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Landmark Park hosts YellaWood Johnny Mack Brown® Western Festival

By [Elaine Brackin](#)

Cowboys, Native Americans and western movies ruled the day Saturday as Landmark Park played host to the YellaWood® Johnny Mack Brown Western Festival.

And, as Dothan paid tribute to one of its favorite sons, guests to the festival were also entertained by a reenactment of an “Old West” incident that happened during the city’s younger days. Los Pistoleros recreated 15 seconds of action that has come to be known as “The Dothan Riot of 1889.” This historic event pitted angry farmers against a young marshal, Tobe Domingus, and his deputy, Parker Powell.

Dothan, just four years old at the time of the riot, placed a tax on draying. The Farmers Alliance refused to pay the tax, which escalated the hard feelings between the city and the farmers. Those feelings boiled over into what some have termed Dothan’s version of the “the shootout at OK Corral.”



Frank B. Wood, left, of Cow Camp Cook, serves up some hot chili during Saturday's Johnny Mack Brown Western Festival.

The end result was two deaths with several more wounded in the fracas.

This event is depicted in a mural in downtown Dothan.

In a more serene setting on the grounds of Landmark Park, Frank B. Wood, owner of Cow Camp Cook, demonstrated how life on the cattle trail was handled - from a trail cook’s perspective. With his chuck wagon filled with supplies and his metal pots suspended over an open fire, Wood and Ronnie Ackerman cooked up a cowboy feast for many of the participants in the Johnny Mack Brown Western Festival.

“I’ve always cooked,” Wood said as he took a break from serving helpings of chili and shepherd’s pie. “In the little house that I grew up in, I would watch my mom cook. She wanted us to be independent. We learned to cook and sew (to do mending).”

Wood, a former employee of the Georgia State Department of Corrections (livestock inspector), also spent 10 years of his career working as a probation officer. However, the Parrott (Ga.) resident says the western way of life has been his love.

“I’m retired now,” Wood said. “But I’ve cowboied most of my life.”

While stirring up a cowboy meal is his hobby, and one that he has practiced since he founded Cow Camp Cook in the 1990s, there is a competitive side to Wood.

When he acquired his chuck wagon, roughly seven years ago, Wood decided to try his hand at competitive cooking.

“We entered a competition and catered off the wagon,” Wood said. “We went on to win several competitions in a row.”

With that success, Wood expanded his operation. But, he didn’t keep the second chuck wagon long. Instead, he opted to return to his original one-wagon operation.

“We probably enter four or five competitions in the southeast every year,” Wood continued. “We also take part in festivals like this. And, we also do cowboy parties, with poetry and music, for churches and schools.”

While chuck wagon cooking is a hobby, Wood also sees it as an educational tool.

“We try to keep the history involved,” Wood said. “A lot of young folks have never seen this style of cooking.”

He also says it’s an activity that the entire family can enjoy. But, he knows it will not always be a part of his life.

“We just do it because we love it,” Wood said. “When it gets to be work, we’ll quit.

“Right now, I know it’s a hobby, because I don’t make much money from it.”