

STUDY OF RANCH MANAGEMENT AT
GEORGE LANE'S BAR U:
TRANSMISSION OF PRACTICES FROM CONRAD KOHRS OF MONTANA

by

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GRANT-KOHR'S RANCH
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DEER LODGE, MONTANA

For all those that did and do work at the Bar U

PREFACE

George Lane, one of western Canada's longest standing and most successful stockraisers, began his career in the cattle industry as a ranch-hand in the late 1870s and early 1880s in Montana. The Bar U Ranch of Alberta would become Lane's own by the turn of the twentieth century, where he oversaw one of the largest ranching spreads of the Canadian west. Within just two decades, Lane went from Montana ranch-hand, to going across the border to become Bar U foreman, to be owner of multiple ranches across Alberta, and finally to become owner and manager of one of the most famous ranches in western Canada. The Lane era of the Bar U lasted from 1902 to 1927 and propelled the ranch to new heights of financial returns and international prominence. Why was Lane successful? What contributed to his management practices?

The literature on the history of western ranching in Canada and the U.S. is beginning to recognize different levels of economic and ranch management success in general and before and after major environmental events, such as the "hard winter" across the U.S. northern plains in 1886-1887 and a similar catastrophe across western Canada in 1906-1907. Historical ranching studies are also increasingly identifying management techniques that led to these differences in which outfits survived hard winters and those that did not. In previous research on a similarly large and prominent operation in Montana, the Grant-Kohrs Ranch (GRKO) during the period of Conrad Kohrs' and John Bielenberg's management, I identified practices that led to the resiliency of the Kohrs and Bielenberg (K&B) Land and Livestock Company of Deer Lodge, MT. These included strategies such as investment diversification, continued and advantageous use of large

lines of credit, maintaining long-term relationships with top cattle shippers who sold much of the ranch's cattle, delegation of ranching duties to trusted employees, and maintaining hay for high-quality cattle near the home ranch while grazing remaining cattle on open range. Previous works on Lane and the Bar U ranch mention his use of similar management strategies, but do not offer reasons as to why these practices existed or spread. There is little research done on understanding how management practices that lead to resilience originate and transmit within the industry. Lane's story is an ideal case study for investigating transmission of management practices between stockgrowers. After settling in the Virginia City area of southwest Montana at age sixteen, Lane found work as a cowboy for several Montana outfits starting in 1877 during the U.S. "beef boom". One of the ranches Lane worked for was K&B.

Another associated area not focused on in the literature concerns the numerous linkages between Alberta and its neighbor to the south, Montana. Perhaps this is due to the simple fact of the two being on opposite sides of a national border; historians have tended to split the two regions' ranching histories by nation with a U.S. story and a Canadian story of western stockraising. With the era in question being the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century, this was an era when the national border was barely patrolled or enforced save for a few widely scattered fences and ranchers or cowboys keeping watch for inter-mingling cattle herds. This was a much less visible and more porous border enabling crossing and interaction of cattle and cattle drivers. Although books and articles have mentioned connections, no case studies or larger themed works have addressed how specific ranchers may have interacted or shared practices despite the

numerous examples of border crossing ranch managers that exist. Lane is a prime example of this border crossing. For over two decades, Lane managed the Bar U implementing similar strategies ranchers like K&B utilized to fruition in Montana.

With these linkages in mind, this report is not only a story of the connection and influence between two of the most prominent ranchers of their period, Lane and Kohrs, but also a story of interaction between Alberta and Montana. Despite the existence of a national border since the beginnings of ranching in the two regions, there has been significant shaping of Alberta ranchers' management practices and cultural styles by Montanans and those Alberta ranchers' experiences in Montana. Even many of the earliest stockraisers, foremen, and cattle were from Montana or had spent their formative years there. While Alberta ranchers built on these skills and shaped them into their own unique style, more recognition can be given to Montana's contribution to ranching in the province. With this, we can more thoroughly understand the roots of much of Alberta and western Canadian ranching.

This report seeks to identify the linkages Lane had with K&B, compares and contrasts their management styles, and illuminate processes and events that shaped Lane's outlook on cattle raising. It also emphasizes, expands upon, and applies the concept of different "ranching cultures" present across these regions through history, which is a concept not widely used in previous works. These are important features not at the forefront of currently used materials including those in park interpretation, which this report strives to inform. A principal goal of this research is that it will be referred to and utilized by park staff to enhance and nuance their visitor programs through adding information and

themes presented to the public. An additional aim is that the report will generate ideas regarding past ranch management to site superintendents and managers that can inform ranch operations.

For the two sister parks, the Bar U and GRKO, that house the remnants of the two respective ranches being researched, this report will also be a point to organize joint project planning around to improve protection of historic structures at the parks. In addition, it explains important connections between the ranches. Having signed a sister park agreement in 2008, the Bar U and GRKO are now and into the future linked with common missions of preserving the materials from the early days of western ranching, telling the account of western ranchers and their lives to the public, contributing to the narrative of westward expansion, and are poised to find a more shared historical story. This research also marks the beginnings of and is a part of a larger collaboration between the parks that strengthened in 2008 when managers and staff from each site visited the other to compare park organizational strategies and results and to share ideas on visitor services, historical interpretation styles, and ranch management. The report extends this growing and long overdue collaboration.

Having sat at what others have commented and I am inclined to agree is perhaps the most beautiful spot on earth, the Bar U home ranch just south of Longview, AB, the seemingly boundless legacy of Fred Stimson, George Lane, Pat Burns, and the rest lives on through the hands of a skilled and knowledgeable staff. I present this research in an effort to contribute to that continuing story.

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September 30, 2010

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During this study, I encountered many familiar and new faces, so many of which deserve thanks. Ken and Deb Pigeon were welcoming and helpful hosts during my Bar U Ranch visit. Ken, the ranch manager for National Parks Canada, facilitated and planned my visit to the ranch, gave me a thorough and insightful tour of the facilities, introduced me to the staff, and pointed me to a plethora of sources in their archives. He devoted a considerable amount of time to ensure I found the information I needed and helped guide me to various staff members and materials that would take the project in new and rewarding directions. Spanning the previous four years, I have worked on this and other National Park Service ranching projects with Chris Ford, Integrated Resources Program Manager at GRKO. Our initial work on the early management history of GRKO led to this appropriate extension to the Bar U, which had numerous similar qualities. Chris located the grant for the preceding project and also the one that sponsored this research, she supplied numerous leads and suggestions for research contacts, was a principal editor for the report, and was a patient over-seer to its success.

Lyndel Meikle and Peggy Gow at GRKO helped read drafts for editing and provided commentary. An exceptionally experienced author and historical interpreter, Lyndel was a keen writer to whom I listened. GRKO Superintendent Laura Rotegard located funds to pay for the project. The Inter-mountain Region International Conservation (IMRICO) program of the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) provided the primary funds for the research through grant #1586-0805-673 (task agreement #J1586080015). This was added to a previous grant from the NPS Rocky Mountain Cooperative Ecosystems Unit (RM-

CESU) program, which gave funding to the author's research on GRKO through grant #1586-CESU-CZS (task agreement #J1242070061). Thank you to NPS Research Coordinator Kathy Tonnessen and NPS Cultural Resource Specialist Christine Whitacre for helping with administration and coordinating of funds.

At Washington State University in Pullman, thanks go to Rod Clausen, Dianne Schlott, and Christine Alexandre-Zeoli for smoothly handling disbursement logistics of the grants and answering occasionally numerous bureaucratic questions with clarity.

The author had the pleasure of visiting and conducting research not only at the Bar U, but at adjacent sites as well. Librarians at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary were friendly and knowledgeable in searching for rare sources and fonds in their archives. The village of Longview nearest the ranch and the city of Calgary were filled with welcoming residents that made me feel at home and ensured my stay was immensely enjoyable.

Most of all, I thank the numerous Bar U staff who I only met briefly, but aided this research immeasurably. Throughout my stay, I ran into multiple historical interpreters, guides, and support staff. All had a story of Bar U history or personal memories of the ranch that opened up avenues I had not considered. The ranch has some of the most colorful and dedicated workers I have experienced with a wealth of diverse opinions and backgrounds on their subject. Their passion for not only their job, but also the place that is this ranch and what it represents, makes them unique. In particular, Jean Gallup was open and forward in giving recommendations for harder to find books and articles, in forwarding me to the most experienced staff concerning specific topics, and in pointing me to the most knowledgeable residents of the area. Having been at the ranch since its

opening as a historic site in 1995, Jean brought an unmatched view of the Bar U and her opinions helped shape the structure and conclusions of this report. Thanks to all of you.

STUDY OF RANCH MANAGEMENT AT GEORGE LANE'S BAR U

CHAPTER I: OVER THE BORDER

As ranchers and historians have written their own first and second hand experiences, respectively, regarding the story of western ranching, the result has been a wide ranging narrative for both the history of ranching in western Canada and the western U.S. While the literature for each nation's early days of ranching is robust and spans nearly a century, a debate has persisted the last three decades concerning the similarities and differences between the ranching experiences of the two regions. Much of this disagreement regards the level and type of government intervention in shaping the settlement of stockraisers across the western territories, the timing and causes of different "boom" and "bust" economic cycles in the industry, characteristics of detrimental climatic events such as "hard winters" and whether or not those fundamentally changed rangeland and ranch financial management, and the type of cultural influences and interaction found in each region.

The more recent works since the 1980s on the history of western Canadian ranching, such as those by David Breen and Warren Elofson, argue that Canada's history on this topic does not simply parallel, nor is it an extension of the U.S. stockraising experience.¹ These works highlight substantial differences between Canadian and U.S. ranching histories in terms of the Canadian national government's comparatively heavy involvement in shaping the settlement, establishment, and operation of western ranches in the earliest decades of cattleraising. The Canadian national government actively encouraged settlement of the west, not only for a general population as the U.S. experienced with the Homestead Act of 1862, but for a specific population of ranchers by formulating rangeland leases

favorable to stockraisers who could then enjoy the security of land ownership. These became mandatory leases, which also helped to decrease free grazing across western Canada rangeland in the early 1880s.

Yet, this narrative of unique government intervention contains a few similar periods that occurred in both Canada and the U.S. Western stockraising in each region began with small-scale ranching settlers who were able to stay afloat or succeed through establishing relationships with industrial and/or government workers already in the area. These were miners, in the case of the U.S., and it was the North-West Mounted Police and Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) workers, in the case of Canada. Ranchers supplied beef to each population of workers keeping their enterprises in business.² These small-scale stockraisers were eventually joined by large eastern-financed cattle companies that at first financially succeeded, then grew increasingly credit leveraged, and eventually went bust. These financial successes partially depended on the growing markets out east to which these ranchers could sell their beef. The U.S. markets were primarily in and went through Chicago to the east coast, while the markets for Canadian beef also went through Chicago or eastern maritime ports, often to Great Britain. “Eastern” demand for beef was a major factor in the establishment and rapid economic boom of both the Canadian and U.S. western ranching industries, although “eastern” buyers in the U.S. referred to those entities and individuals in eastern states within the nation. “East” for Canada referred to this, those in eastern Canadian provinces, and also numerous buyers across the Atlantic in Great Britain.³ A further similarity between the two regions is that through the 1890s and into the first decade of the 1900s, mass settlement of the west by farmers began to encroach on the

western range and resulted in struggles for land as stockraisers rapidly became fenced range managers and started operating smaller enterprises.⁴

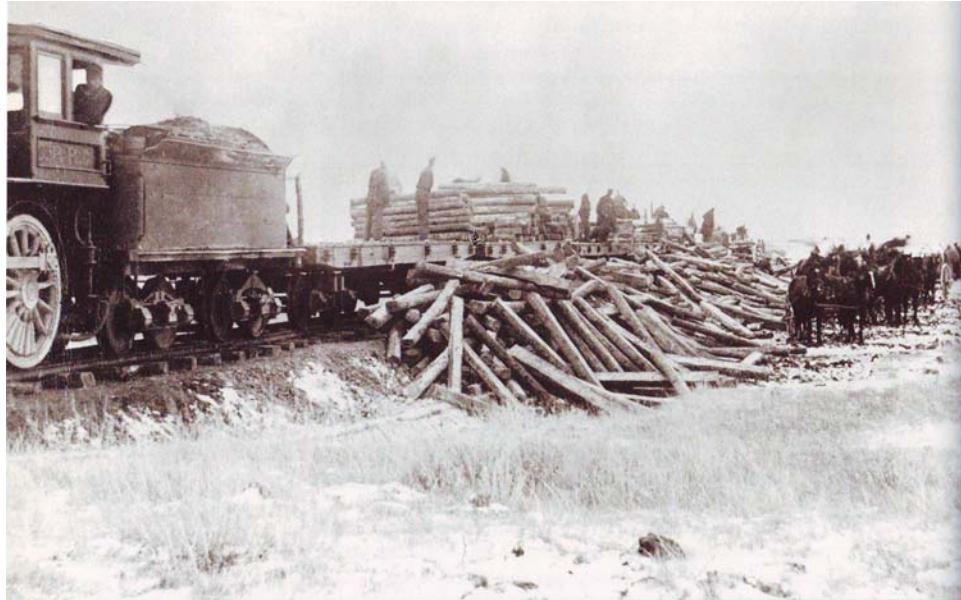


Photo 1. Workers on the CPR building the railway, n.d. Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, 32.

While Canadian cattleraisers were a distinct political advocacy and social group of their own working towards their increased territorial control of western Canada in opposition to western Canadian farmers, there were cases of ranchers who had brought managerial styles with them from previous experiences in the U.S. With the significant number of ranchers and foremen during the earliest decades of ranching in Alberta that came from a specific region in the U.S. and the large amount of parallels between one of those prominent early Alberta ranchers and one of his mentors in that same U.S. western territory, this report will argue that early western Canadian ranching was tightly linked and shared numerous qualities with that region, Montana. The earliest western Canadian stockraisers were not distinct in every aspect and did bring certain management practices they learned while in the U.S.⁵ In addition, ranching geographers and historians such as Simon Evans argue that

ranching in Alberta began due to the national government promoting ranching as to have a local industry to provide ample food for police and First Nation peoples already settled there. This was due, however, to promote Canadian enterprise and innovation instead of having to rely on Montana stockraisers and merchants to migrate up from south of the border and fill the void.⁶ Evans also mentions that Alberta gained much of its early ranching expertise from Montana, whether it was ranch managers and ranch-hands relocating to Alberta or the transmission of ranching practices.⁷

There is also a discussion among historians of western Canadian ranching regarding the cultural practices among Alberta ranchers and ranch-hands along with how and from where cultural elements such as ranching management practices, styles of dress, recreation, and language came. Lewis G. Thomas argues Alberta ranching was much a British-style enterprise with mostly influences of English culture. Evans and Breen argue that, as mentioned earlier in this chapter concerning early ranching settlement and operation, western Canada was a distinct entity with its own culture more independent of U.S. influence.⁸ Terry Jordan adds that western Canadian and nearly all other ranching regions of North America have their own cultures, but they are mixtures of practices and styles transmitted through interactions over time. Alberta ranching, in this view, is an amalgamation of practices from places as distant as Texas, the U.S. Midwest, Europe, and California.⁹ Ranching culture from these areas eventually spread to places close to Alberta, such as the U.S. Pacific Northwest and northern plains, where they then crossed over into Alberta through rancher and cowboy interactions and migration.

