



A Lone Star Cowboy (Southwest Heritage)

Charles Angelo Siringo

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For a number of years prior to 1922, one of Santa Fe, New Mexico's most colorful and famous residents was Charles Angelo Siringo (1855-1928), popularly known as "the cowboy detective." A small, wiry man, he was friends with practically everyone in town. In 1916 Governor William C. McDonald persuaded Siringo to accept a commission as a New Mexico Mounted Ranger for the state Cattle Sanitary Board. The only thing unusual about that was Charlie Siringo's age, a ripe 61. Undaunted, he saddled up and with a pack horse started for his headquarters at Carrizozo in Lincoln County. His duty was to run down outlaws and stock thieves in southern New Mexico. "During my two years as a ranger," Siringo said, "I made many arrests of cattle and horse thieves and had many close calls with death staring me in the face." Obviously, Governor McDonald had made a wise choice when he tapped this hard-riding, fast-shooting "senior citizen" for the dangerous ranger job. But Siringo was more than a law man. He put in countless nights writing up his experiences. When his book, "A Texas Cowboy," appeared, its author achieved fame overnight. "A Lone Star Cowboy," published in 1919, and which Sunstone Press has chosen to include in its Southwest Heritage Series, contained many of the stories in his earlier books and the author says in his preface: "This volume is to take the place of A Texas Cowboy.." Meanwhile, soon after publishing his recollections, Siringo joined the renowned Pinkerton Detective Agency, whose branch offices covered the West. He remained with the firm for two decades. After leaving the Pinkertons, Charlie Siringo did a good bit of roaming before settling in Santa Fe. Because of the name he'd made in publishing, he had access to many persons, on both sides of the law. From them he got first hand information that he later incorporated in a new book called Riata and Spurs. In that work, the writer had wanted to include some of his own daring adventures while serving with the Pinkertons. But the Agency threatened a lawsuit if he revealed any of their professional secrets. So the cowboy detective had to delete some of his best material. Siringo's experiences as the quintessential cowboy and determined detective helped romanticize the West and its myth of the American cowboy.

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