Johnson County War

Ned 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 Bighorn mountain slopes
Life was sweet, we lived on the meat of the deer and the antelope

We cut house logs up on the mountain, with the team we hauled 'em down
Peeled 'em and we stacked 'em up, piles in bottom ground
Traded for some cattle, turned them out on the open range
Skies were blue but we never knew how things were gonna change

Old Powder River, you're muddy and you're wide
How many men have died along your shores
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 chopping wood
They filled me in on the local news, there ain't none of it that sounded goo
d
Said there'd been some cattle stealing, by some no count outlaw band
We'd all been branded rustlers by the big ranchers of this land

So it was us against the cattle men and the years just made it worse
First the drought and then the tough winter, Johnson County been dealt a cur
se
Then there came the story about the two dry [?] tax
Ranger Jones and John Tisdale, both shot in the back

Oh, Powder River, you're muddy and you're wide
How many men have died along your shores
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Then last night at supper time, well, a rider stopped by chance
He said the cattle men, their hired guns, just burned the Kaycee ranch
Two men had died this morning, 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
They caught the cattle men at the TA ranch and surrounded all four sides
They hailed the house with bullets, swore they were gonna pay
Then the cavalry came from across the plains, once again they saved the day

Well, they marched them off to Cheyenne, no one went to jail
The cattle men were all turned loose and their 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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