

# Arizona Cowboys

By Kathy McCraine

I've been photographing Arizona cowboys for more than 25 years now. My husband and I are ranchers, so I've been lucky enough to call many of my subjects friends and neighbors.

Over the years I've written about and photographed cowboys on some of the state's greatest outfits – Babbitt Ranches, Diamond A Cattle Company, the O RO Ranch, Chevelon Butte Cattle Company, and the 7 Up. Some of the cowboys enjoy being photographed and some couldn't care less, but because most of them know me, they don't seem to mind. I just stay out of the way, never stage anything and, only rarely, ask them to pose.

They are a diverse and colorful bunch. Some are nomads who never stay anywhere very long, drifting from camp to camp and wagon to wagon like they're playing a game of musical chairs. Others, like Cisco Scott, who's been in a remote camp on the O RO for most of the past 30 years, just take root. Some, like Clay Rodgers, whose family has worked on Babbitt Ranches for generations, were born to the life. Others are young cowboys who come to Arizona's big outfits to hone their skills and build their resumes. Here and there, you run across somebody like KJ Kasun, who gave up a lucrative career in cutting to come home to ranch on the 7 Up and do what he truly loves.

Over time, I've come to realize that I'm documenting a time and way of life that is unique, a culture that could vanish someday in this accelerating world of changing values. I like knowing there are still places like the ROs and Babbitts, where families raise their kids in remote cow camps and cowboys bunk in tepees when the wagons pull out, far from bustling cities and highways. Cowboys are a unique breed, who take the kind of pride in their work you don't often find in town. Their story needs to be told.



Brother Daniel relaxes with a cup of coffee at the O RO Ranch wagon, which was nooned out at Jones Tank, Prescott, 2009.



Kadence Kasun watches the Campwood Cattle Company crew load trucks at the K8 Division, Prescott, Arizona, 2012.

Kadence may be only seven, but she's already enough of a hand to whip the older kids in local gymkhanas.





Ralf LeSueur watches for the vet to arrive at the O RO headquarters, 2008.







Clay Rodgers drags calves at the Cataract Division of Babbitt Ranches, Flagstaff, 2010. Clay is the second generation in his family to work for Babbitts.



Jeff O'Haco works a young horse, spring 2012. Jeff's Basque family settled in Arizona more than a hundred years ago and now owns the Chevelon Butte Cattle Company at Winslow.



Gary Wilson, manager of the Diamond A Cattle Company, at the wagon at Pica Camp, Seligman, 2010.



Linc Buddy after a hard day at the fall wagon, Francis Creek Camp, O RO Ranch, 2006. Linc was the Francis Creek camp man and jigger boss for the ROs for several years.





Texas cowboy Dakota Falcon brands out of a holdup at the O RO Ranch, 2009.





Cisco Scott waits for the wagon boss to rope his mount for the next morning's circle at Francis Creek, 2006. Cisco has worked for the ROs for more than 30 years.







Ralf LeSueur drags calves at Redlands Camp on Babbitt Ranches, 2007.  
At 10 years old, Ralf was already riding with the Babbitt wagon.







Cisco Scott relaxes while he waits for the wrangler to bring the remuda for the next morning's circle. O RO headquarters, 2008.





A young cowboy relaxes at the horse barn after a long day. O RO Ranch, 2008.



See more of Kathy McCraine's work at [www.kathymccraine.com](http://www.kathymccraine.com).