

# A Guide to the Harold McNett Seagoing Cowboy Oral History, October 18, 2016 SdArch 0038

Harold McNett seagoing cowboy oral history

2016-10-18



## Title Statement

A Guide to the Harold McNett Seagoing Cowboy Oral History, October 18, 2016 SdArch 0038

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## Publication Statement

**Publisher:** James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

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URL: <https://www.lib.jmu.edu/special/>



2019

## Profile Description

**Creation:** This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-10-17 07:02:10 -0400.

**Language Usage:** Description is written in: English, Latin script.

**Descriptive Rules:** Describing Archives: A Content Standard

## Descriptive Summary

**Unit ID**

SdArch 0038

**Unit ID**

/repositories/4/resources/629

**Unit Date**

2016-10-18

**Language**

English

## **Abstract**

The Harold McNett Seagoing Cowboy Oral History, October 18, 2016, is comprised of one audio recording and transcript of an interview of McNett by Gordon Miller about his experiences attending horses on ship bound for Europe, as part of the relief effort after World War II.

## **Creator**

Miller, Gordon W. (Gordon Wayne), 1938-

## **source**

Miller, Gordon W. (Gordon Wayne), 1938-

## **Extent**

0.06 cubic feet 1 folder, 1 cd

## **Repository**

James Madison University Libraries Special Collections

# **Administrative Information**

## **Access Restrictions**

Access to oral histories is governed by agreements with the narrators. Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection. Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the James Madison University Special Collections Library to use this collection.

## **Use Restrictions**

Copyright interests have been transferred to the James Madison University Special Collections Library. For more information, contact the Special Collections Library Reference Desk ([library-special@jmu.edu](mailto:library-special@jmu.edu)).

## **Acquisition Information**

Items were donated by Gordon Miller on November 16, 2016.

## **Processing Information**

Interview was submitted as a .cda file on a cd. It was converted to wav file on July 25, 2018, for preservation purposes.

## **Preferred Citation**

[identification of item], [box #, folder #], Harold McNett Seagoing Cowboy Oral History, October 18, 2016, SdArch 0038, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University.

# **Administrative History**

"Seagoing cowboys" is a term used for the men who attended livestock on ships bound for Europe from 1945-1947, as part of the effort to send relief to war-torn countries after World War II. Many seagoing cowboys were Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, and members of other Anabaptist groups, who served under a joint-partnership between Heifers for Relief of the Brethren Service Committee and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).

Heifers for Relief (now Heifer International) was founded in 1944 by Dan West of the Church of the Brethren, to donate heifers to people in need. West worked with the Northern Indiana Brethren Mens' Work in 1942 and the Brethren Service Committee to raise heifers and ship them overseas, with the first shipment of heifers sent to Puerto Rico in 1944. In 1945, it became possible to ship livestock to Europe. Heifers for Relief leaders, M.R. Zigler and Benjamin Bushong, brokered an agreement with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to provide economic assistance to European nations; Heifers for Relief provided livestock and attendants ("seagoing cowboys"), and the UNRRA provided ships and free passage for the livestock. Between 1945 and April 1947, the UNRRA made approximately 360 livestock shipments of horses, mules, heifers and bulls, as well as some poultry and other animals. Shipments went to Albania, China, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Greece, Italy, Poland and Yugoslavia.

After the UNRRA shipments stopped in 1947, the Heifer Project no longer had a ready supply of ships for their heifers. However, civilian seagoing cowboys returned to their communities with accounts of the destruction in Europe and the ongoing need for relief, and support of Heifers for Relief continued.

# **Scope and Content**

The collection is comprised of an interview with Harold McNett of Rockingham, County, Virginia, who served as a "Seagoing Cowboy" at the age of seventeen. McNett recalls his experience of traveling on boat with over 750 horses from New York City to Poland, the care and feeding of the horses, experiences in Europe learning

about the Holocaust, and recollections about how his shipmates spent time on the boat, among other topics.

## Keywords

transcripts

oral histories (literary works)

Miller, Gordon W. (Gordon Wayne), 1938-

## Bibliography

Reiff Miller, Peggy. "The Impossible Dream: How the Heifer Project Came to Be." Messenger. July/August 2009. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://seagoingcowboyswebsite.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/impossible-dream-article.pdf> Reiff Miller, Peggy. The Seagoing Cowboys; Delivering Hope to a War-Torn World. Accessed July 26, 2018. <https://seagoingcowboys.com/>

## Description of Subordinate Components

### Harold McNett, interviewed by Gordon Miller

**Unit ID** 38-1

**Unit ID** /repositories/4/archival\_objects/23729

**Unit Date** 2016 October 18

**Mixed Materials** SA0038-SET-001 (network storage)

### Conditions Governing Access

Audio and transcript are open for research.

### Use Restrictions

Copyright interests have been transferred to JMU Special Collections.

### Transcript

**Unit ID** /repositories/4/archival\_objects/23730

**Mixed Materials [1000898345]** 1 (box)

**Container** 1 (folder)