

LIFE OF A COWBOY

BIOGRAPHY

OF

JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY

AN

OKLAHOMA COWBOY PIONEER

**LIFE OF A COWBOY**  
**A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930**



**John Arnold Callaway as a Young Man**  
Portrait by Rex A. Reynolds

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

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### FORWARD

This Biography of John Arnold Callaway's life was written by Rex Arnold Reynolds, son of Enid Callaway-Reynolds and grandson of John Arnold Callaway.

I grew up knowing my aunts and uncles, the children of John Callaway's two families. In turn they grew up with John Callaway and they knew him well. They lived in the places described in this biography and relayed to me and my cousins much of the information that has been passed on in this biography. And, I was lucky to grow up with my cousins. Sometimes we even lived with each other. We recognized each other as members of an extended family and we grew up in northwest Oklahoma until we were adults and know the family places described here.

This biography is mostly for future generations of the John Callaway family. Most do not know each very well, if at all, and it is hard for them to have a sense of family with people they may never have met. It was written in the hope that it will give them an understanding and appreciation for those who came before them, and for each other, and for their place in a great American family. They are the beneficiaries of this family legacy of pioneer men and women and I would like for them to be able to embrace it with the pride that flows from knowledge of the character, accomplishments, and contributions of their predecessors.

The information in this Biography comes from a variety of sources. Some of it comes from historical records and documents, genealogical records, and written correspondence. Some of this information is anecdotal and has been passed down to family members by John's children or other family members. I cannot attest to the accuracy of all of it; but, I have endeavored to include only that which is most credible and omit that which I believe is suspect or identify it as such.

In addition to enumerating the facts of his life, I have tried to place it in the historical context of the time in which he lived in the hope of better understanding the person he was and the life he lived.

I have also added maps and other geographical information to assist the reader in locating places and understanding their relationship to each other. I hope the pictures that have been included will add additional substance to the people and places.

In any case I believe this biography describes and portrays the essence of the life of my grandfather, John Arnold Callaway.

Rex A. Reynolds  
Revised: December, 2013

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**LIFE OF A COWBOY**  
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**DEDICATION**

This biography is dedicated to the many descendents of  
John Arnold Callaway  
and, to the larger Callaway Family.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge and thank all those who contributed family information and pictures which made this endeavor possible, especially Pat Callaway-Maskus, the daughter of Fred Callaway who wrote down many of her father's memories and compiled a family album.

Thanks to my mother, Enid (Callaway) Reynolds, and to all of my aunts and uncles and their spouses who were special to me and who shared their memories of their father over the years. And, a special thanks to Arnold Callaway, the last living child of John and Minnie Callaway, for his contribution of information, memories, and pictures.

For all of my cousins, the children of John Callaway's children, who have passed down information about their grandfather that was related to them by their parents: Thank You. You all share in this biography, the story of your grandfather's life.

A special thanks to my cousin Mona Lou (Callaway) Tea for additional information she provided which I have used in this revised version.

Finally, thanks to Samuel W. Newman, the grandson of W. T. "Bill" Callaway for information he has documented in his family history: From England to Texas 1640 - 1990. And thank you to all of you who read early versions of this manuscript and made suggestions, corrections, and editing comments. Your contribution has been invaluable.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

### BEGINNING IN TEXAS

John Arnold Callaway was a cowboy. He was born November 15, 1857 near Crockett, Texas, in Houston County, the fifth of nine children born to James Wilson Callaway from Franklin County, Georgia and his wife Caroline Elizabeth Dillard from Williamson County, Tennessee. He was the seventh generation in the pioneer family of Peter Callaway, his 4th Great Grandfather, who came to America from England before 1640.

In 1835, his mother Elizabeth came from Tennessee to Houston County, Texas with her family. John's father James came from Georgia and arrived in Colorado County, Texas, in 1839 and then moved to Houston County in about 1844. After arriving in Houston County, James and Elizabeth met and they were married on July 14, 1846, at the time that the Mexican-American War began (1846-1848) in Texas.

Four years after John Callaway was born, America was plunged into a Civil War (1861-1865) which, in addition to the death of his maternal grandfather, bankrupted his family.

John's father and his maternal grandfather, William Dillard, operated a large estate in Houston County, Texas. In 1860, William Dillard died and John's father, James, was appointed executor of his estate and had to sell the land and distribute the proceeds to the beneficiaries of the estate. This proved a costly chore for James, who had to post a \$10,000 bond, a very large amount for the time, and in the process of administering the estate he lost a considerable amount of money.

Meanwhile, the Confederacy requisitioned their cattle and other livestock and paid for them with Confederate money which was worthless after the war. After his father's death, John's mother told him that his father James came into the house with a trunk full of Confederate money and in a rage began throwing hands-full of bills into the fireplace. When flaming bills began to fly out of the fireplace, his wife Elizabeth, fearful that he would burn down the house, begged him to stop. The family found the trunk with the remaining bills after his death.

With no estate, few livestock, and little money left, James Callaway moved the family west to Gonzales County and then, in 1865 or 1866, on to De Witt County, Texas.

John attended school in De Witt County through at least the sixth grade. He was literate and could read and write, although his spelling sometimes left something to be desired, and he was good at arithmetic. For a cowboy living on the western frontier he was relatively well educated. He was a lifelong proponent of education. And, although he thought that boys did not require schooling past the eighth grade, he saw to it that his children received the best education that he could provide for them. In fact, two of his girls, Minnie and Nellie, went to college and became school teachers and his youngest daughter, Enid, went to nursing school.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

In 1867 Joseph G. McCoy, built market facilities at Abilene, Kansas and the great cattle drives began from Texas across the Indian Nations' western Oklahoma Territory to Kansas. John's older brother William Theodore "Bill" Callaway went into the cattle trailing business in 1870, and Bill brought thirteen-year-old John into the business to work as a drover and later as a trail boss. He also brought their younger brother George into the business a few years later.



John spent the next thirteen years of his life driving cattle north from Texas over the Chisholm trail to Abilene and then the Great Western cattle trail to Dodge City, Kansas and as far north as the Dakota Territory. Although there is no way to verify it, it was related by his sons, James and Fred, that their dad had worked for Murdo MacKenzie as trail boss for a couple of trips up the trail to northern locations in the late 1880's or early 1890's.

The three brothers, Bill, John, and George made many of their trips up the trails together. When they decided to settle down, John's Brother Bill remained in Texas and became a deputy sheriff in De Witt County. But, rather than return to Texas, John decided to stay in Kansas and Oklahoma. George returned to Texas for a while: but, after a few years he joined John in Oklahoma.

John's father had come to Texas from Georgia and he and John's older brother were more southern in their outlook than John who was essentially a westerner and race and color mattered little to him. He told his son John William that he did not want to return to Texas to settle down because he was offended by the treatment of black and Mexican cowboys there. Among other things, it offended his sense of fairness that they could not eat at the table with the rest of the hands when they were working on the ranches in Texas. They did the same work as he and the other hands and John felt that they deserved to be treated the same as the white cowboys.

At Pioneer Hall in San Antonio, Texas, the names and pictures of many of the early Texas trail drivers have been recorded for posterity. W. T. "Bill" Callaway is one of those cowboys whose name is there. Some of the men whose names are recorded there, like Jesse Chisholm, and Charley Goodnight, are legendary; but, most are lost to history. Following are the names of eleven of these stalwart men along with that of Bill Callaway:

- |                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cade, James G.               | Gardner, J. W.     |
| Cade, J. J.                  | Gardner, Sam       |
| Callan, Jim                  | Gates, James H.    |
| <b>Callaway (Bill) W. T.</b> | Gibson, James      |
| Castlebury, R. L.            | Goodnight, Charley |
| Chisholm, Jesse              | Gray, W. H.        |

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

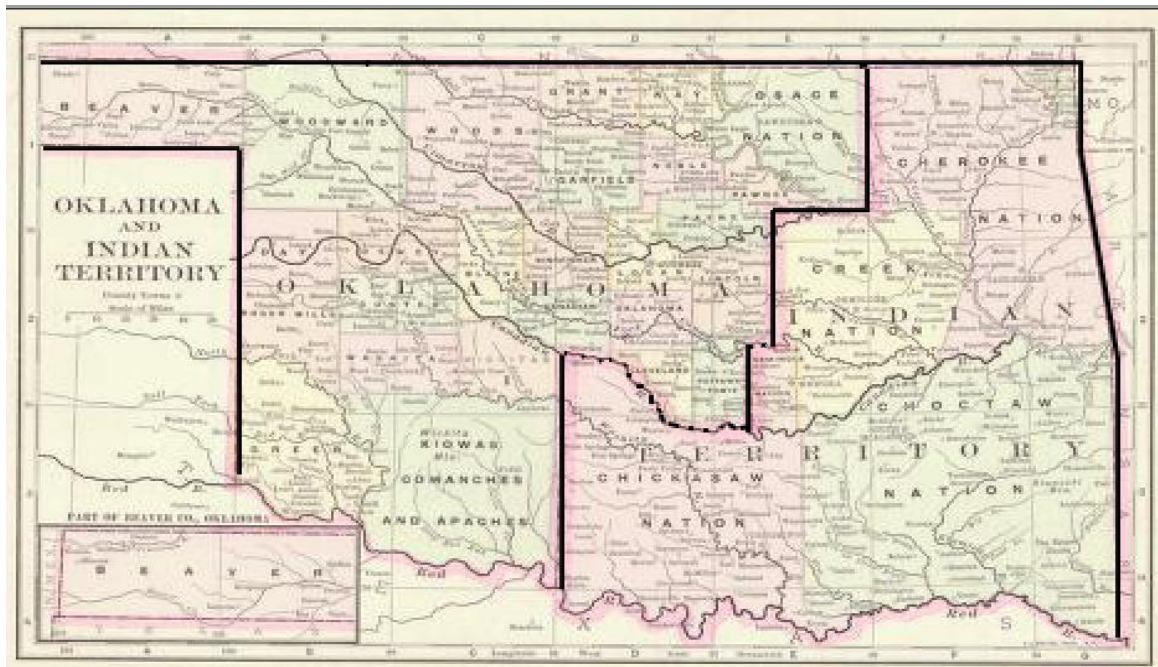
A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

## OKLAHOMA TERRITORY AND THE INDIANS

The Indian Nations were comprised of Indian Territory on the eastern side of the Cross Timbers and Oklahoma Territory to the west. The Cross Timbers was a thick, almost impenetrable, primeval forest of hard wood trees, mostly blackjack and post oak, which bisected what, would become the State of Oklahoma diagonally into two almost equal parts. It ran from southeastern Kansas through central Oklahoma down into west central Texas ending near Waco and the Brazos River. The main part of this forest was from ten to thirty five miles wide with fingers branching out periodically to the east and west forming a boundary between the forest and prairie lands to the east and the Great American Plains to the west.



Indian Territory, east of the Cross Timbers, was occupied by Indians that had been resettled there from other sections of the country, including the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole, the Five Civilized Tribes from the southeast. Oklahoma Territory to the west was the traditional territory of the Plains Indian tribes: the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Wichita, Caddo, Ponca, Osage, and others that were still actively hostile to the United States and white settlers in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was in the west, in Oklahoma Territory, where the major cattle trails were located and the historic cattle drives took place.



The Indian Nations: Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

It is important to remember that long before the Europeans came, the Great American Plains had been a battle ground. For centuries the Indian tribes were mortal enemies and fought each other for survival. Now they stood defiantly and resolutely against the overwhelming forces of white civilization. For the native people it was a struggle to retain their lands and their way of life and they would prove formidable foes. The last 50 years of the nineteenth century was the culmination of two centuries of conflict between Indian peoples and the white newcomers and it would frequently be violent and bloody and John Callaway lived and worked in midst of this battle ground.

General Philip Sheridan, in command of the U.S. Army's Department of the Missouri, decided to send George Armstrong Custer to Oklahoma Territory for a winter campaign to pacify the hostile Indian tribes.

During the winter campaign of 1868, Custer massacred Black Kettle, a Cheyenne peace chief, and his village of Sothern Cheyenne who were encamped on the Washita River in western Oklahoma Territory for the winter. At the time the village was occupied mostly by women and children and this would enrage the plains Indians. A story has been told that sometime later in a pow-wow, Cheyenne Chief Medicine Arrows (aka: Stone Forehead) insulted Custer by emptying the pipe's ashes on Custer's boots, rebuked him for the massacre of Black Kettle's village and predicted his downfall.