While Evans and Breen note connections between Montana and Alberta in terms of some ranchers and ranch-hands crossing over the border and establishing themselves in western Canada; Jordan describes cultural elements that came into Alberta. None of these authors emphasize and focus on the over-whelming amount of influence of Montana ranchers, cowboys, and cattle on establishing early Alberta ranching. Within the first two decades of ranching in southern Alberta, numerous stockraisers, foremen, and cattle were coming from Montana, with the primary supply of these arriving for the largest ranches. Not only did Montana have a significant role in shaping Alberta stockraising, there are case studies, such as the subject of this report, George Lane, which show how specific prominent ranchers and foremen brought ranching and financial management practices with them from techniques they learned from ranchers in Montana. I will now expand upon the historical influence of Montana in Alberta ranching briefly.

A. Early Ranching in Alberta by Way of Montana

As ranching began in the southwest portion of the North-West territory of Canada during the mid-1870s, missionary John McDougall and his trader brother David McDougall drove fourteen head of cattle from Ft. Edmonton down to a Methodist mission at Morleyville on the Bow River in November 1873. This established one of the first herds in southern Alberta. Once settled at the Morleyville mission, a larger herd was driven there from Montana by Kenneth McKenzie.¹⁰ Explorers and travelers had been crossing between Montana and what would become Alberta for decades prior to this, especially traders

during the middle part of the nineteenth century.¹¹ Some of the earliest trails across Alberta were set out by people from Montana as well during this period.¹²

By 1874, the North-West Mounted Police arrived at Ft. Macleod and they brought 200 head of cattle with them.¹³ Initial cattleraisers near Ft. Macleod consisted of migrants up from recent stints in the U.S. such as Joseph MacFarland, who along with Henry Olsen, brought a herd from Montana to near Ft. Macleod in 1875.¹⁴ George Emerson was also among the startup ranchers bringing cattle from neighboring Montana.¹⁵ Emerson, along with Tom Lynch, who would eventually work for the Northwest Cattle Company (NWCC) on occasion, drove cattle from the Sun River Valley of Montana to Ft. Macleod during this startup period of Alberta ranching. These two would continue to drive cattle over the border from Montana during this era and send them as far north as Ft. Edmonton. By 1879, after grazing cattle along the Highwood River, Emerson and Lynch constructed a hut alongside where the town of High River, AB would eventually be constructed.¹⁶ John Quirk was another rancher in the Highwood District of southern Alberta during these early years with most of his cattle being from Montana. He had guided a smaller herd from Missoula, MT during the drive that brought initial cattle to the NWCC, the owning company and referential name to the earliest era of the Bar U Ranch.¹⁷

By 1879, the Canadian government entered stockraising and they too brought 1,000 head up from Montana, which supplied daily rations to nearly 300 First Nation peoples at Ft. Macleod through 1880. The government established two ranches in Alberta that year, one near Calgary at Fish Creek and the second at Pincher Creek.¹⁸ As of the 1880s, the largest Alberta ranches were bringing in herds from Montana, such as a herd of 4,000 from

Dillon, MT that went to the Cochrane Ranch.¹⁹ The Cochrane Ranch's first herds also came from Montana, with 600 coming up through Ft. Benton and a herd of 6,700 being purchased in Montana.²⁰ An additional 5,000 cattle were purchased from Montana by the Cochrane Ranch in 1882, giving their ranch a vast majority of cattle having been developed or come through Montana. Even when Cochrane started with sheep ranching, he purchased a large herd of 8,000 sheep from the Sun River area in Montana in 1884.²¹



Figure 1. View of Ft. Macleod, 1883. Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 157.

Beyond cattle-raising, even one of the most prominent and widespread mercantile trading companies across Alberta at the time, I.G. Baker and Company, had their base in Montana at Ft. Benton. I.G. Baker and Company were crucial during these early years as they helped supply beef to the police and First Nation peoples and handled the police's contracts for supplies.²² In those early decades, many of the trade goods and supplies coming into Alberta were pulled by bull trains across trails coming north from Ft. Benton.²³ This trail, known as the Whoop-Up trail and later the Macleod trail, was part of a series of a

few key routes that were used to bring many of the cattle up to southern Alberta from Montana. These were the trails blazed by previous explorers and traders, which included the Great North (or “Old North”) trail with the Whoop-Up/Macleod being the more southern road. This southern route went from Ft. Benton, to the northeast of Great Falls, MT, up to Lethbridge, AB, and onto Ft. Macleod. There was an additional trail that started around the Sun River area of Montana, went west by Great Falls, and then onto Ft. Macleod. Once reaching Ft. Macleod, Calgary was within reach for route travelers and cattle drivers.²⁴

During this time, there were also some additional small-scale ranchers that were upstarts across Alberta. These included policemen who had completed their tours of duty in the area that built their own small ranches, along with a smattering of Canadian settlers from other portions of the east and west who ranched and/or farmed. The government had been attempting to establish control and promotion of settlement across the Canadian west through the 1870s as the North-West Mounted Police arrived in 1874.

By 1881, Canada’s Department of the Interior published a map showing the major geographical features of the western “grazing country”. Much of this early ranching activity, as outlined in the preceding pages, was closest to Ft. Macleod.²⁵ Also during this period, biological surveys were being conducted through the region. These suggested that while buffalo had vanished within a few years, the elevation and arid nature of Alberta was conducive for stockraising more so than agriculture. The mountain slopes would be prone to late frosts and much irrigation would be required for extensive crop growing, but the dry climate produced grasses that retained many of their nutritional qualities. Proclamations

such as these and promotion by the national government helped further the settlement of southern Alberta, although agriculture did flourish even alongside ranching in the early and following decades. Boosters promoting ranching settlement of the Canadian west also noted increasing use of western U.S. rangeland by ranchers, placing the less settled areas of Alberta in contrast to regions such as Montana and Wyoming that had already experienced mining booms and subsequent establishment of large stockraisers by the 1880s.²⁶

Prominent ranchers from the U.S. operating in western Canada included the Conrad brothers and I.G. Baker of Ft. Benton, MT who owned the Circle Ranche. Howell Harris, the ranch's on-site manager, was one of the attendant ranch managers in the Canadian west that was from the U.S. as was J. Lamar of the Walrond Ranch.²⁷ The Walrond was one of the larger ranches in the territory, established by 1884. In 1885, the Walrond's first herd of 3,125 head came from Montana as did the driver of that first herd, Jim Patterson.²⁸ Fred Stimson, manager of the NWCC's Bar U (hereon referred to as "Bar U"), hired Tom Lynch as one of his cowboys, who had experience driving cattle across Montana and had driven one of the first herds from Montana to the North-West Mounted Police in Alberta.²⁹ John Craig, manager of the Oxley Ranch, purchased the Oxley's first herd of about 3,500 head from Montana in 1882.³⁰ The Quorn Ranch, which was a smaller British-owned operation, also had its first large herd of 1,000 head trailed north from Montana.³¹ One of the largest western grazing land claimants and ranchers of the 1880s, Matthew H. Cochrane, had thousands of cattle brought north from Montana as mentioned earlier in this chapter. As early as 1882, the Cochrane Ranch had solidified itself as one of the prominent ranches in the region supplying beef through government contracts to First Nation peoples and North-

West Mounted Police units.³² There were also numerous herds and occasional Hudson Bay Company traders that came to settle as ranchers in southwestern Canada that were from the U.S. These constituted one of the major categories of stockraisers in the region during the 1870s and early 1880s, along with portions of the North-West Mounted Police, startups or financially-backed easterners from Quebec and Ontario, and wealthy Englishmen.³³

By the 1880s, the four largest ranches of western Canada, the Bar U, the Cochrane Ranch, the Oxley Ranch, and the Walrond Ranch had either a major cattle herd of theirs from Montana and/or a foreman that had just arrived from there too.³⁴ Even the initial herd that would mark the beginnings of the Bar U was driven up through Ft. Benton having been purchased in Chicago by Fred Stimson in the spring of 1882.³⁵ The importation of U.S. herds and the establishment of U.S. stockraisers in Canada, however, may have slowed starting in 1886 as the Canadian government placed a ninety day quarantine on cattle crossing the border north into Canada. Ranchers of the North-West territory had protested the continual use of “their” western range by operations south of the border.³⁶

B. The Beginnings of Large Ranch Dominance, 1881-1891

It was during this time, in the mid-to-late 1880s, when increasing attention was paid by the Department of Interior in Ottawa and the Territorial Council in Regina concerning slowing or halting squatting rancher settlement across southern Alberta. Stockraising had been established for nearly a decade across Alberta at that point and ranchers were increasingly hostile to settlers wanting large tracts of land, even from the U.S. Although some larger ranch outfits held formal property rights to the lands they settled and had stock

grazing upon, there were numerous stockraisers who did not. One idea proposed at the national level was a water reserve system whereby certain springs, streams, and river fronts would be usable by a certain number of stockraisers regardless of their previous property rights holding status. Regardless of government policy, fencing was occurring by the mid-to-late 1880s as some ranchers along the Belly River had fenced off approximately 25 continuous miles along the riverbank to stake claim on the water and nearby range.³⁷ In less than two decades from initial ranching in the territory, fencing and staking claims to the open range had occurred within southern Alberta.

The government heard this outcry. In December 1886, a water reserve system was enacted as law allowing for ranchers who already held formal property rights to have access to government designated water reserve areas and for those ranchers to evict squatter ranchers utilizing those areas. With already large acreages of lease holdings and increased control of water rights, the large stockraisers of the period had the means to grow more prominent.³⁸ Despite this, the percentage of squatter ranchers occupying portions of southern Alberta did not change much through the late 1880s into the early 1890s.³⁹ Those that claimed informal rights over rangeland and water sources stayed and continued to make a living, albeit surrounded by a growing number of larger operations.

Breen declares this period of 1881 to 1891 in Alberta as the decade of dominance by the large stockmen due to this political control held by large ranchers in territorial councils and in Ottawa, the disproportionate percentage of rangeland and cattle controlled by the large outfits (which helped define them as “large”), their stability through political support by holding formal leases to their rangeland and associated water rights, and their robust fiscal

health through this period.⁴⁰ Formal leases were large, being up to 100,000 acres and backed by the Canadian government. Ranchers had time on their side as well having three years from signing a lease to stock their range. This policy allowing formal leases was enacted in 1881 with leases in effect for 21 years with a cost of only one cent per acre annually, giving a bias to establishing large acreage ranches.⁴¹ Such ranches appeared fairly quickly taking advantage of the policy as 75 leases were granted in 1882 with twenty more following the subsequent two years. By 1886, 8.5 million acres of land was leased.⁴² Cattle came along too, especially with the rapid boom in leases occurring in 1882. In just that year following the lease policy, imports of cattle into Alberta jumped with more than a double from over 6,000 in 1881 to over 16,000 in 1882.⁴³ It was an initial period of quick growth in the burgeoning western Canadian cattle industry after over five years of large and small-scale outfits sharing and sometimes bickering over rangeland. Just as the 1880s were a decade of prosperity for western U.S. ranchers, so it was too for western Canadian ranchers.

C. The Case of Lane and Kohrs; A Mix of Cultures

Government intervention with policies at the national and territorial levels designed to aid ranchers in gaining large portions of rangeland was unique to western Canada compared to the U.S., although government and private entities encouraging rapid settlement of the west was a shared phenomenon. So too were the ranchers, cowboys, and cattle, more specifically of Montana and Alberta as reviewed earlier in this chapter. One other major area of comparison between early ranching in western Canada and the western

U.S. is that of culture. Recent works looking at cultural comparisons and cultural transmission of practices and styles in ranching include analyses of range and animal management, style of cowboy dress, and technology used. These find that southern Alberta and much of western Montana are part of a larger mix of “Anglo-Texan”, “Anglo-Californian”, and “Midwestern” cattleraising culture during the late nineteenth century and into the turn of the twentieth century.⁴⁴ George Lane of the Bar U and his friend and former rancher boss, Conrad Kohrs of Kohrs and Bielenberg (K&B) Land and Livestock Company shared numerous traits from these various cultures, which inter-mixed across Alberta and Montana.

The “Anglo-Texan” culture included the use of open rangeland so cattle could more “manage themselves” while saddled and skilled cowboys on horseback could effectively herd them and eventually take them to market. It is a resultant mix of Carolina and Mexican ranching cultures (with the cowboy materials and practices specifically from the Mexican tradition), which thrived across Louisiana and east Texas before spreading across the plains and into the U.S. and Canadian Rocky Mountain West (see Figure 2).⁴⁵ Although not every element of this culture, such as the use of longhorn cattle, was present among all western ranchers such as the Lane and K&B, the major elements of heavy open range utilization, a reliance on the open range to produce quality cattle, and the use of cowboy teams to herd and drive cattle short and long distances are present among them. Even specific annual events, such as spring roundups with cowboys of multiple ranches (usually all those in a cattle associations’ district) identifying their outfits’ head through branding, were a part of this culture that spread from the southern U.S.⁴⁶

Besides Anglo-Texan culture, Lane and K&B also exhibited some elements from the neighboring “Anglo-Californian” cattle ranching culture with the most prominent being the use of different grazing pastures in different seasons (e.g. fenced pasture close to the home ranch in winter and low or high elevation rangeland in summer). Jordan argues this was a trademark of nineteenth century ranching that covered an area across the western one-fourth of the U.S., which spanned north to south in a line west from western Montana, western Wyoming, western Colorado, and eastern Arizona.⁴⁷

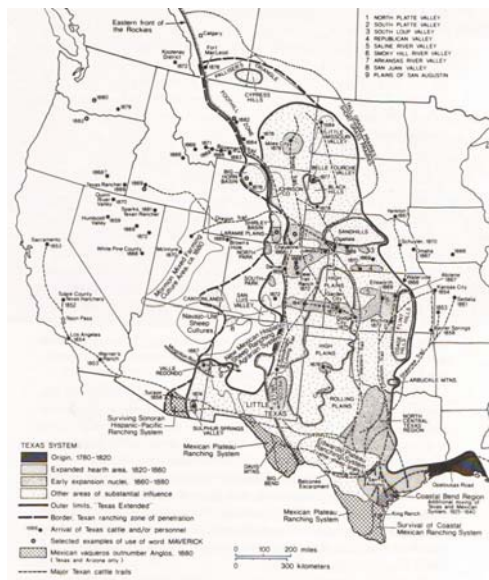


Figure 3. Map showing spread of Anglo-Texan ranching culture, 1780-1880. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*.

