{3}{4}$ "); depth, 9 cm ($3\frac{1}{2}$ "); height, 10 cm (4").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 12,567; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.8; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—The wooden stirrup has a rectangular platform and slightly tapered sides which are sharply curved in at the top to form an arched suspension bar of overlapping tongues. This arch is reinforced with a bent twig, secured by a wrapping of plant fiber.

HISTORY.—This bent-wood construction represents the underlying structure of a distinct type of Plains Indian stirrup, as shown in the description for item 20. In that example, the finished stirrup is covered with leather and decorated with paint and bead work.

Collected at Fort Rice, North Dakota, the stirrup has been in the Smithsonian Institution since 1873.

20. *Crow Stirrups*

FIGURE 79

DATE.—About 1870 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Northern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Crow Indian.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, sinew, metal, glass, natural fibers.

DIMENSIONS.—Width, 20 cm (8"); depth, 13 cm (5"); height, 12 cm ($4\frac{3}{4}$ ").

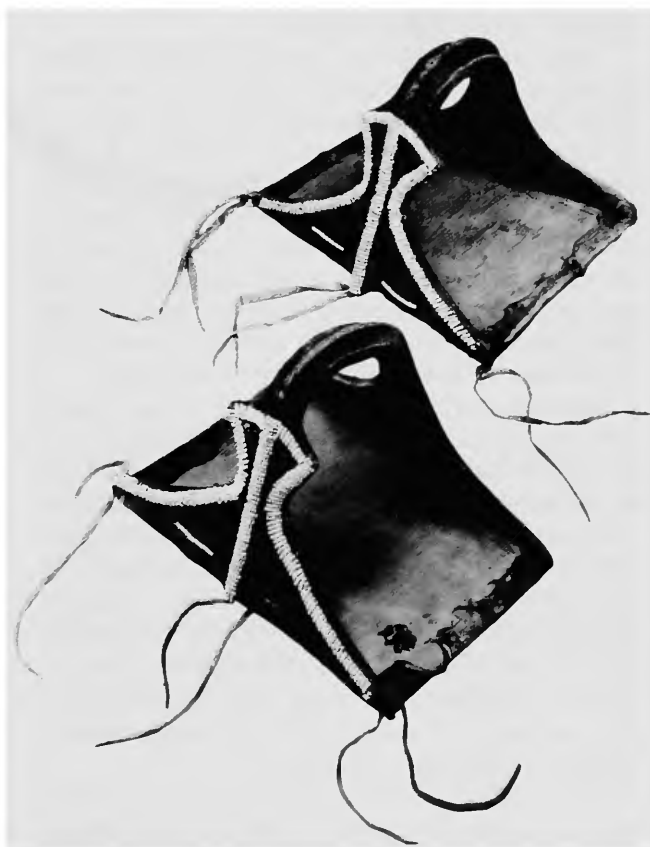


FIGURE 79.—Crow stirrups.

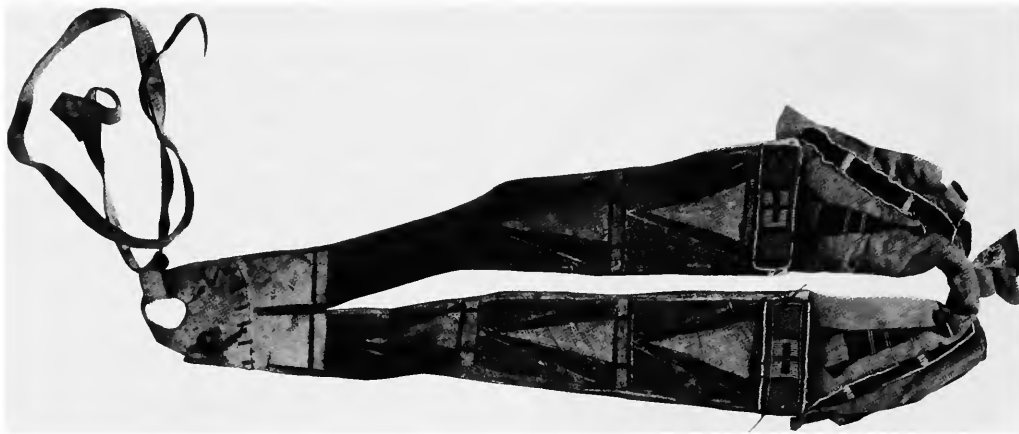


FIGURE 80.—Crow crupper.

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 154,368; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.11; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—A pair of wooden stirrups each displaying a rectangular platform, concave sides, and arched suspension bar. The exterior of the platform, sides, and arch is covered with painted rawhide, which is stitched with sinew to the wooden frame. The outer sides display four triangular cutouts, with brass tacks in the lower two. Raised cords of white beads outline the outer sides, and mark a center line. Double hide ties are stitched to the outside corners and the center of the outside edge of the base.

HISTORY.—These ornamental stirrups represent one of the few stirrup forms manufactured by the Plains Indians. Apparently a single thin panel has been skillfully bent to form the base and sides; the arched top may be reinforced by a twig (see description for item 19). Rawhide has been moistened and stretched over the wooden elements, then sewn with sinew, and let dry; it was then painted a dark gray. On the outer sides, triangular areas were cut out of the hide, exposing a commercial red woolen fabric. Finally, bead work was sewn on.

These stirrups were collected by Dr. W. J. Hoffman on the Crow Indian Reservation, Montana, for the Smithsonian Institution in 1892.

21. Crow Crupper

FIGURE 80

DATE.—About 1870 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Northern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Crow Indian.

MATERIALS.—Rawhide, sinew, tanned leather, paint, natural fibers, and glass beads.

DIMENSIONS.—Length, 84 cm (33") without ties; width, 34.3 cm (13½").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 154,378; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.10; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—The slit rawhide is painted in multicolor geometric designs, decorated with beaded panels, and terminates in a stuffed pad ornamented with trade cloth and glass trade beads. The other end is repaired with a rawhide piece attached with rawhide thongs; a thin rawhide strap is tied through the hole in the end, and used to lash the crupper to the lower ends of either bow, depending on the length of the crupper.