For years the Comanche, Kiowa, and Cheyenne had been on the war path, mostly in Texas and Oklahoma Territory. They attacked buffalo hunters at the battle of Adobe Walls in the Texas panhandle, raided Mexico, and waged war against whites and Mexicans wherever they found them. In the Red River War with the U.S. military they went unconquered until the winter of 1874-1875 when they were defeated by Ranald Mackinzie and the Fourth U.S. Cavalry in Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas panhandle leading to the surrender of Quanah Parker and his warriors that summer at Fort Sill, Oklahoma Territory.

Farther north, in Montana, in The Great Sioux War of 1876, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse with Sioux and Cheyenne warriors defeated General George Crook at the Battle of the Rosebud and then killed Custer and defeated the Seventh U.S. Cavalry in the battle of the Little Big Horn fulfilling Chief Medicine Arrows' prophecy. When the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne were finally subdued the Sioux were moved to reservations in Nebraska and Dakota Territory and Dull Knife and Little Wolf with their Northern Cheyenne were relocated to Cheyenne-Arapaho lands in central Oklahoma Territory at the Darlington Agency.

In Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas the Apache wars continued non-stop from 1849 until 1886, with the army and Kit Carson battling the Navajo and war leaders Mangas Coloradas, Cochise, and Victorio, from other Apache tribes, ending with General Crook and General Miles finally making life so impossible for Geronimo and his band of Chiricahua Apache that they surrendered and were relocated to Florida and later to Oklahoma Territory.



# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

In Oklahoma Territory in 1878, Dull Knife and Little Wolf led the Northern Cheyenne across northwestern Oklahoma Territory and western Kansas in a breakout and exodus from the Darlington Indian Agency near Fort Reno, fleeing the Cheyenne lands in central Oklahoma Territory to go back to the Wind River country of Wyoming. Along the way Black Coyote and his Cheyenne dog soldiers killed a number of settlers and cowboys, three of whom were Quinlan ranch hands in Clark County Kansas where John worked after quitting the trail.

The Indian Nations were also infamous for attracting lawless men trying to avoid the consequences of their lawless life style. The Indian Territories were a haven for bank and train robbers, cattle rustlers, horse thieves, and murderers. So, in addition to the inherent dangers of working with livestock, fording rivers, traversing dangerous terrain, and spending large amounts of time in areas sometimes occupied by hostile Indians, John Callaway was also forced by necessity to associate with men who were intemperate and not of the highest character. Some of them were, or would become, outlaws. The Doolins, the Daltons, and Sam Bass are some of those he knew and with whom he had at times worked.

Oklahoma with its inhabitants was a rugged, demanding, wild, hostile, and unforgiving land; but, John learned early that danger wasn't just confined to the trail and the Indian Nations. Once, while still a youngster, he found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time. His outfit arrived outside Dodge City with their herd and were low on supplies. So, as the low man, John was sent into town with a wagon to bring back what was needed. But, before he could accomplish his task he found himself between two groups of men approaching each other from opposite ends of the street with pistols, rifles, and shotguns intent on confronting each other. To get out of the way John escaped up an alley between two buildings where he could wait it out. During the confrontation a group of men came up the alley and discovered him. He escaped harm because the man who spotted him told the others to move on, that he was just a kid.

It was a dangerous time to live and work any place on the western frontier; but, it was especially dangerous on the southern plains in Texas, Kansas, and in Oklahoma Territory.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

## EARLY YEARS: TRAILING CATTLE

As a cowboy and a frontiersman, John Callaway lived his early life on the edge of the great American western frontier herding wild Texas cattle north to the railroads in Kansas and beyond. Most of the time, during these years on the trail, his home was in a saddle on horseback under the sun and stars in Oklahoma Territory, good weather and bad. He was a tough man who did tough, difficult, and dangerous work in a sometimes violent environment. And, because it was the era of the great Indian wars on the western frontier, herding wild longhorn cattle across Oklahoma Territory was doubly dangerous.

John Callaway was not a large man. He was about 5 feet, 10 inches tall and weighed about 170 pounds; but, by all accounts he was extremely strong with great endurance gained through years of hard work. During the course of his life he sustained many injuries and broken bones. He was an exceptional horseman and skilled at managing both cattle and men. And, like many western pioneers, he was good at building things and able to fix most machinery when it broke down; skills that he passed on to his sons. In fact, under John's tutelage, all of his sons became highly skilled ranch hands with a strong work ethic.

In the west your good name was a reflection of your reputation. Your reputation was determined by your actions and the man that you were and John had a sterling reputation. He was a principled man who lived by his principles, and those who knew him said that he was a man of character and honor whose word was his bond.

John liked people and treated everyone with respect until they showed themselves unworthy of that respect. He was friendly and considerate with a sense of humor, and although he was quiet, he was not withdrawn, and most people liked him and enjoyed their low key conversations with him. Generally, men felt a sense of camaraderie with him and women found him charming. He was a charitable man who was quick to help those in need. And even with the inherent difficulties of working with large and sometimes temperamental animals, he would not tolerate their mistreatment. And, although John was generally easy going, he had a temper, which he managed to control most of the time; but, he was a very tough man and it was generally unwise to provoke him.

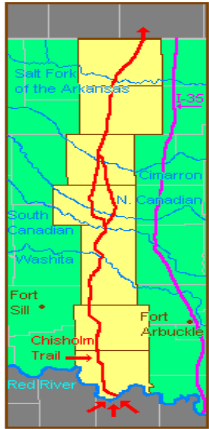
John Callaway was a privately religious man. Most of his life he was not in close proximity to a church and only found his way to church services infrequently; however, he held his Christian beliefs firmly and attempted to live by his Christian beliefs and the Christian moral and ethical code. On the occasion when a minister was in the area, he would extend them an invitation to enjoy the hospitality of his home and share their message with his family.