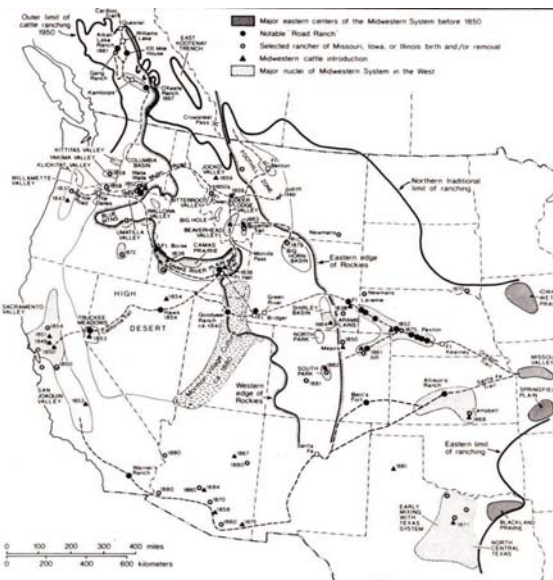


Figure 2. Map showing spread of Midwestern ranching culture through the late 1800s. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*.

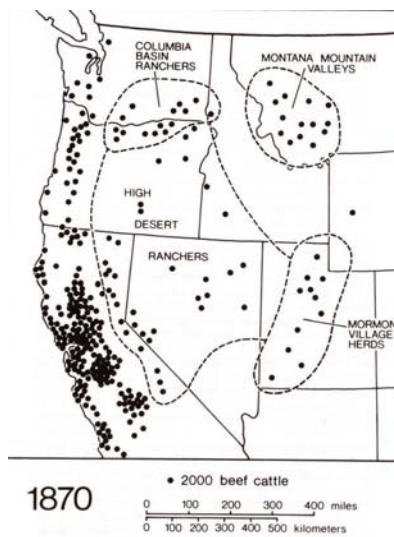


Figure 4. Map of cattle herds in
Midwestern style ranching areas,
1870. Jordan, *North American
Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins,
Diffusion, and Differentiation*.

Utilizing different pastures depending on the season was also characteristic of “Midwestern” ranching culture, which spread from the U.S. Midwest and was derived from British roots. This was the third cultural style that existed and mixed across Montana and Alberta during the periods of Lane and K&B respective operations with both ranches sharing some features of this style as well. Besides grazing different pastures, both Lane and K&B also exhibited Midwestern traits such as using hay feeding in winter, erecting fences near their ranch homes for additional pasture use, taking part in selective breeding practices to improve herd quality, importing stock to add to the quality of their herds, and participating in the development and operation of stockgrowing associations that allowed ranchers of a district to come together for decision-making purposes and rule-making parties regarding their operations.⁴⁸ The spread of Midwestern ranching culture can be seen in Figure 3.

Perhaps the most crucial of the characteristics that Lane and K&B shared which set them apart from many of their more “Anglo-Texan” style contemporaries was the use of extensive hay feed. Lane especially had become a large farmer in his own right setting aside large acreages for the purpose of growing feed for his cattle. Those ranchers of the Canadian and U.S. west that did grow their own feed did so often with at least 50 to 100 acres set aside for the purpose. Although Lane may not have done as much cross-breeding or importation of British-style cattle, K&B certainly did with their emphasis on shorthorns and Herefords, which was an additional feature of Midwestern ranching.⁴⁹

Lane and K&B certainly shared these qualities and major parts of these cultures, which will be explained further in the proceeding chapters. Of the three cultures, however, the Midwestern style was the heaviest influence in southwestern Montana where K&B’s home ranch was located and where they developed their earliest ranching skills.⁵⁰ None of the three styles survived as a “pure” culture independent of mixing with the others across the vast Canadian and U.S. wests. Rather, they did combine various parts to create unique ranching practices in different western regions.⁵¹ Tables 1 and 2 outline a sample of cultural components and if or how they existed in each of the major ranching cultures with “Highland Britain” being the source of Midwestern ranching culture and “African Cattle Fulani” and “Salt Marsh Andalucia” referring to the “Old World” origins of Anglo-Texan and Anglo-Californian cultures. While it may be debated, which of these styles penetrated and shaped southern Alberta the most, if any one of them did significantly, the mixed characteristics (with a dominance of Midwestern style) are evident among both Lane and K&B.

<i>American trait, at least regionally</i>	<i>Salt Marsh Andalucía</i>	<i>Extremadura and Castilla</i>	<i>Highland Britain</i>	<i>African Cattle Fulani</i>
Focus upon cattle	yes	rarely	yes	yes
<i>Bos taurus</i> , Iberian	yes	yes	no	no
<i>Bos taurus</i> , British	no	no	yes	no
Open range	yes	some	some	yes
Mounted herders	yes	some	rarely	rarely
Male herders only	yes	yes	no	yes
Herders not youths or aged	yes	no	no	no
Herders from social/ professional underclass	yes	yes	yes	no
Lasso known	yes	?	no	?
Cattle staff or pike	yes	yes	no	yes
Cattle whip	no	no	yes	no
Herder dogs	no	no	yes	no
Germanic-derived livestock laws	no	no	yes	no
Branding cattle	yes	yes	some	no

Table 1. Traits of “Old World” ranching cultures. These categories provide the basis for the various stockraising styles discussed throughout the report and are theorized to have transmitted to result in different ranching cultures across North America. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*.

<i>American trait, at least regionally</i>	<i>Salt Marsh Andalucía</i>	<i>Extremadura and Castilla</i>	<i>Highland Britain</i>	<i>African Cattle Fulani</i>
Earmarking cattle	yes	yes	some	yes
Infrequent care of stock	yes	no	no	no
Transhumance/ nomadism	some	yes	yes	yes
Overland drives to market	yes	some	yes	yes
Semiwild stock	yes	no	no	no
Athletic contests involving cattle	yes	yes	no	no
Range burning	yes	yes	yes	no
Haymaking	no	no	yes	no
Crops of secondary importance	yes	no	yes	yes
Market-oriented production	yes	no	yes	no
Large-scale operators	yes	few	yes	no
Beef important food	yes	no	yes	no
No consumption of cattle blood	yes	yes	no	yes
Bovine dairying unimportant	yes	yes	no	no

Table 2. Traits of “Old World” ranching cultures (cont.). Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*.



Photo 2. “Beaverhead” hay stackers near Big Hole, MT, n.d. These were an innovation by Midwestern style ranchers across MT that eventually were used across western Canada. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*.



Photo 3. “Mountain Horse Barn” near 100 Mile House in southern interior British Columbia, n.d. A type of barn with horse stables, tie-stalls, mangers, box stalls, a tack room, and hayloft that was likely started in western MT and became part of western Canadian ranching. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*.

As Jordan argues and the first-hand and secondary evidence of Canadian and U.S. western ranching shows, similarities and differences in ranch management practices and culture

were not a result of different ecosystems.⁵² Certainly, numerous comparisons could be made between the environments of southern Alberta and western Montana, the two regions Lane and K&B operated in respectively. Rather, contacts between and the experiences of various ranchers, i.e. the human dynamics, were one of the key driving forces in shaping which strategies were used where. Lane and K&B are an exemplar representation of these human dynamics that shaped where certain ranching practices spread. Their sharing is thus more a story of human interaction, experience, adoption, risk-taking, decision-making, and circumstance than it is of ecology and climate. The next two chapters will elaborate on these shared traits that made Lane and K&B financially successful and two of the longest enduring ranch operations of the early west.

CHAPTER II: EXTENDING THE BOOM

A. The Journey of a Montana and Alberta Cowboy

Many of the earliest and most successful ranchers across southern Alberta had previous experience in Montana. George Lane was no exception to this. Recent works studying the spread of various ranching cultures across the U.S. and Canada argue that southern Alberta was heavily shaped by a “Midwestern” style of ranching practices and management with much of this culture spreading, not completely from the U.S. Midwest, but from practitioners of this culture in western and central Montana.¹ Lane not only had experience across Montana, but also had roots in the Midwest as well that would perhaps provide him the background to later adopt and utilize styles from a ranching culture he experienced across Montana and Alberta.

The story of Lane coming to Montana and eventually Alberta begins with his father, Joseph Lane, who joined the Montana gold rush, specifically at Alder Gulch around 1863. Also coming out from the family farm in Iowa, Lane joined his father in 1872 at the age of sixteen.² Within two years of his entering Montana, the first labor records of Lane appear showing he was working as a rider and scout for the U.S. Army. After this, a young Lane began a seven-year stint working as a ranch-hand across Montana. During this time, Lane met and worked with increasingly expanding ranch owner Conrad Kohrs.³

Conrad Kohrs and John Bielenberg were the two owners in a stockraising partnership centered in Deer Lodge, MT. Little had been written about K&B through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries compared to their western U.S. ranching contemporaries.⁴ This

despite their running one of the largest open range companies of their era (1870s to 1920s), in terms of acres seasonally grazed upon, bringing in some of the highest sales returns before and after the industry's economic downturns, and being honored with the ranch houses' conservation at GRKO, the one U.S. National Historic Site preserving nineteenth century ranching materials. In this way, it stands as the U.S. "equivalent" to Canada's Bar U and vice-versa. A recent volume written by the author of this report, however, has outlined new data on K&B concerning their economic and ranching management practices.⁵ The K&B story is primarily one of endurance and financial success through the beginning and eventual fluctuations in the first half-century of Montana ranching as is Lane's story with the Bar U during his quarter-century ownership tenure. Evidence from the most recent work on K&B will be referred to through the remainder of this report to support the numerous similarities that existed between Lane and K&B.



Photo 5. Middle-age portrait of Kohrs, n.d. Courtesy of GRKO, Deer Lodge, MT.



Photo 4. Middle-age portrait of Bielenberg, n.d. Courtesy of GRKO, Deer Lodge, MT.

Lane's first major impressions and visit to Canada likely occurred in the early 1880s, while continuing work in Montana. Frank Strong, who drove the Cochrane Ranch herd to Bow Valley in 1882, returned and told Lane that he was impressed with the territory and was planning to eventually live in Canada. A year later, Lane himself entered Alberta as he drove 1,800 cattle from the Sun River area in Montana to the Belly River across the border.⁶ Lane would return to Sun River in the late summer of 1883, but these earliest impressions of southern Alberta seem to have resonated with Lane and his actions into the following decade.⁷ One impression, besides the established ranches and widely available rangeland, was how much was yet to be done in this burgeoning part of the west as Alberta was still a sparsely populated area. As of 1883, Calgary only had a population of a few hundred. By the time Lane became Bar U foreman, the CPR reached to Calgary and its population began increasing rapidly to around 1,000.⁸

Only a year after his initial experiences in Alberta, Lane was selected by Robert Ford, President of the Sun River Stock Association of Montana to be a recruit for serving as a foreman for one of the newly established ranches in Alberta.⁹ In 1884, Lane traveled north into Canada and met Fred Stimson, then ranch manager of the Bar U. Upon this meeting, Lane became their foreman under Stimson, a position he would hold until 1889.¹⁰

Lane showed his skills as a cowboy and became an active and well-known member of the ranch-hand community in Alberta. Besides large regional roundups, he was also in

charge of cowboy activities at exhibitions such as in 1893 when he organized a popular steer-roping competition at the mid-summer fair in Calgary that attracted the top hands of western Canada.¹¹ According to neighboring Alberta rancher F.W. Ings' memoirs, as of spring 1884 (the year Lane was hired by the Bar U), there was a roundup encompassing many of the southern Alberta ranches and the Bar U foreman was the one usually in charge. Ings also notes that the Bar U had the most cattle of all the ranches in the roundup.¹² As one of the more prominent foreman in Alberta, Lane would also work alongside one of the earliest African-American cowboys of western Canada, John Ware, as Ware was a ranch-hand for the Bar U into 1884 and 1885 when Lane was starting out there. Lane and Ware even worked together on the spring roundup of 1885 that the Bar U and many of the large Alberta ranches participated in, which was a large separation and branding identification of tens of thousands of cattle from the open range for the various ranches.¹³ As Bar U foreman, Lane would occasionally call upon Ware after Ware had left there to work for other ranches. One enlightening example that shows the trust between Lane and Ware and especially the latter's skill occurred in 1887. Lane was driving cattle to a loading point on the CPR in Calgary. The herd got stuck in the chute heading towards the railcar; Lane called on Ware to help out and Ware proceeded to walk along the backs of the cattle to the front and steer the cattle into the car. As Lane did with numerous other acquaintances, he grew it into a long-term relationship with Ware to the point that Lane was in charge of his funeral arrangements and was one of his pallbearers when he died in 1905.¹⁴

The initial years of Lane in Montana and Alberta parallel those first activities of Kohrs in several key ways. Kohrs also came out to Montana from Iowa for reasons of gold prospecting, eventually bringing a family member, half-brother Bielenberg, with him. After running low on provisions during a gold prospecting venture across Montana and Idaho, Kohrs settled into southwestern Montana in the spring of 1862. He met Hank Crawford who ran a butcher shop in Bannack, MT where Kohrs negotiated a job. There he learned the meat supply business that included occasionally driving cattle to the shop from out of town and furnishing the region's miners and mining companies with provisions, which provided Kohrs initial experience and contacts he would call upon over the following years.¹⁵ As Kohrs made contacts among prospective buyers and from those he could learn the business of beef supply, so did Lane with potential future ranch-hands.

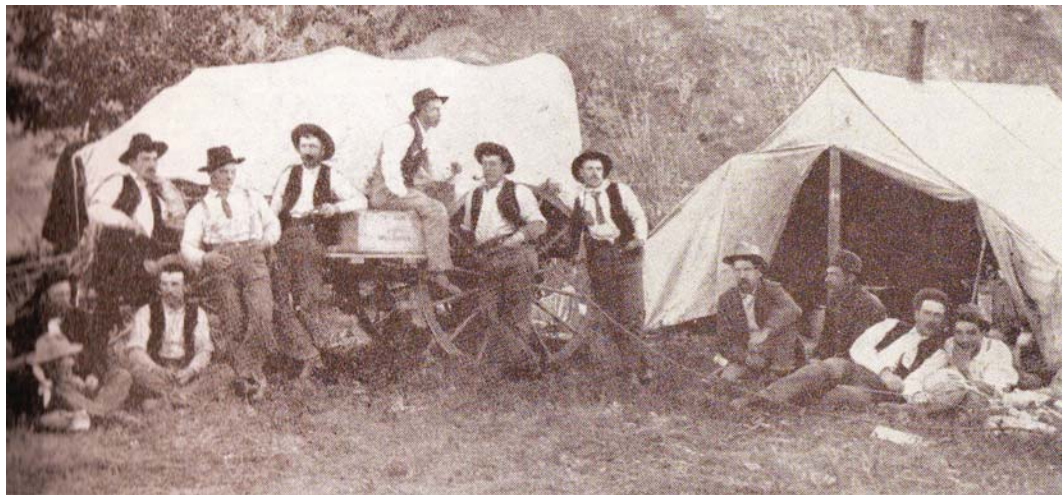


Photo 6. Roundup camp of cowboys on Willow Creek, 1895. Lane was captain of this roundup and is pictured fourth from the right. Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 19.