HISTORY.—A crupper kept the saddle from shifting forward. It also served as an additional area for decoration, especially in the hands of Crow Indian artisans.

This crupper was obtained from Dr. W. J. Hoffman and has been in the Smithsonian Institution since 1892.

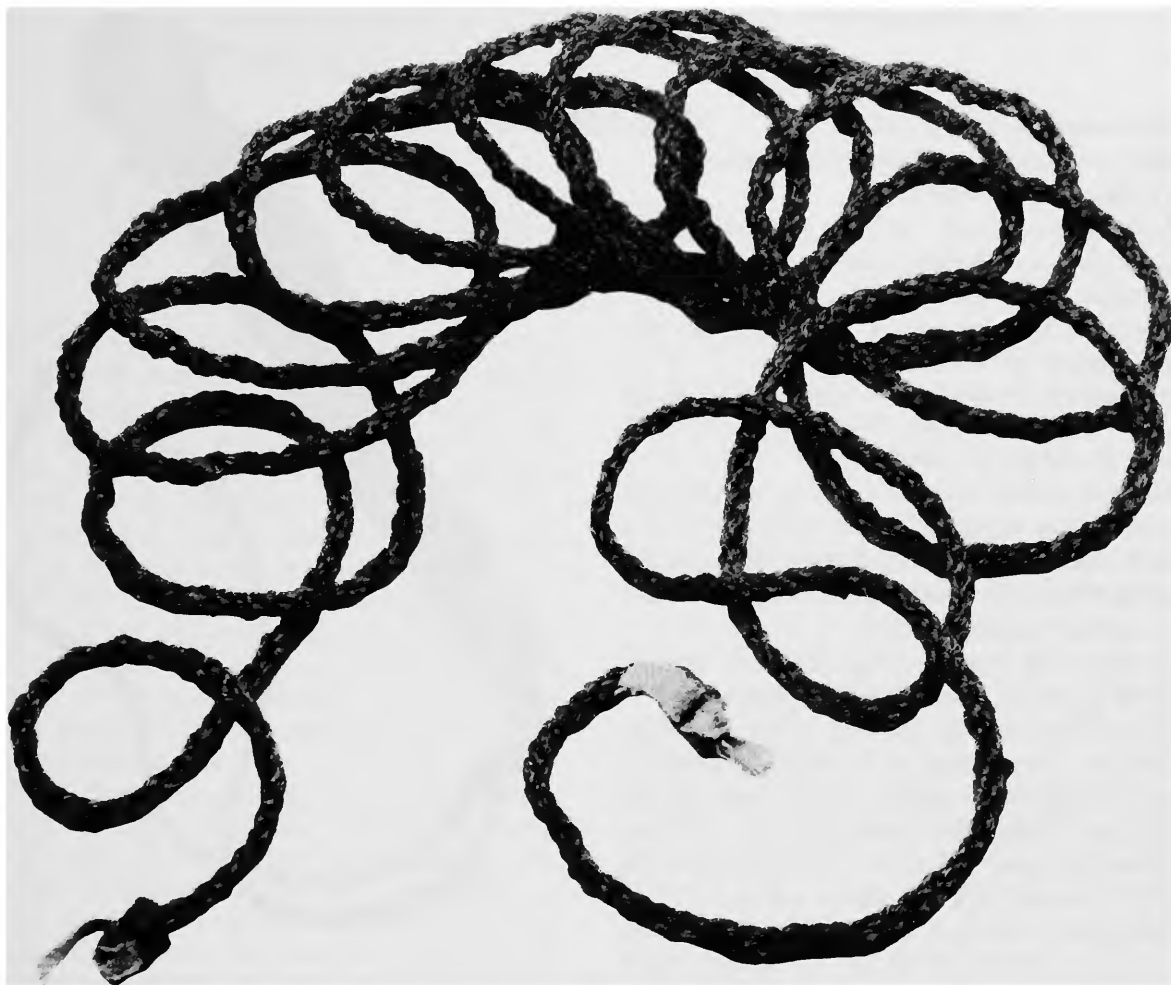


FIGURE 81.—Cheyenne rope.

22. *Cheyenne Rope*

FIGURE 81

DATE.—About 1880 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Southern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Cheyenne Indian.

MATERIALS.—Buffalo hair, textile.

DIMENSIONS.—Length, 4.61 m (184").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 165,866; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.15; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—Buffalo hair twisted (S twist) into four strands that are braided together, the ends knotted and tied with fabric.

HISTORY.—Buffalo hair was one of several materials used by the Plains Indians to braid ropes. It is lighter in weight than rawhide, and was usually used in the manufacture of bridles. Braided rawhide was used in lariats and travois ropes.

This rope was collected by the Reverend H. R. Voth, a Moravian missionary to the Southern Cheyenne Indians. It has been in the Smithsonian Institution since 1893.

23. *Sioux Quirt*

FIGURE 82

DATE.—About 1870 to 1890.

ORIGIN.—Northern Great Plains region.

MAKER.—Sioux Indian.

MATERIALS.—Wood, rawhide, metal, glass.

DIMENSIONS.—Handle length, 41 cm (15"); lash length, 45 cm (18").

LENDER.—Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History.

REFERENCE NUMBERS. — NMNH Catalogue, 360,317; Renwick Loan, TL.20.1974.13; ACL Report, by catalogue number.

DETAILS.—The wooden quirt is carved and painted in the form of a man's head and uniformed torso. It is pierced through the head for a knotted rawhide wrist loop, through the base for a lash of tanned leather.

HISTORY.—A variety of quirts were used in place of spurs by most Plains Indian riders.

The wooden handle of this quirt has been fashioned to represent a "buffalo soldier," a common term for a black cavalry man. In the 1880s, black troops were stationed at posts near the Sioux Indians. Indian representations of the Negro, however, are extremely scarce.

This quirt, collected by Victor Justice Evans, has been in the Smithsonian Institution since 1931.



FIGURE 82.—Sioux quirt.

