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At Home on the Range: Essays on the History of Western Social and Domestic Life.

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At Home on the Range: Essays on the History of Western Social and Domestic Life. Edited by John R. Wunder. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985. Tables, notes, bibliographical essay, index. xiii+213 pp. \$29.95.

John Wunder has performed a service to those interested in the social side of western life by bringing these useful and interesting essays together. Part of the Contributions in American History series, this volume contains perspectives on agricultural history that range from the analytical to first-person observation.

The topics considered are initial cultural implantation, agricultural acculturation, collectivism, technology, war and cultural change, and agricultural imagery and reality. James I. Fenton's essay, "Critters, Sourdough, and Dugouts: Women and Imitation Theory on the Staked Plains, 1875-1910" speaks to the first topic area by examining women's lives and culture on the northwestern Texas Plains. His findings support the validity of imitation

theory by demonstrating that women did not change radically on the Texas Plains but instead applied known ways and solutions in their new homes. In a later piece, Deborah J. Hoskins investigates material culture on the Oklahoma farming frontier between 1889 and 1907 in an attempt to determine the availability of technology on this relatively late frontier. Hoskins finds that because numerous material goods are indeed available around the turn of the twentieth century, the period of isolation and deprivation is shorter in Oklahoma than on earlier frontiers.

Other essays are by Rodolfo Rocha on early ranching along the Rio Grande, Rebecca J. Herring on field matrons and acculturation on the Kiowa-Commanche reservation in the Oklahoma Territory, Jacqueline S. Reinier on concepts of domesticity on the southern Plains frontier, Byron Price on the Panhandle Stock Association, Janet Schmelzer on the early years of the Texas Farm Bureau Federation, Robert C. Williams on the rhetoric of "horse lovers and tractor boosters," and George Q. Flynn on farmers and the draft during World War II. The collection ends with Charles L. Wood's and James E. Brink's "Cowboy Life on a Western Ranch: Reminiscences of Alexander Mackay."

As with any anthology, the quality of the individual pieces varies. Overall, however, the essays more than fulfill Wunder's promise that they will "challenge the conceptualization of one-dimensional agricultural, social and domestic life experiences" (p. xi).

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