

*"I think my life was completely turned around because of the experience. I became interested in needy people, people who had been deprived of many things in their life because of war, and became very negative toward warfare and its effects on people and the world. As a result of that, I got more interested in doing work for our church and became a missionary in Nigeria in West Africa, then became a mission administrator. I think this all began because I became a Cowboy and went to Europe in my college years."*

*—Roger Ingold, Seagoing Cowboy*



## HEIFER FOUNDATION COWBOY ENDOWMENT



## HEIFER FOUNDATION COWBOY ENDOWMENT

By sea, land and air, “Cowboys” played an integral role in the early successes of a burgeoning organization that was then known as Heifer Project.

Spurred by founder Dan West’s idea to “send a cow, not a cup,” Heifer Project (now Heifer International), which at the time was a program of the Church of the Brethren Service Committee (BSC), began accepting donations of heifers



from all across the Mid-West as World War II came to an end. When the war ended, Heifer found itself in the precarious position of having a surplus of cattle ready to send to war-torn regions of Europe, but no ships to transport the life-sustaining cargo.

The BSC forged a fortuitous partnership with the recently formed United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which had ships yet lacked manpower for transporting

livestock. The BSC agreed to provide the cattle attendants for UNRRA’s shipments, and UNRRA agreed to provide free shipping



space for the Heifer Project cattle. From 1945 to 1947, thousands of Seagoing Cowboys traveled to countries that had been utterly devastated by the war. The Cowboys delivered heifers as well as horses, bulls, chickens, rabbits, sheep and goats to countries such as Poland, Italy, Greece and many more. Their efforts helped return the livelihood and dignity to people scarred by the violence and poverty of war.

In celebration of the Cowboys’ commitment to helping those less fortunate, funds from the **Heifer Foundation Cowboy Endowment** will be utilized by Heifer International in project areas where they are most needed.

Family, friends and those inspired by the Cowboys’ story can now make gifts in honor and in memory of the Heifer Cowboys.



### FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE

The Cowboys were a diverse mix of ages, races and religions that represented a cross section of American life. There were farmers, preachers, teachers, doctors, plumbers, students, veterans, carpenters and others that shared in this unique experience. Many of the individuals who served as Cowboys had never traveled outside of the country. For them it was a series of firsts – their first ship ride, their first train ride, their first time interacting with foreigners, and their first exposure to abject poverty and the ravages of war.

After the UNRRA partnership ended, the Heifer Project continued and Cowgirls were also recruited as the mission spread to the air where smaller shipments were transported by planes to Asia, Africa, South America and Europe. There were even Cowboys that never left the country, yet served the important role of driving the trucks that rounded up all the donated livestock that was then taken to seaports and airports for shipment.

### COWBOYS’ LEGACY LIVES ON

While the Cowboys were eventually phased out as Heifer International began purchasing high-quality livestock from regions surrounding the projects, their legacy is undoubtedly one of the bedrocks of the organization. The Cowboys were given an opportunity for not only adventure, but also the chance to encounter new cultures and interact with victims of war – an experience that forever altered

the course of many Cowboys’ lives. A large number of the Cowboys were conscientious objectors, with the experience galvanizing their lifelong dedication to peace and justice.

Witnessing the devastation of war and seeing first-hand the poverty of war victims influenced many of the Cowboys’ career paths. They went on to become teachers, ministers, social workers, missionaries and nonprofit professionals working to end hunger and poverty. Their days on the sea, on the road, and in the air may have ended, but the dedication to helping those less fortunate remained.

*“There is no doubt in my mind that the cattle boat experiences dramatically changed my outlook on life and led me to spending my entire career working with people in the hope of making the world a better place than the World War II world that I lived through during my teen years.”*

*–Joseph M. Long, Seagoing Cowboy*

**For more information on the Heifer Foundation Cowboy Endowment, please contact us at [info@heiferfoundation.org](mailto:info@heiferfoundation.org) or call 888.422.1161. To donate online, please visit [www.heiferfoundation.org/CowboyEndowment](http://www.heiferfoundation.org/CowboyEndowment)**



All photos courtesy of Peggy Reiff Miller