Notes

1. A typical turn-of-the-century stock saddle from Smithsonian collections (Division of Extractive Industries, NMHT, catalogue number E 2302) is the stock type made in California by R. Sears, displayed in the Smithsonian Institution's bicentennial exhibition "A Nation of Nations."

2. For comparison, there is a sidesaddle in the Smithsonian collections (Division of Extractive Industries, NMHT, catalogue number A-3916) made by William D. Craig in New Lisbon, Ohio, about 1835.

3. A Plains Indian saddle but in poor condition,

collected by the western artist George Catlin in the early 1830s, is also preserved at the Smithsonian. A later example, Anthropology catalogue number 8415, in excellent condition, is displayed in the exhibition "A Nation of Nations."

4. A similar woman's saddle, Anthropology catalogue number 361,488, is displayed in the exhibition "A Nation of Nations."

5. [The only other Indian-made saddles with horse head pommels I know of are from the Menominee, neighbors of the Eastern Sioux, J.C.E.]

Glossary

Richard E. Ahlborn

The purpose of this glossary is to define English and Spanish equestrian terms, largely dealing with saddlery, used in this study. The glossary is also intended to serve as an independent reference tool for students of early saddles in western North America. We recognize that there are variations in the use of some terms between articles in the study; additionally, in both English and Spanish, some definitions vary with accepted regional usage. As both literary and visual evidence for terms in this study are cited in the glossary, the reader is enabled to locate exact points for comparison of usages and representations.

The arrangement of the glossary is alphabetical. Articles are given for Spanish nouns, but the noun itself provides the indexing letter; thereafter alphabetizing is letter-by-letter (not counting any subsequent articles in Spanish) to the first mark of punctuation. English compound terms often are entered only under the

noun component. Equivalents in other languages and information on word derivation are enclosed in brackets; even if not used in the study, Spanish equivalents are given if known. Definitions are usually given under the English expression; where a definition is not given, the entry for that definition is indicated in parentheses following the main entry. Numbers representing page or figure references (the latter italicized) apply to the main entry.

Although terms have been defined within the context of this study, standard references in English and Spanish have also been consulted: *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (1971), *Appleton's Revised Cuyas Spanish Dictionary* (1953), *Diccionario de la lengua española* (1941), and *Santamaria's Diccionario de Mejicanismos* (1974). Final responsibility for each definition rests, however, with the volume editor.

la acción, las acciones (stirrup leathers): 83
la adarga (shield, oval): 16 *lower*
los aderezos (trappings): 11
la albarda (packsaddle): 35
amulets [*las higas, los coscojos*]—metal nodules used to decorate border of horse's rump cover
 [*la anquera*]: 37
anchero (rump cover): 60
la anquera (rump cover): 9, 37, 39; 23, 37
la anquerita (rump cover): 9, 14; 4b, 6b, 7b
apishamore, apishemeau [from Ojibwa *apishamon*]
 —a saddle blanket, sometimes a saddle cover:
 50
árabe (Arabic): 11
Arabic [*árabe*, adj.]—designation of an object, such as a stirrup, that displays Arabic or Moorish

design: 11
la arción, las arciones (stirrup leathers): 34, 35
la argolla (cinch ring, right; latigo ring; rigging ring): 34, 25; 21
las armas [lit., arms] (armor of horse; saddletree covers): 9, 10, 16, 18, 37, 39
las armitas (armor of horse): 14
armor of horse [*las armas, las armitas, la barda*]—protective leather coverings of varying sizes for a combat horse; later, heavy waterproof leather pieces hung across rider's legs [*las armas defensas, las armas de agua*]: 11
Attakapas tree [from Choctaw *hataka-apa* referring to native group in southwest Louisiana; other variants are *attacapas* or *atakapán tree*]—a saddletree from the southern Louisiana-Texas region: 47

