


 Hey Neighbor

For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

Cowboy Cousins Construct Old West Town For Movies

The Culbertson cousins are living their childhood fantasies.

Not unlike many young people growing up in the 1950s, the Culbertsons' idols were cowboys. Many an afternoon was spent at the cowboy movie matinee, and the cousins had the bonus of riding horses on their grandfather's farm.

"We've always loved horses, liked to ride and wanted to be cowboys," said Larry Culbertson, who with his cousins, Rob (best known as Cowboy), and Don, are old time cowboy re-enactors. They do frontier shows for the public as well as make living-history documentaries and movies.

"Cowboy (Rob) has been a re-enactor for over 25 years, and Don and I and all of our families have been involved in the business for some time too," continued Larry, at his Texas Tea Ranch near Easton.

While performing as cowboy re-enactors, the Culbertsons saw the need for an authentic frontier town site and scenery.

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of Ride With The Devil in Pattonsburg, Mo., Cowboy (Rob) suggested that we build a permanent Old West town," Larry recalled.

"Many sets are built specifically for a movie, and then most of them are just bulldozed down," he added.

The town, proposed to be built by the Culbertson cousins, would have to be devoid of modern day things, such as telephone lines, nearby modern houses, streets and noise of the city.

"We knew that such a frontier setting would not only be a great asset to movie makers, but a benefit to the community around it," Larry related.

If they could build their brainchild, the Culbertsons knew they would have one of only a few Old West towns that had an actual 360-degree view of nothing modern.

Perfect location was the 180-acre Leavenworth County farm that the Culbertson cousins had ridden horses on throughout their lives. Larry and his wife Chris live on the land that

has been in the family for many years.

"It has the ideal scenery for a town and surrounding frontier atmosphere," Larry related.

Construction on the town site, a mile from the ranch headquarters, was started in 1998. Finding necessary materials was a major task, and recycled lumber was used for the structures.

"The first building was a log trapper's cabin located just below the road to where the town was to be situated," Culbertson explained. "We needed scenery for people to see along the way, so we designed a place for an Indian village too."

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Larry and Chris Culbertson and their sons Larry Jr. and Chad are in costume for a movie filmed at the frontier town site they've built on their Texas Tea Ranch near Easton.

Culbertson cousins doing most of the labor personally. "We call it Millwood," Larry said. "There are a total of 13 buildings with no modern conveniences such as electricity and running water."

Included are a two-story saloon, First National Bank, OK Corral, blacksmith shop, sheriff's office, log cabin jail, barber shop,

bath house, brothel, lawyer's office, mercantile, Pony Express station and the trapper's cabin along with the Indian village.

"Every building is complete inside and out with props that were of the

time period between 1840 and 1880," Culbertson elaborated.

Of course, there are horses, buggies, covered wagons and authentic clothing. "We had to do a lot of searching to locate a lot

and other items from over 125 years ago," he added.

A three-acre lake near the town is a beautiful background and can appear in photographs like the Missouri River looked in the 1800s, before being dredged, according to Culbertson.

Already a part of the ranch was a 50-head Longhorn cattle herd, which also makes for appropriate scenery.

The purpose of the town, operated as Western Frontier Adventure, is for photo shoots, re-enactments, movies, personal and company getaways, trail rides, etc.

"We and fellow re-enactors portray cowboys, Indians, Confederate and Union troops, cavalry, bushwhackers, mountain men, saloon girls, and do portrayals of Custer, the Sharps and more," said Culbertson.

Millwood has attracted lots of attention. Most recently a group of military personnel from Singapore was guests of Kansas National Guardsmen, with a total of over 200 visiting the old West community for a catered supper and wild west skits performed by the Culbertson cousins and other re-enactors, including full-blood Indians.

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Models are equipped with authentic weapons, horse tack and clothing. "It gives one a scene right out of a Remington or Russell painting," Larry declared.

Serving as re-enactor coordinator, Cowboy (Rob) is also in charge of the firearms collection, including several dozen pieces.

"We load our own shells with corn meal for the shooting scenes. These can cause damage, so re-enactors do not shoot right at one another," he pointed out.

Many of the models have been featured in movies including *Rough Riders*, *Buffalo Soldiers* and *Ride With The Devil*. They've been written about in several national publications.

"The models can explain the difference between a certain weapon and its use," Cowboy (Rob) noted. "They can also readily discuss different horse tack and clothing."

