1992

Review of Renderbrook: A Century Under the Spade Brand

James W. Cox
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly

Part of the Other International and Area Studies Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/720

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
Renderbrook: A Century Under the Spade Brand.

In the context of the current concern over the disappearance of the family farm, this work is important because it presents the story of one successful family enterprise. In the late nineteenth century I. L. Ellwood applied a fortune made from barbed wire to create a model cattle
operation in west Texas that exists today. His business expanded through careful management and an eye toward innovation. Kelton draws in various aspects of the operation that influenced the evolution of the ranch by considering new technology, diversification, changes in daily ranch operation, and the new role of the cowboy in keeping enterprise running. As journalists are wont to do, Kelton relies on anecdotes, but he writes well and presents an enjoyable case study of large-scale cattle ranching and its unfolding history over the course of one century. What emerges is a sense of how the maturing cattle industry helped develop the rural West.

JAMES W. COX  
Department of History  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln