



*Whooper Crane,  
SASS #52745*

Mug shot by Deadeye Al



#### DETAILS

Contact: Shawnee Shamus

Email:

[shawneeshamus@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shawneeshamus@sbcglobal.net)

Phone: (913) 236-8812

Web Site: [powdercreekcowboys.org](http://powdercreekcowboys.org)

Location: Lenexa, Kansas

Matches:

2nd & 4th Sat. and 4th Wed.

Annual: 2nd Weekend in May

#### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The old saw in the real estate industry is Location is the *three* most important aspects in selling a property. With this month's featured cowboy club, the Powder Creek Cowboys, Location also plays a vital role in their success.

Let's examine their Location as it applies to the Old West as a starter.

So many of us today think of the Old West as starting on the left side of the Rockies. *Whoa Nelly!* Back in the mid-1800's, folks called anything west of the Mississippi "The West" ... and rightly so!

The opening of the West essentially began with the mountain men, followed by the phenomenon known as the Santa Fe Trail, which brought eastern "civilization" in the form of trade goods to the frontier. The Santa Fe Trail's kick-off point was Franklin, Missouri. Crossing into Kansas, it went right through Lenexa, which just happens to be the

# BUNKHOUSE BIDNESS

## A Spotlight on SASS Clubs Around the Country

### POWDER CREEK COWBOYS

By Whooper Crane, SASS #52745

home of the Powder Creek Cowboys.

To elaborate on the Location theme, need we say more than to mention that Lenexa is in the original Monticello Township, home of Wild Bill Hickok's first Lawman job in 1858 (where the pay was lousy, but Bill could earn an extra 50 cents for every stray dog he "eliminated"). And, Lenexa's only a stone's throw from St. Joseph, MO (where Jesse James met his end, thanks to that dirty little coward), even closer to Lawrence, KS (scene of one of the bloodiest Civil War raids on the frontier), and just a couple hours drive from Coffeyville (where the Dalton Gang bought the farm). I think these examples safely put The Cowboys about as smack dab in The Old West as you can be!

#### HISTORY

Back around the turn of the Century (the 21st, that is) there was a group of Cowboy Action Shooters in the Lenexa area who thought they'd like to shoot closer to home, rather than take the long drives necessary to reach the Old West events available to them at that time.

So, eager beaver Tame Bill rallied the troops (about 10 of them) and determined to find a nearby range to hold some matches. They contacted the Powder Creek Shooting Club in Lenexa who saw the benefit of having an active Cowboy Club as part of its shooting mix and offered the Cowboys the use of the east end of its property.

Then the real work began. The shooters called themselves The Powder Creek Cowboys and set about building appropriate Cowboy Action targets and constructing a western town with authentic-as-possible buildings to house their stages.

Here again, Location played a role. Since this range was located near burgeoning residential developments, the Cowboys had to devise a plan to ensure the safety of the neighborhood. They did this in two ways. First, they oriented their stages to



*Don't turn us in to the EPA,  
it's an unloading station  
for our 5th Stage!*

point them in the safest possible direction. Second, they designed and built a unique baffling system that all but guaranteed no errant rounds could fly out of the range.

When all was set, The Cowboys held their inaugural match at their new digs in 2003 and have been going strong ever since, with the support of an effective Board and a willing membership (now over 110 members) pitching in to keep their matches creative and exciting.

#### INTERESTING STUFF

We mentioned that the Cowboys built stages to resemble an old Kansas cattle railhead town as much as possible. As you walk down their town's street, you feel like you're there in the middle of the heyday of the cattle drives.

You start at **The Jail**, which is an amazing replica of the "modular" jails that popped up in every cowtown throughout the state. The Jail's tricked out with barred windows, a sheriff's desk, a log-burning stove, and other props to make it look lived in.

Next comes a small-scale version of the **C.M. Condon Bank** from Coffeyville ... the site of the downfall of the Daltons back in 1892 when they attempted to rob both this bank *and* the First National Bank at the same time (a bad idea!). The façade, like the others at the range, is 8-10 feet deep, giving a real feel of being inside the buildings (and adding to the sound effects when shooters start banging away ... not to mention the smoky scene when blackpowder shooters are doing *their* thing!

Then comes **The Alamo Saloon** with its bar and old-time piano. Now, for "period correct" fans, the saloon is a very authentic replica of Abilene's famous Alamo Saloon as back-engineered and created by the Club's resident artist, Biggun Stump. Like all the building stages, the saloon has a wide boardwalk to keep you out of the elements on "weather days."

Fourth Stage is **The Drover Store**, which is an exact copy of an actual cowboy mercantile that existed in Ellsworth, Kansas and which catered to the needs of drovers as they came in off their trail drives. Lots of antiques add to the authenticity of this great-looking stage.

Their fifth stage is **The Dewey Cattle Company Corral**, complete with railcar loading ramp, swing gate, and outhouse. This stage was designed by member Chauncey Dewey, whose namesake owned and ran the original Dewey Cattle Company (and who, as rumor has it, sent several adversaries to That Great Roundup in the Sky during the infamous Dewey-Barry Range War of 1902).

#### Some interesting sidebars:

Because their parking lot is immediately adjacent to their stages, most shooters leave their guncarts at home and simply take advantage of the nifty gunracks (which resemble hitching posts and horse troughs) at each stage.

*(Continued on next page)*

(Continued from previous page)

Wild Bill Hickok performed several trick shot demonstrations during his career as a Lawman. So, as part of their annual, the Cowboys hold a Frontier Revolver Shootout using simulations of five of Bill's best demos for competition. These include shooting out a candle flame, shooting a silver dollar, shooting five corks from five bottles, shooting the ace of spades, and shooting a bullseye.

As you might have guessed, the Cowboys have a real penchant for Kansas history. They show it in the way they built their cowtown range. They also show it in a very special artifact they recently dedicated. It's a scaled down replica of the original flagpole that flew Old Glory over historic Fort Hayes on the Kansas frontier during the Indian Wars. Notable soldiers, including Custer, served at Fort Hayes when the Cheyenne and Arapahoe were holding sway. Before each match The Cowboys hoist a period-correct (ca. 1873) American Flag

on the flagpole and recite The Pledge of Allegiance. It's a moving moment.

An active Club like the Cowboys couldn't be so successful without the help of its members *and* a group of very supportive sponsors ... like nearby Bass Pro Shops, Hodgdon Powder Company, and CZ Firearms. They also get great support of their annual shoot, The Prince of Pistoleers Match (named after favorite son, Wild Bill) in May from local merchants like The Bullet Hole Gun Store and Show Me Shooters Gun Shop. It takes a keen combination of member and sponsor support to keep Clubs on top.

That's it for this month. Next month we're heading for the hills to meet with the fine folks in Wyoming who put on one of Cowboy Action Shooting™'s best-known Annual Matches "Hell On Wheels." See you then.

**Photos:**

Whooper Crane by Deadeye Al  
Action shots by Club members