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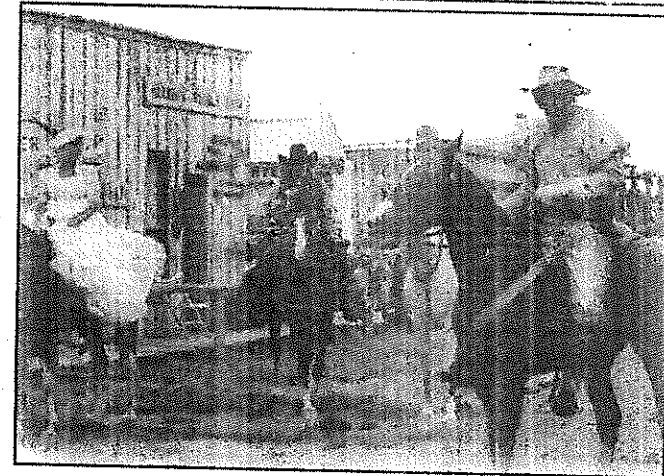
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Every one of these horses gets in the movies. "They are used to all of the guns shooting and cannon shots and don't even flinch," Culbertson said.

Acquiring the horses wasn't done overnight, Culbertson pointed out. It's taken many years to find just the right horses to work in the scenes.

"Some of our best ones are getting old now, and we are always on the lookout for horses that we can use," Larry commented.

The Culbertsons are truly living their dream as cowboys of over a century ago.



Cowboy (Rob) Culbertson, right, has been an old time re-enactor for over 25 years and was instrumental in construction of the frontier town site, Millwood, near Easton. He's participating in one of the movies filmed recently at the location.

Additional information about the frontier town is available by contacting Larry Culbertson at 913-773-8537 or email webmaster@westernfrontieradventure.com.

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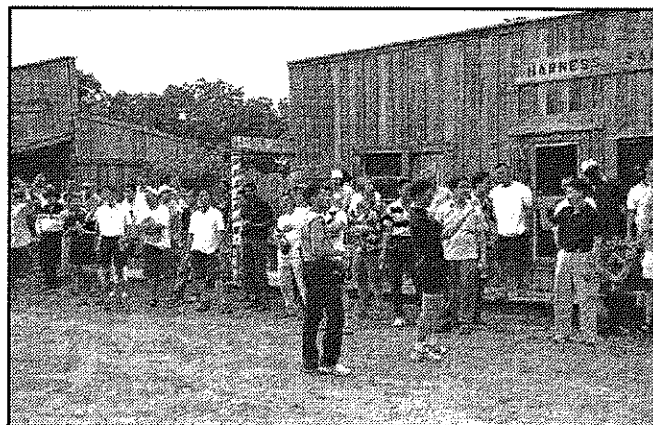
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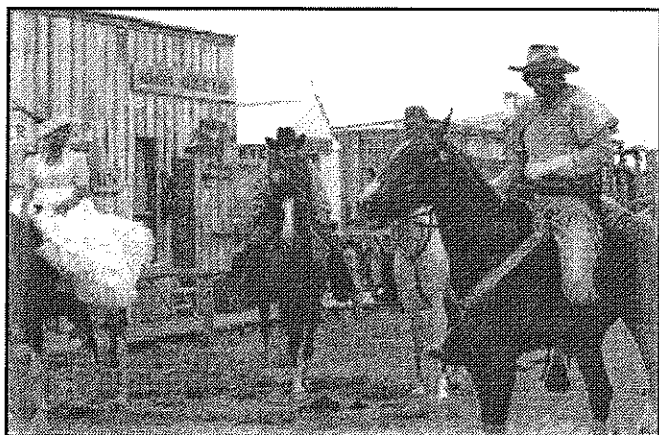
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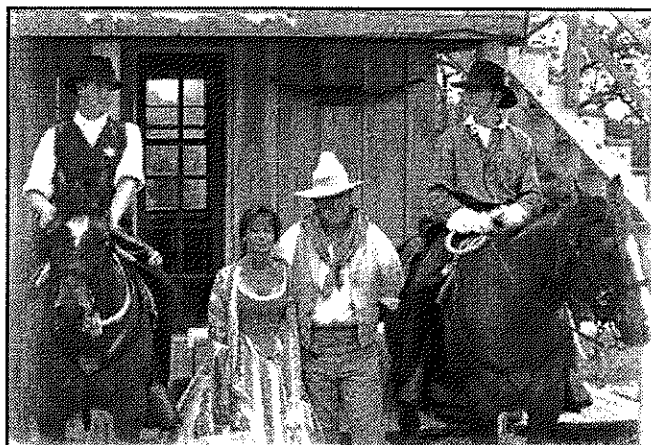
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