

## DENVER STOCK SHOW

01-22-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

*In Denver, roughly two of every seven Christmas days have snow covering all. It tends to be the same on the following month when the Annual Stock Show and High Jinks appear. Except this is over many days, at the forum once known as the Denver Stockyards.*

*Everyone tends to agree the Stock Show is entertaining; hints of the Olds West, doesn't smell too bad, centrally located, worth the search for warmth, western garb the tenderfoot might wear. Yes, relatively inexpensive, changing daily.*

*Back up to the 1950s for another side. You may not recall that Denver Stock Yards were still operational year round. Cudahy, Swift, Armour, Litvak and others maintained substantial cattle and hog Yards for processing these animals daily. So come Stock Show in January, there was ample housing for animals. Not to mention saloons and eateries nearby for cowboy and customer.*

*The visiting cowboys were not the only ones physically qualified to ride, rope, cuss, get drunk and manhandle the often unruly animal. Globeville, home for many workers, as tough as any other local or visitor.*

*The City of Denver dedicated a new Coliseum January 10, 1952, in time for that year's National Western Stock Show. The packers who had contributed much of the money for this building had suggested it be named National Western Stock Show Coliseum, Instead the building was named the Denver Coliseum. The slight aside, the building was a huge success, houses much of the rodeo and animal exhibits to this day.*

*Police security in those years at the Coliseum and Stock was were part of District 5's responsibility. To provide security Officers were allowed no days off during the two weeks of the Stock Show. Those not working regular patrol.*

*worked at the Stock Show, afternoons and nights.*

*And yearly, those Januarys were cold, snowy. Everyone attending dressed warmly. When Policemen left the comfort of their work station en mass, they could appear to be almost immobile. Officers patrolled assigned areas in gatherings of at least three.*

*Visitors tended to be accommodating, Cowboys belligerent.*

*Men handling animal daily that outweighed them by a factor of five give or take, were not apt to be intimidated in a misunderstanding with men who appeared too warmly dressed to move. Then there was the booze, attitudes, earlier arrests, bragging. Some nights, saying hello without a big smile could be understood as insulting, cause a melee, men flailing at one other all over those properties, with maybe one knowing what had instigated the fight. But once a fight began, even the timid soul might throw a punch. The scene, Police initially outnumbered, quickly reinforced by available patrol cars, peace restored, hands shook, none arrested. Quiet until the next drunk felt offended. Few nights passed without the Stockyard officers returning looking like nothing had happened. And the laughter, camaraderie, stories retold before each went home, repeating each adventure to their family.*

*Late part of that decade, with little notice, national packing houses in Denver, were all closed, accepting a national change in meat processing. Men and families that had collected in Globeville to be near work, drifted away. Quieter now, the area forever changed.*

*Those cowboys performing at the Stock show, became more professional, less belligerent. The Denver Police no longer manned the barricades. Instead became free to work at the Stock Show on the days off, little hassle, extra pay, if they wished.*