His principal vices were swearing and loss of temper, both of which he considered failings. He did not drink and he did not play cards. The family would keep alcohol in the home only for medicinal purposes. John told his sons that he had seen more men killed as a result of excessive alcohol consumption and disputes over card games than for any other reasons and he implored them not to fall prey to these temptations. But, John did love to dance. He taught his girls to dance and, whenever possible, the family would take advantage of opportunities to attend dances.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

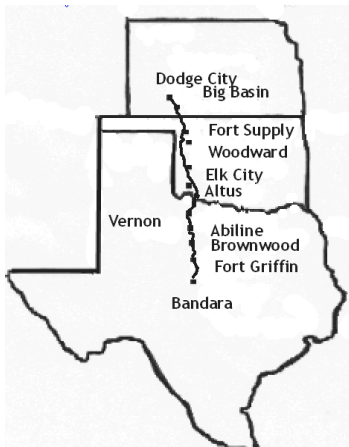
John spent his teenage years, grew into adulthood, and became a man, traveling the great cattle trails through Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and the northern territories. He learned their geography, he became acquainted with their inhabitants and wildlife, and along with the cowboys, cattle, and horses they became his world.



The Chisholm Trail ran to the west of, and roughly parallel to, the Cross Timbers through Oklahoma Territory generally following the ninety-eighth meridian. The trail began at Fort Worth, Texas, although herds might join it at any point south of the Red River. It crossed the river at Red River Station southeast of the modern day town of Duncan, Oklahoma and progressed north passing by what became the communities of Comanche, Apache, Duncan, Rush Springs and Chickasha where a split developed. The western split passed Fort Reno, which became El Reno, and the eastern split passed Yukon, Oklahoma before the two merged at Kingfisher prior to crossing the Cimarron River at the Dover Stage Crossing. It continued on past what became the communities of Enid, Pond Creek, and Medford before moving into Kansas on the way to Wichita and Abilene, a total distance of about 500 miles. Current Highway 81 from Fort Worth, Texas through Oklahoma to

Wichita Kansas generally follows the route of the Chisholm Trail.

The Great western cattle trail ran west of the Chisholm Trail. Bandera, Texas, west of San Antonio, was considered its earliest origination point and it headed north passing what became the cities of



Brownwood, Abilene, and Vernon, Texas before crossing the Red River at Doan's crossing southeast of Altus, Oklahoma. The trail ran almost parallel to the Oklahoma-Texas border moving north past Elk City, through Comargo, east of the Antelope Hills, and moved on north to the west of Vici. At this point, the trail veered to the northwest past Fargo, southwest of Woodward, where it began to run parallel to the military road and proceeded on past May, a few miles to the west of Camp Supply, now Fort Supply. From there it continued on northwest past the border through the big basin area to Dodge City, Kansas. The entire length of the trail was about 600 miles from Bandera to Dodge City with herds joining the trail at different points before the Red River.

A typical cattle drive lasted from 110 to 150 days, depending on where the herd originated and how long it took to round-up and gather the cattle. Usually, cattle were only moved ten or twelve miles a day so they would not lose an excessive amount of weight during the trip. Drives to northern locations took even longer.

Cowboys were paid 75 cents to a dollar a day, \$20 to \$30 dollars a month with room and board furnished. A good pair of boots cost \$20, a hat \$10, and a saddle \$40 to \$60. A saddle horse cost \$10 to \$30, depending on how well it was trained and how much experience and skill it had working cattle; however, most outfits rounded up wild horses and broke and trained them themselves, sometimes creating a herd of several hundred saddle-broken horses, called a remuda, from which cowhands chose their mounts for the day. Cowboys furnished their own tack and the trail outfit included a wrangler for the remuda and furnished a string of horses for each cowboy.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

The business of cattle trailing was not an easy life. Personal accommodations were non-existent. The men slept in their clothes on the ground. They might go for weeks without a bath or a change of clean clothes. The cook would usually provide a tub of water for the men to wash-up before meals, which consisted mostly of the basics: meat and beans, or stew, or chili, and biscuits. Occasionally, they might get a treat like pie or cobbler when fruit could be acquired.

The longhorn cattle in Texas after the civil war were mostly wild cattle that were often difficult to handle and could be dangerous. On the trail there were many river crossings to be made and sometimes difficult terrain to traverse which often resulted in injuries to cowboys and John Callaway was no exception. Mostly, the weather was hot and the trail was dusty with occasional summer storms producing lightning and thunder that could spook the herd and cause out-of-control stampedes.

Because Oklahoma Territory was the domain of outlaws and hostile Indians, preventing the herd and remuda from being stolen was a continuous problem. They usually gave the local tribes a few head of beef as consideration for crossing their land. And, when hostile Indians were close, they frequently let them take a few head of cattle rather than stop them and risk a deadly confrontation. Horses were not given-up so easily and horse thieves and cattle rustlers were given no quarter. The ownership of firearms and the ability to use them proficiently was a requirement for cowboys. And John's sons recalled that their father was an expert shot with a rifle.

In 1883 at the age of 26, after thirteen years of trailing cattle, John was a highly skilled cowhand; but, although he was still a young man, he was worn down and ready to leave the trail. What John Callaway knew was horses and cattle, so he went to work on one of the large cattle ranches that had developed in western Kansas during this period.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

### THE FIRST FAMILY

For eleven years after he left the cattle trailing business, from 1883 until 1894, John mostly worked on ranches in Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma Territory; although, he did on occasion work as a trail boss for a few drives during this period. He worked at one time or another on the Quinlan Brothers cattle operation in the Cherokee Outlet in Oklahoma Territory, the famous XIT ranch in the Texas panhandle, the Claremont Land and Irrigation Company and the C. D. Perry ranches in Kansas.

The Quinlan brothers, William, Thomas, and Robert, operated a ranch in Clark County, Kansas, just a few miles north of the Cherokee Strip. As members of the Cherokee Strip Cattlemen's Association, they had leased grazing land from the Cherokees west of the Cimarron River, on land that became Woodward County after Oklahoma statehood, and they hired John Callaway as foreman for this operation. John worked for the Quinlan brothers in Oklahoma Territory through the disastrous winter of 1886-1887, which badly depleted the herds, until 1890 when the U.S. Government invalidated the Cattlemen's Association lease with the Cherokees and forced them to move their cattle off of Cherokee land and out of the outlet. But, the Quinlan brothers would return to the Outlet after it was opened for settlement and build a big new ranch.

