

## *Introducing 2012 Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame Inductee...*

### **Sam McDowell 1887-1959**

Sam McDowell was born in Anson, Texas, and he and his siblings grew up around Paducah, Texas. Mabry, Aubry, Marion and Snyder were brothers, Ethel- his twin sister. Sam was always interested in cattle and quit school at the age of fourteen and went to work for the Matador Land and Cattle Company in Texas. In 1909, he and his cousin, John McDowell, caught a train for Sheridan, Wyoming. Soon after arriving in Sheridan, Sam got a job breaking horses and punching cows for the Kendrick Cattle Company at the OW Ranch on Hanging Woman Creek. Then he worked awhile for the Willis Spear outfit in southern Montana. After that, he homesteaded on Sarpy Creek, east of Hardin thus acquiring the name of "Sarpy Sam". Homesteading was not much to Sam's liking: so after a year, he sold out and went to work again for Willis Spear who was running a roundup wagon north of the Wyoming line in Montana. He then worked for the Antler Cattle Company, a large cow outfit on the Crow Reservation which was owned and operated by Frank M. Heinrich. At that time, Heinrich's holdings extended from the Yellowstone River to the Big Horn River and from the Pryor Mountains nearly to Hardin. Thousands of Antler cattle grazed this vast area from just after the turn of the century until Frank's death in 1928. Sarpy Sam worked for Frank Heinrich as wagon boss for many of those years. Sam was a well-respected cowboy and noted as a good roper at the brandings. Sam was never seen without wearing his necktie, whatever he was doing. In 1916 Sam married Carrie Kellison. They had three daughters, Barbara, OraJean, and Corinna. They purchased the Kellison ranch on Pryor Creek, but due to hard times had to soon sell. They later moved to Big Timber, and he helped Leo Cramer put on his first rodeo. A couple of years later they returned to Hardin and in 1926 Sam again worked for Frank Heinrich. They moved to the Dryhead Ranch, which had been purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Phelps. The Dryhead Ranch was located on Dryhead Creek at the foot of the Pryor Mountains about 75 miles west of Hardin. They moved back to Hardin, but returned in 1931 to the Dryhead, which was now leased by E. L. Dana; Harvey Willcutt was the superintendent at the time. Later the family was again in Hardin and Sam worked for the county assessor's office for a time, but also served as Undersheriff for Big Horn County and the family lived at the jail. He was also appointed Chief-of-Police. Sam entered politics and ran for Sheriff, but did not win. In 1940, 'Sarp' went to work for P.R. Krone, who ranched in the Soap Creek area, out of St. Xavier. In 1942 he became foreman for the Faddis-Kennedy Cattle Company and moved to the SU Ranch in the Wolf Mountains, southeast of Lodge Grass. In 1950, he was appointed Special Investigator and Range Detective for Montana on assignment in Roosevelt County. When this terminated a year later, he returned to Lodge Grass and became a stock inspector for Big Horn County. They lived at Spear Siding then. He belonged to Farm Bureau in Lodge Grass and was vice president of that organization at the time of his death in 1959.