“Well, come along boys and listen to my tales, I’ll tell you ‘bout my troubles on the Old Chis’m Trail …”

Celebrated in song and film, the Chisholm Trail stretched from south Texas to Abilene, Kansas during the 1870’s – 1880’s. Probably 9 million head of longhorn steers were driven along this route. Its tales have become legends of the American West.

The Trail passed just west of Duncan, Oklahoma and is memorialized by their local museum, “the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center”. Duncan is about 80 miles south of Oklahoma City, on Highway 81.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Center. While not related to anything about Bill Hart or the Oklahoma Land Rush, it is part of our Western Heritage and honors the American Cowboy.

The Center houses a vast collection of western themed artworks: paintings and sculptures by local and nationally known artists, including Remington and Russell, and a 5/8 scale bronze of a sitting ‘Chief Geronimo’.

The interactive Experience Theater features a giant screen movie that takes you on a cattle drive. [You can smell the bacon fryin’ and might even get a little splashed when they cross a river]. The Campfire Theater seats you around the evening fire with two Animatronic cowboys: Jessie Chisholm and a trail boss. As they drink their coffee, they discuss life on the trail.

Of course, it also has a chuckwagon and general store display as well as roping and branding venues for the kids (in all of us). And it is not expensive.

If you’re in the vicinity, I recommend a visit.

BILL CROWL