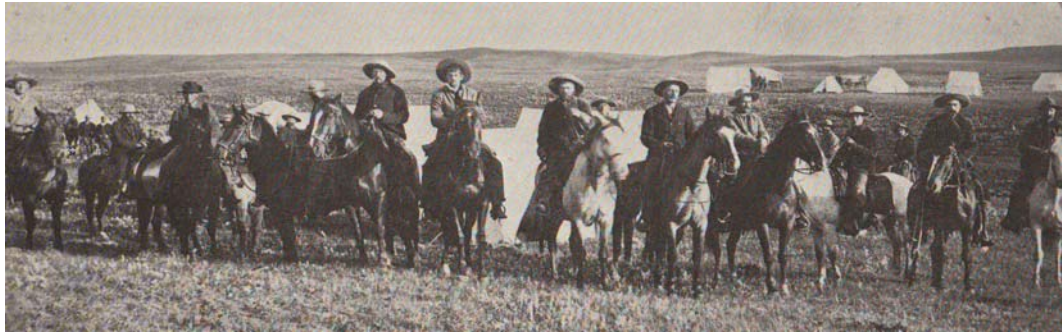


Photo 7. Bar U and Mosquito Creek riders and wagons leaving camp in the morning at Spring Creek (southwest of Okotoks, AB), 1892. This scene is similar to what Lane would participate in within a few years in Alberta concerning seasonal roundups. Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 18.

The Bar U under Stimson's management and Lane as foreman was the foundation era for the ranch. The history of the Bar U began with the incorporation of the NWCC and the establishment of the ranch itself in 1882 and ended twenty years later in 1902 upon the sale to Lane, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Stimson, along with the Allan family who were the initial owners of the Bar U, had their stockraising and investment experience in Quebec.¹⁶ Lane would provide the Bar U its first injection of management practices from someone with substantial experience from the Rocky Mountain West. After leaving the job as foreman and into the following decade, he built more diverse experience in the industry as a cattle buyer for prominent rancher, meat-packer, and beef supplier Pat Burns. Lane also began a relationship with the powerful cattle shipping firm, Gordon, Ironside, and Fares (GIF) as one of their cattle buyers during this period.¹⁷ It was in the late 1880s and 1890s that Lane laid the groundwork of business relationships that would enable him to claim his major purchase of the Bar U the next decade. As Kohrs had early in his career with cattle shippers such as Joseph Rosenbaum, Lane's ranching enterprise was helped by long-standing business relationships he had built years prior to fully entering the industry as an owner-manager.

B. Lane Purchases and Expands the Bar U

In 1902, after years of building up finances from his multiple smaller ranches across Alberta and diversified experience in the industry, Lane met with the Allan brothers in plans to negotiate a buying price for the Bar U ranch. After a half-hour of back-and-forth between prices of \$220,000 (\$5,500,000) and \$250,000 (\$6,250,000), the Allans told Lane he could buy it for his bid of \$220,000 as long as he put \$50,000 down immediately and paid the rest upon signing the deeds a few weeks later.¹⁸ The Allans, not expecting Lane to even have the money he was bidding, ended up selling to Lane as he fished out \$50,000 onto the table at which they were sitting and negotiating.¹⁹ For this price, Lane acquired the Bar U, which consisted of approximately 18,000 acres of deeded land, numerous acres of leased land, multiple buildings near the home ranch, 3,000 cattle, and 500 horses. To aid in financing the total amount of the Bar U purchase, Lane sought out his long-time associates and friends GIF as equal partners in the purchase, which they would remain for years until Lane bought out their shares in 1920.²⁰ It was not just the Bar U stock and materials that Lane now had, Lane brought assets from his previous ranches the Flying E and Little Bow. In total, combined with the ranches of GIF, Lane and they held around 30,000 cattle as of the start of their business relationship in 1902, which quickly cemented both parties as significant players in the industry.²¹ Through his early forays into owning smaller ranches, Lane already showed a keen interest in enterprise, a propensity to diversify investment of his energy and capital in money-making ventures, and the willingness to learn different trades around the ranch. This is what a

young Kohrs had done through the 1860s and early 1870s by his undertaking of mining and ranching within a few years of establishing himself in southwest Montana. Kohrs also participated in some of the earliest cattle drives from his ranch; a skill Lane had fine-tuned from his years as a cowboy and foreman.²²

Lane also showed his propensity for risk with his Bar U purchase as half his ranch was entrusted under the capital of GIF. Like Lane, Kohrs had numerous episodes of risk-taking. Even in his early years, like the summer of 1863, Kohrs followed gold prospecting “fever” over to Alder Gulch, MT where he met up with his acquaintance Ben Peel. While there, Kohrs and Peel decided to start back into butchering since Virginia City was nearby Alder Gulch with a sizable population. They secured a loan from George Gohn, who was traveling through Virginia City at this time and would become a friend of Kohrs for years to come. Kohrs and Peel started their first shop together, called “Con and Peel” by using the loan from Gohn to buy cattle being driven through Alder Gulch.²³ With Peel, Kohrs would take further risks and setup multiple butcher shops including one in Summit City and one in Highland City. During these years, Kohrs speculated on cattle buying and received a \$12,000 (\$155,800) loan early in 1865 at a rate of five percent per month. Combining this with other capital, Kohrs made a large swoop of cattle purchases across the area buying 1,000 head of cattle, which constituted a large portion of the local cattle supply.²⁴ Risk and speculation were certainly two qualities Kohrs and Lane shared. K&B especially show a long history of speculation through loaning (see Table 3).

Date	Lender	Loan Amt	Loan Amt (2008)	Interest	Amt Paid Back	Used towards
1863	George Gohn	unspecified		unspecified	unspecified	cattle purchases (for Con & Peel shop)
1863	Johnny Grant	\$2,250		unspecified	paid in full	pay other debts
1865	George Forbes	\$12,000	\$155,800	unspecified	unspecified	cattle purchases
1873	L.H. Hershfield and Bros.	unspecified (requested)		1.5% per month	unspecified	unspecified
1878	L.H. Hershfield and Bros.	\$5,000 (requested)		1.25% per month	unspecified (to be paid back in full in four months)	unspecified
1886-7	Joseph Rosenbaum	unspecified		unspecified	\$12,532.36	
1888	A.J. Davis	\$100,000	\$2,222,200	unspecified	paid in full in 3 yrs	cattle purchases

Table 3. Loans acquired and used by K&B, 1863-1888. These represent only a small sample of Kohrs' and K&B's lines of credit through their operating years. Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

The “Lane era” of the Bar U thus began in 1902, lasting until 1927 when meat-packing and cattle-raising eminent Pat Burns purchased the ranch three years preceding Lane’s passing.²⁵ In this episode of Lane’s purchase of the ranch, he showed characteristics similar to Kohrs: preparedness and clear vision concerning terms of a deal, that would continue through his management of the ranch. He also showed a similarity with Kohrs in terms of life circumstance as both came to the west initially from what is now the midwestern U.S. coming from non-wealthy families. Both began their lives out west as workers for others and did this for years before meticulously amassing wealth so they could purchase their respective property and begin their various investments. Kohrs had worked at a butcher shop for \$25 per month delivering beef starting out after having settled from a time of gold prospecting and Lane had earned around \$100 per month at various points during his years as a cowboy in Montana and Bar U foreman.²⁶

As of this episode, Lane had been years removed from his days strictly working as a cowboy. He built up the large sum he placed on that table through a decade starting in the early 1890s as a ranch speculator and partial owner of two ranches. He also had a multi-year standing relationship with GIF, as previously mentioned, more specifically James T. Gordon. Lane and Gordon had established the Two Bar Ranch in 1896, where they ran between 5,000 and 10,000 cattle for over ten years, and partially bought the SC Ranch that same year.²⁷ GIF were also large owners in the ranching business themselves having thousands of cattle over several ranches across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and even Mexico, making them one of the bigger ranch owners of turn of the twentieth century western Canada.²⁸ With his previous dealings, Lane knew that GIF was potentially interested in continuing to support buyers of western ranches in order to strengthen their network of cattle suppliers for shipment.

GIF, only officially incorporated a year prior to Lane's Bar U purchase, already had established a gross income of about \$6 million (\$150,000,000) by 1902.²⁹ They were the largest cattle exporter in Canada and the operator of the biggest packing plant in Winnipeg during the years prior to World War I when Lane was beginning his management and expansion of the Bar U.³⁰ Beyond this, James Gordon and Robert Ironside had decades of business relationships together and knew each other well. They had their first partnership going back about two decades before Lane's ownership of the Bar U, to the mid-1880s when they both supplied beef to workers on the CPR and military troops stationed in western Canada. They had long experience with cattle raising and shipping too having facilitated cattle shipments from across Alberta, as far north as

Edmonton, and through Winnipeg as far back as 1890. Both Gordon and Ironside also traveled across the ranches of western Canada through these early decades establishing shipping relations with stockraisers, purchasing cattle of their own, and actually taking occasional rides on the trains with their cattle through the shipping port of Montreal.

By 1893, Gordon and Ironside became the second largest exporter of cattle from Canada shipping 9,600 total head that year out of the country, which accounted for nearly 10 percent of the total national export. The following three years, 1894 to 1896, they more than doubled their annual exports to between 19,000 and 27,000 total annual exports, making them the kings of Canadian cattle shipment and holding 25 to 33 percent of all Canadian cattle exports. In 1897, still before Lane would take over management of the Bar U, Gordon and Ironside continued to be at the top of Canadian cattle shippers and added William H. Fares as a third partner. Through the decades prior, Fares was a prominent cattle buyer and investor across western Canada and as he joined GIF, he continued to focus on purchases and managing the GIF ranches while Gordon specialized in GIF's meat-packing operations and Ironside focused on overseeing exporting.³¹

GIF prospered into the 1900s as well when Lane took over the Bar U. Officially incorporating in 1901, they showed \$1 million (\$25,000,000) in capital and increased this a few million dollars to \$4 million (\$93,023,300) near the end of the decade in 1909. GIF maintained high worth and assets into the next decade as annual records from 1913 show their total net assets at \$4,020,988 (\$87,412,780) as of that year. GIF was making over \$400,000 (\$7,843,140) annually in profits by 1916.³²

Having such a close business relationship with GIF allowed Lane to hold favor for shipping and processing of his cattle in Winnipeg, the key point on the railway between Canadian ranchers and shipping points south and east such as Chicago. Lane was showing his reliance on linkages with shippers who were proven successful and friendly acquaintances, as Kohrs had established with Joseph Rosenbaum. This allowed Lane the knowledge and security he would have a financial base and a firm to help manage shipping of head. Having a reliable shipper that had the ability to find buyers for his beef and to be flexible when market dynamics shifted is one crucial reason why Lane with GIF and K&B with Rosenbaum were able to claim such exorbitant returns.³³ Beyond their being partners in ranch ownership and Lane relying on GIF for cattle shipping and selling, Lane would also have occasional large cattle transactions with GIF. This is shown by his purchasing of 12,000 head in 1905 from GIF's SC ranch.³⁴



Photo 8. Portrait of James T. Gordon, 1903. McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".



Photo 9. Portrait of Robert Ironside, n.d. McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".

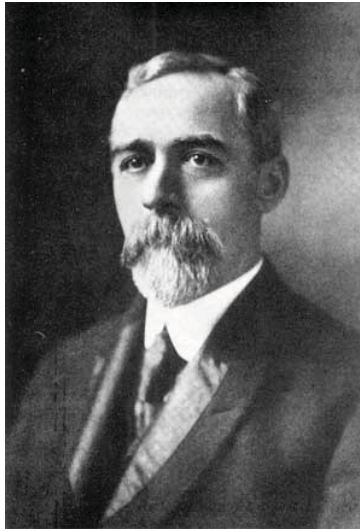


Photo 10. Portrait of William H. Fares, n.d. McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".

The many qualities and services that GIF gave to Lane were also those that Rosenbaum provided for Kohrs With K&B's quantity of cattle transported to the Chicago stockyards increasing to the tens of thousands per shipment during the 1870s, the company needed a reliable and trustworthy commission firm in the city to handle increasingly large sales of their cattle, hold and invest returns, and provide loans upon their assets if needed. The relationship commenced during this decade and Rosenbaum had sold a K&B herd as of 1878 after K&B had the cattle shipped to Council Bluffs, IA where Rosenbaum sold them to feeders. With Rosenbaum as seller and banker in Chicago, K&B could focus more energy on range management, stock-breeding, and cattle market issues close to home without worrying as much about the condition of their animals in distant Chicago. Rosenbaum essentially worked as a bank for K&B besides finding purchasers of their cattle. Proceeds from K&B cattle sales would go into accounts held by the Rosenbaum in Chicago and K&B would draft from them in order to finance

acquisitions and investments out west. K&B gained an advantage in efficiency by aligning with a prominent stock commissioner before the upcoming boom years of the industry. Kohrs, as the ranch's promoter and sharp judge of men for the business, showed the similar trustworthy and delegatory qualities with Rosenbaum that had also led to success with the ranch's cowboys. Rosenbaum was not only K&B's banker and trusted Chicago salesman for decades, but he became a close friend of Kohrs over this time period. Over three decades after their partnership commenced, Rosenbaum came to visit the Deer Lodge ranch in 1915.³⁵

Lane also evidenced the intuition for a profitable deal as Kohrs had numerous times during his career. Evans, from the most recent head counts available prior to the 1902 Bar U purchase, estimates the total herd from the purchase accounting for 1902 market prices to be worth \$240,000 (\$6,000,000) alone. Lane's buying price was perhaps already "paid off" by the worth of the herd as this is above his total purchase price. Adding in an estimated \$20,000 (\$500,000) of value in horses and \$36,000 (\$900,000) in land totaled about \$296,000 (\$7,400,000) in estimated worth for the entire Bar U enterprise at the time of Lane's purchase. This is approximately 34 percent more in worth than his total purchase price, in terms of 1902 dollars, and about \$1.9 million more in 2008 dollars. As of April 1902, the NWCC treasurer E.W. Riley noted total assets of the ranch totaling \$233,000 (\$5,825,000).³⁶ Taking these possibly more conservative estimates, Lane was sitting on at least six percent more value than for which he agreed to pay. Starting out in 1902, Lane also had legal claim to the previously mentioned 18,000 acres of land with

the Bar U and about 8,000 head of cattle.³⁷ As Kohrs had an intuition for value purchases, including the terms of buying entire ranches, so did Lane.

Kohrs' purchase of Johnny Grant's Deer Lodge ranch was certainly a value buy. The offer Grant accepted from Kohrs came in August 1866 for \$19,200 to purchase Grant's farmhouse, 200 to 400 shorthorn cattle from his herd, threshing machines, corrals, haystacks, and the informal claims to graze the surrounding open range. The increasingly business savvy Kohrs, on acquiring the largest farmhouse and immense grazing lands from Grant, saved \$10,800 from his first offer as he had offered \$30,000 to Grant two years prior. Kohrs and Grant were actually acquaintances within one year of Kohrs arriving to the area with Kohrs borrowing at least \$2,250 from Grant early in 1863 so Kohrs could cover debts he had with other creditors.³⁸ Grant likely viewed Kohrs as an honest man early on since Kohrs repaid Grant in full within the year even after Grant had considered the loan settled upon partial payment. Grant even offered Kohrs 100 head of prime cattle from his herd on credit, of which Kohrs took 50, after receiving in-full payment of the previous loan.³⁹ Kohrs was opportunistic as well on this purchase as during 1866, Grant became eager to sell. Grant had grown tired of the vile example the vigilantes and "robbers and gamblers that are generally met with in a mining country" presented to his children during the Montana gold rush.⁴⁰ Kohrs took this opportunity, which resulted in his acquiring an entire working ranch for nearly half of a previous offer.

