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Review of *Black Cowboys of Texas* Edited by Sara R. Massey

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The work is divided into three sections. Part one, "The Early Cowboys," deals with the establishment and early growth of the cattle industry in Texas between 1820 and the end of the Civil War. Part two, "Cowboys of the Cattle Drives," engages the heyday of the cowboy era, up until the barbed wire enclosure of the open range and the expansion of the railroads in the late 1880s. The final section, "Twentieth-Century Cowboys," focuses on the kinds of ranch work done by African Americans from the turn-of-the-century through the 1940s and '50s. Placement of individual histories is based on their subjects' most active working years.

The preface, introduction, and explanatory notes help establish a historical framework for the biographies. Particularly useful is Alwyn Barr's introduction, which provides an excellent summary of the historical material relevant to the study of Black cowboys from his book *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas* (originally published in 1973 and reprinted in 1996).

A unique feature of the text, one that could have been more consistently developed, concerns the roles of women. Only two chapters focus on cowgirls. The book's opening chapter notes that the experiences of ranch wives are important because they illuminate the daily activities and foodways of cowboy families, but too few of the subsequent chapters investigate this in any thorough way.

The collection's main strength—its structure and thoughtful content—enables readers to differentiate between the larger dynamics of cowboys' lives and the idiosyncratic details and personal circumstances which make for much enjoyable reading. Overall, the collection presents a more complete picture of cowboy life than any single biography of any of its subjects could render.

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Black Cowboys of Texas. Edited by Sara R. Massey. Introduction by Alwyn Barr. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000. Photographs, contributors, bibliography, index. xix + 361 pp. \$29.95.

This is one of those rare books that truly push the boundaries of the extant primary source material. *Black Cowboys of Texas* is the collaborative work of twenty-seven professional and amateur historians. The majority of the book's twenty-five chapters are biographical sketches of individual African American cowboys or cowgirls. Most chapters successfully weave the scant information available about individuals into short, engaging profiles. The collection focuses on Texas, but also details cattle drives to Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota.