

Joy:

Hello, everyone. Welcome to The Stories We Tell, a production of Collier County Museums. Today, we are talking about cattle ranching in south west Florida. We're pleased to be joined by our very own Theresa Schober, manager of the Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch, and Clint Raulerson, a fifth generation cattle rancher, manager of several local ranches that consist of over 20,000 acres of ranch land, and thousands of head of cattle, and is also the District 5 representative for the Florida Cattlemen's Association Executive Committee. We're happy to have you, so welcome, Theresa and Clint.

Clint Raulerson:

Thank you for having me.

Theresa Schober:

Thank you.

Joy:

All right, you're welcome. We can jump right into this, and let's start with the history of cattle ranching in this area.

Clint Raulerson:

Well, Florida in general, Ponce de Leon brought cattle here in 1521. Everybody thinks that Texas is where the cowboy originated but actually, your first cattlemen were right here, in our state. We've built a strong tradition in the cattle industry over that time, and still is pretty good today. It's a little smaller than it has been in the past, but it's still a thriving industry.

Theresa Schober:

Well, and I'll just add a little history to that. We know that the first cattle came to Florida in 1521, as well as the first hogs and horses. A settlement attempt, an attempt at a European colony, occurred right near the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River, near the bridge over to Sanibel Island, in Lee County. And that settlement did not last. So, exactly what happened to those cattle is hard to say, but the Spanish expeditions that were coming to Florida in the 1500s brought more and more and more cattle, hogs, horses to Florida to support growing colonies. And by 1600, there were 20,000 branded head of cattle and the industry was already well under way, with many ranches stretched across northern Florida. And the cattle herds were already sustaining those early colonies.

Joy:

Okay. So, the Spanish brought some early cattle here, but how did the pioneers, or what we consider pioneers, how did they get into actual cattle ranching?

Clint Raulerson:

Well, the Seminole Indians, as well as the Calusa Indians, I believe. They gathered cattle and used the cattle. They were some of our first cowboys here, and built their herds. And then Theresa can give you a little bit more on when the settlers came in and started doing more of that.

Theresa Schober:

Yeah. Florida has had many flags fly overhead. While it was initially Spanish territory, it later became British territory, Spanish again, before the US took over it as a territory in 1821, and then it became a state in 1845. And in all of that time, pretty much everyone who was here was using cattle as a means of supporting early settlements. What we think of as American pioneers came down predominantly after the Civil War. People were looking for additional land to graze cattle. By this time, the Seminole Wars had already come and gone, and so the Seminole who were in Florida had retreated down into south Florida. And when cattle ranchers, or families looking for land, came further south into Florida, pretty much where we are today, in and around Immokalee, they were relying on the Seminole both in terms of skilled cattlemen, but also as trading partners for the different kinds of products that were here.

Theresa Schober:

Because people who were coming were not major ranchers. They were people who were sustaining their own families and producing just enough extra that they would be able to trade for or buy whatever else they might need that they couldn't grow themselves or make themselves. And so the initial industry started as really a means of supporting all settlements. And then by the time what we think of as the early pioneer period, post Civil War, it was really a way to support families. And it regrew into a much bigger enterprise from there.

Clint Raulerson:

Yes. Just with my family, my family came here after the Civil War. They came into Florida, down to the central part of the state. My grandfather's grandfather ran about 15,000 head of cattle himself in the middle part of the state, from Polk County across to what's now Osceola County. And from there, they built relationships with the Indian tribe. It was really a necessity, and really essential that they built those relationships for bartering, trading, and making their way in the state.

Clint Raulerson:

From there, my family came south. My grandfather came south from the Basinger area in about 1930, and built a relationship with the tribe then. And so the Seminole tribe has a lot to do with my family's history, as well as a lot of these families in south west Florida, the old pioneer families, the Roberts families, the Brown families, the Raulersons. And there's many more that I'll forget. But it was really important that they had these relationships. The Seminoles had trading posts, and they could go there and trade goods. And they also just had that way to get along. And from there, that's where my grandfather went into a lot of work with them.