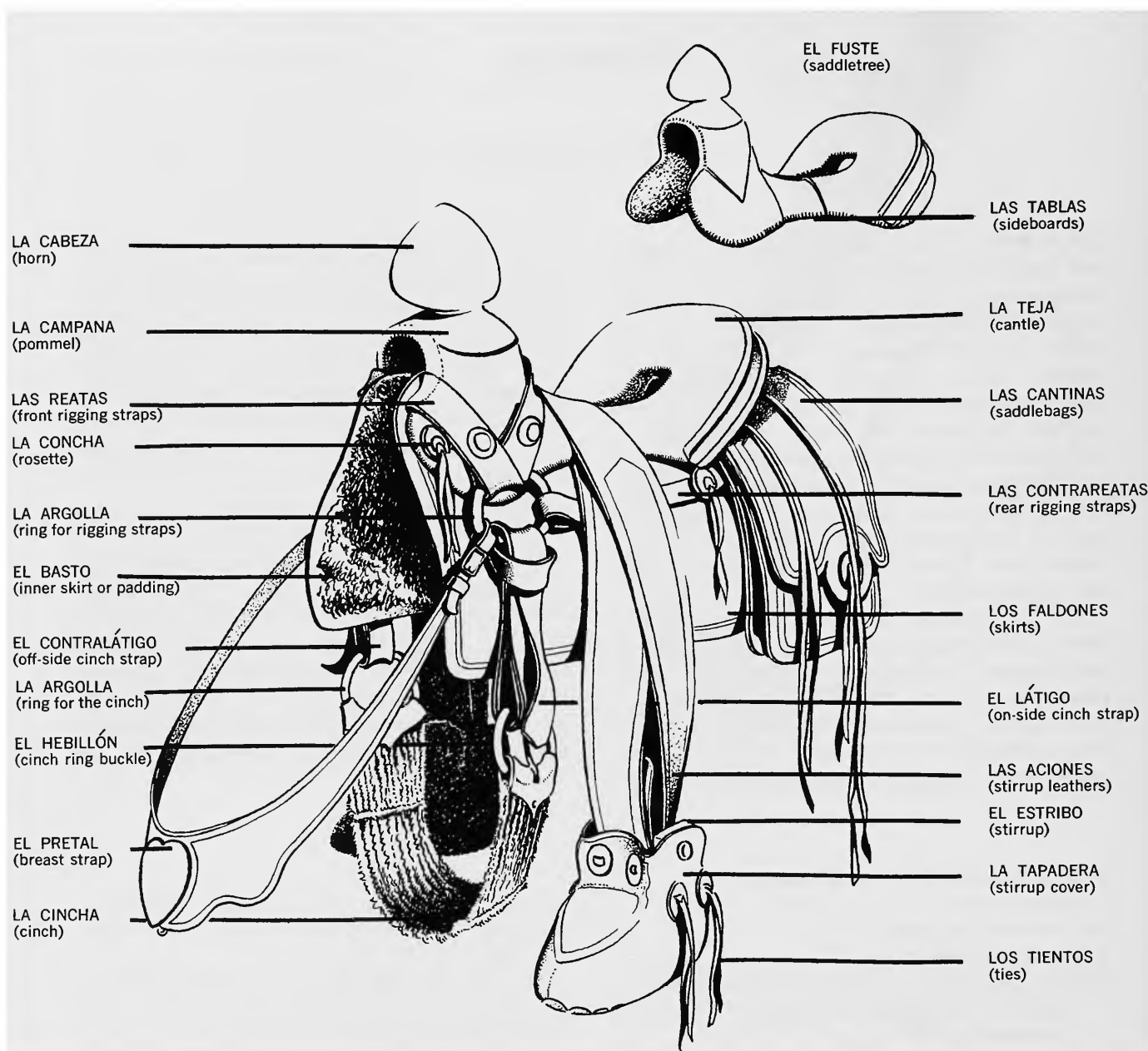


FIGURE 83.—Parts of a Mexican stock saddle, about 1930, built on a Chihuahua tree.

(Drawn by Paul A. Rossi.)

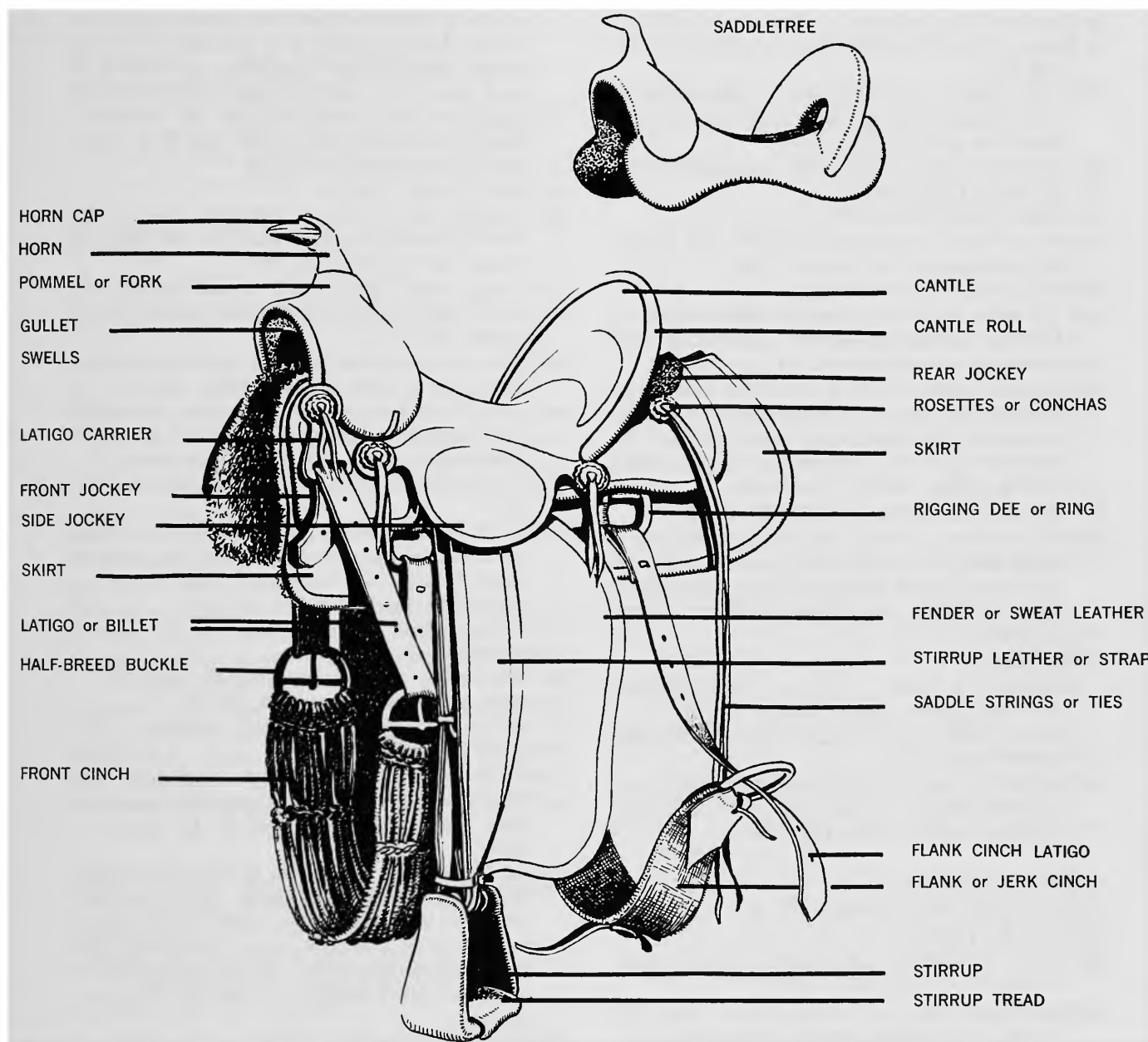


FIGURE 84.—Parts of a western U.S. stock saddle, about 1930, built on a Nelson tree.

(Drawn by Paul A. Rossi.)