Lane entered as Bar U ranch owner and manager during the early 1900s when, from about 1901 through 1905, cattle raising and farming were booming across parts of western Canada. Alberta and neighboring Saskatchewan experienced large increases

approaching the millions during these few years concerning number of cattle within the territories, pastureland in hectares, and a substantial rise in cropped hectares (see Figure 5). The first few years of the new century saw significant up-trends in ranching and farming, which may have been grain production associated with or owned by ranchers. Homesteading was significantly on the rise during this period too, which may have contributed partially to the large increase in cropped land as of 1901. The year prior, 7,500 homestead claims were filed in Alberta with the population of Alberta rising to 73,000 by 1901. This shows the continued rise in homesteading of western Canada as the number of homestead claims filed in just Alberta that year equaled the total number of homesteaders migrating into the entire western portion of Canada as of less than fifteen years prior in 1888. By 1905, the annual number of homesteads filed in Alberta had quadrupled from five years prior to approximately 30,000.⁴¹ Between 1896 and 1914, one million immigrants from within and outside of Canada settled across western Canada and within the first decade of the twentieth century, Calgary's population rose dramatically from 73,000 to 374,000.⁴²

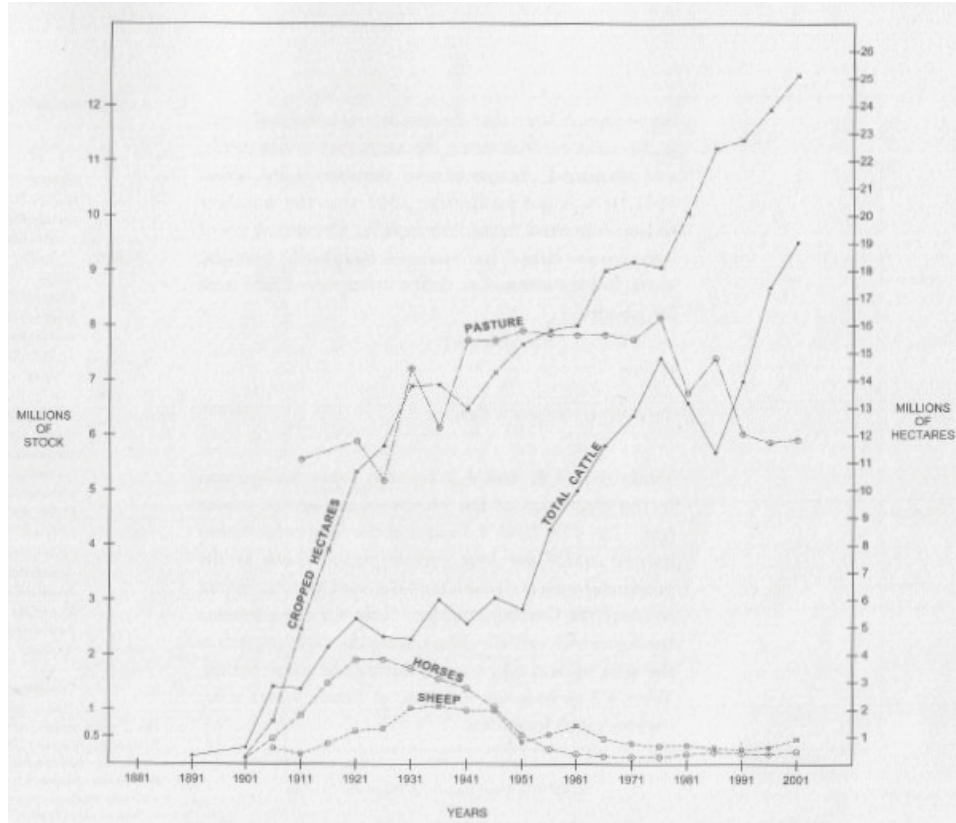


Figure 5. Total cattle, horses, sheep, hectares of pasture, and cropped hectares in millions for Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1881-2001. Compiled from statistics in the Census of Canada. Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 305.

In June 1905, the Department of Interior, in an effort to finally clear up the continuing fights in Alberta over land rights and whether established ranchers or increasingly settling farmers would lay claim to lands, issued closed leases to several large ranch outfits, including the Bar U. Through this, Lane came into legally recognized possession of nearly 44,000 acres north and west of the home ranch, which solidified the Bar U's grazing land adjacent to the home ranch and its large land hold in southern Alberta. This deed remained in force for all of Lane's tenure.⁴³ Lane, in partner with GIF, leased at least an additional 18,000 acres in the vicinity of the Bar U that year as well, further expanding the Bar U's land spread.⁴⁴

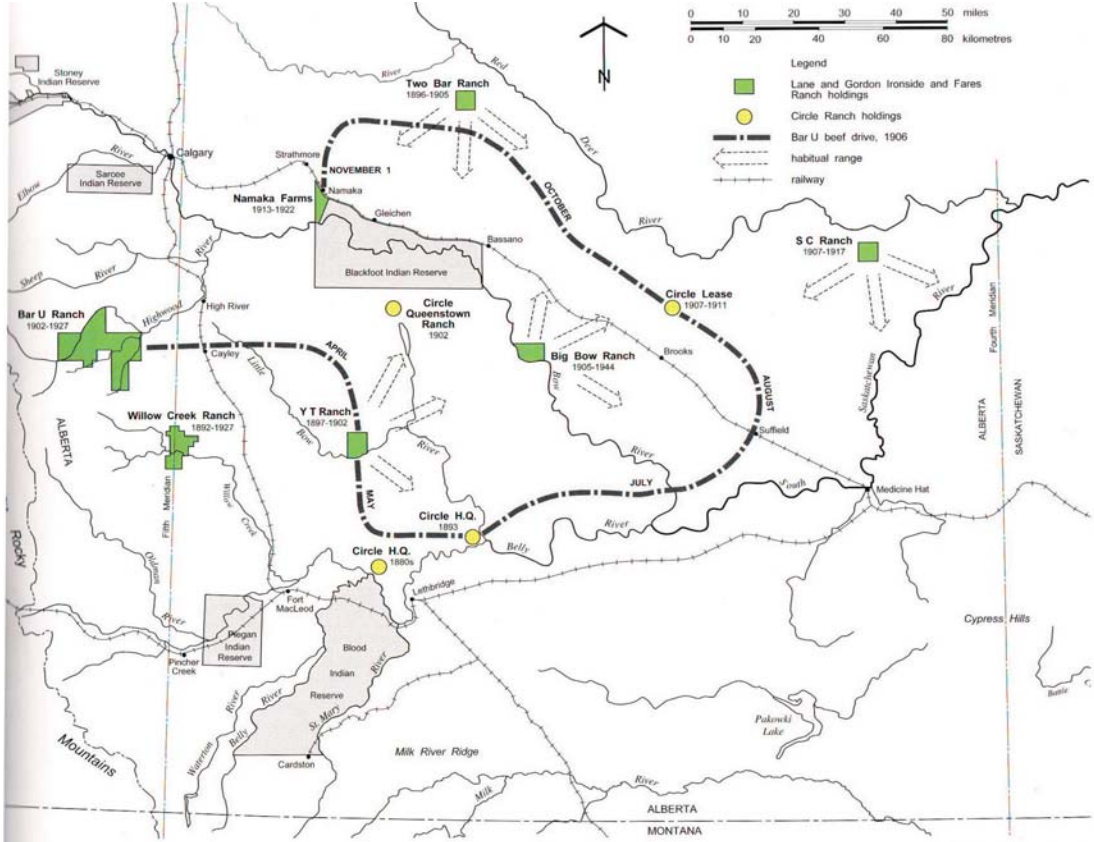


Figure 6. Map of Lane's Bar U land holdings surrounding the home ranch, associated ranch and farm holdings, and GIF's ranch holdings in Alberta, 1906. Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*.

Lane, like Kohrs, increased the acreage size of his ranch considerably from the previous owners and also held deeded land. Both were two of the largest land-holders of their respective regions. They were also alike regarding monetary allocation as despite their large investments in land and even accounting for their propensity to take on large debt, they were both most heavily invested year after year in their cattle.⁴⁵ Ambition, shown by continued purchases and speculation while in large debt, was also a trait Lane shared with Kohrs. At the start of 1902, Lane was indebted to the Union Bank of Canada (in Quebec) for over \$62,000 (\$1,550,000).⁴⁶ This accounts for about 28 percent of his total purchase of the Bar U that same year. Despite this indebtedness, Lane continued with the putting down of more than this amount a few months later on the Bar U

purchase, despite the indebtedness. As Evans describes Lane, he could have been describing Kohrs just the same in that “he was an innovative, perhaps visionary, entrepreneur with enormous drive and energy. He thought big and was prepared to take risks.”⁴⁷

Even concerning materials for the ranch, Lane was a grandiose spender, but always ensured he had enough to supply his operation. An example is at one of the mills in the area, owned by Charlie Stubbs in nearby Happy Valley, where one day in September 1922 Lane visited the mill and purchased all the lumber sitting in the yard for a total of \$1,309 (\$16,570) as almost an after thought.⁴⁸ Although a small example, such was the bravado that came with being one of the largest and wealthiest ranchers of the region. K&B were also large spenders. Although they likely held tens of thousands of dollars in various bank accounts during their peak years through the last decades of the nineteenth century, the credits they deposited were sometimes countered by sizable withdrawals. High withdrawals proportional to credits are especially seen in their Larabie Bros. bank account, which was a main depository for K&B’s earnings. Examples from 1885 to 1901 show debiting ranging from around \$15,000 to nearly \$270,000 in various months to cover different expenditures. Debits often ran as high as 90 percent or more of the credits being placed into K&B’s bank accounts and even associated accounts that were used for particular purposes, such as an account specifically for K&B’s eastern ranch manager John Boardman.⁴⁹

Lane’s entrance into large ranch owning as of 1902 was not necessarily during an ideal time considering the larger industry. Starting just the next year in 1903, cattle prices

lowered as did the total cattle herds across western Canada.⁵⁰ Despite these less than ideal circumstances, Lane would show resiliency and flourish financially for many years following as K&B had through good and bad circumstances regarding larger economic forces surrounding them. This is well shown by one of the few items for which statistics exist for the worth of Lane's land and cattle during his Bar U ownership tenure. Although Lane was not known to keep many records on finances, nor are there much of any known surviving economic records from Lane's ownership tenure beyond the initial purchases from the Allans and the final sales to Burns, Lane's partner in the Bar U, GIF, did have some of their annual financial records survive. According to GIF's records, their interest in 45,882 acres of land at the Bar U, along with some acreage at Rush Lake, was worth approximately \$412,169 (\$8,960,200) as of 1913. Cattle in which GIF held half interest, likely mostly Bar U cattle, were worth \$860,588 (\$18,708,430) that same year.⁵¹ This is not the entire total for either land or cattle for the Bar U at that time, yet the sum of GIF's holdings were likely over at least \$600,000 (\$13,043,480).

Lane even took on the liabilities of business partners as in the case of his cattle shippers and fellow ranch investors, GIF. One of the three principals, Gordon, died in December 1919 and upon settlement of his estate it was found the firm was experiencing deep indebtedness and had few remaining holdings. Ironside had passed away nearly a decade prior in 1910 with his family taking on his one-third of GIF ownership. When Gordon died in 1919 the company had lost two-thirds of its original owners and effectively ended the partnership.⁵² While showing bank debts of \$3.5 million (\$43,209,880) and its packing subsidiary owing \$3.3 million (\$40,740,740), the only

major assets remaining for GIF were land holdings including a share it held of the Bar U. Lane paid a large lump sum of \$650,000 (\$8,024,700) in 1919 for the portion of the Bar U held by GIF in order to aid in settling Gordon's estate. The deal included Lane taking on \$100,000 (\$1,234,570) of GIF's debt.⁵³ Taking out a mortgage in order to finance this purchase, Lane showed that he was loyal and willing to help out the partners he had worked with for decades in their time of financial trouble. Further leveraging his own assets, Lane undertook not only a large burden that may not have been financially justified at the time, but did it while adding more debt to his financial statement as well. Through being forward on cattle and land purchases, utilizing credit leverage, applying sound judgment on value investments, and establishing and maintaining long-term business relationships and friendships with cattle shippers, Lane ensured the Bar U was financially resilient in the face of adverse policy and economic events facing the ranching industry. As K&B were resilient through similar episodes in the U.S., Lane was as well and was able to "extend the boom" years beyond the prosperous periods of other ranches.

CHAPTER III: NEW RANCHING, OLD STYLE

Besides the economic successes Lane achieved for the Bar U and himself through his tenure as owner, Lane also had day-to-day ranch management practices that contributed to this success and were also similar to that of K&B. These included holding and developing calves over a few years to later sell as high quality cattle, keeping breeding cattle close to the home ranch while grazing additional herds on open range, utilizing British cattle as part of herds, grazing stock on abundant open range while maintained a fenced home range with winter feed, and delegating many crucial ranch managerial tasks to a handful of long-time trusted employees. These characteristics will be discussed in this chapter.

Similar to K&B's eastern ranch run by John Boardman, Lane focused much of his herd development efforts and resources on having calves constitute a sizable portion of the herd to grow over a period of about two years so they could be sold as adults for high prices. Lane ensured enough purebred bulls were on hand to service the cows and maintain a healthy line of calves produced each year.¹ Like K&B, Lane often purchased cattle from nearby ranchers, such as Billy Cochrane's CC Ranch. From here, Lane bought a lot of his purebred bulls. Lane also used a large amount of shorthorns, which was also a strategy of K&B's.² With K&B, their eastern ranch managed by John Boardman was where calves were focused on and where they tended to build herds up from calves. K&B preferred and kept more mature two and three year old cattle at the home ranch while young cattle developed at the eastern ranch.³

As K&B had their eastern ranch, Lane had his additional YT Ranch nearby, which he had purchased in 1898 as a complementary rangeland for herds to graze and that allowed for growth of cattle with additional land to use.⁴ When farm settlement began encroaching adjacent to the YT along the Little Bow River, Lane knew the importance of spreading out his herd and claiming enough rangeland. He began moving cattle to the rangeland between the Bow River and the CPR's main line. This area, between the towns of Bassano, AB and Medicine Hat, AB was too dry for early farm settlement, but adequate for grazing.⁵ In these ways, the YT and later the land east of that both served as the "eastern" ranches of Lane in similar ways K&B's eastern ranch did for them. Lane maintained breeding herds closer to the home ranch in better-watered areas, while mixed herds were kept more along the open ranges, such as K&B practiced with their eastern ranch operation.⁶

One of the "Midwestern" ranching culture qualities that Lane exhibited was utilizing "British breeds" of cattle, sometimes imported from Britain or purchased from within the continent.⁷ This trait he shared with K&B as they had numerous cattle of British descent within their herds. Like the extent of hay and feed farming done by Lane (discussed later in this chapter), the use of British cattle was also an area of practice where the Bar U may have exceeded K&B's operation. Even observers from south of the border early in the days of western Canadian ranching were recognizing the significance of this type of ranching across southern Alberta and how it could have an impact on practices across the region. The editor of the *Fort Benton Weekly Record* of Fort Benton, MT commented in 1881 that Alberta ranchers such as Matthew Cochrane and others with their extensive use

of British cattle “will eventually revolutionize the whole North West system of cattle raising”.⁸

By the late 1890s through the turn of the century, K&B were also increasing their use of British breeds reaching their peak in cross-breeding for production of quality cattle. Bielenberg focused on cross-breeding the ranch’s stock for years, but after years of high returns K&B were able to adequately cover the costs of importing top bulls from England to increase the weight and maturation rates of the herds. They brought over “Anxiety” during this time, the first high quality bull imported from England and later shipped over the bull’s son “Anxiety Fourth” who sired a majority of the high quality bulls at K&B through this period with names such as “Bull Mischief”, “Bull Blanchard”, and “Bull Randolph”. While the “anxiety” line was a purebred operation, K&B also decided to cross-breed Hereford and shorthorn head during this period producing a variety of cross-breeds.⁹ This may have been a trait Lane shared with K&B, but did not acquire from them as K&B relied more on British cattle and cross-breeding into the 1890s when Lane was mostly in Alberta.