Theresa Schober:

I think interreliance is a good word to use. One of the other things that's key about this time period is that there wasn't yet roads to south Florida. There wasn't rail lines to south Florida. And so in order to move cattle from one place to another, they were driven overland, many to Fort Myers, right down what's called First Street in Fort Myers, down McGregor Boulevard to the Punta Rassa, which is the base of the bridge to Sanibel Island. And then they were barged, some up north, to get on the rail lines. But then many down to Cuba, and so it was an international industry. And it stayed that way, really, and still is today, much more so.

Clint Raulerson:

Yes. We traded internationally at that point. And here, just lately we've reopened some international lines to trade beef with Japan and China and these other countries that are really important to our industry.

Joy:

Wow. I do want to get into the scope of ranching in modern day, but I want to back up just a little bit. We talked about the early pioneers coming here. Were they bringing their own heads of cattle with them when they settled here? Or, we know the term of Scrub cattle. Was that something that they started cultivating? How did that work out?

Clint Raulerson:

A lot of the original cattle had kind of morphed into this wild herd, and were scattered around the state. And they would pick them up here and there. Most of them did not bring cattle with them. They built herds from what was already here, and that's the Scrub cattle or the Cracker cow. And from there, they went on. Theresa might be able to take a little bit more of that.

Theresa Schober:

Well, and I would only add to that that the industry really flourished more so with the largest herds of cattle further north than where we are today. Really, across the northern part of the state of Florida because there is better ... Not better ranch land, but less swampy land, a wider part of the state. And certainly the Indigenous people initially, but then the Spanish colonies, were also being supported by corn agriculture. So, a lot more grain up there as well. But these wilder herds of cattle not being contained within a particular ranch or settlement were spread through the middle of the state. For example, the Roberts family did bring a few head down with them when they moved, but they moved from about an hour north of where we are. So, people had herds, or smaller herds, and then developed them from there. But many of those wild cattle were a little further north than where we are.

Clint Raulerson:

Yeah. A lot of, actually, the big, metropolitan areas that are there now were some of the best ranch land, the best cow land, in the state. The Orlando area was all big-time ranch land. There was a lot of cattle in that area. And we know what it is today. But Jacksonville, Gainesville, those areas were all really big cattle industry areas.

Joy:

I do want to expound a little bit on the Seminole tribe, and their role in cattle ranching. And really helping, particularly helping the early pioneers in cattle ranching. And then we'll take that conversation and roll it into modern-day ranching, because they play a major role in modern cattle.

Theresa Schober:

Well, I wish you would have invited a tribal member to come and speak on their own behalf.

Joy:

Well, I don't want you to speak to the full tribal operations. More so of what we know that doesn't get talked about is their role in helping these early pioneers. Clint sort of started that conversation, but just expounding on that a little bit.

Clint Raulerson:

Well as far as the Seminoles, they've had cattle since way in 1521, basically. Because when they chased them out of here, then they kept the cattle. And they built those herds. But I honestly can't really speak, because I don't want to speak out of turn on some of that stuff, because some of that stuff is spiritual. And it's very important to my friends in the Seminole tribe, which I wouldn't go out ... I can speak a little more to their modern stuff. But their early stuff, I wouldn't want to speak out of turn.

Theresa Schober:

And I'll only speak a little bit as well, for some of those same reasons. But recently, Clint and Joe Frank, on the Board of Directors of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, came to Roberts Ranch. And we met with an associate editor of a publication called Florida Sun. And it was fascinating even for me ... While I don't consider myself to be a historian, I have a fair background in some of the history of this state. And I was just in awe of listening to Joe Frank tell the Seminole story of cattle ranching in Florida.

Theresa Schober:

And my recollection from that conversation, or a couple of my recollections, is really when these first ranches or cattle herds were being brought up into the northern part of the state and sustained, these early settlements were mission sites for Indigenous people in Florida, and also, in some cases, Spanish forts. And both of those populations were being sustained by the cattle. But the Indigenous people who were living there ... Because cattle are not native to Florida. It was a new kind of animal husbandry that had to be learned. And as most people are aware, in those Early Contact Era situations, in the 1500s, 1600s, and even into the 1700s, large percentages of Native American populations ultimately were decimated by introduced diseases, the increased hostility and warfare, changes in social practices, changes in economic relationships. And in order to maintain these herds, then, it was important for these early communities to bring in additional Indigenous peoples to take care of these herds.

Theresa Schober:

And that's really where the ancestors of some of the Seminole come into Florida, really to assist in some of these major cattle operations that are intended to sustain these early settlements in Florida. And so the knowledge base may not have been a cultural tradition of distant ancestors, but certainly they became specialists in cattle herds from very early on in Florida's history. And before the pioneer era, when people are moving down into Florida, the Seminole would have had a long trajectory, in particular of maintaining cattle herds in what we now know as the state of Florida.

Theresa Schober:

But as the Seminole Wars come about, and there is an interest in the government obtaining land to sell and to create new settlements in the American period, a lot of Indigenous people were already displaced, but the Seminole also get displaced. And so it's not a continuous pattern of cattle ranching. There is periods of time when they're more directly involved, or their ancestors more directly involved, and then other periods of time when they're less involved because of American government policy to attempt to physically relocate, to congregate Seminole in less advantageous land that doesn't support cattle herds. And so it's a very complicated history, and a resurgence later on. But the skillset was still there.

Clint Raulerson:

Some of the best cowboys that I know come from the Seminole tribe. I have a young man that works for me now. He's outstanding. But there's been a long line of them. They'll just keep coming.

Joy:

And I guess I was looking for that hand-in-hand relationship.

Clint Raulerson:

Yeah. I understand.

Joy:

That it happened, and it's still happening.

Clint Raulerson:

Yes.

Joy:

I do want to talk about now, cattle ranching. Modern-day cattle ranching in this area, and the scope of it. And what's happening now?

Clint Raulerson:

Well, we are being encroached every day by urban sprawl, and government buy-in of land. We are battling environmental issues all the time. We kind of get painted with a dark marker, or however you want to put it. But we are still stewards of the land. We care for the land. It's imperative that we take care of the land, because the land takes care of us. We are directly connected to the land. Our water, our land and our grasses, they are what build our livelihood every day. So, it's imperative we take care of that.

Clint Raulerson:

But cattle ranching today is still a thriving industry, on a smaller scale than what it has been in the past. At one time, Florida was the number two cattle producer in the nation. We've dropped to about 13 now, but we are still home to seven of the 25 largest cattle ranches in the nation as far as numbers of head go. Florida is a cow-calf state, meaning we rear calves. We breed cattle, they rear their calves until about six to 700 pounds. We put them on trucks, and we sent them out west to finish, and then they go from there.

Clint Raulerson:

But just in Collier County itself, Immokalee Ranch, which is owned by the Collier company, is still in the top 25 largest cattle ranches in the country as far as numbers of cattle go. And there are a lot of other small ranches. I work for two ranches here in the county, one being the Half Circle L Ranch, which was established in 1942, and then I also work for JB Ranch. JB Ranch has a lot of history for me and my family, because my grandfather came to work there in the late 1920s, for Mr [John Price 00:16:33]. And now, almost 100 years later, I am fortunate enough to work on the same ranch and ride the same land that my grandfather did, for John Price's granddaughter.

Theresa Schober:

I think that's a really great segue to the conversation about how ... I mean, you were talking about this interreliance, Joy, between different cultures and populations that are living in Florida. But there's also these incredibly rich, strong family connections and traditions. And they go back generations and generations. And the Roberts Ranch was the same way. That is, a family that many of the kids of the kids of the Roberts are still involved in cattle ranching today in various capacities. And it's almost like it's in your all's blood, and that it's going to stay there generation after generation. And it's really a family enterprise, or a family-based industry.

Clint Raulerson:

It's our heritage. And through the Florida Cattlemen's Association this year, our President, his key word, however you want to put it, but his platform this year is Share Your Heritage. And that's been a big thing for us all year with social media and things like that, is to share our heritage. Because in the past, cattle ranchers have been very closed. They didn't allow people to see what they were doing. They just went to work every day. They weren't worried about someone paying attention to what they were doing for a living, or how they did it, or anything like that. It was just the way you made a living. Well, in the day and time that we're in and the issues that we deal with, we want to share what we do. We want to share what we do with the outside world. We want people to see that we're doing good things. We want to show them our industry and our heritage. If you'll notice on my social media, everything I do says #ShareYourHeritage. You'll see that a lot through the cattlemen in the state now with social media. Social media has been a great way for us to broadcast what we do, and show the world. Everybody loves a cowboy.