- la barda* (armor of horse; riding styles; saddletree covers; saddle types): 8, 28
- la barriguera* (cinch): 35
- la bastarda* [lit., bastard] (riding styles): 28
- el baste, el basto* (saddle pad): 19, 37, 107, 60e, 64e, 83
- billet [*el látigo, la abrazadera*]*—*the pierced end of a strap that fits into a buckle; or loop for hold-down the end of a strap: 84
- bit [*el brocado del freno*]*—*metal mouthpiece on a bridle: 5, 120, 15, 69q,r
- las bolsas* (saddle bags): 37
- border [*el ruedo*]*—*ornamented edging such as that on a rump cover [*la anquera*]: 37
- la bota* (lower leg guard): 12
- bow [*el arzón de silla, el fuste de silla*]*—*either of the two arching pieces that connect the sideboards in a saddletree: 5, 14
- breast band; breast strap [*la antepecho, la pechera, el pretal, el petral*]*—*leather strap or poitrel, sometimes decorated, that passes around the animal's chest and is attached to the front sides of the saddle: 26, 37, 79, 99; 83a
- la brida* (bridle; riding styles): 26, 27, 37
- bridle [*la brida, el freno*]*—*the head harness for a horse, basically consisting of the headstall, bit and reins, but at times including also a brow band, nose strap, and throat latch: 12, 37, 82, 120; 69q,r
- bridle types
- el freno de la brida* or *bridona**—*heavier bridles used with longer, looser reins: 12
 - el freno jineta**—*lighter bridles used with shorter, lighter reins: 12
- bucking rolls*—*a pair of small, stuffed ovoid cushions attached behind a "slick" pommel to help hold the rider in place: 110, 113; 68a-c
- el cabestro* (halter): 12
- la cabeza* [lit., head] (horn): 34; 83
- la campana* (pommel): 34; 83
- la cantina, las cantinas* [lit., canteen, saloon] (saddle bags): 37, 55, 103; 64, 83
- cantle [*el arzón trasero de la silla; la teja* (Mex.)]*—*arched, often dished portion of saddletree connecting rear of sideboards: 34, 40 76; 84
- cantle roll*—*rounded or curved outer edge of the cantle: 84
- center fired, center rigged (girthing types): 14, 18
- las chaparreras* (chaps): 9, 10, 14
- el chapetón* (concha): 35
- chaps [*las chaparreras, los chaparejos*]*—*long, loose leather pieces belted together and attached around the legs of a cowboy: 9
- charro* saddle (*la silla charra*): 19, 20, 33
- cinch [*la cincha*] (also: girthing types)*—*a leather or fabric band (or girth) that is the portion of the girthing system that passes under the horse's body; usually it is fastened to leather straps (*latigos*) that hang from the rigging on each side of the saddle; if the saddle is double rigged there is both a front (or forward) cinch [*la cincha*] and a rear (flank or jerk) cinch [*la barriguera*]: 34; 84
- la cincha* (cinch): 34; 83
- cinch buckle [*el hebijón, el hebillón*] (also: half-breed buckle)*—*tongued ring on the near or on-side end of cinch: 35, 86
- cinch ring, right [*la argolla*]*—*metal ring on off-side (right or far) end of cinch, opposite cinch buckle: 35
- cinch tie*—*a strap connecting the forward and rear cinches on a double rigged saddle: 84
- coat pad [*la grupera*]*—*a leather piece, also called "coat pillion," with buckled straps on some cruppers, to hold a coat or other garment: 66
- el cojín, el cojinillo* [cushion] (saddle pad): 12, 14, 74; 7
- concha [*la concha, el chapetón*]*—*a metal disk, often of silver, set on a leather rosette that secures saddle thongs [*los tientos*]: 85; 84
- la concha* [lit., shell] (concha): 35; 83
- el contraenreatado* (*latigos*): 35
- el contralátigo* (*latigos*): 35
- las contrareatas* (rigging straps): 35, 103; 60f
- la coraza* (saddletree covers): 9, 10, 39
- los coscojos* [lit., Kermes berries] (amulets): 37
- croata* (riding styles): 26
- cross-form stirrup [*el estribo de cruz*]*—*an iron Mexican type with wide flanges and long, pendant plates, often ornamented: 13, 14; 6, 7 lower
- crupper [*la ataharre, la baticola, la sotacola*]*—*broad leather strap that runs under the horse's tail and over the rump to the back of the saddle to prevent its sliding forward; sometimes featuring a pad [*la grupera*] for the attachment of a coat or other bundle: 11, 66, 79, 113, 134; 69g, 80
- el cuello* (neck): 34
- dee*—*a metal D-form ring from which stirrup leathers or other straps are often hung: 110, 128; 84
- dinner-plate horn*—*a horn terminating in a wide, circular flat projection, found on many Mexican-type saddles: 34, 107
- double rigged or rigging (girthing types): 33, 35, 107; 20

