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**Review of *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History* Edited by Simon Evans, Sarah Carter, and Bill Yeo**

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*Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History.* Edited by Simon Evans, Sarah Carter, and Bill Yeo. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2000. Illustrations, selected bibliography, notes, index. xiv + 232 pp. \$29.95 paper.

This collection presents a selection of papers delivered at the Canadian Cowboy Conference held in Calgary, Alberta, in 1997 in conjunction with the Glenbow Museum's "Canadian Cowboy Exhibition." The subtitle indicates the main theme, but American readers should note that all of the authors focus on ranching north of the border, and particularly on southern Alberta. They present new research from that frontier and compare it to the existing literature in the United States. The main purpose of their efforts, however, is to challenge the traditional vision of Canadian ranching first articulated by Lewis G. Thomas and refined by such disciples as David Breen, Sheilagh Jameson, and Patrick Dunae, a vision of Canadian ranching that contrasts sharply with the American experience. Canada, they claimed, presented an orderly frontier dominated by a paternalistic British-

Canadian elite that lent an aristocratic tone to ranching society.

By contrast, the authors in this collection find striking similarities with the American range. Terry Jordan-Bychkov concludes that Canadian ranching techniques typify the American "Midwestern system" described in his own seminal work. Simon Evans demonstrates that American ranch managers and foremen taught those techniques to British and Canadian greenhorns, and Joy Oetelaar provides a sketch of George Lane, the most prominent American cattleman on the Canadian range. Warren Elofson argues that the northern frontier featured more crime and violence than Canadian mythology admits. Two articles offer novel comparisons. Brian Dippie demonstrates that Western artist Charles M. Russell visualized no cross-border differences in ranching or cowboys, and Lorain Lounsberry chronicles how Canadians participated in, and even organized, their own "Wild West" shows based on the Buffalo Bill model.

The parallels drawn by the authors are persuasive, but not conclusive. Some articles are too brief or rely too heavily on anecdotal evidence to be more than suggestive. Moreover, they do not directly address many of the contentions of Thomas and company. Significantly, no representative from that school is included in this collection, although Alan McCullough examines one member of the British-Canadian elite in his portrait of Fred Stimson, part-owner and first manager of the mammoth North West Cattle Company (the Bar U). And not every article in the collection deals with cross-border comparisons. Henry Klassen on the economic history of two mid-sized ranches and Max Foran on changes in ranch lease policies move into the virtually uncharted post-1914 era, while Sarah Carter offers a preliminary glimpse at neglected participants in ranching: women and Native people.

The articles in this collection do not resolve the debate about the similarities and differences between Canadian and American

ranching, but they do provide insights that deserve to be read and considered.

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