

18 Trails to Two Moons

Moons — a cattlemen's town — to squat down in the hill pocket in the heart of the Big Country; the saw-tooth range of the Broken Horns behind, and before it more square miles of fat range land than a man dared reckon by hundreds.

A cattlemen's town it remained as long as freight wagons had to haul one hundred and seventy miles up from the nearest reach of the Union Pacific — as long as the bunch grass grew fat and no man stretched wire between Denver and the Dominion Line. But a new railroad rocketed down in a north-and-south slash through the wilderness, and freight wagons had to haul only forty miles. A stage appeared. Two Moons began to change.

A government land office opened on Main Street. Then, as flies to the honey pot, came straddling and stumbling across the bad lands, first the unlovely hordes of the homesteaders, "nesters", in the vernacular of the cattle clan; then the sheepmen with their devastating flocks to contest the range, which the nesters did not fence, with the cattlemen, who abominated sheep a little more than they did barbed wire. There was an upheaval in the town's social life. Where one saloon had served the boys in from