- dust guard [*guardapolvo*]
—leather piece, such as a lower leg guard [*la bota*] tied to riding boot, or a larger piece covering part of the rider or saddle: 12
- los enreatados* (rigging straps): 35
- epishemore (apishamore): 50
- la espuela bridona* [*bridona*-type spur]
—heavy, metal spur used in *bridona* riding style (q.v.): 12
- la espuela bridona* [*bridona*-types spur]
—heavy, metal cavalry spur used in *jineta* riding style (q.v.): 12
- la estradiota* (riding styles; *la silla estradiota*): 8, 12, 26,; 11 upper, 14 left
- el estribo* (stirrup): 34, 35, 42; 21
- el estribo de cruz* (cross-form stirrup): 14
- el estribo de lomo* (wooden stirrup): 19
- las faldas* (skirts): 9
- las faldones* (skirts): 34; 83
- fender [*el alero*, *la defensa*, *la orej(et)a*, *la ala*]
—leather piece projecting back from stirrup leather to protect the rider's legs from the animal's sweat and dirt: 18, 37, 86, 95, 107; 84
- el fierro* (iron): 22
- flank cinch, [*la barriguera*] (cinch): 84
- flank cinch latigo (cinch; latigos): 84
- foot pads (stirrup tread): 100
- fork (bow): 14, 34, 40, 47, 60, 70, 132; 84
- forward rigged (girthing types): 14 86
- forward rigging straps [*los enreatados*, *las reatas*] (rigging straps): 35
- el freno de la brida* or *bridona* (bridle types): 12
- el freno jineta*, (bridle types): 12
- front cinch (cinch; girthing types): 84
- front-fired cinch (girthing types): 18
- el fuste* [saddletree, bows of saddletree] (saddletree): 12, 14, 34; 83
- la gineta* (*la jineta*): 19
- girth, girthing, girth strap [*la cincha*] (cinch; girthing types): 8, 11, 66 74
- girthing types
- double rigged—two cinches, one forward and one behind the seat: 8, 35, 107, 110
 - single rigged—one cinch
 - center fired, center rigged—cinch suspended under the center of the seat: 8, 14, 18, 35, 110
 - forward rigged—cinch suspended from any point forward from the center of the seat: 8, 14, 35, 86
 - front fired, full forward rigged—cinch suspended beneath the pommel: 8, 18
 - three-quarter rigged—cinch suspended from a point between the pommel and the center of the seat: 8, 95
- Graham tree—saddletrees made by the Graham firm of Santa Clara, California: 59
- el gremio* (guild): 26
- guild [*el gremio*]
—an organization of artisans created to promote, protect and regulate their craft, such as the guild of saddlemakers [*el gremio de silleros* or *de talabarteros*]: 26
- la gualdrapa* (trappings; housing): 9
- el guardapolvo* (dust guard): 12
- gullet [*el interior del arzón*]
—inside of the pommel or the front edge of the forward arch (bow) of the saddle: 70, 98; 84
- half-breed buckle [*el hebijón*, *el hebillón*] (also: cinch buckle)
—a type of tongued cinch ring used on many western saddles: 84
- half martingale [*la media gamarra*]
—strap from breast band to bridle, to keep horse's head down: 37
- halter [*el cabestro*]
—rope or strap, usually with a headstall [*la jáquima*], for holding an animal: 5, 12
- headstall [*la jáquima*]
—a band or rope that fits behind the horse's ears, as part of a bridle or halter: 12
- el hebijón* (Mex.), *el hebillón* (Sp.) (cinch buckle; half-breed buckle): 35; 83
- las higas* (amulets): 37
- holster [*la funda*]
—a case, usually of leather, to carry a pistol or a rifle, on a person or saddle: 113; 69a,j
- los hombros* (shoulders): 34
- Hope (saddle types, western U.S.): 59, 67
- horn [*la cabeza*]
—(also: dinner-plate horn; pear-shaped horn)—the projection, often bent forward, above the pommel: 35, 41, 79; 84
- horn cap—a small leather or metal cover, on western saddle horns: 84
- housing [*las armas*, *la barda*, *la coraza*, *las faldas*, *los faldones*, *la gualdrapa*, *la mochila*]
—ornamental and protective leather pieces attached to the saddle or coverings laid on it; in the plural, it also means trappings (q.v.): 10, 113
- iron [*el fierro*]
—device heated to burn or brand owner's mark onto animal's hide: 22
- la jáquima* (headstall): 12
- jerk cinch [*la barriguera*] (cinch): 84
- la jineta* (riding styles; *la silla jineta*): 27; 11 upper, 14 right, 17
- jockeys—separate leather pieces, front and rear, that lie over the larger skirts of western U.S. saddles; attached to the saddletree, side jockeys cover the upper stirrup leather, but other arrangements are known: 84

- lariat [*el lazo*]*—*a long rope (also called “lasso” or “riata”), of braided rawhide or hemp, with a loop [*la gaza*; *el nudo* (Mex.)] in one end through which the other runs; distinct from a “macardy” [*el mecate*], a rope of braided horsehair: 12, 35, 41
- el látigo* (latigos): 34, 35; 83
- latigo carrier*—*leather piece with slit, attached by rosette to front of pommel, to hold end of latigo billet: 84
- latigo ring [*la argolla*]*—*metal ring suspended from rigging strap(s) from which a latigo is hung; also known as a “rigging ring”: 86, 95
- latigos [*el contraenreatado*]*—*leather straps to which the cinch is secured, each suspended from a latigo ring (or rigging ring), one on the near or on-side [*el látigo*] and one on the off-side [*el contralátigo*] of a single rigged saddle; on a double-rigged saddle there are also flank cinch q.v.) latigos: 75, 86; 84
- el lazo* (lariat): 35
- leggings*—*protective covering worn over the rider's legs: 60; 8
- loggerhead*—*term used in nineteenth-century California for the front fork or pommel of a saddle; it may reflect New England usage of the term for the upright post on a whaleboat used to slow the run of the line: 59
- lower leg guard [*la bota*]*—*in Mexico, a protective, often decorative, piece of tanned leather tied beneath the knee of the rider and falling to the instep: 12
- machere, machila (*mochila*): 60, 62
- la maleta* (valise): 12
- martingale [*la gammara*]*—*strap from the (front) cinch to the bridle, or ending in two rings through which the reins pass, to keep the horse from throwing the head: 120; 44, 69p
- la media gamarra* (half martingale): 37
- mexicana* riding style (riding styles): 31, 34
- mochila* [*la mochila*, *el telliz*]*—*a loose, tanned leather covering for the saddletree, with openings for the pommel and cantle; in the American west, often equipped with pouches: 9, 37, 39, 50, 90, 95; 23, 40, 61a,c,d
- Mother Hubbard*—*a large, square leather covering attached to some saddletrees, as distinct from the separate mochila, based on the loose fitting clothing of a character in an 1805 nursery rhyme by English writer, Sarah C. Martin: 9
- neck [*el cuello*]*—*post between head of saddle horn and pommel: 34
- el nudo de puerco* (pig knot): 35
- opishomo (apishamore): 50
- packsaddle [*la albarda*]*—*simple wooden framework with crossed ends placed on animal's back to carry loads: 12, 35, 74, 132
- las pajuelas* (sideboard extensions): 34
- pear-shaped horn [*la perilla*]*—*saddle horn shaped like a pear, used on some Mexican saddles: 33
- la perilla* (pear-shaped horn, pommel): 33
- Persian saddle*—*early, light-weight cavalry saddle used in Persia, whose form suggests western stock saddles: 14
- pig knot [*el nudo de puerco*]*—*knots shaped like a pig's head, often used in Mexico to tie strands of cinch band to cinch rings: 35
- pig-snout (stirrup cover): 14; 66
- poitrel (breast band): 11
- pommel [*la campana*, *perilla de arzón*, *fuste delantero de la silla*]*—*forward, arched portion of saddletree linking the sideboards: 10, 34, 40, 78; 84
- el pretal* (breast band): 37
- quirt [*la cuarta* (Mex.)]*—*short, leather strap(s), often attached to a handle, to whip the horse for speed: 136; 82
- rear cinch [*la barriguera*] (cinch; girthing systems): 35
- rear rigging straps [*las contrareatas*] (rigging straps): 35
- las reatas* (riggings straps): 34, 35, 103; 83
- rein [*la rienda*]*—*strap or cord (in pairs) that runs from the bridle bit around the horse's neck, held by the rider: 13
- riding styles (also: saddle types): 26
- barda**—*used for travel in sixteenth-century Spain: 28
- bastarda**—*popular in Spain and France; used by Spanish Riding School in Vienna: 28
- brida**—*of Italian derivation, favored by working horsemen and by society riders for display, also called *de rua*: 26
- croata* (riding styles, estradiota): 26
- estradiota**—*ancient, straight-legged style appropriate to European forms of warfare, jousting, and gentlemanly display: 26
- jineta*, *gineta**—*bent-knee style suited to speed and close-quarter maneuverability, introduced by Arabs into Turkey and Spain: 8, 27
- mexicana* [Mexican]*—*informal, non-academic style adapted to range use in Mexico: 31, 34
- rigging (also: girthing system)*—*arrangement of leather straps that secure the rigging (latigo) ring (q.v.); location of these rings determines

