The story of the cattle drive starts in Texas. Longhorns sold for about four dollars a head. But in Chicago, people were willing to pay forty dollars per head because Chicago was the center of the meatpacking industry. The best way to get the cattle from Texas to Chicago was to ship them by train; however, there were no railroads in Texas yet.

Joseph McCoy bought some land in Kansas in a town called Abilene and built a stockyard, an area for holding livestock closed off with a fence. This let cattlemen drive their cattle to Abilene and load them onto railcars. The trip from Texas to Abilene was called the long drive. More than six million cattle were taken during the late 1800's. It took at least three months to complete. The process of marking cattle is known as branding. A sudden rush of animals is called a stampede.

There were three trails that ran through Indian Territory were:
   1)Shawnee Trail
   2)Chisholm Trail
   3)Great Western Trail
The Shawnee Trail was used the most before McCoy built his stockyard. It had good grass for the cows to eat. It crossed land that belonged to the Five Tribes. Sometimes the Indians wanted a few cattle. It also crossed land where outlaws hid. After McCoy build his stockyard, cowboys started using the Chisholm Trail because it was more direct. It was flatter and the rivers were not as deep. The shortest and fastest way was using the Great Western Trail. But water along the trail was not very good and made the cows sick. Some longhorns had ticks on them that spread to other rancher's cattle causing a disease called Texas Tick Fever.

There were names for the four jobs for the cowboys: They were the

   1) trail boss
   2) drover
   3) biscuit shooter
   4) Little Mary

The person who was in charge was the trail boss. He made all of the decisions. This drover's job was to keep the cattle together and move them where they were supposed to go. The biscuit shooter was in charge of all the cooking, settling fights, and doctoring the cowboys if they got hurt. The Little Mary was a young boy who helped the cook and who washed the dishes and gathered firewood.

The first cross country, or transcontinental, railroad opened in 1869. You could travel from New York City to San Francisco. This caused the cattle drive to come to an end. Workers took two years to build tracks across the territory. The first railroad was called MKT. It was short for the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad. The railroad brought new people and new businesses to the land that would become Oklahoma. Trains carried lumber, cattle, and grain to other parts of the country. The Panhandle was called "No Man's Land". It was a hiding place with no rules or laws. It was the perfect place for outlaws to hide.

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