



**Texas Women on the Cattle Trails (Sam Rayburn Series on Rural Life, sponsored by Texas A&M University-Commerce)**

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## Texas Women on the Cattle Trails (Sam Rayburn Series on Rural Life, sponsored by Texas A&M University-Commerce)

*Texas Women on the Cattle Trails* tells the stories of sixteen women who drove cattle up the trail from Texas during the last half of the nineteenth century.

Some were young; some were old (over thirty). Some took to the trails by choice; others, out of necessity. Some went along to look at the stars; others, to work the cattle. Some made money and built ranching empires, but others went broke and lived hard, even desperate lives.

The courage of Margaret Borland and the spunk of Willie Matthews, the pure delight of Cornelia Adair viewing the buffalo, and the joy of Mary Bunton gazing at night constellations on the open range offer new insights into women's experiences of the West.

For the most part, these were ordinary women doing the best they could in difficult frontier conditions. They did not see themselves as living in unusual times or participating in "romantic" lifestyles, although the women who actually took to the trail were few in number.

Like the cowboys on cattle drives, they faced dust and heat, thirst and exhaustion, rustlers and Indians, stampedes and prairie fires. Drawing heavily on the accounts of the women themselves, the authors of these chapters vividly illustrate the complexity and diversity of women's experiences on the cattle trails. Their stories of cattle drives and moving cattle to distant pastures add an important chapter to the story of life in the real Old West.

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