- type of girthing system (e.g. forward rigged, double rigged): 86
- rigging dee (dee): 84
- rigging ring [*la argolla*] (latigo ring): 35; 84
- rigging straps—the leathers attached to the saddle-tree that support the latigo rings; forward ones [*las reatas, los enreatados*] are usually wrapped around the pommel in Mexican saddles; rear ones [*las contrareatas*] pass behind the cantle: 35, 90; 60f
- la rodela* (shield, round): 16; 8
- rosette [*la roseta*—a circular design; on western stock saddles, a small leather disk with two slits for thongs or ties (q.v.) to pass through, securing skirts to saddletree: 35, 76, 85; 84
- rowel [*la rodaja, la estrella*—the pointed disk or star set in the end of the spur's shaft or post [*la espiga*], which turns as the rider's heel rakes the horse's flank: 5, 8; 14 left
- el ruedo* (border): 37
- rump cover [*la anquera, "anchero"*—fitted leather covering, protecting and decorating the horse's rear quarters; used also in an abbreviated form [*la anquerita*]: 10
- saddle [*la silla*—seat type device set on an animal to facilitate riding it: passim
- saddle bags [*las bolsas, las cantinas*—large leather piece with attached pockets, placed over the rear extensions [*las pajuelas*] of the saddletree: 37, 103, 110; 64a
- saddle cloth (also: saddle pad)—heavy, blanket-like piece placed under the saddle: 60
- saddle pad [*el cojín, el baste, el basto, el sudadero*—flat cushion, usually separate, under the saddle, to protect it from dirt and to fit it to the animal's back: 12, 107
- saddle strings [*los tientos*—narrow strips of tanned leather, usually in pairs, that lace through the saddletree or coverings, and are held on surface by rosettes; the long ends are decorative and also serve to tie on ropes, and other pieces of equipment: 84
- saddle ties (saddle strings): 34; 84
- saddletree [*el fuste de silla, el asiento de barras, el arzón*—framework, often of wood covered with rawhide, consisting of two side-boards connected by two forks for the pommel and cantle; the conformation of these parts gives the saddle its characteristic shape and name: 5, 12, 19, 34, 39; 84
- saddletree covers [*la coraza, la mochila, la barda, las armas, el telliz*—loose leather pieces of various sizes and locations: 10
- saddle types, Mexican or Spanish (*la silla . . .*; also riding styles)
- saddle types, western U.S.
- American (saddle types, English): 41, 65, 67
- California—a single-rigged saddle, often with long stirrup covers, curved skirts, wrapped horn and carved leather, all in contrast to a double-rigged Texas type: 62
- dragoon—the 1833 Grimsley design for the U.S. cavalry based on the skeletal Mexican ("Spanish") saddletree, equipped with skirts and padding; or refers to later military types: 66, 68, 120
- English [*la silla inglesa*—light, low-profile hunting or racing type introduced to America in colonial times from England: 41, 48, 62, 67
- Hope—a San Antonio, Texas, tree, very popular in Texas, furnished briefly (1857-1858) to the U.S. military: 60, 67
- Indian—any non-western or non-English type thought to be used by native Americans: 45
- McClellan—a design, largely derived from Mexican and western saddles, adopted by the U.S. cavalry in the late 1850s; it had no horn, but retained forward rigging and bent-wood stirrups with leather covers: 62
- Mexican (*la silla vaquera*): 34, 59
- pad—an early, Plains Indian, treeless type, appearing by 1830: 73, 74, 75
- prairie chicken snare—the Blackfoot name for a packsaddle modification of the Plains Indian woman's saddle: 81, 132
- ranger—a New York-made type produced for use in Texas; also used by the Union Army in 1861 until McClellans were available: 62
- Spanish—the skeletal tree imported into the U.S. from Mexico, and probably made here by the 1830's; served as the foundation of many early western stock saddles: 39, 43, 45, 46, 65
- Texas (Hope): 67
- wagon—a heavy, military type, built on a "Spanish" tree after 1845, used by teamsters; it had a tall, slender horn and a high, steep cantle: 47
- wood—the Blackfoot name for the Plains Indian woman's light, open saddle framework covered with rawhide, the slender ends rising high and spreading into large, horizontal disks: 76
- schab(b)rack (also: *mochila*)—a removable covering proposed for the dragoon saddle by Grimsley: 65
- shield, oval [*la adarga*—Spanish type with indented top and bottom: 16 lower
- shield, round [*la rodela*—Spanish type also used in America: 16; 8
- shoulders [*los hombros*—outer edge of pommel,

