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Winter 1998

**Review of *The Hog Ranches of Wyoming: Liquor, Lust, and Lies Under Sagebrush Skies* By Larry K. Brown**

Rebecca Howard

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

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*The Hog Ranches of Wyoming: Liquor, Lust, and Lies Under Sagebrush Skies.* By Larry K. Brown. Glendo, Wyoming: High Plains Press, 1995. Photographs, index. xiii + 127 pp. \$9.95 paper.

In *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* by Larry L. King and Peter Masterson, the titled place of ill-repute was nicknamed the Chicken Ranch. In Wyoming locals referred to such places as Hog Ranches. Established to supply wine, women, and song to military outposts in the nineteenth century, the history of the Hog Ranches has received little attention until now. It is the story of these dens which Larry K. Brown pursues here. The book has the cover of a dime store novel and a title that draws immediate attention. For these reasons readers might approach the work looking for a lively and entertaining history of the subject.

In his exposition, the author strings together a series of anecdotes graced by characters such as Mother Featherlegs (nicknamed for her red hair and pantaloons), Al Packer (the Colorado cannibal), Dr. Will Frackleton (the Sagebrush Dentist), and Calamity Jane. Each played out some part of his or her life among the Hog Ranches of Wyoming. Individually such tales are entertaining, and brought together they might have highlighted an interesting passage in history. Unfortunately, Brown tells them with too great a concern for dramatics and too little concern for documentation or cohesion. The dramatics might have fulfilled the cover's promise of entertainment rather than history, but the author's sexist commentary spoils the fun. In one instance, while discussing the lives of prostitutes who worked in the Hog Ranches, Brown writes that the "tired and trying life did not . . . dampen their feminine instincts. Jealousy, for example, was as easily provoked in them as in any ladies of a church sewing circle" (p. 31). Such undocumented assertions and wild prose might be acceptable in a Zane Gray novel but in a book that professes to be history it is out of place.

Larry Brown is author of a continuing column in the *Annals of Wyoming* and has produced more than eight hundred articles for various media. The documentation of his sources for *Hog Ranches of Wyoming*, which include books, articles, court records, and newspapers, is peripheral. The phenomenon of the Hog Ranches is intriguing and a subject worthy of inquiry. The style of pulp history which characterizes this text will undoubtedly find an audience when placed in truck stops and tourist traps, but among historians it will find little acclaim.

REBECCA HOWARD  
Lincoln, Nebraska