Matilda Crupper was born September 07, 1857 in Quincy, Adams County, Illinois, where she met her first husband Thomas C. Douglas. They moved west to Camp Supply in Oklahoma Territory where her first two children, Jennie A. and Lucy T. Douglas were born. Jennie was born in December of 1886 and Lucy was born in January of 1889.

Tom Douglas was a teamster and traveled between the settlements along the western cattle trail delivering supplies. He had chosen Camp Supply in northwest Oklahoma Territory for his home base because it was a convenient location for his travel needs.

John frequently moved cattle between the Quinlan ranches in Kansas and Oklahoma Territory and passed by Camp Supply. It was a convenient stopover for him and he was already familiar with it because during his cattle trailing days they had often stopped close by with their herds to give them some time to graze for a few days and gain weight before continuing on to Dodge City. It also gave the cowboys a break with a chance for some downtime in town, such as it was.

It was at Camp Supply that he met the Douglas family. John loved children and would often spend some time talking, joking, and laughing with the local kids when he came into town. The Douglas girls were among those local kids and over time he developed a friendship with them. Eventually he met their mother Matilda and they also became friends. John already knew Tom Douglas and he also came to know his family.

## LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

Tom was a serious alcoholic and was seldom at home and when he was it was often not a pleasant time. John was a very different man than Tom Douglas. He didn't drink and was easy to be with. So it happened, over time, during his stopovers at Camp Supply, that John and Matilda developed feelings for one another. She wanted to divorce Tom and build a new life with John; but, he would have none of it. Whatever his feelings for her, or however much he liked the children, his personal ethics would not permit him to act on those feelings; so, they made do with being friends.

In 1890 Tom Douglas passed away and Matilda buried him in Woodward, Oklahoma Territory. After the funeral she caught the train with her two daughters and they rode it east where it stopped to let them off at the siding for the Quinlan cattle pens. There was a small community there with a livery stable and she rented a buggy and drove to the Quinlan ranch headquarters where ranch hand Perry Phillips would later recall going to find John Callaway to tell him there was a woman with two little girls who were there to see him.

As an old man Perry Phillips frequently spent his afternoons at the Woodward town square. On Saturdays, John's son, John William Callaway, would load his family in a wagon and they would go to town for supplies. Horses and wagons were parked on one end of the square and it was a gathering place for people to catch-up on the local news and gossip. On these Saturday afternoons Perry would often sit with John William's young daughter, Mona Lou, telling her stories and reminiscing about old times. He had known and worked with her grandfather, John, for years at the Quinlan ranch and he told her stories about him and often recounted for her the time that her grandmother, Tilley, came to the Quinlan ranch with her two little girls to see him.

Matilda Ann "Tilley" Crupper-Douglas was a widowed woman with two daughters and she was now free to pursue a life with John Callaway. Because he worked on a large ranch not suitable for family living, John secured a position for Tilley as a cook at the Cattle King Hotel in Dodge City, Kansas until he could make arrangements for them to get married and become a family. Matilda was pregnant with her third child when Tom died and Flora Mae Douglas was born in April of 1891 in Clark County Kansas. John took a job at the Claremont Land and Irrigation Company ranch in Kansas to be close to Tilley and the girls.

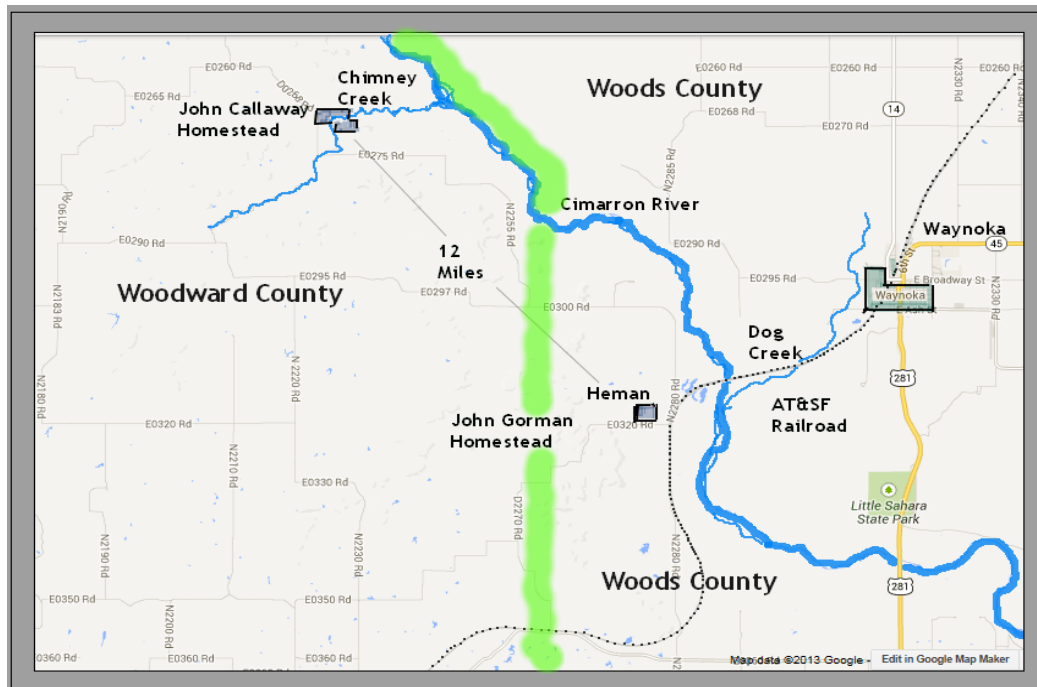
At the age of 35, John married Tilley on August 16, 1892 in Englewood, Clark County, Kansas. Because he had lived and worked in the outlet prior to it being opened for settlement in 1893, John was not eligible to make the run and stake a homestead claim until the following year; but, having worked for the Quinlan brothers in the Cherokee Outlet he was familiar with the land near the Cimarron River and thought that it would be a good area in which to settle.

