



FACT SHEET

Fort Worth Stockyards

As a drover headed cattle up the Chisholm Trail to the railheads, he had one last stop for rest and supplies: Fort Worth. Beyond the city, he'd be crossing the Red River into Indian Territory. Between 1866 and 1890, drovers trailed more than four million head of cattle through Fort Worth. The city soon became known as "Cowtown."

When the railroad arrived in 1876, Fort Worth became a major shipping point for livestock, so the city built the Union Stockyards, two and a half miles north of the Tarrant County Courthouse, in 1887.

But the Union Stockyards Co. lacked the funds to buy enough cattle to attract local ranchers, so President Mike C. Hurley invited wealthy Boston capitalist Greenleaf Simpson to Fort Worth in hopes he would invest.

After the war, everything changed. The stockyards prospered through droughts and floods – they were even rebuilt with new flame-resistant materials after two disastrous fires killed many of the penned livestock – but the booming business couldn't last forever.

During World War II, the Fort Worth Stockyards processed 5,277,496 head of livestock, making 1944 the peak year of the entire operation. Unfortunately, the decline of the stockyards soon began with the decline of the railroad.

After World War II, newly paved roads gave rise to the trucking industry, with lower costs and greater flexibility than the railroads. This meant the market moved to the shipper instead of the meat packer, and smaller local livestock auctions and feedlots started drawing business away from central locations like the Stockyards.

###

Follow us on Facebook: [Tarrant County Veterans Council - Home | Facebook](#)

Email Us: TCVC@tcvc.us