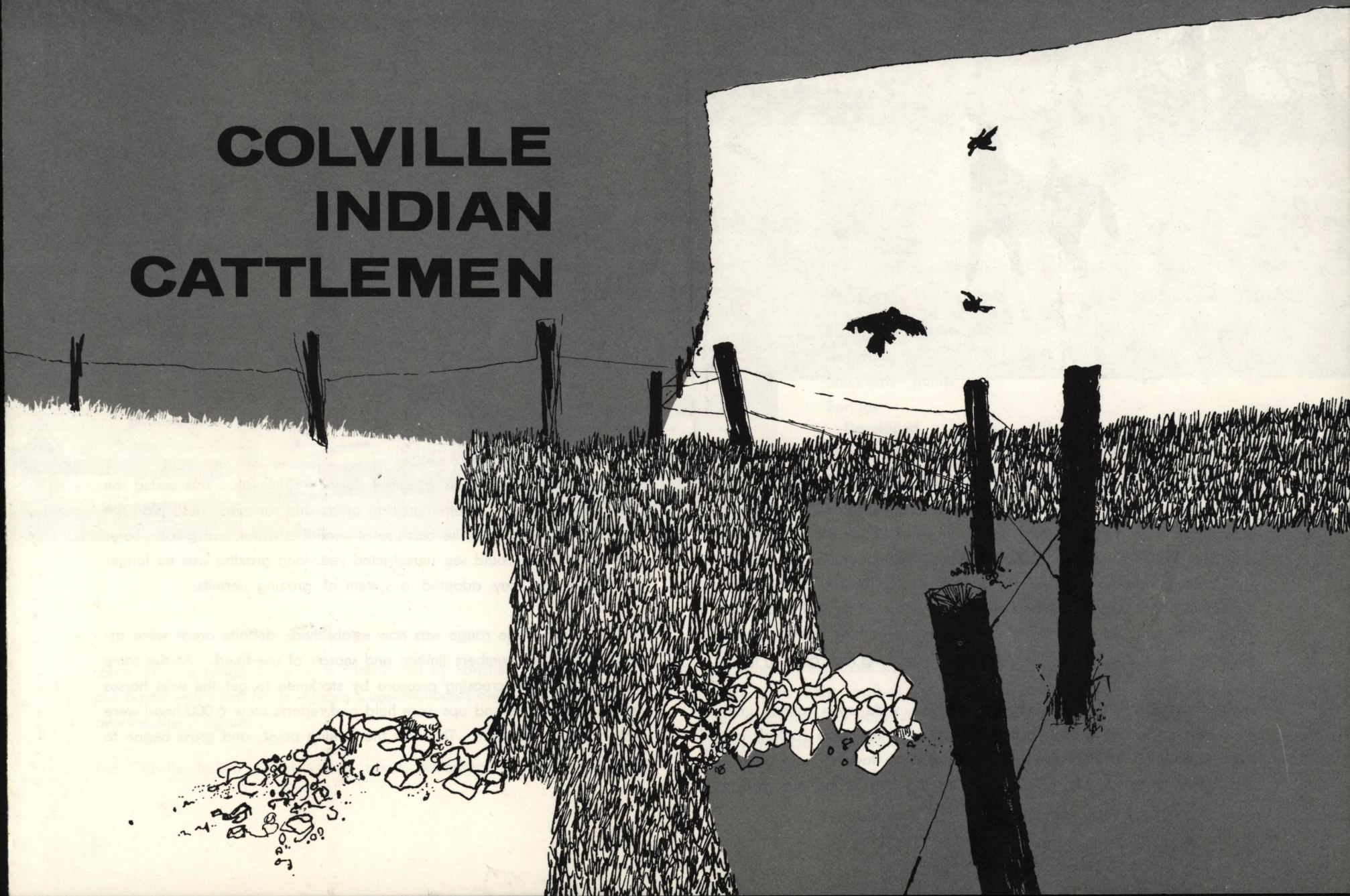


COLVILLE INDIAN CATTLEMEN





Not too many years ago the Wild West reigned on the Colville Indian Reservation — cattle, sheep and horses grazed an unfenced, unimproved area larger than the King Ranch or the State of Rhode Island. Reports from the 1920's show over 100,000 sheep, 20,000 cattle and 30,000 wild or semi-wild horses. All the Indians owned horses, six or eight Indians owned cattle; the remaining stock was owned by white ranchers living on or near the reservation. This folder shows how the Wild West was tamed and how the Colville Indians are now using their grazing land.

