TIME FOR KIDS

A Day in the Life of a

COWHAND



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For teachers' inspection ONLY

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The Cowhand's Morning

"Yee-haw!" yell the cowhands as they race off to round up the cattle. It's early in the morning, and their day is already beginning. There's so much to do!





THE FIRST COWHANDS

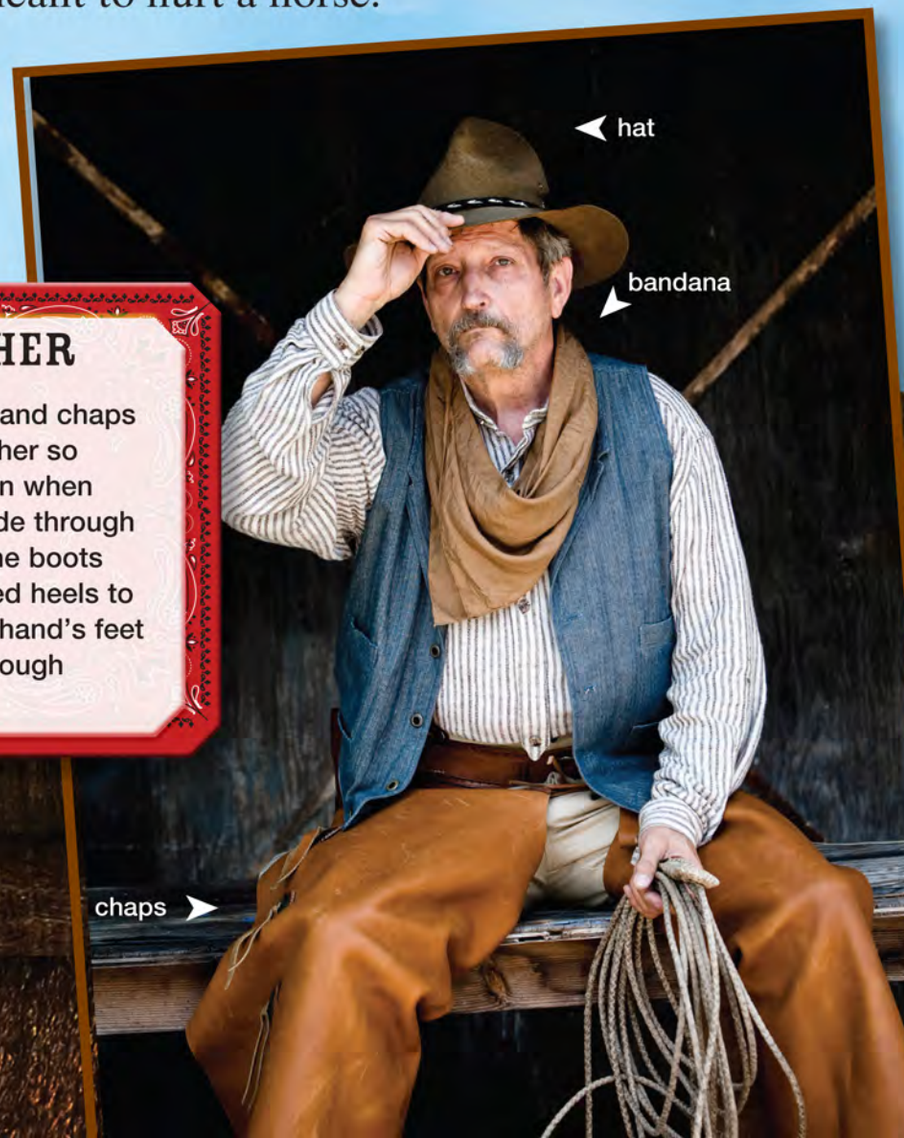
When people first started keeping large herds of cattle, or cows and bulls, they needed a way to keep them together. In Mexico, there were **vaqueros** (vah-KAIR-ohz) as early as the 1500s. Vaqueros were the first cowhands. They herded the cows and bulls. They did most of their work on horseback.

Horses have always been important in the life and work of a cowhand.



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Some cowhands work from sunup to sundown. Before the sun rises, the cowhands start their day by putting on the right clothes. These can include **chaps**, boots, spurs, a **bandana**, and a hat. Chaps and boots are used to protect the cowhand's legs and ankles while riding through cactus and brush. Spurs may look dangerous, but they are not meant to hurt a horse.



LEATHER

Cowhand boots and chaps are made of leather so they can't be torn when the cowhands ride through thorny areas. The boots have high, slanted heels to help keep a cowhand's feet from slipping through the stirrups.

Instead, the horse is urged on by a gentle tap to its ribs from the spurs attached to the cowhand's boots.

Bandanas and hats are used to protect the cowhand's face and neck from the wind, rain, and sun. Bandanas can also be used as a washcloth for the cowhand to clean things, or to cover the eyes of a scared horse.