Theresa Schober:

They just don't know they're here in Florida.

Joy:

Well you know what? That's funny, because my next question was going to be about the idea of a cattle rancher or a cowboy, and what that looks like for a lot of people. You see hats, riding horses. Is that what a Florida cowman does? Or is that a stereotype?

Clint Raulerson:

It's what we did 100 years ago. Still the best way to handle cattle and do things where we do them in the kind of environment and the conditions that we do them in, no matter where you're at around the country, still the best way to handle a cow and do your job efficiently and humanely and the right way is on a horse. And we still do it on a horse. I ride a horse every day. Matter of fact, I rode a horse til about noon today. That's why I was late getting here. But it is what we do, and it's a proud tradition.

Clint Raulerson:

There are some of us that are a little bit more traditional than others. Some people use motorized vehicles and things like that, and get the same job done. But I'm a little bit more traditional, which most of the people I know are. And we still like being cowboys. I'm going to wear a hat every day and a pair of boots. And a lot of things have come into our world, just the cellphone and computers, and our vehicles are upgraded almost every year to make our world easier.

Clint Raulerson:

I look back at my grandfather and the men of his era and how hard they worked. And even my dad. Watched my dad work his fingers to the bones, providing for us, doing the same thing that I do today. It's a lot easier for me today. I don't have to get up and ride my horse 10 miles to get to the other end of the ranch and get a job done. I can load him on a trailer and take him part way, and then cut down on my trip. Which, I do. But then some days you get up and I feel like I want to do like they did, so I'll saddle up and make the big trip.

Clint Raulerson:

But yes, we are still cowboys. It's in your blood. I knew what I was going to be when I was a little boy. When other kids wanted to be firemen and policemen, and their mothers and fathers wanted them to be lawyers and doctors, there was never a choice. Or, never a question about what I was going to be.

Theresa Schober:

I think you reminded me of two different things. One is that I think there is a Hollywood vision of what an American cowboy is. That while it's men and/or women on horseback handling herds, but it also tends to be an image of a Euro-American cowboy on that horse. And from our earlier conversations, cattle came over with the Spanish, but the Indigenous people in Florida, Indigenous people that moved to Florida, African Americans, essentially anyone who has needed to participate or was early in Florida ... I said that horribly. Anybody who was here in Florida was participating in the cattle industry. And so what a cowboy actually is is an incredibly diverse set of skills among almost every culture that has been in the state of Florida.

Clint Raulerson:

Absolutely. No doubt about it. We have African American cowboys, Seminole Indian cowboys, Mexican cowboys. I have two guys that work for me that are from Guatemala, and they help us in the work on the ranch. And they're good little cowboys. They're my guys. I think the world of them. I think you're right about that.

Theresa Schober:

The other thing that you said was that you're more traditional, but I have a photograph of you sitting on a horse, doing your cowboy thing, looking at your cellphone.

Clint Raulerson:

You can find me on my cellphone quite a bit.

Theresa Schober:

But you've also mentioned, getting back to how the cattle industry operates today, that you've seen in your lifetime some major changes in how information about how cattle herds are presented to the world. And that now there's a lot of satellite television, and that people can buy herds from ... Not herds. People can buy-

Clint Raulerson:

You can buy herds.

Theresa Schober:

Stock from almost anywhere, watching a video screen instead of actually having to go to an auction house to get cattle.

Clint Raulerson:

It's funny you said that. I, in the last week, have been at two bull sales. And a friend of mine in Florida, I called him and said, "Hey, you interested in any bulls?" He said, "I'm buying them now." And he was online, buying them online. You can see the auction online and he was bidding right there. And all of our cattle are marketed on satellite television across the country. I actually sent one load of cattle to Turkey. These cattle left here, went to Ohio to a quarantine area, and they then got on a barge and went to Turkey. I was really glad that the Turkish people liked American beef.