A. Returns, Resiliency, and the Open Range

Lane also utilized open rangeland in abundance as did K&B. With squatter ranchers still an issue across Alberta into the early 1900s and the cancellation of some previous leases by the Canadian government, larger ranchers like Lane had little incentive to attempt and establish new leases to keep out a few squatters who would likely come in anyway.¹⁰ Lane would thus rely upon free grazing and would be one of the largest

practitioners of it well past when other large stockraisers were utilizing. Open range grazing was reported among Lane's herds as late as 1918.¹¹ This was despite the open range being declared dead by 1907 from the orthodox view of the history of western Canadian ranching and also the comparatively sweeping attempts at enforcing ranching land lease systems by the Canadian government as of the early 1900s.¹² Similar to the history of western U.S. ranching, western Canada suffered a "hard winter", this being in 1906-1907. This was marked as a key transition point in the Canadian ranching industry whereby ranchers transitioned from primarily using open range to mostly using fenced range and cattle feed.¹³ Lane and others, however, thwart this perspective with continued extensive use of free range into the 1910s. The Bar U was one of the primary users of open range into the 1910s after the hard winter (see Figures 7 and 8).

The hard winter had, however, for many southern Alberta ranchers, sizable effects on decimating their stock while cattle prices continued to decrease. Just as estimates of cattle losses across the U.S. plains and Rocky Mountain West ranged from 60 or more percent from the 1886-1887 winter, so did the assessment of losses among western Canada's cattle. These estimates for Canada, however, were likely near double actual losses once individual rancher's notes and records have been accounted.¹⁴ Coupled with the profits being made by grain farmers and further losses of cattle from mange, many stockraisers across southern Alberta sold their stock and began grain farming. This, combined with continued in-migration of farmers contributed to the significant change in open rangeland being used from 1909 into the 1910s as shown in Figures 7 and 8 and is also shown in the downtrend of total pasture land during this time (see Figure 5 in Chapter 2).¹⁵ Table 3

below also illustrates the decrease in cattle across major districts of Alberta after the hard winter and, along with Figure 5 in Chapter 2, shows the correlated increase in land utilized for crops during these same years. Table 4 displays the associated large drop in exported cattle from Alberta, especially the number of exports almost cut in half in 1907, which was the first fall shipping season following the hard winter. Notice the rebound towards the original numbers after the one bad year immediately preceding the hard winter.

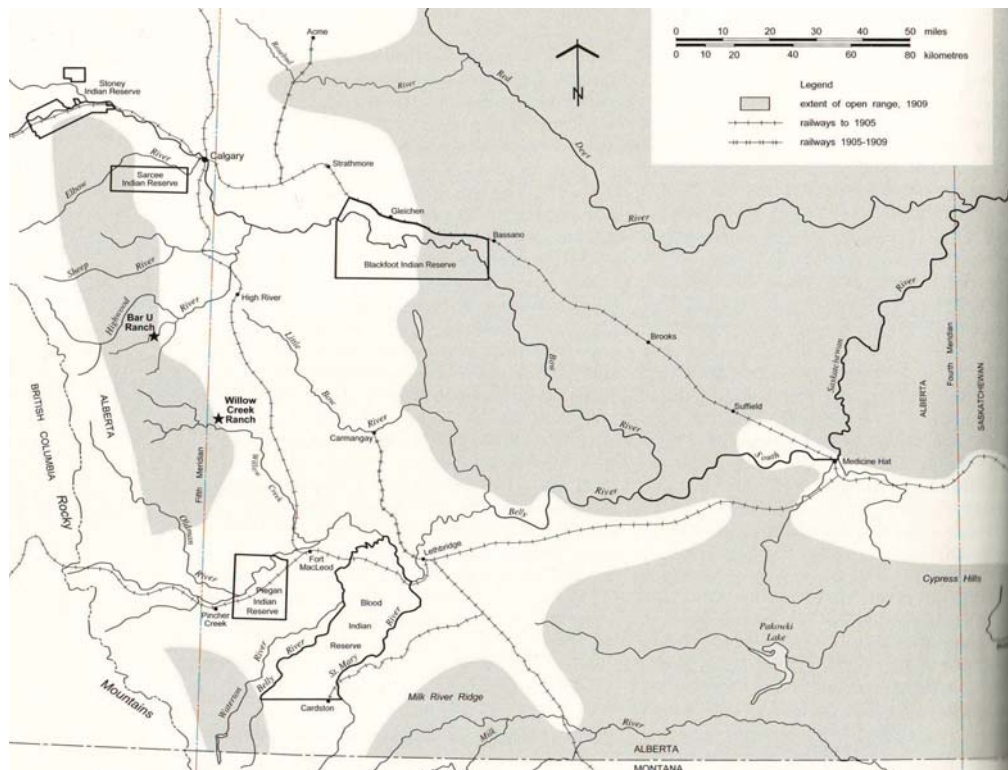


Figure 7. Map of open rangeland across Alberta, 1909. The dark shaded areas mark land that was open range. Notice the large north-to-south band of grazing land available to Lane immediately surrounding the Bar U home ranch. Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*.

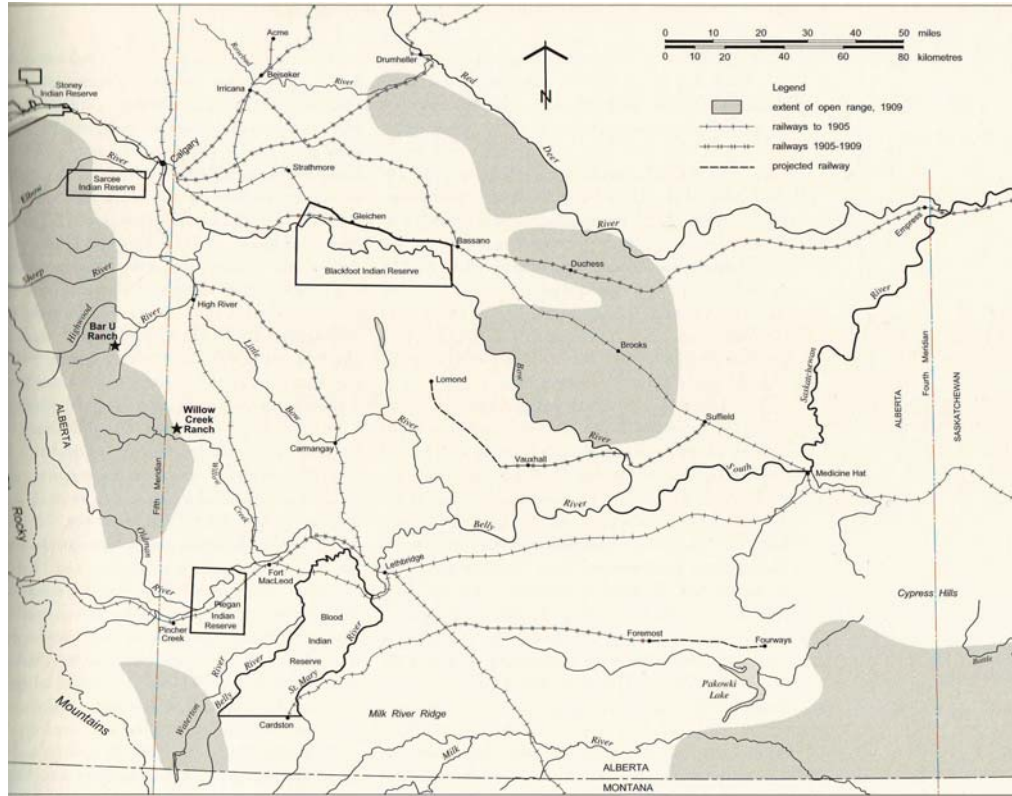


Figure 8. Map of open rangeland across Alberta, 1913. The dark shaded areas mark land that was open range. Notice the large north-to-south band of grazing land available to Lane immediately surrounding the Bar U home ranch remains since 1909, but most of the open range south and west of the home ranch decreased over those four years. Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*.

1906		
	Alberta*	373,482
	Calgary	262,293
	Qu'Appelle	37,099
	Total:	672,874
1911		
	Calgary	41,156
	Macleod	85,490
	Medicine Hat	144,471
	Moose Jaw	97,484
	Total:	368,601 ^b
1916		
	Bow River	78,030
	Calgary East	41,431
	Calgary West	24,982
	Lethbridge	35,704
	Macleod	99,667
	Medicine Hat	43,206
	Total:	323,020
	Assiniboia	30,310
	Maple Creek	46,116
	Moose Jaw	19,443
	Swift Current	20,579
	Weyburn	14,986
	Total:	131,434
	Combined 1916 Total	454,454 ^c

Table 4. Total beef cattle across Alberta by census districts, 1906, 1911, and 1916. Adapted from Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 306.

	CATTLE.
In 1906 we exported in all from Alberta.	74,733
In 1907 we exported.	42,960
In 1908.	61,810
In 1909.	67,257
In 1910.	51,627

Table 5. Total cattle exports from Alberta, 1906-1910.
Adapted from Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the
Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 461.

So while the hard winter did contribute to some losses across the region, Lane, like K&B in Montana, were able to thwart it well and continue to be one of the few remaining practitioners of open range grazing through the following decade. Evans estimates through studying Lane’s correspondence of these years that losses through the hard winter for the Bar U were approximately 10 to 15 percent of their cattle, which would have meant a total loss of about 3,000 head. Evans further calculates this loss being worth about \$103,000 (\$2,340,900). Estimates of losses across various types of cattle and losses broken down by different sections of the Bar U are shown in Table 5. Considering preceding annual losses of only three to four percent, Lane made it through the bad winter without losses approaching his neighboring stockraisers who lost more or even lost enough to exit the business within a few years. Although it sounds like a large amount of wealth, considering Lane likely had annual returns similar to what K&B had in Montana during their peak years and this time period, Lane probably had amassed preceding years of returns of \$250,000 to \$350,000 easily exceeding this one time hit.¹⁶

Returns on cattle were similar for K&B during their peak years as well with annual returns ranging from approximately \$75,000 to a few hundred thousand dollars during the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁷ Even five years after the hard winter, Lane was likely at his peak having shipped and sold numerous steers to Chicago in the fall of 1912 that brought the highest cattle prices at the Chicago market ever recorded up to that point.¹⁸ While some ranchers left the industry or struggled to regain their herds' qualities and numbers, Lane quickly rebounded and peaked.

Bar U and Willow Creek Ranches (10,000 head)			
	<u>Losses</u>	<u>\$ Per head</u>	<u>Total \$</u>
Calves	350	12.00	4,200
Cows	350	30.00	10,500
Yearlings	200	20.00	4,000
Dry cattle 2years +	100	40.00	4,000
Total	1,000	Total	22,700
	[10%]		
Big Bow Bar U, near Bassano (10,000 head)			
	<u>Losses</u>	<u>\$ Per head</u>	<u>Total \$</u>
First Year stockers (25% of 3000)	750	30.00	22,500
2nd Year stockers (20% of 3000)	600	50.00	30,000
Ranch bred cattle (15% of 4000)	600	50.00	30,000
Total loss	1,950		82,500
	[20%]		

Table 6. Estimates of cattle losses in number of head and dollar terms for Bar U from the 1906-1907 winter. Adapted from Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 308.

This is another point of similarity between Lane and K&B, their resilience through climatic events that shutdown or nearly shutdown their competitors and ending up actually improving their shipments and returns in the years immediately following. Although the 1886-1887 hard winter of the U.S. ruined many of their contemporaries south of the Canadian border, K&B lost only \$30,000, which was out of an estimated total of \$14 million in capital and eastern investments across Montana ranches at that

time. K&B lost nearly 66 percent of their cattle while other companies' herds decreased up to 90 and 95 percent.¹⁹ K&B contributed to the ranching rebound across the state during the subsequent two decades by purchasing 20,000 acres in thirteen years following the harsh winters and shipping an average of 8,000 to 10,000 cattle per year from 1888 to 1913 ranging from \$15 to \$62.50 per head.²⁰ The decades immediately following the famed hard winter were the most profitable for K&B peaking in 1909 with their largest gross annual sales of \$550,000 (\$12,790,700) at an average sell of \$40 per head. As Lane's Bar U did after being established about five years, K&B also grew in their annual financial earnings, size of their herds, and total rangeland claimed with increased shipments and returns. For K&B, this period was through the 1870s and 1880s.²¹

Given the evidence of Lane's propensity to spend, the debt he carried near the end of his ownership of the Bar U (expanded upon later in this chapter), and the expansion on the returns of the ranch through the years, he likely tended to spend much of the Bar U's cattle earnings once they were received. This was a quality that K&B consistently exhibited also and enabled the expansion of their future returns through re-investment in cattle purchases. Earnings from large Chicago cattle shipments for K&B, often in the range of six figures (equivalent to millions in 2008 dollars) were most often received by October at the latest. Much of this, in some cases with additional funds from other sources, were immediately re-invested in cattle or other investments as shown from bank account records.²²

