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Review

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Legends of Our Times: Native Cowboy Life. By Morgan Baillargeon and Leslie Tepper. (Vancouver, UBC Press, and Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1998. x + 254 pp. \$38.95)

This is a wonderful book, and I can't wait to view the exhibit upon which it is based. Anglo cowboys have been getting serious scholarly attention for some time. Native cowboys, however, have been mostly ignored in both the United States and Canada, except for a rare study like Peter Iverson's *When Indians Became Cowboys*. Once the buffalo disappear, so too does the native horseman. Thus, this fascinating book on Canadian native cowboys yesterday and today makes an important, much-needed contribution.

The authors are curators of a major exhibition on native cowboys that opened at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) on June 18, 1998. This book serves as an elegant catalogue to the exhibition, but it is much more. "*Legends of Our Times* is a different sort of book presenting the words and works of Plains, Plateau, and Métis ranchers and cowboys themselves. The expression of these voices takes several forms: narrative and legends, research studies, and artistic statements such as poetry, works of art, and objects of everyday use" (p. 14).

The book is structured in three parts. Following a concise introduction to "Native Cowboy Life," Part I explores the "Sacred Beings" of many Canadian Plains and Plateau native cultures. These brief folkloric segments relate native stories about the horse, buffalo, wolf, coyote, deer, and dog. These humorous, often wise, tales draw the reader into viewing the world through native eyes.

Part II presents different views of "Ranching Life," including a look at "Women and the Ranching Life," by Clara Spotted Elk of Lama Deer, Montana. Especially enjoyable are the lyrics from two songs, "Lonely Cowboy" and "Tried, True, and Tested," written by one of my favorite western singers, Tim Ryan Roullier (Salish). Historical photographs, exquisite native artifacts, and paintings add stunning visual impact to the book's text. I did not count the illustrations, but most of the heavy stock 8.25 by 11.25-inch pages display one or more brilliantly reproduced photos or paintings. Kudos to the book's designer, George Vaitkunas, for creating the clear, visually appealing layout.

Part III explores cowboy fun: "Rodeo and Other Entertainment." Phil Baird (Brulé) offers a lively discussion of "Indian Rodeo Cowboys of the Dakotas." Like much of the book, this essay shows how culturally porous the U.S.-Canadian border is. This section also includes enjoyable poetry and songs, such as the 1971 clas-

sic "He's an Indian Cowboy in the Rodeo" by Buffy Sainte-Marie (Métis/Newiyaw).

I am reluctant to find fault with such an expansive, impressive project. My sole criticism is that citations are a bit thin in some of the essays, notably the introduction (pp. 2–16). This precludes readers from pursuing in greater depth some of the fascinating topics introduced in the book. We can only hope that other major museums will take this imposing book and exhibition as a model and produce similar materials for other native cultures of the Americas.

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The Making of a Mexican American Mayor: Raymond L. Telles of El Paso. By Mario T. García. (El Paso, Texas Western Press, 1998. x + 187 pp. \$12.50 paper)

A neglected chapter of Mexican American history is brought to light in this beauty of a book. In fact, it reminds one of that West African proverb, "Only when lions have historians will hunters stop being heroes." Well, the lions have their historian in this account of the El Paso, Texas, electoral initiative (1957–1961), when the Mexican American community implemented Mexican ways of civic engagement, turning community mutual aid into political success. The lions' historian, Mario T. García, influenced by that crucial political legacy, examines direct engagement efforts of a post-World War II community, a so-called Mexican American generation that refused to accept second-class citizenship; a generation that acted collectively to use the resources around them to create an uncommon story of political success. Before Henry Cisneros or Federico Peña, one Mexican American leader, Raymond Telles, reluctantly came forward to be the essence of this story.

García, a well-published Chicano historian, focuses on Telles as part of a larger ongoing struggle of collective memory, or on what it means for a community to struggle under a legacy of second-class citizenship. The family upbringing that Telles experienced in south El Paso, his values and personal qualities, religion, education, marriage, and early military career tell a story of a public servant in the making. Telles's record as county clerk and support from a local newspaper, Mexican American veterans, League of United Latin American Citizens, and other mutual-aid networks on the South Side, particularly the grass-roots efforts of his brother Richard Telles, led to his 1957 election as mayor of El Paso. The election was neither an ethnic campaign nor a mandate for