Clint Raulerson:

But we do. It's the marketing of cattle, the moving of cattle, everything has changed. I can pick up a phone right now ... And our networking has changed immensely. I can promise you that my dad didn't really know, when he was a young man ... As he got older, of course, he did. But when he was young, he knew people in Collier County and Hendry County, and maybe over at Okeechobee. Whereas now, I can pick up a phone and call a friend of mine in Oregon that's one of the largest cattle ranchers in Oregon, and actually one of the largest cattle ranchers in the country. Or, California, New Mexico and Arizona. That networking of our modern technology has really changed the cattle industry.

Clint Raulerson:

Last year, made a call, we brought some cattle in through a research program. And these cattle came out of southern Arizona. And I made a call, got them shipped to Texas to a friend of mine's house, drove out there and picked them up, and got them back here. So, yeah. The modern technology has helped us a lot. But, yeah. And you will find me on my phone a lot, because I do that whole social media thing. I do live Facebook feeds and all this stuff from my horse, and people seem to enjoy it. As long as they do, I'll keep doing it.

Joy:

From your horse.

Clint Raulerson:

From my horse, I do that. Absolutely.

Joy:

Well, I guess I'll ask about modernization. I mean, I know that in a lot of ways, modernization is great. It has its wonderful advantages.

Clint Raulerson:

Absolutely.

Joy:

But are there some things that you don't modernize, or you're still doing it the same way it's always been done? Or are there some things that have been modernized that you wish were still done the way it used to be done?

Theresa Schober:

What about branding?

Clint Raulerson:

Branding. Well, we've modernized that. We're using electric brands now. We still do use a firebrand, but now we are using an electric brand in some places, in instances where you have a generator or electric power. But yes, we still use a firebrand from time to time.

Theresa Schober:

I think some people might be surprised that cattle are still branded, thinking that ear tags or digital media would overcome that stamp.

Clint Raulerson:

Nowadays, we are really working on something across the country now that is traceability. And it's going to make things a lot better in our industry, a lot of us think. We want to be able to trace a cow that is at a processing plant in the Midwest. We want to be able to track her all the way back to her producer. And we're working on ways to do that through electronic tagging and some computer systems, stuff like that. But we still do, as far as our local identification, cattle are branded on most ranches. We brand every calf that is born on the ranches that I take care of, is branded. This protects us from theft. I go every year, when the cattle are in the feed yards out west for whoever bought our cattle, when I get out there, I like to see our brand on them because I'm pretty proud of the cattle that we are able to produce and ship. But yes, the tagging systems and things like that, they are coming along.

Joy:

Can you speak a little bit to the brand design process? How you get a brand, a registered brand? Because I think that's kind of cool.

Clint Raulerson:

It's very individual. Everyone has their own idea of what their brand is going to be. You construct a brand. I sat down when I was ready to make mine, and drew it out on a piece of paper. And then I sent it into the state of Florida, to FDACS. And they compare it with all the other brands in the state, and if someone has that brand, just exactly like what I designed, then I have to modify mine a little bit. I sent in one brand and they did not pass it. They sent it back to me and I had to modify it a little bit. They're very individual, they're very personal to a lot of people. A lot of them have something to do with your family or your heritage. It's all tied into what we do.

Theresa Schober:

The Roberts Ranch and the Collier Museum collections have a number of brands from some of the families in Immokalee. And I can say that a granddaughter brought in her grandfather's brand and gifted it to the museum. And while she felt like she was putting it in the right place, so that people would be able to see it in the future and the legacy of their family's brand would live on, she had tears in her eyes. Because it also meant that she was letting go of something that was so important.

Clint Raulerson:

It's very personal.

Theresa Schober:

The physical object of it. And how much it meant to them was really clear.

Clint Raulerson:

Yeah. It's very personal, especially the old brands. Because there is a reason. They didn't just throw something down and build it out of metal and stick it to a cow. There was something personal about that brand. And when it's passed down through a family for 100 years, there is a lot of emotional and sentimental ties to that. So, absolutely, I can see that. I see that, totally.