Lane also used fencing for closed range practices wherein hay and cropland were protected in summer and winter grazing areas were marked. K&B had the same practice

for their home ranch for most of their existence. Hay feed was extensive for Lane's Bar U and was often fed to adult cattle and calves.²³ Evidence of hay feeding by Lane exists into the early 1910s to the point that a large acreage was used amongst the Bar U for sowing winter feed for cattle and various grades of hay were utilized alongside each other. After Lane purchased the Namaka farms south of the Bar U in the summer of 1913, he began using one primarily for growing oats, wheat, and barley, which were sold and also utilized for their cattle feed. By 1917, 1,000 tons of alfalfa was being produced at Lane's various farming operations as well as large amounts of prairie hay. Lane may have even competed with other prominent farmers like Charles Noble during the late 1910s for being Canada's largest grain farmer.²⁴ Use of winter feed may have only been stopped by 1919 due to the droughts of that year and the increases in grain prices due to World War I as Lane did occasionally purchase additional feed for the ranch.²⁵ Hay from Ontario, Manitoba, and northern Alberta, along with feed from as far away as Texas were shipped to the Bar U in 1920 to makeup for the large amount of feed already consumed by cattle that were snowbound much of that winter and spring. That winter had long lasting below freezing temperatures allowing snow to accumulate and extra feed needing to be utilized to compensate for cattle not being able to graze on open range.²⁶ Lane, like K&B at their ranch, was the first in his area to develop and use irrigation at his ranch to improve pastures and grow cattle feed.²⁷

Extended use of open rangeland was a trait Lane may have observed with K&B, one of the larger utilizers of free grazing in the western U.S. As some of their contemporaries did, K&B also provided hay feed in winter near their ranch headquarters for years prior to

the U.S. hard winter. In years preceding the hard winter, K&B had a strategically organized operation of winter hay feeding that paralleled later fenced rangeland methods of western ranches. Mixed with an immense open range that encompassed millions of acres across Idaho, Wyoming, and the entire state of Montana allowed K&B to give ample care for their herds year-round. They continued a combination of winter feeding and open range techniques on immense, yet reduced free-grazing areas, through and after 1886 and 1887. Evidence through correspondence between Kohrs and Bielenberg regarding discussions on the purchase and use of hay feed exist as late as 1917, about four decades after Kohrs began the practice at his ranch.²⁸

B. Entrusting Ranch-hands and Building a Percheron Stable

Shipping was an integral part of Lane's and previous ranchers' operations as having reliability in a shipper (such as Lane had with GIF and Kohrs had with Rosenbaum), a large market to which to ship, a railway shipping point, and low shipping fees could help determine financial returns for a company. Lane shipped most of his top steers to Chicago as K&B and numerous other large ranchers' of their respective eras did. Those Lane cattle not going to Chicago often went to Winnipeg for export. Lane often had stock loaded on the CPR line near Namaka. Shipping was often done through late autumn, sometimes as late as October or November.²⁹ This is much like K&B who shipped much of their stock late in the year, sometimes through to November.

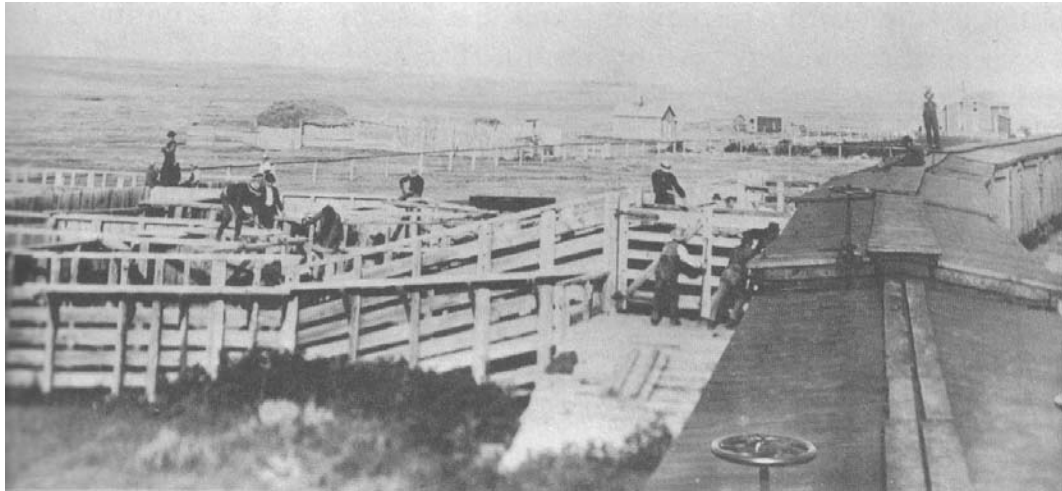


Photo 11. Cattle-loading chutes at Maple Creek, SK, a shipping point along the CPR, n.d. Foran, "The Impact of the Depression on Grazing Lease Policy in Alberta".

Much of Lane's wealth came through the buying, breeding, and selling of top-grade Percheron horses. Even this practice had its roots in Montana for Lane as he noted:

"When I first came to Canada from Montana in 1883... I was particularly impressed by the absence of horses such as we had been accustomed to... by this I mean horses that were able to do ordinary hauling and farm work, and that also had the endurance and speed necessary for making long trips to the railroad... I came to the conclusion that it was Percheron blood that was lacking in the horses of western Canada."

Lane had worked with Percherons in Montana before coming to the Bar U and this seems to be where he generated his initial ideas for utilizing the horses. One of his first Percheron purchases was 35 head of purebred Percherons from the Mauldin Horse Ranch in Dillon, MT in 1898.³⁰ After this transaction, Lane also bought about 1,000 head of additional Percherons from across Montana.³¹ The Percherons' quality in Montana had made a lasting impression on Lane and his eventual success in horses can be highly

contributed to his experiences in Montana. A few years passed before Lane established the Percherons at the Bar U though. He eventually moved the Percheron breeding program he built at his YT Ranch to the Bar U as of 1909.³² K&B also earned returns through horse sales. In October 1887, a horse sale occurred totaling \$4,519.50, which included six geldings sold for \$750 total and five mares for \$475 total.³³ Horse sales would continue sporadically for K&B even into the mid-1910s as their eastern ranch manager John Boardman also garnered extra income during that period by selling saddle horses.³⁴



Photo 12. Percherons on Bar U ranch land, n.d. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, Calgary,

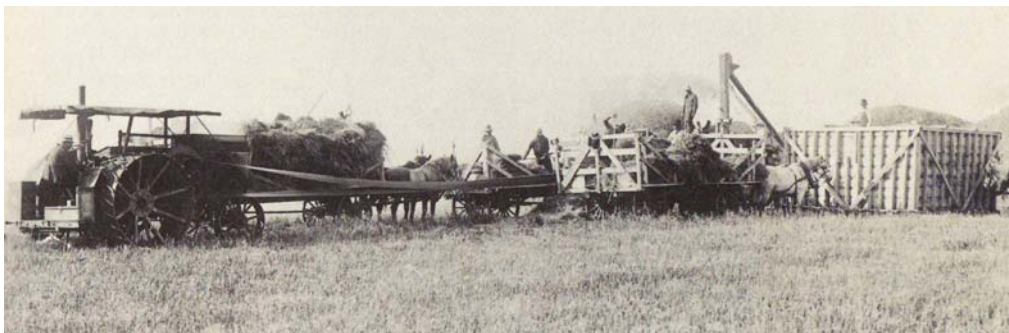


Photo 13. Threshing oats at the Bar U, 1917. Threshing was the duty of ranch-hands and Percherons were used as pullers. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, Calgary, AB.

Lane also delegated authority well and had a record of long-standing employees, similar to what Kohrs had. Lane had a central circle of ranch-hands that stayed with the Bar U ten to twenty years. Adding together the years of service of Lane's senior ranch-hands, Herb Millar, Alex Fleming, Frank Pike, Neils Olsen, and Bert Pierson, equaled approximately 100 years total. Millar was Lane's primary foreman for much of his Bar U days. He came to work at the Bar U as of 1902 and would be a crucial decision-maker and manager of the ranch during Lane's ownership. Millar is a prime example of Lane establishing long-term relationships with employees, having them be loyal to him, and him holding faith in their abilities.

Lane and Millar worked together at the Bar U when it was owned by the NWCC and Lane was foreman. By 1899, ten years after Lane had left the Bar U foreman position, he called on Millar to be head horseman at one of the ranches Lane owned at the time and had purchased just the year prior, the YT Ranch. Three years later, when Lane purchased the Bar U, he once again brought the trusted Millar with him and named him foreman.³⁵ Beyond his extensive experience and knowledge of cattle grazing and horses, Millar was also an equal or near-equal of Lane's when it came to entertaining perspective cattle and horse buyers at the ranch. He was a member of a regional gentleman's club, the High River Club, alongside Lane and helped him entertain visiting cattle buyers. Besides the daily management of animals, this is one area where Lane delegated much authority to Millar.³⁶ This made him an outward "face" representing the ranch during Lane's early years as owner, which was a unique responsibility for a foreman of his era. As foreman,

Millar was trusted with heavy responsibility overseeing the cattle at the ranch on a daily basis, organizing round-ups, and on the breaking and training of saddle stock.³⁷

Lane also delegated entertaining prospective buyers to Alex Fleming who was talented in this regard and also a master horseman. More importantly, Fleming was often put in charge of traveling to France to purchase new Percherons and was a manager of Percheron breeding at the Bar U. His authorities included overseeing the showing, daily care, and sale of Percherons.³⁸ He also held the important task of occasionally accompanying cattle on shipments to Chicago. Fleming arrived at the Bar U in 1908 and gave Lane sixteen years of service at the ranch. He would eventually grow to become general manager of all of Lane's ranches and upon Lane's incorporation in 1916, Fleming was named Vice President of the company by Lane.³⁹ Bert Pierson was another trusted horse specialist who was in charge of the Percheron brood mares and breeding program during Lane's tenure. Like Millar, Lane had built a loyal relationship with Pierson as he had worked for Lane back at his YT Ranch.⁴⁰

Frank Pike was delegated the responsibility of bookkeeper and kept that position for at least a decade at the Bar U. Occasionally supervising cattle transactions for the ranch, Pike was certainly a trusted employee that Lane had given a great responsibility of keeping tabs on the in-flows and out-flows of money at the ranch. Pike was given a large amount of authority as evidenced by letters on behalf of Lane and his company signed by Pike. Pike was at the Bar U during a period of heavy amounts of building construction at the ranch and he oversaw the bringing in and paying for construction materials. Along with this, he also managed the paying of cowboys and other employees and supplying

food and other materials for ranch-hands. Pike also had the opportunity to serve in the prominent position of ranch manager on an interim basis as of June 1913 when Herb Millar was at Namaka farm.⁴¹



Photo 14. Foremen and ex-foreman of southern Alberta roundups, June 1901. Charlie McKinnon is at the far right. Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 21.

Neils Olsen also had a considerable authority delegated to him, first as being designated the “range boss” for Lane, taking over from Charlie McKinnon. As range boss, Olsen was in charge of overseeing cattle on the range. Even more prominently, Olsen was designated manager of the Bar U replacing Herb Millar in late 1914. Olsen had earned the trust of Lane over fifteen years as he worked his way up from being a night rustler with the Bar U in his early twenties to being ranch manager by the time he was 38. He had climbed the ladder from what ranch-hands considered the lowest rung starting out to the highest in less than two decades. Olsen was a successful manager for

the ranch and would be the manager for Lane during Lane's last decade as owner of the Bar U.⁴²

Entrusting managerial duties critical to the operation and success of the ranch was a characteristic Kohrs displayed as well, which may have been an additional trait Lane picked up through his time in Montana and working with Kohrs. K&B's most trusted ranch-hand, Tom Hooban, would be a key foreman and cattle driver during the building decade for K&B, the 1870s. Kohrs quickly delegated cattle driving and hay feeding authorities to Hooban upon hiring him. Hooban would help expand the operation across the open range of the northern Rockies and trail cattle to the railroad towns for shipment. In November 1869, for example, Hooban became the first from Kohrs' operation to take a herd to eastern Montana, on Big Muddy north of Augusta, MT. This is near to where K&B would continue grazing cattle on what would become their secondary headquarters, their "eastern ranch" in the northeastern plains of Montana. Besides grazing the eastern ranges of Montana by 1869, Kohrs also trusted Hooban to winter 1,300 cattle in the Sun River Valley northeast of Deer Lodge that same year. In 1871, Hooban wintered cattle along the Snake River Valley in southern Idaho where he constructed barns and supplied hay for the cattle. Kohrs and Hooban enjoyed complete confidence in each other with Hooban being sent out with thousands of the highest quality cattle the company owned without hesitation. K&B did not write many checks in the many years before 1905 when check stubs begin appearing in their records; instead paying hands and fulfilling business transactions with cash. Hooban was trusted with large amounts of cash while trailing in open country; money to pay for amenities along the drive, compensate the other ranch-

hands, and purchase services needed for the cattle such as night stalls when stopping overnight.⁴³

Mitch Oxarart was also a trusted range and herd manager and cattle driver who was employed as early as 1869 until the winter of 1878 under K&B when Oxarart relocated to Texas to work at another ranch for reasons Kohrs does not disclose in his autobiography.⁴⁴ Oxarart served as foreman at the home ranch early in his work with Kohrs as of 1869.⁴⁵ Oxarart was likely hired and placed as home ranch foreman that year as K&B were expanding on rangeland with Hooban beginning to manage a herd at a range near the Sun River, north of Deer Lodge.⁴⁶ Hooban and Oxarart occasionally performed some of K&B's largest cattle drives too, such as Hooban taking 2,300 head to Cheyenne, WY in 1874 and Oxarart guiding 2,000 cattle also to Cheyenne in the same year. Hooban and Oxarart would do drives out of Montana to railroad shipping ports in 1876 as well.⁴⁷

Kohrs also hired his son-in-law John Boardman upon Boardman's marriage to Kohrs' daughter Anna in 1891 to run daily operations for the "eastern" headquarters. Boardman received trusted authority to trade cattle on the eastern ranges, hire ranch-hands, and organize shipping schedules. Delegation of appropriate tasks needed at distant outposts from the Deer Lodge headquarters allowed K&B to maintain expanded rangelands and herds within their company while promoting confidence and trust in range managers like Boardman and Hooban through a wide scope of needed duties.⁴⁸

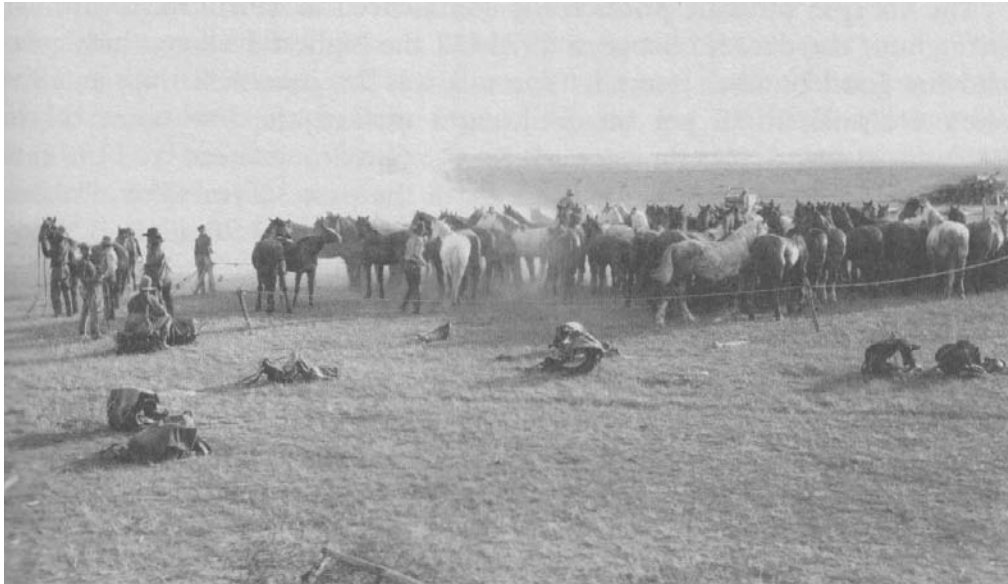


Photo 15. A roundup in western Canada during the 1920s. This is representative of activities done by Bar U foremen and ranchers during this period. Foran, "The Impact of the Depression on Grazing Lease Policy in Alberta".