- ranging from flat ("slick") to rounded ("swelled") form: 34, 104
- sideboards [*las tablas*]
—two horizontal pieces, also called "side bars," under and joining the two forks to form the saddletree [*el fuste*]: 34, 40, 50, 76; 83
- sideboard extensions [*las pajuelas*]
—ends of saddletree projecting behind the cantle: 34
- sidesaddle [*la silla de señora, el sillón*]
—a device for women to ride with both legs on one side, based on English saddle type (q.v.): 9, 12, 120; 70
- la silla* [lit., seat] (saddle; *la silla . . .*): passim
- la silla de andar* [riding saddle]
—any non-special-use riding saddle: 12
- la silla de armas* [saddle with armor]
—a combat saddle with high pommel and protective leather housing: 11
- la silla barda*
—successor to *la silla jineta* in Spain, longer stirrup leathers than *la jineta*: 28
- la silla bridona* (*la silla de armas*): 11
- la silla de campo* [country saddle]
—non-specific term for any saddle used for working on the open range: 20
- la silla charra* [*charro* saddle]
—a type of Mexican cowboy saddle [*la silla vaquera*] with a full forward cinch, often double rigged, developed by gentlemen riders [*charros*] into a display saddle with a large horn and decorations of chased silver and carved leather: 33
- la silla de esqueleto* [skeleton saddle]
—a light Mexican saddle with open seat, short skirts, and stirrup fenders: 37
- la silla estradiota* (also: riding styles, *estradiota*)
—the heavily armored, medieval European saddle: 11; 26
- la silla jineta* (also: riding styles, *jineta*)
—a light cavalry saddle introduced by Moors to Spain and carried to America: 11; 2c
- la silla de montar* [mounting saddle]
—any riding saddle: 12, 35
- la silla vaquera* [Mexican cowboy saddle]
—a class of early Mexican range or stock-working saddles, relatively rough, with simple stirrup leathers and no covers; later developed into the *charro* and western U.S. saddles: 13, 33
- el sillón* (sidesaddle): 9
- single center rigged (girthing types): 18
- skirts [*las faldas, los faldones*]
—large leather panels attached to the saddletree, under the jockeys on western U.S. saddles, to protect the rigging and give form to the saddle: 9, 34, 35, 65, 103; 84
- slipper stirrup
—type with enclosed toe and flat sole, used on sidesaddles: 120; 70 right
- la sotacola* (crupper): 11
- Spanish tree (saddle types, western U.S.): 18, 46, 66
- spike or prick spur
—a medieval type with a rowel-less post [*la espiga*]: 5, 8; 11 upper, 14 left, 16
- spur [*la espuela*] (also: *la espuela bridona; la espuela jineta*; rowel; spike spur)
—U-shaped device attached to rider's heel to goad the animal to greater speed, or to make a horse buck: 11
- staples
—U-shaped metal pins that attach rings for the stirrup leathers to the saddletree, or provide attachment points on the back of the cantle for extra equipment: 66, 113
- stirrup [*el estribo*] (also: cross-form stirrup; slipper stirrup; wooden stirrup)
—a device hung from each side of a saddle to receive the rider's foot: 5, 8, 34, 35, 41, 42, 50, 60, 79, 99, 120, 133, 134; 22, 84
- stirrup cover [*la tapadera*]
—leather piece fitted over the front of the stirrup; in western U.S., the long, loose, pointed type is called "tapadero," the blunt, up-turned type, "pig-snout," but all are "taps": 60*h,i*, 61*g,h*, 66
- stirrup leathers [*el ación, los aciones* (Sp.); *el arción, los arciones* (Mex.)]
—adjustable straps that suspend the stirrups from the saddletree: 34; 83
- stirrup straps (stirrup leathers): 86
- stirrup tread [*la pisa*]
—inner face where the foot rests, often protected by a leather piece: 84
- el sudadero* [sweat pad]
—a heavy piece of leather or fabric, often lined, placed under the saddle: 37
- surcingle [*el sobrecincho*]
—a kind of girth or cinch fastened over the saddle: 49, 70
- sweat-leather
—the fender (q.v.) on the stirrup leather; or a padded piece (sweat pad, *el sudadero*) placed under the saddle: 60; 84
- swells
—bulging of the shoulders of the pommel: 84
- las tablas* (sideboards): 34; 83
- el talabartero* [saddler, harness maker]
—Mexican craftsman trained in making saddles: 26
- el talle* [sic], *el telliz*
—any covering or appurtenance for a saddle: 9
- la tapadera* (stirrup cover): 18, 35, 42, 107, 110, 120; 83
- tapadero (stirrup cover): 62, 95; 37, 39
- taps (stirrup cover): 95
- la teja* (cantle): 34; 83
- Texas saddle (saddle types, western U.S.): 33
- Texas tree (saddle types, western U.S.): 59
- thongs (saddle strings): 35

three-quarter rigged (girthing types): 8, 95

los tientos (saddle strings): 34, 35; 83

ties (saddle strings): 34

trappings [*los arreos, los aderezos, los jaeces*]—all the equipment that is normally associated with a saddle, including housings [*las faldas, los faldones, la gualdrapa*] and armor or coverings [*las armas, la barda, la coraza, la mochila*]: 11

tree [*el fuste*] (saddletree; bow): 14, 18, 42, 65

valise [*la maleta*]—a container secured behind the cantle: 12, 60, 120; 69*a,g,i*

el vaquerillo—a protective and decorative appur-

tenance usually made of goat skin, with the hair remaining on the outside and with pockets added on the under side; placed behind the cantle on some Mexican-type saddles: 37, 90; 18

vaquero saddle [*la silla vaquera*]: 14, 18, 33

wooden stirrup—either the eastern U.S. bent-wood type, or the Mexican and southwest U.S. type carved from a block: 92; 14

Zaldivar tree—popular type of *charro* tree named for the noted Mexican gentleman-rider, Don Juan Zaldivar: 34

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