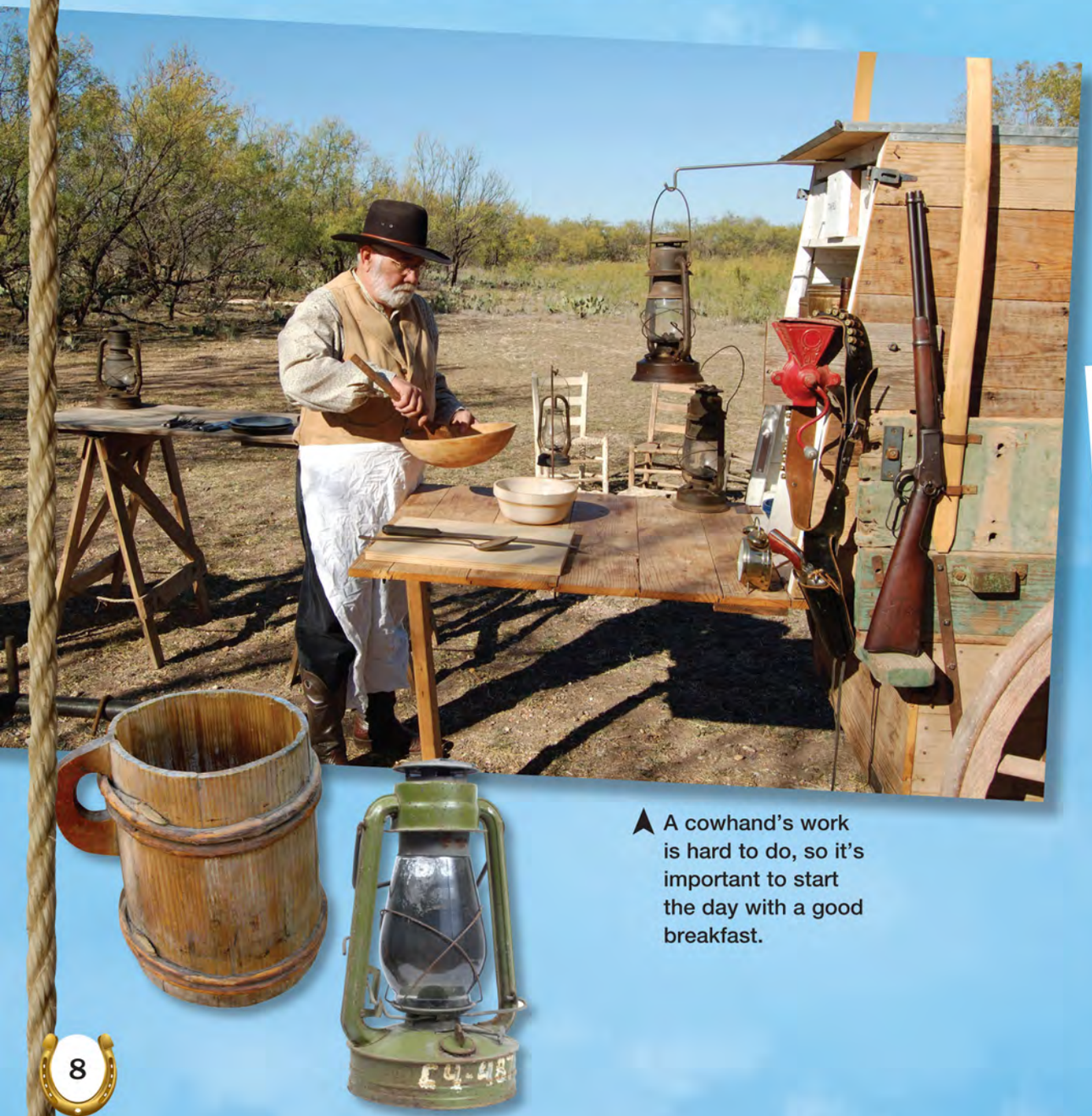
FAVORITE TOOL

A **lariat** is a long rope used to catch horses, cattle, or other livestock. It is also called a lasso.



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Once they are dressed for the day, the cowhands have a hearty breakfast before heading out. They need all the energy they can get to round up the cattle.



A cowhand's work is hard to do, so it's important to start the day with a good breakfast.

cowhands using lariats



watching the cattle



NAME GAME

Cowhands in different regions are called by different names. There are vaqueros in the south. Cowhands in the north are called *buckaroos*. In Australia, they are called *drovers* or *jackaroos* (*jillaroos* for women). It wasn't until the 1860s that the word **cowboy** came into common use. Today, we sometimes say "cowhand" or "cowboy" and "cowgirl" because both men and women can do the job.

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