Joy:

Well, I'd like to give you the opportunity to talk about the cattle drive. Kind of segue into that, because it's a great way to learn about ranching in this area and to experience parts of it.

Theresa Schober:

Well, absolutely. And that's actually how I met Mr Raulerson in the first place, was back in 2017, our Immokalee Chamber of Commerce had put together a small cattle drive of 25 head as part of a cultural festival. And they asked, I think, almost everybody. And most people said, "Oh, I don't want to do that." And then they said, "No, we found him. Clint is going to do it." And so we did this small cattle drive. He and I met because I was on the logistics end of ... At that time not having seen a cattle drive down Main Street, and was a little concerned about how cows and the people were going to stay completely separate. But we worked it out, and it worked pretty good. And then I told him that I wanted 200 next year. And he said, "Okay."

Clint Raulerson:

We made it happen. One thing I always say, people might say I'm crazy, but they'll never say I'm scared. It is an undertaking, and takes a lot of planning and putting things together. And the county and our sheriff's department has really been great to work with. And they've helped us with street shutdowns and traffic control and things like that. When I've got 20, 25 head of cowboys and 200 head of cattle, walking them down Main Street in about a 60-foot area, between people lined up on both sides of the street, and then when we get to the museum area, it's really tight there. We've got people behind barricades, and they'll be stacked a couple of thousand people there.

Clint Raulerson:

And it's been a neat experience. When I first got into it, it was like, "Sure. I'll do it. I'll try it." And then now it's a little bit of a passion, because we have gotten the public response. The people really enjoy it. And I have a rule with my guys. And all my guys that come are actual ranch-working cowboys. That was one of my stipulations when I told the Chamber of Commerce that I would do it the first year, I said, "I have one thing. If I'm going to do this, I want to use real cowboys." I've seen this done in other places where they just have anybody that wants to bring a horse can show up and ride. And that's fine. But for me, I wanted it to be as traditional as we could keep it. So, all of my guys are actually working, ranch cowboys. And cowgirls. We've got a few of them that come. My daughter has come. [Heather Clecker 00:32:45] comes, and-

Theresa Schober:

Who is a Roberts family descendant.

Clint Raulerson:

Yeah, who is a Roberts family descendant. So, we have that. And then it's just kind of taken off. And the amount of people that give us feedback on it and let us know how positive it is, and how much they learn in that one day, watching the cattle or watching us drive the cattle, watching the dogs work. Dogs are a very important part of what we do. And watching the dogs work and watching how we do things, and how it's not the wild, wild west, if I can put that in there. But everybody wants to think that it's run and gun, and you're fast, and it's all with a rope or whatever people call a lasso or whatever. We call it a rope. Roping cattle, and harsh stuff, but those cattle are our livelihood. Just like the land, we take very good care of them and we treat them very well. As well as our horses and our dogs.

Clint Raulerson:

So, it's great for me to be able to broadcast that to people, just like I said earlier about the social media and things like that. This is where people can come, and they stand 15 feet from where we're driving cattle. And for us to do that, and for me to be able to introduce all the people that are there helping, that is very important to me because these people mean a lot to me, because they are our tradition. And these young people are carrying on what we do. They're carrying on our heritage. And it's so important, because I am basically in my family ... My grandmother had 10 kids. My dad and two of his brothers actually were involved in the cattle industry heavy. But I'm the last one that really took it, as one of the grandchildren of my grandfather, and is doing this for a living. And it's very important to me.

Theresa Schober:

One of the other things that we do is the cattle that are brought in are Corriente cattle, which have a very similar look to those first, southern Spanish, Andalusian cattle that came over in 1521.

Clint Raulerson:

Very true.

Theresa Schober:

And so it has the appearance of being a real, Cracker cattle drive rather than it just being any cow walking down the street. And we call it a drive, but the cows are politely walking down the street, which is a real sense of pride, it seems, for the cowboys and cowgirls that are there. Their whole intention is for it to be calm, structured, a casual movement of cattle from one end to the other, rather than this idea that you make a loud noise and let them sprint to the other end. They want it to be, and they do it so beautifully, keep the whole herd under control.

