

## Herbert Birdsall 2017 Hall of Fame Pre-1940's Ranching

Herb was born on his family's farm north of Berthold on September 11, 1904, and grew up farming alongside his dad and brothers. Herb's parents had passed away by the time he was 20. He and his brothers grew the family farm into a business, calling it the Birdsall Farm Company. In time, bringing son-in-law Darrell into the business, Herb developed the Birdsall Farming Company into one of the largest farming and cattle operations in this part of the world.

Cattle from the Birdsall ranch were known to weigh over 400 lbs at weaning, something unheard of in their time. In one story, a black bull trespassed in the neighbor's pasture. Herb reassured the upset man that when he sold calves the next fall, he and Darrell would give him as much for his black baldies as he got for his best Hereford steer calves. The handful of baldies brought the most money, and the trespassing bull was forgiven.

Herb was a noted teamster and excellent rider. He broke many teams of rank broncos. As an older man in his 60's, Herb was still breaking colts. One winter, he hurt his hip when a colt he was riding blew up. The horse was cross hobbled, but Herb said, "he could dang sure buck with hobbles on". That horse turned out to be Bobby Sox, two-time winner of the NDRA's Saddle Bronc of the Year award.

In a piece about Herb in 2016, Bill McCulloch wrote about the Birdsalls having the first real saddles and riding equipment that he had dreamed about. Herb noted McCulloch's interest in rodeo early on. He and his wife, Mildred, took McCulloch to his first rodeo. "I saw the Teschers, Dean Armstrong, Casey Tibbs, and Pete Fredericks all ride and others rope. What a treat – 100 miles from home, contestant I had read about. I was hooked", relates McCulloch. "Today, with all our modern innovations, I feel blessed to have grown up around a man like Herb Birdsall," McCulloch continues, "He was no different than the successful homesteader a decade or two before him. He worked hard, took care of family, neighbors – gave of himself to the community – made sound progressive decisions his whole life. We need more people like him today. Truly 'salt of the earth'."

Herb Birdsall passed away April 10, 1990.