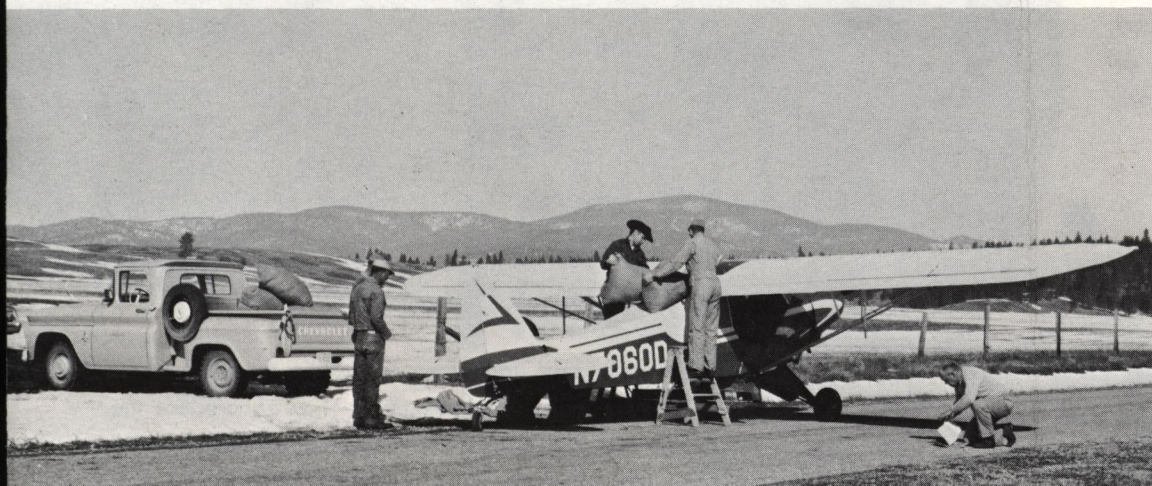
Livestock numbers increased rapidly on these wide open ranges until there was no longer enough grass and the need for some controls became apparent. In 1927 the first step was taken toward more orderly use of the range. It was decided to divide the open range into grazing

units with a definite area assigned to each stockman. This ended the annual spring race to better grazing areas and ranchers could plan the use of their range to make best use of available water and grass. Later Indian stockmen could see unrestricted year-long grazing was no longer profitable and they adopted a system of grazing permits.

Orderly use of the range was now established; definite areas were assigned, livestock numbers limited and season of use fixed. At the same time there was increasing pressure by stockmen to get the wild horses off the range. Round ups were held and reports show 6,000 head were taken off in one year. This was the turning point, and grass began to come back.

After gaining control of range use, the tribal council and range specialists began to look for ways to help those Indian people who wanted to raise livestock on the Reservation. A tribal credit program was set up to take care of a need for financing. A second major step toward

creating an opportunity for Indian stockmen was the introduction of a range improvement program in 1962. This program continues to be successful; the tribal council, ranchers and agency people work together to improve the range.



Labor for the range program is contributed by ranchers, materials are purchased with tribal funds, Agency Conservationists and tribal employees oversee the program.

The Colville Indian people have taken advantage of opportunities,

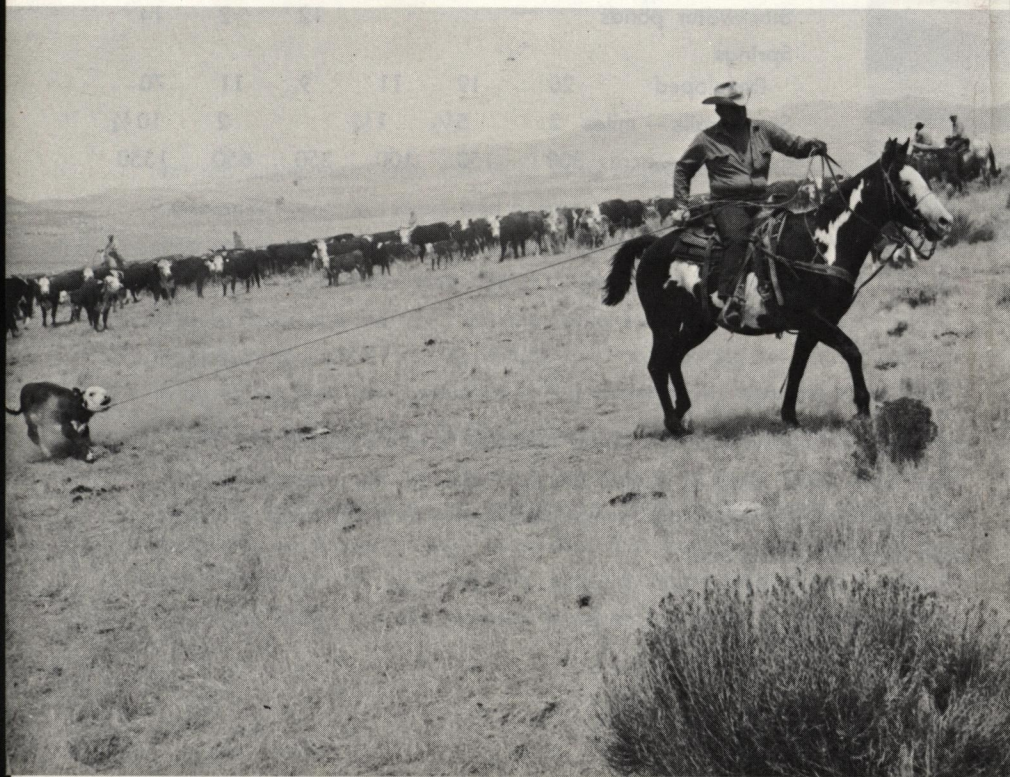
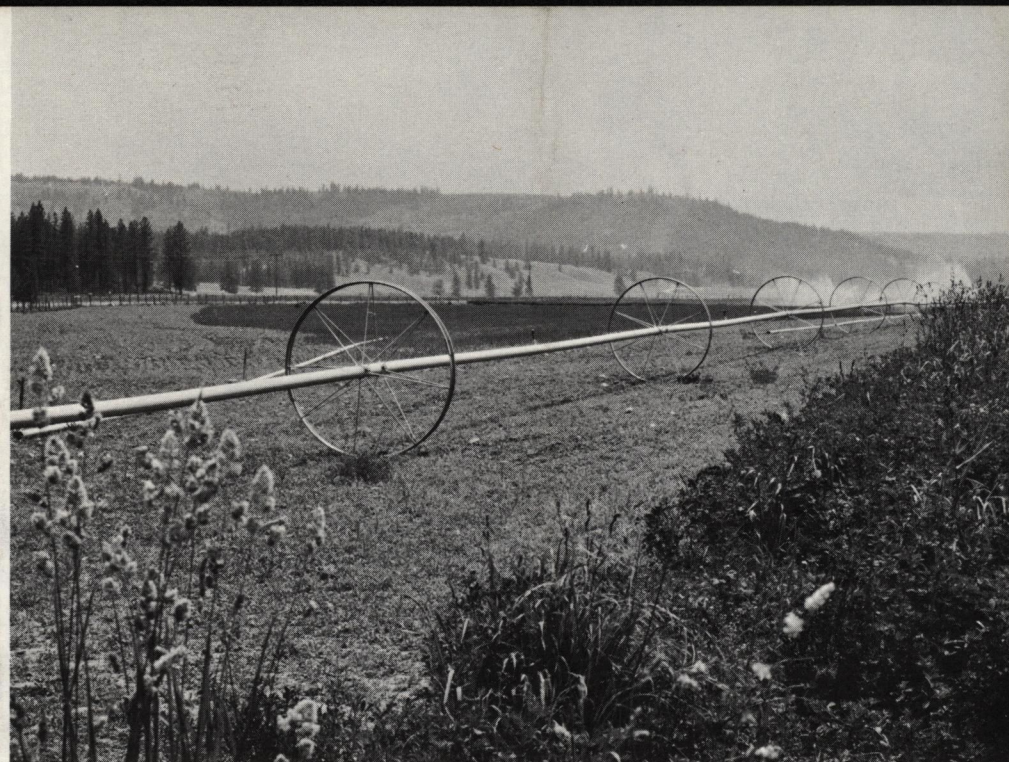
The following table shows kind of projects and progress made:

PROJECTS	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	TOTALS
Fencing — miles	21 ¹ / ₄	31	8	17	14	91 ¹ / ₄
Cattleguards	13	9	2	4	6	34
Stockwater ponds				12	2	14
Springs						
Developed	20	19	11	9	11	70
Stock trails — miles	2	5 ¹ / ₂	1 ¹ / ₄		2	10 ³ / ₄
Reseeded — acres	300	150	100	350	650	1550

as range is improved Indian cattle numbers have increased. In 1960 there were 4000 head of Indian owned cattle on the reservation, the fall count in 1966 shows the number has grown to 8,500 head — more than doubled in 6 years.

Prior to advent of grazing controls, most of the cattle were left on the range as long as feed was available, little hay was used for wintering. With establishment of grazing controls, seasons of use were set and winter feeding was required for about five months. The ranchers raising grain hay could not produce enough feed on their limited haylands to winter their stock and the most practical way to increase production was to irrigate and raise alfalfa. Since 1957 thirty one Indian farmers and ranchers have installed sprinkler irrigation systems. Production has increased from one ton per acre on alternate years to an average of three tons per acre every year.

This change in haying practice represents a considerable investment in time, money and energy on the part of the ranchers. It has also resulted in higher returns through more calves and heavier calves at sale time. Using current prices, the gross value of cattle sold by Indians in 1960 was \$285,000, gross value this fall (1966) was \$841,560.



Ownership of cattle is not a sure sign of economic success and present problems are related to efficiency of production — how to produce the most beef at the lowest cost. This takes cattle know-how, business management skill and careful planning. The ability to produce has advanced much faster than the ability to manage, and stockmen generally aren't as willing to devote time to business management training as they are to learning improved production methods. In plain terms, cowboys seem to have a natural aversion for pencil pushing. But as conditions on the range and quality of cattle improve so must the stockmen develop to fully exploit the opportunity available.

*Prepared by Land Operations — Colville Indian Agency
Cover design by Jerry Torrey — W. S. U., Pullman*