



In Without Knocking
oil on canvas, 1909, courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

OLD TOWN STANFORD

Stanford was established in 1882 along the main freight line between Fort Benton and Judith Gap. Originally nestled at the base of Antelope Buttes west of the current town site, the towns folk moved buildings and all to the present site when the railroad arrived in 1907. According to local legend, the Mercantile kept its door open for business even during the moving process.

Originally named Antelope Butte Springs, a Postmaster General insisted that the name was too long and shortened it to Stanford.

In Without Knocking shows old town Stanford in the 1880s when the night before the cattle drive some of the cowboys, among them Henry Keeton, the Skelton brothers and Matt Price, rode into town for a little celebrating. Russell, a night herder at the time, painted this based on the story told to him - the cowboys swore the details in the painting were just as they described them to Russell.

The destination for this first major cattle drive from the Judith Basin was the Northern Pacific railhead at Miles City. Upon reaching their destination, they learned the railroad would not be there until winter, so the herd was trailed 125 miles farther to the railhead at Glendive.

