Pincher Creek, June 15, 1991. The bizarre humor of Montana poet Skinny Rowland proves too much for session host Bryn Thiessen of Sundre, Alberta. Thiessen himself has been known to crack up a few listeners himself.

I'm often asked just why I quit
My wagon drivin' years
In the famous race invented by
Our rangeland pioneers.

Well, I've seen a lot of races run
With broken tongues and traces
But a race with minus one front wheel
Is the spookiest of cases.

I bust this wheel on the figure eight
Just before I hit the track
But the teams lined out to grab the rail
And never once looked back.

As we pulled into the back stretch
I chanced to look around
And there that wheel was rollin' yet
In fact was gainin' ground.

So, to cut this woeful story short,
When we hit the finish line
Guess what beat us by a length?
That busted wheel of mine.

Yes, that broke my heart for racin'
I never smiled again.
But at Xmas time, for you and yours
Our kindest thoughts remain.
A fine example of the Christmas cards sent by chuckwagon champion Dick Cosgrave (1912-1970) and his wife. The caricature is by Calgary artist Stew Cameron, whose cartoons defined the cultural aspect of the Calgary Stampede for many years; he was also known for his political cartoons, especially his satires of Social Credit premier William Aberhart.
Poets Gord Colliar, manager of the AD Ranch, Longview, Alberta, and Denis Nagel, veterinarian, Crossfield, Alberta, listen intently to a colleague reading at the Calgary Stampede, 1990.

Young and old at Pincher Creek, 1991. Robert I. Strader, of Brooks, Alberta (L), has written poetry for years; he published a volume, *TWISTING TRAILS OF MEMORY*, in 1979. At his right is his fellow Albertan, Fred Miller, of Condor, who gave his first reading at the Gathering on this occasion.

Lloyd Dolen, an elder statesman on the Cowboy Poetry scene, found a youthful audience at the Calgary Stampede in 1991.
Glenn D. McKenzie of Medicine Hat, President of the Alberta Cowboy Poetry Association, recites at the O'Keefe Ranch, 1991. The heavy canvas overcoat, known as a "duster," has become a popular item of western wear since it has been featured in several movies.


The presence of women is increasingly important in Cowboy Poetry. Wendy Vaughan of Crossfield, Alberta, chairs a woman's poetry session at Pincher Creek.
Ben and Sharmon Crane sing at O'Keefe Ranch. Music is featured at all Gatherings, and Ben, a commercial artist and songwriter, is noted among cowboy poets for his skill on several instruments. Glen Rafuse waits his turn behind them. The stage is a portable trailer loaned from the Calgary Stampede; it comes with the barn motif prepainted.

Just as you can expect to hear music at Cowboy Poetry Gatherings, you can expect them to end with a dance. Saturday night at Pincher Creek, 1991.