In 1894 John brought his new family to Oklahoma Territory where they set up camp on Dog Creek on the east side of the Cimarron, just west of Waynoka, in what became Woods County, Oklahoma, in 1907 upon the granting of statehood. Tilley was pregnant with his son John William and the camp on Dog Creek was close to town. She and the girls lived there in two tents, one for cooking and one for sleeping, while John looked for a place to homestead and worked to build the family a permanent home.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

Map of Cimarron River Area at Waynoka



Chimney Creek, a tributary of the Cimarron, was marked then by a gypsum and red sandstone column named Chimney Rock near its mouth. It is located in a remote area about twelve miles northwest of Waynoka on the west side of the Cimarron River in what became Woodward County after statehood. The creek flows northeast into the Cimarron through a canyon flanked by trees, good grass for cattle, and soil that is suitable for farming. And, it was a reliable source of water in all but the driest times. During the time he worked in the Cherokee Outlet, a cattle trail ran along the creek and John was familiar with the area. He had traveled it often before settlement and could not get it out of his mind.

In 1894 John staked his homestead claim on Chimney Creek where he built a one room cedar log house. When it was ready, he moved his family from their tents on Dog Creek into their new home on Chimney Creek. He had constantly been on the move for 22 years and now he had a family and a place to call home. While he farmed and ranched his own place, he periodically worked on other ranches to make ends meet. He worked often for the Quinlan brothers who had purchased and leased land and operated a large new ranch headquartered a couple of miles southwest of his place. Over the years, he improved his home by adding a room connected by a hallway and he and his family lived on their Chimney Creek ranch for the next 17 years.



## LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

The land John had chosen for his home was some of the most remote and rugged land in the Oklahoma Territory. To the west of the Cimarron River's south bank, (the river runs north to south here) from the north at Freedom, Oklahoma to its eastern bend south of Waynoka, Oklahoma the erosion which formed the Cimarron valley had created a steep escarpment with a plateau topped by gypsum cap rock. On the low plain between the river and the plateau are a series of flat top buttes and mesas with valleys between them that open eastward toward the river.

The many buttes and mesas in the Cimarron valley plain are also capped with gypsum rock formations and their steep eroded sides often display horizontal layers of red sandstone, red clay, and white gypsum. Many of the valleys they form are watered with spring fed creeks and have an overlay of sandy loam that supports rich grasslands interspersed with trees, mostly cedar and mesquite. It was the valley watered by Chimney Creek that John chose for his home.

On the western plateau behind the escarpment, the ruggedness of the land continues. Known as the *Ragged Hills*, the landscape consists of a series of sometimes rolling and sometimes steep sided hills interspersed with large rolling plains that extend west for twenty or more miles.



Chimney Creek flowing west toward the Cimarron River

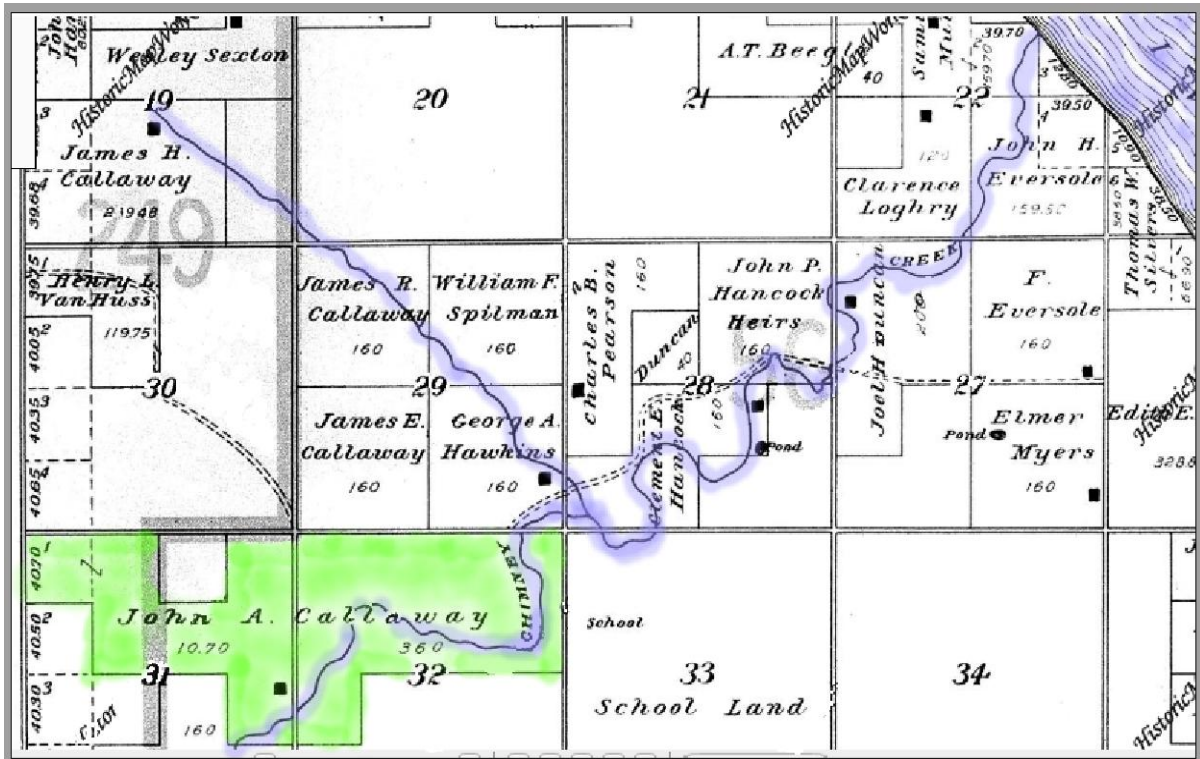


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In places, the land is cut by long, steep ravines that can run for miles and in other places depressions will sometimes contain spring fed watering holes. The area is covered with well watered grass lands that provide excellent forage for cattle. Much of this land went unsettled for years after the opening of the Cherokee Outlet and about 30,000 acres of it was leased from the government by the Quinlan Brothers Cattle Company for their ranching operation where John frequently worked as a cowboy and range rider.

Woodward County 1910 Property Plat Book



John A. Callaway Homestead on Chimney Creek:  
Township 25N, Range 17W, Sec 31-32

Because of the ruggedness and remoteness of the area, outlaws often traveled through, and sometimes hid out in, the remote ravines or canyons being careful to avoid the local population. One evening, when returning home from a day at the Quinlan ranch in a severe thunder storm, John found himself having a difficult time finding his ranch in the dark and rain. He assumed that he would be able to see the lights of the house to guide him, but there were none to see. He was finally able to get his bearings by sighting landmarks during lightning flashes and when he got to the house he was angry and barely in control of his temper. He relented and cooled down when Tilley told him that she was afraid to light lanterns because she was frightened and afraid that outlaws passing by would see the lights and come to the house seeking shelter.