Theresa Schober:

We have a pioneer family that's usually honored each year. In 2018, we invited the Roberts family. The Roberts family moved to Immokalee in 1914 with seven kids, and had two more on site. All of those kids, those nine kids, have passed away. But kids of all of those kids showed up at the drive, and we had 30-some Roberts family members. And the next year, we invited the Brown family to come. And the Brown family were actually earlier in the area, and set up the first trading point on the edge of Big Cypress with the Seminole tribe, the Brown's Boat Landing. And 70-some Browns came. And so it's really fun to see all the cattlemen who know each other from their conventions and from being in the business and family connections for so long, and then also having a chance to honor and let it turn into a family reunion of sorts from a really early family that dates way back in the area.

Clint Raulerson:

As you were speaking, that's kind of what it does evolve into, is a reunion during that day. Last year, we had people come that I hadn't seen in 20, 25 years, and showed up there. Some of the Brown family came to ride with us. It's just really neat. It's a great day.

Theresa Schober:

And of course after the cattle drive, we have all sorts of fun and games that go on. And we strive to commemorate all of the different cultures that are part of Immokalee. And so there's cowboy poetry, by yours truly. As long as that means you. This gentleman. There is Seminole storytelling. Tribal members do alligator wrestling. We have dancing horses, which is a Latin American tradition. We have lots of really good food. We have Mexican dancing. There's just a lot of things for all sorts of people to come and see because Immokalee today has always been this diverse community, but it's probably more diverse now than it was even 100 years ago. And that diversity is worth celebrating, and it's really a neat opportunity to do so.

Clint Raulerson:

I was in California recently, and told them that I thought Immokalee was maybe as diverse a small community as there is in the nation, if you get to looking at it and look at how many different countries are represented there, and cultures. It's really amazing. And I'm happy to be a part of it. I love Immokalee. It's where my grandparents raised their kids, and where I've grown up. It's still a nice, safe, little community, and great place to live.

Joy:

All right. Well, we want to make sure to invite people to the cattle drive. Next year, it's March 14, 2020, at the Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch. It really is a fun experience. I'm typically working it.

Clint Raulerson:

Yes, you are.

Joy:

So I don't get to see everything, but one of the things that I try to be in place for is the actual drive when they come along the fence. I always record it. I always put it on social media. People who are not even there are excited just to see it.

Clint Raulerson:

Outstanding.

Joy:

It's a pretty cool experience.

Clint Raulerson:

Well, thank you.

Joy:

And so if you have the opportunity to come out to our audience, please do, and enjoy the event. If you guys have any last comments or commentary you'd like to add?

Theresa Schober:

I think I'd just like to ... The Collier Museum system has five locations. And the one that I manage is the Pioneer Museum out at Roberts Ranch, and I think I just want to give a lot of credit to the Roberts family. Because in the mid-1990s, there were still two of the original, two of the kids alive, the two that were born on the property after 1914 when the family moved there. And they and the kids of the other kids put the main family farmstead in trust, and then donated the family home and some of the outbuildings to Collier County. Because I think they probably recognized that this heritage that was important to Clint, important to their family, important to a lot of families in that area, it was becoming a lot less visible.

Theresa Schober:

And it really is a credit to their vision that we can even have this property today, where people can come and learn about pioneer history in Florida, and where we can have ... I think we could never have the cattle drive in Naples, so it's pretty awesome that the ranch is in Immokalee and we can run those ... Politely walk those cattle down Main Street and bring them back to the ranch every year. And so I just want to say thank you to the Roberts for having such a strong vision that allows us to talk about this legacy with the public, and create a place where the public can come to learn.

Clint Raulerson:

And for me, the county, for allowing us to do what we do with the cattle drive every year. And really working with us and helping us do that. And helping us share our heritage on a pretty big scale. So, I really appreciate that.

Joy:

All right. Well thank you so much, Clint and Theresa. Thank you for joining us today. And thank you to our audience for listening.

Clint Raulerson:

Thank you for having me.

Theresa Schober:

Thank you, Joy.