



## **Richard Loudon**

(1920 – 2008)

**Richard Loudon** was born September 2, 1920 into a ranching family in Las Animas County, Colorado. His father homesteaded near Branson, CO and Richard, his younger brother, Willard and their sister, Dorothy, would continue the ranching tradition with their families. Richard was proud of being a cattleman and devoted his life to the family ranch and to his small rural community. He was salutatorian at Branson High School in 1937 and would later serve for 18 years on the school board. While most of his life's work was centered in, and around, Branson, Loudon's accomplishments over the course of 88 years reveal just what a remarkable man he was--as a successful cattleman, a community leader, an author, a respected scholar and historian, preservationist, and tireless advocate for higher

education. He earned an Associates of Arts Degree from Trinidad St. Junior College in 1939 and went on to the University of Colorado and University of Missouri, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism. Loudon served in the U.S. Signal Corps and Air Force during World War II. He returned home in 1946 to work on the family ranch, married Grace Wakefield and they had one son, Mack.

Richard Loudon was present at the founding of the Santa Fe Trail Association at Trinidad, Colorado in 1986 and was named SFT Ambassador at the 2007 Symposium. He assisted with the National Park Service survey of the historic route of the Santa Fe Trail in 1988 and contributed many fine articles to Wagon Tracks over the years. He served on the advisory council of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, the Board of Directors of the SFTA, and as President of the Bent's Fort Chapter. His reputation led to Loudon being consulted on many county and state projects. He was president of the Trinidad Historical Society and a founding member of the A. R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art. Loudon joined the Colorado Archaeological Society in the 1950's and later served as president of the society. He participated in the excavation of sites throughout Las Animas County in Colorado. In later years, numerous honors were bestowed upon Loudon by the many organizations he served and the people who recognized his tremendous life-time of contribution to history, community, and the educational institutions of southeastern Colorado. He was a true scholar with a rich sense of humor, much respected by everyone whose lives he touched. Richard died June 18, 2008, at the age of 87.

