

## Cow Thieves & Outlaws Reunion

Frank Phillips was fascinated by the “Old West” and wanted to preserve the history of the Cowboy and the Outlaw. Frank devised his own special way to salute the old-time outlaws as well as the cowhands and the Indians of the Osage. Starting in 1927, he hosted an annual party for them at the Woolaroc Ranch. He organized the hard core regulars (genuine cowboys and tough guys from the area) into an association and summoned them to the Ranch each year. He called these annual blowouts the “Cow Thieves & Outlaws Reunion.” Nothing before or since ever quite compared!

Frank assembled a team of associates to help him plan his party.....Pawnee Bill who had helped stage Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, the Miller brothers from the 101 Ranch along with Frank's own ranch manager, Grif Graham who was the former sheriff from the area. His party intended to salute the survivors from the territorial days “when men were men and women were respected.”

The party consisted of cowboys, Indians, outlaws, ranchers and area businessmen. The Reunion was a colorful affair attended by a variety of locals – old trail riders, horse traders, US Marshalls and a sprinkling of Frank's personal guests, including Phillips Petroleum directors and other businessmen whom he was trying to impress.

Frank's ground rules for the party were quite simple.....any wanted outlaws would be granted a day of grace for the reunion. If there was an outstanding warrant, the law officers in attendance would have to wait for another time and place to serve their papers. Second and last rule: all guns and grudges had to be left at the main gate.

Now, let's fast forward to 2006.....the wonderful party that had such a rich history had grown tired and had lost its once famous “allure”. Rather than to let such a wonderful event simply fade away, eight people who loved Woolaroc formed a committee and were determined to put this party “back on the map again”.....and to say they were successful would be an understatement. Today, the party is trumpeted as “the best in the State of Oklahoma” and anyone who has attended would be the first to agree with that statement! The party is held on the same grounds as Uncle Frank's first one in 1927 and it very often is able to conjure up some of the spirit and characters of years long passed. A crowd of 750-900 people gather for an evening of great food, entertainment, art to buy and true Old West friendship. Uncle Frank would be pleased!

Because of the great success of this party since 2006, Woolaroc has been able to complete the following improvements:

- Restoration of the historic Lodge home

- Renovation of the Museum
- Creation of the Children's Playground
- Renovation and improvements to the Heritage Theater
- Improvements to the facilities at Clyde Lake
- Creation of the very special "Walking Trails" at Woolaroc

Cow Thieves & Outlaws Reunion has a very rich history at Woolaroc.....a history that you can still be a part of each Fall.