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Review of *Texas Women on the Cattle Trails*. Edited by Sara R. Massey

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Texas Women on the Cattle Trails. Edited by Sara R. Massey. Introduction by Joyce Gibson Roach. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006. x + 326 pp. Map, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

It's been almost twenty years since Patricia Limerick debunked myths of the Old West and

forced us to look at the role of women, Native Americans, and minorities in the American West. But if the new history brought women to prominence, it was as stoic homemakers in difficult, almost impossible circumstances. We see them walking patiently beside wagon trains, collecting buffalo chips for fuel, hoeing rock-hard ground for a vegetable garden, but never on cattle drives, never on horseback. Men—Anglo men—drove those cattle north. This book demonstrates that many women in the Great Plains, specifically Texas, did indeed work and drive cattle. They weren't all gentle tamers.

In her introduction, Joyce Roach surveys the riding habits of Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo women, emphasizing that women were not just homemakers. They rode, instead of walking—and the view of life on horseback was very different from that on the ground.

Drawing on letters, diaries, and journals, the contributors provide detailed pictures of sixteen women who worked cattle and of the way their lives really were—sometimes joyous, sometimes unhappy. They are a diverse group—some born to the life, others married into it, some successes and some failures. Some lived the cattle life daily; others moved on, either because of success or failure.

Most of the women are unknown. The familiar names are Molly Goodnight and Cornelia Adair. Goodnight was the only Anglo woman in seventy-five miles on the High Plains of Texas. While she may have mothered the cowboys, what isn't generally known is that she also accompanied Charles Goodnight on two trips to Dodge City, driving a wagon and, once, earning his scorn for mistaking distant trees for stalking Indians.

Adair, wife of Goodnight's partner, was born into wealth in the East but fascinated by the West. She rode with the Goodnights, taking cattle to the Palo Duro ranch, and once rode sidesaddle for twelve days. After her husband's death, she presided over the ranch, a huge financial empire—and continued to ride the range with the cowboys and eat their chuck-wagon meals on her annual visits.

These essays document the lives of self-assured and assertive women and provide the background material for much scholarly and creative work to come. Sarah Massey chose her subjects and her contributors well.

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