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The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) had built tracks through this area in the 1880s and the Quinlan brothers built cattle loading pens next to a railroad siding to support their cattle operation. In addition to the Quinlan brothers, other cattlemen often used the loading pens and a flourishing community had sprung-up there, and with settlement of the Cherokee Outlet in high gear, the town of Quinlan was founded adjacent to the cattle pens in 1901, in what became Woodward County, Oklahoma after statehood in 1907.

In their home in this rugged land, John and Tilley prospered and during their life together three children were born to them: Mary Ann Callaway, born July 28, 1893, in Englewood, Clark County, Kansas; John William Callaway, born April 15, 1895, in Waynoka, Woods County, Oklahoma, while the family was living on Dog Creek; and Caroline Elizabeth Callaway was born November 29, 1896, in their home on Chimney Creek in Woodward County, Oklahoma. With his three step-daughters, Jennie, Lucy, and Flora Douglas, John had a family of six children.



**Water Hole in the Ragged Hills West of the Cimarron River**

Sometime after John and Tilley moved to Chimney Creek, John's younger brother George Dickerson Callaway moved his family from Gonzales County, Texas to the area nearby to be close to John. His place was west of the Cimarron and south of Belva in Woodward County, Oklahoma; and, on January 1, 1902, George's last child, George Dickerson Callaway, Jr., was born there.

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John's life with Tilley and their family was satisfying and happy. The land was productive and the cattle business provided a decent living. He was doing well, he loved his family, and he loved the land. He was content with his life and with the world. Time passed and for nine years, each year merged seamlessly into the next; but, the tranquility of his life would not last.

Callaway First Family Portrait



**Back Row:** Step daughters Flora, Lucy, and Jennie Douglas

**Front Row:** Mary Ann, John William, Tilley holding Caroline, and John Arnold Callaway

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

### THE SECOND FAMILY

1903 was an important year in the life of John Callaway. On May 28, his beloved wife Tilley passed away and was buried in the Waynoka Cemetery. John was devastated; but, he steeled himself against his grief and assumed the stoic demeanor he displayed all his life. On the frontier in the 1800's the cycle of life played out often, death was not a stranger, it was a constant companion, and people seldom lived into old age. Extended grief was a luxury few could afford, and the process of maintaining life had to take precedence.

John was alone with his children and the weight of his responsibilities was greater than ever. Life was hard; it was a day-light until dark affair filled with unending work. There were children to raise, stock to care for, land to till, and crops to harvest. His only reprieve was that his older step-children were able to assume the domestic work for the family and care for the younger children while John did the ranch work.

In September that year, as a member of the local school board, John assisted in hiring 30 year old Minnie Gorman as the teacher for the local school. Because he was a widower with six children in school, John and Minnie became well acquainted during the course of the year.

Minnie Gertrude Gorman was born February 13, 1873 in Fithian, Vermilion County, Illinois, one of four girls and one son born to John Brooks Gorman and America Jane Norton. In about 1899 or 1900, her father loaded the family into a covered wagon and moved them west to Indian Territory where they stayed with a relative in Newkirk, Kay County, Oklahoma until John Gorman found land for a home. He found the place he wanted and brought the family to Heman, Oklahoma Territory, west of the Cimarron River on March 5, 1901. After they arrived at Heman, Minnie and her sister, Nellie Gorman, went to live in Alva, Oklahoma Territory, so they could attend school to obtain teaching certificates for the lower eight grades.

John Callaway married his second wife, Minnie Gorman, on September 29, 1904 in Alva, Woods County, Oklahoma Territory. John was 47 and Minnie was 31 years of age when they married. After their marriage, Minnie moved into the home on Chimney Creek to help John raise his six children.

John and Minnie lived in the home on Chimney Creek for seven years and three of their six children were born there: James Gorman Callaway, was born August 13, 1905, Minnie Callaway, was born February 11, 1907, the same year Oklahoma became the 46th state of the union on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November. Fred Dickerson Callaway was born there on August 17, 1909.

Minnie's mother, America Jane (Norton) Gorman, died on April 3, 1909 and was buried in the Waynoka Cemetery. A couple of years later, in 1911 John and Minnie moved the family to her father, John Gorman's place at Heman, Woods County, Oklahoma, several miles southeast of Chimney Creek, to be near her aging father.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

## A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

The AT&SF named a local section house Heman for a local landmark, a butte called Mount Heman by the locals, which stood in the low plain close to the Cimarron River and was on John Gorman's property. A town was platted there but was never developed. The area was thereafter known as Heman.



When John moved to Heman, he sold his place at Chimney Creek to the McNeely family. During their time at Chimney Creek, Jean Ingelow McNeely was born there on August 12, 1914. She was born in the same house where Fred Callaway had been born 5 years earlier. Fred and Jean would be married on December 12, 1931 in Alva, Woods County, Oklahoma.

After arriving at Heman, John and his son John William, with the help of neighbors, constructed a house there at the edge of an embankment about three quarters of a mile west of the Cimarron River and about a quarter mile from the AT&SF Railroad which ran parallel to the river.

They dug a basement into the embankment with the back side opening toward the river and lined it with native stone. They then built a two-room frame house on top of the basement and anchored it



to the native stone walls of the basement with heavy wire. The front of the house opened west onto the plain facing away from the river toward the butte and the basement opened to a lower level behind the embankment. Upstairs, one room was John and Minnie's bedroom and the other room was a living area during the day and children's sleeping area at night. The basement had a large cast iron stove and was the kitchen and dining area.

The family continued to grow, and three more children were born at Heman: Nellie Luella Callaway, born March 28, 1911; Enid America Callaway, born April 10, 1913, and Arnold Lafayette Callaway, born May 15, 1917. The place at Heman remained the Callaway family's home for the next 19 years, until 1930.

Remains of Callaway Basement at Heman

John and his boys raised cattle and farmed at Heman and sometimes share cropped other farms for additional income. And, although money was in short supply, as it was in many rural families, they did not consider themselves poor or underprivileged. Theirs was a happy family and although short of material goods they were abundantly blessed with love for each other. John loved to tease the children, especially the girls, and at mealtime, there was always conversation, fun, and laughter. They worked hard and participated vigorously in the life of their community. When the occasion arose, and the community asked them, they were willing to step-up and assume leadership positions and served on numerous boards and committees.

## LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

### Callaway Second Family Portrait



**Back Row:** Minnie, James, Fred

**Front Row:** Nellie, John Arnold Callaway holding Arnold, Minnie, Enid

The farming and ranching community in which the family lived was populated by a diverse group of people and like most rural communities in the west they banded together to look out for each other and help their neighbors when the occasion arose. Their neighbors were John's brother George, the Quinlans, Graves, Kohlers, Drakes, and the Daltons among others. His friend Jim Dalton was a pall bearer for John Callaway when he died. The Callaways were good neighbors and they were held in high esteem by those who lived around them.

When John's son James was 16 he went to work for Marion Graves, a local rancher. James was an excellent hand and the two remained friends, and sometimes partners, for the rest of Marion's life. When Mr. Kohler became elderly, he quit farming and ranching and moved to town so John leased his place and he and James farmed it for several years where they batched together during the summer because of its distance from Heman. Later, James acquired the Kohler place for himself and farmed and ranched there for many years.

# LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

Again, time was moving on and the years slipped by. The children from John's first family were adults and were now gone and had families of their own. This was a time when extended families often occupied the same household and children cared for their parents as they aged. John was no longer young, and as he was becoming more elderly, his younger children were becoming adults. His sons James, Fred, and Arnold carried more of the farming and ranching work load. Minnie, Nell, and Enid helped their mother with domestic work. Everyone had chores to do that were based on their age and ability.

In 1929, at the age of 71, John helped his 20 year old son Fred acquire a piece of farm land on a lease purchase contract in the Texas panhandle outside of Dalhart, Texas. John Callaway had never learned to drive an automobile and in late summer of 1930 he decided to drive a wagon and team of horses to Dalhart and help Fred with his harvest. During the course of his trip to Texas he became ill and Fred had to bring him home.

By the time John arrived home he was very sick. It is unclear what happened to him. Some think he developed a gastro intestinal illness or had a heart attack, and some believe he developed pneumonia. Whatever his illness, shortly after returning home John Callaway died on October 17, 1930. He was 72 years and 11 months of age. He was interred in the Waynoka Cemetery beside his first wife Tilley, and now rests there between Tilley and his second wife, Minnie.

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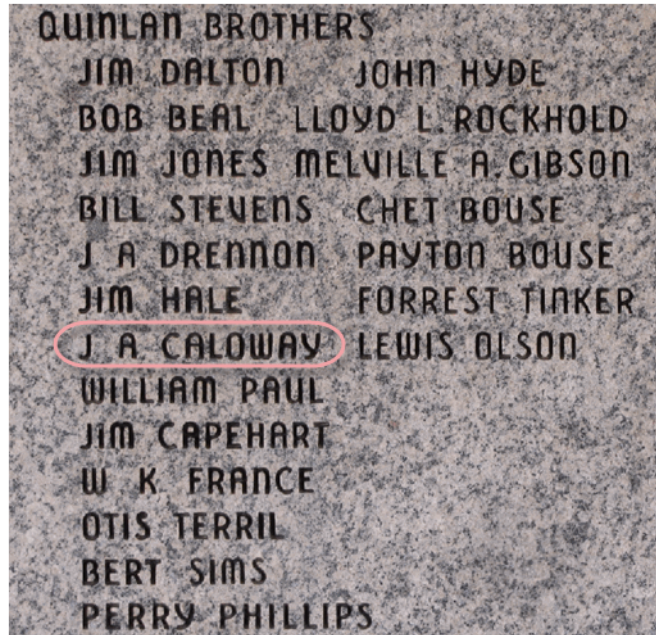
## EPILOGUE

John Callaway was not a large land owner nor was he a big rancher, and he certainly never became rich. He was a father, a family-man, a pioneer, a frontiersman, and a cowboy who helped settle a wild land. He did the dangerous, hard, and dirty work that needed to be done. He was one of those men whose bravery, grit, and fortitude made the cattle drives and ranches of the nineteenth century possible. He was one of those mostly nameless, faceless men who lived during the classic age of the old west; now a celebrated time in American History.

In his obituary that appeared in the Woods County Enterprise, published in Waynoka the week after he passed away, John Arnold Callaway was lauded as a pillar of the local community. He was mourned by his family and many friends and neighbors. He is remembered for his pioneering role in early Oklahoma Territory with his name engraved on "The Cimarron Cowboys Monument", a fifteen foot long red granite stone memorial on the banks of the Cimarron River in Freedom, Oklahoma commemorating the old cowhands that helped settle the Cherokee Outlet in northwest Oklahoma.



John Arnold Callaway



Old Cowhands Monument  
Freedom, Oklahoma



# LIFE OF A COWBOY

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN ARNOLD CALLAWAY 1857-1930

## *John Arnold Callaway Family Pedigree*

<i>Peter Callaway</i>	<i>Before 1640</i>	<i>Emigrated from England</i>
<i>John Callaway</i>	<i>Born 1685</i>	<i>Somerset County Maryland</i>
<i>Edward Callaway</i>	<i>Born 1711</i>	<i>Somerset County Maryland</i>
<i>Isaac Callaway</i>	<i>Born 1750</i>	<i>Somerset County Maryland</i>
<i>David Callaway</i>	<i>Born 1779</i>	<i>North Carolina</i>

### *James Wilson Callaway*

*Born 1816*                      *Franklin County, Georgia*  
*Died 1874*                      *De Witt County, Texas*

## **John Arnold Callaway**

*Born Nov 15, 1857* *Crockett,*  
*Houston County, Texas*

*Died Oct 17, 1930* *Waynoka,*  
*Woods County, Oklahoma*

### *Children:*

*Mary Ann Callaway*

*John William Callaway*

*Caroline Elizabeth Callaway*

*James Gorman Callaway*

*Minnie Callaway*

*Fred Dickerson Callaway*

*Nellie Luella Callaway*

*Enid America Callaway*

*Arnold Lafayette Callaway*

Note: For a complete genealogy of the Peter Callaway family, go to the Callaway Family web site which will link you to the family genealogy that is hosted on Web Roots.