

Johnson County War

Chris LeDoux

Headed for Wyoming in 1882, a woman, a team and a wagon

Gonna make our dreams come true

Settled in the foothills of the big horn mountain slope

Life is sweet, we lived on the meat of the deer and the antelope
We cut house logs upon the mountain with the
team we hauled 'em down

Peeled 'em and we stacked 'em up for a house and bought some ground

Traded for some cattle, turned 'em out on the open range

The skies were blue, we never knew how things were gonna change
Oh, Powder River, you're muddy and
you're wide

How many men have died along your shore?

When you brand a man a rustler, he's gotta take a side

There's no middle ground in this Johnson County war
Well the neighbors stopped by yesterday while I was
outside choppin' wood

They filled me in on a local news, ain't none of it sounded good

Said, there had been some cattle stealin' by some no count outlaw bands

We'd all been branded rustlers by the big ranchers of this land
Well, it was us against the cattlemen and the years
just made it worse

First the drought and then the tough winter

Johnson County had been dealt a curse

Then there came the story about the two dry gulch attacks

Ranger Jones and John Tisdale had been both shot in the back
Oh, Powder River, you're muddy and you're wide
How many men have died along your shore?

When you brand a man a rustler, he's gotta take a side

There's no middle ground in this Johnson County war
Then, last night at supper time riders stopped by chance
They said cattleman and their hired guns just burned the Kaycee Ranch

Two men had died this mornin', shot down in the snow

Now the vigilante army was on the march to Buffalo
Well the County was in an uproar and every man saddled
up to ride

Caught the cattlemen at the TA Ranch and surrounded all four sides

We hailed the house with bullets and swore they were gonna pay

But the cavalry came across the plains and once again they saved the day
Well, they marched 'em off to
Cheyenne, no one went to jail

The cattlemen were all turned loose and the hired guns hit the trail

And I guess the only justice wasn't much to say the least

Last winter me and mine ate mighty fine on the cattle baron's beef
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wide

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