Care Deeply

Citizenship

Dare Greatly

Nature

Think Boldly

Live Passionately

CARE DEEPLY · THINK BOLDLY · DARE GREATLY · LIVE PASSIONATELY

Leadership

In the Arena

THEODORE ROOSEVELT
## PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

Hands-On History Activity

DESIGN YOUR OWN CATTLE BRAND

Conservation

How to
DESIGN
your own
CATTLE BRAND

Ranchers like Theodore Roosevelt needed a way to identify their cattle and to prevent them from being stolen. A cattle brand is like a "logo" that ranchers register with their state as a method of tracking their livestock. Brands are registered and taxed, similar to the way trademarks and copyrights are regulated.

An ancient Egyptian tomb painting dates cattle branding as far back as 2,000 BCE. The Old Testament of the Bible includes several mentions of branding, and Ancient Romans would brand cattle as a means of supernatural protection. During the Reconstruction Era after the American Civil War, cowboys drove cattle over the open range from Texas and the West to railroad depots. As beef was in high demand and land was expensive, it was essential that ranchers have a way to track cattle ownership.
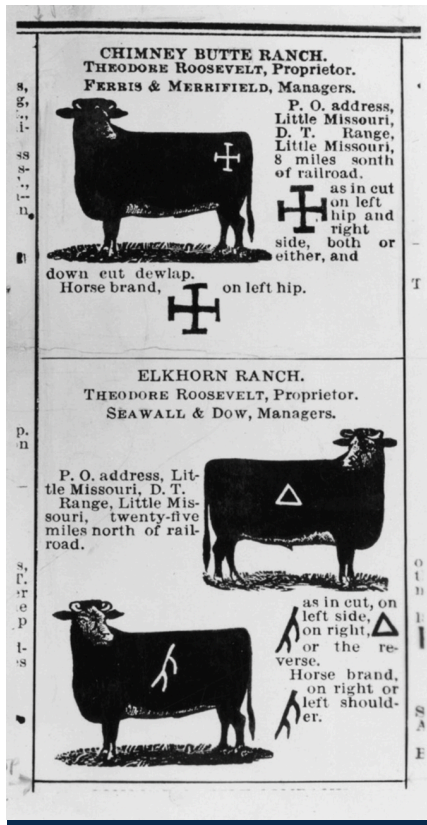
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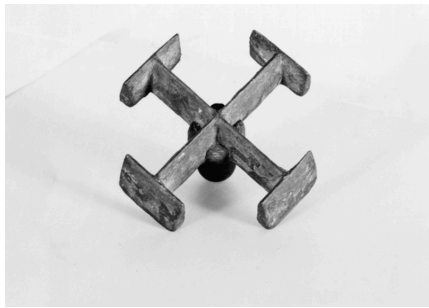
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There are several methods for cattle branding. Hot branding, which uses a hot iron to burn a mark into the cattle's hide, was used during Roosevelt's time. Freeze branding, which uses super-cooled irons to destroy the pigment-producing cells, causing the hair to grow back white, started to be used in the mid-1900s. Ranchers can also make specific notches in their cattle's ears to further identify them. Theodore Roosevelt used a branding iron to mark his cattle.

Cattle brands are composed of a few letters and numbers, sometimes in combination with a basic shape or symbol. They can be embellished with serif-like flourishes, like extraneous "wings" or "feet." These additions result in a unique name for the character. For example, letters with "feet" are known as "walking." An upside-down character is called "crazy," while one rotated 90 degrees is called "lazy." These descriptors are used to verbally communicate a brand's name. Characters can also be combined into one character known as a "ligature."

Theodore Roosevelt had three different cattle brands: the Maltese Cross, the Elkhorn, and a triangle that was used in conjunction with the Elkhorn. At left are images of his brands.

You can design your own cattle brand inspired by real ranchers like Theodore Roosevelt. **Follow the instructions below to draw and name your cattle brand.**

SUPPLIES

Equipment Needed: You will need scratch paper for sketching ideas, a pencil, cardstock (any size), and a marker.
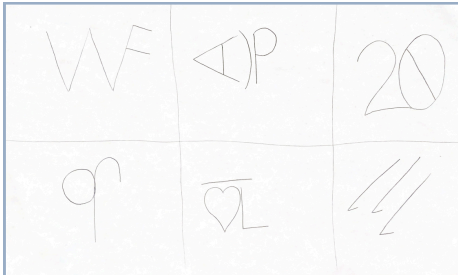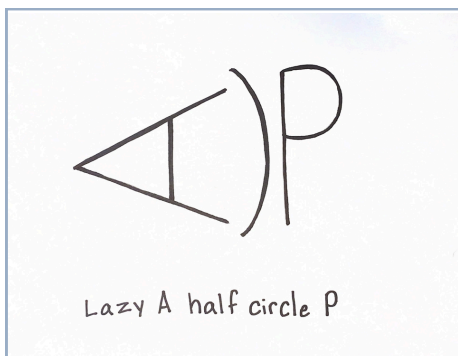

Figure A

Figure B

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Look at <u>examples</u> of cattle brands from Theodore Roosevelt's time and begin sketching ideas. Many brands are based on letters or numbers.

2. Sketch a minimum of three different options for your brand. Choose your favorite for the final design. *See figure A.*

3. Use a pencil to draw out your chosen design on the cardstock.

4. Trace over your pencil drawing with a marker, making your lines as neat as possible. *See figure B.*

5. At the bottom of the page or on the back, write a description of your brand using the terminology described above (for example, "lazy A half circle P"). You have just created your very own cattle brand!

TIPS

✓ **Look Up Your State's Brand Record for Inspiration:** Every state has a record—organized by which letters are used in the brand—of all registered brands in the state. If you know someone with a brand, you can find theirs on the record of the state where they are registered. This is a great way to find inspiration if you are stumped on your design. Click <u>here</u> to view North Dakota's brand book.

✓ **Use Your Initials:** To personalize your brand even more, you could try drawing your initials in a creative way. You can make the letters "crazy" (upside down), stacked one over the other, or connected as a single character.