Photo 16. Cowboys branding cattle at the Bar U, n.d. Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, 49.



Photo 17. Closeup of cowboys branding cattle at the Bar U in 1919 or 1920. Carter, “Postscript: ‘He Country in Pants’ No Longer – Diversifying Ranching History”.

With the important duties Lane placed upon his ranch-hands, he made sure to treat them to well, which is perhaps one reason why numerous employees stayed loyal to him and his operation. One story of Lane’s propensity to delegate large responsibilities to trusted employees and ensure their well-being involves a young man who had earned Lane’s trust and was sent to France to purchase Percheron stallions. Lane gave him a \$25,000 line of credit for the horses with instructions to “Treat yourself well. Tip well... When you have closed the deal take a couple weeks for sightseeing in France.”⁴⁹

Beyond Lane’s personal characteristics, even his ranch’s location was similar to K&B’s in a few key respects. As K&B’s home ranch was conveniently located west of the cattle rustling experienced by Granville Stuart and other ranchers of central Montana, so was Lane’s Bar U west of the larger influx of early farm settlers encroaching on ranches across parts of Alberta to the east.⁵⁰ Even beyond the 1860s and 1870s, K&B

experienced little controversy or issues concerning gunfights, range wars, mining claim disputes, or cattle rustlers that would occasionally damage other ranchers in neighboring regions of Montana. This condition would slightly change, however, for Lane and the more western portions of Alberta a few years into his ownership. Still, he had a slight advantage over other ranchers in the region who would experience more increases of farmer settlement during their early years.

C. Leadership Beyond the Ranch and Long-term Financial Impact

Beyond the daily life of the ranch with managerial duties, Lane was active politically within the ranching industry and eventually became active in larger regional and national politics. One of the “Midwestern” ranching cultural characteristics shared by Lane and K&B was their inclusion in regional stock associations. The Western Stock Growers’ Association (WSGA), formed in the mid-1890s, consisted of owners of stockraising outfits across southern Alberta. The WSGA, like the neighboring stockgrowers’ associations south of the border, attended to matters of quality range and ranch management in the district they oversaw, often making recommendations or agreements of rules for stockraisers to follow. Such associations, as did the WSGA, also provided a forum for discussion of political affairs concerning ranching and to decide on and organize any responses needed to larger regional and national policies that influenced the practices and livelihoods of the members.⁵¹ Such associations were often creations of those ranchers who practiced styles of “Midwestern” ranching culture and Lane and Kohrs were both active members of their respective associations.

Further concerning activities with fellow ranchers, Lane especially displayed leadership among his colleagues during the later years of the mange outbreak that plagued Alberta cattle through the early twentieth century. In 1919, Lane was backed by a group of area stockraisers to rid the region of mange. He became the head of the newly formed Cattlemen's Protective Association that year, an organization that helped build and increase the number of mange dips across the area. This association Lane led was quickly successful as after nearly two decades of being a menace, mange was nearly completely eliminated from southern Alberta within just a year.⁵² Regarding politics, Lane was even similar to Kohrs and other ranchers of the era in both Canada and the western U.S. in that he ran and was elected to a regional or national political body. Lane was elected to Canadian parliament as the representative from Bow Valley on the Liberal Party ticket.

While this report has described many of the similarities between Lane and K&B, a moment should be taken to emphasize that throughout its existence, the Bar U did not always simply "follow" the history of the GRKO ranch nor did it always parallel. Although there are numerous similarities between the ways its most successful owners managed the operations, there are a few key divergences as well. The largest perhaps is in simply how each ranch began regarding financing. Going back to the earliest days of each ranch, the Bar U began with the backing of the prominent and wealthy Allan family who allowed Fred Stimson to be the on-site manager, while GRKO started as an owner-operator venture of one individual, the less well-off Johnnie Grant.⁵³ The Bar U was, therefore, a creation much by the way of "eastern" capital and is sometimes referred to in

writings on its history as a “corporate” ranch whereas GRKO was started and operated through the finances of its owner-managers, Johnnie Grant and then Conrad Kohrs. This may have actually been an advantage for Kohrs as he did not have to pay a large price when purchasing his ranch since Grant had to more slowly build up a smaller-scale ranch without the security of eastern capital and it was an earlier time in his regions’ ranching industry. This is telling when comparing debt loads for Lane and K&B too. Although they may have spent a similar portion of their entire wealth to buy their respective ranches, Lane started out with a larger buy-in price he would need to makeup for over the following decades.

After Lane’s death and the selling of the Bar U to Pat Burns in 1927, an inventory was taken as to the total land and cattle holdings of the ranch under Lane and their respective worth. These are shown in Table 6, which place Lane’s long-term economic and ranching ventures into further perspective. Having purchased the ranch in 1902 for \$220,000 (\$5,500,000) and estimates of its worth at that time totaling \$233,000 (\$5,825,000) as outlined earlier, the total value of the ranch as of its sale to Burns had increased to \$509,000 (\$6,207,320). This was an increase of about \$700,000 over 25 years adjusted for inflation. Although a near doubling of value in absolute dollar terms, it was a modest gain in total value for the ranch accounting for changes in the larger economy.

Perhaps the largest success Lane can claim, however, was growing the size of the ranch. Lane’s claim to 18,000 acres as of 1902 jumped to over 71,000 acres by the time of his death. While number of cattle at the ranch had declined, perhaps due to Lane’s slowing down on cattle grazing during his later years, he oversaw a significant expansion

in the total acreage and an additional rise in the total value of the ranch during his quarter-century tenure. The same occurred with K&B who managed such increases during their tenure as well. In crucial financial categories, Lane had succeeded in managing the Bar U. The legacy of Lane's expansion of the ranch was even felt over two decades later in the next sale of the Bar U land after Burns' tenure ended. Using estimates of actual Bar U land sales in 1949, average dollar per acre prices from those sales showed that the worth of over 64,000 acres of Bar U land was in the range of \$860,300 (\$7,681,250) to \$1,019,928 (\$9,106,500). Estimates from the sales of cattle and horses as of 1949 range from \$963,980 (\$8,606,960) to \$1,171,260 (\$10,457,680) for about 6,500 cattle and 300 horses.⁵⁴ As the previous discussion has outlined and the table below and previous figures show, Lane expanded the land and animal base at the Bar U to the point that this large level was sustained and could be continued to produce increased amounts of wealth through the next few decades and the following owner.

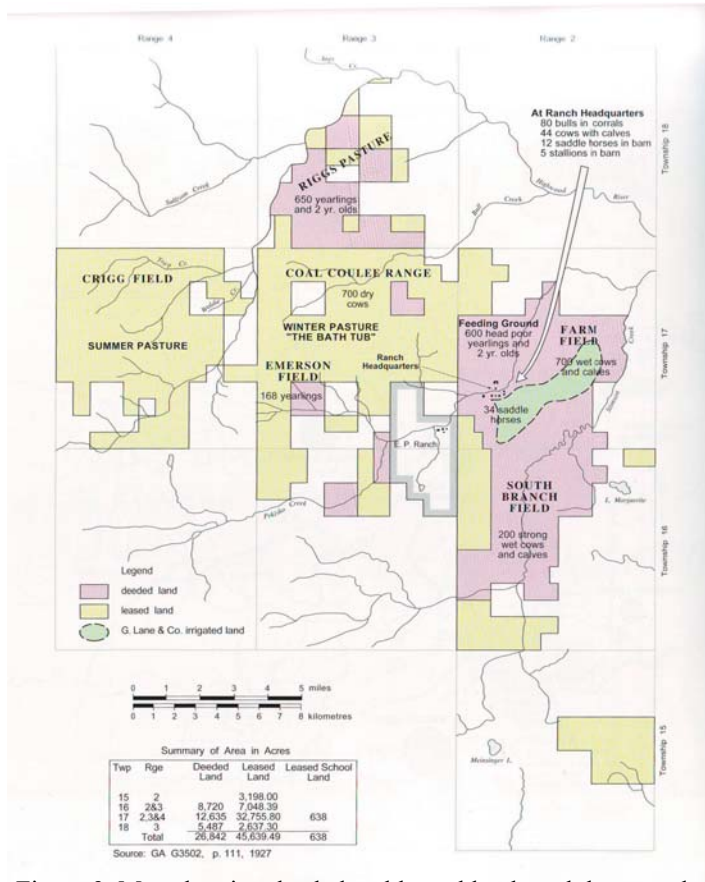


Figure 9. Map showing deeded and leased lands and the spread of cattle herds of the Bar U as of 1927, along with that sold from George Lane to Pat Burns. Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*.

	1927 ^a	1937 ^b	1947 ^c
Land Deeded (acres)	26,842	27,679	29,675
Value	\$297,000	\$187,636	\$593,500
Value per acre	\$11.00	\$6.78*	\$20.00**
Leased acres	45,619	41,490	42,685
Stock			
Cattle total	4,996	5,151	6,637
Steers 3 y.o.	830	206	
2 y.o.	1,422	4	302
1 y.o.	152	1066	
Cows 3 y.o.	1,159	1675	3,891
2 y.o.	534	800	1066
1 y.o.	886		
Bulls	80	72	106
Calves	971	1562	n/a
Horses	273	283	334
Total value	\$509,000	\$370,000	\$860,000

Table 7. Estimates of total value for land and cattle of the Bar U, 1927, 1937, and 1947. Adapted from Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 308.

While Lane enjoyed many years of economic success and brought the Bar U to prominence as a high quality ranch through the early 1900s, he did apparently carry an increasingly large debt-to-income ratio through the last years of his life up to his large debt leftover upon his passing. Many factors may have contributed to this. Lane's extensive use of feed continued into the 1920s when feed prices began rising following the brutal winter of 1919. Also at that time, cattle prices decreased and a U.S. tariff on beef coming in from Canada cutoff Lane from shipping through Chicago. For at least the decade prior, compared to other market options like Winnipeg and selling to neighboring Alberta ranchers, Chicago was likely the best option for ranchers looking for the top prices on high quality steers.⁵⁵ Losing such a large pool of buyers in the south and east of the U.S., along with international options through Chicago, was likely a significant blow to Bar U returns. Lane's Namaka farms, which he had purchased years earlier, did not produce as much grain as expected following drought periods during this time as well.⁵⁶ Lane and K&B shared similar management practices and decision-making styles, but although they were successes in terms of the cultural styles they inherited and adopted and their conscious practices, they also were at the whims of circumstances beyond their control. While K&B enjoyed mostly positive circumstances and in most instances were "in the right place at the right time" as was Lane, Lane also experienced some financial hardship nearing the end of his life. As with K&B, circumstances and what could be argued as good or bad "luck" also played its role in shaping the positive and negative economic outcomes for Lane during his tenure.

Lane's propensity to take on any investment that he forecasted would pay off and help his ranch and his ability to manage multiple people and projects at once were two qualities that shaped his financial and management style. Lane diversified, much like K&B, in not only the ranch operation, but also mining, water rights, and land.⁵⁷ A rancher colleague of Lane's once described him as "a double-barreled back action, high pressure, electrical dynamo at top speed".⁵⁸ His management record certainly supports this assertion.

Ranching in Alberta developed a couple decades later than that in Montana mainly due simply to the timing of population movement and settlement in each region. While Alberta was one of the last "frontiers" for ranching among the Canadian and U.S. west, there were old styles that had been around for decades and centuries brought into this region. It was not a case of a set of new practices being forged in the new territory, rather it was a combination and amalgamation of old skills that shaped Alberta's early ranching legacy. There are likely few better examples of this than Lane; a mixture of Midwestern, Anglo-Texan, and Anglo-Californian ranching born in the Midwest and learning ranching in Montana.

CHAPTER IV: AN INTERNATIONAL LEGACY

Like GRKO, the Bar U was part of an initial list of potential ranches to be chosen as the representation of western ranching for their respective nations and for a prospective buyout by their respective parks systems. Out of seventeen initial candidate ranches noted through the 1970s, the Bar U was selected that decade as the ranch with the most in-tact on-site resources to commemorate the history of western Canada ranching. It has been considered for decades by scholars, park staff, and the public as one of the most popularly recognized and most crucial ranches in the development of western Canada. The Bar U has, in addition, enjoyed decades of being one of the more widely known Canadian ranches and was one of the first large ranches established in the prairies of western Canada.¹ It has also held a place in western Canadian history as one of the longest surviving continuously operating ranches among the large stockraising operations that were started in the late 1800s, the time of the earliest western Canadian cattleraisers.² After an unsuccessful bid in 1977, Parks Canada bought the Bar U in 1991.³ The ranch Lane had built up to financial success, high quality cattle production, and national recognition was selected as the official commemoration of the entire western ranching industry as K&B's ranch had been south of the border.



Photo 18. View of the Bar U from the visitor center, 2009. Courtesy of author.



Photo 19. View of the Bar U, 2009. Courtesy of author.

As K&B's ranch did, Lane's Bar U provided a series of contradictions to the overarching orthodox historical narrative of its nation's history of western ranching. The hard winter did not destroy or seriously hinder returns of the Bar U in years immediately following the storm. Ranches such as the Bar U could be resilient and their fates not

determined by harsh and unforeseen climatic episodes. For much of its history, Lane used open rangeland for grazing Bar U cattle and actually kept much of this continuing through and following times like the hard winter. Despite the large farmer settlements of the early 1900s, ranches such as Lane's Bar U thrived during this period and it was not simply an overthrow of ranching by farming in the region. There was not always a stark separation of the two practices, some ranchers like Lane adopted farming as part of their practice to supply feed for their cattle.

Lane and his parallel of Montana, Conrad Kohrs, share many similarities when looking more broadly at their life stories as well. Kohrs' story is especially a thorough example of the "American Dream" as his experiences cover numerous aspects of the ideal narrative a successful and adventurous citizen was supposed to have. Both Lane and Kohrs come from modest middle-class families. They never divorce from their marriages and stay happily united with their respective partners until death. Lane and Kohrs experience the western adventures of being on prospecting trips, before running into a new field that employs them in an industry at which they will eventually learn and excel. After pulling themselves up from having little, Lane and Kohrs settle in newly populating territories and begin accumulating contacts and land and water rights. Taking all these risks, they also risk alienating partners by taking out loans early in the building of their businesses, which pay off in the long-run.

Growing his earnings from cattle, they become one of the largest earners and most prominent businessmen in their territories, specializing in the western "boom" industries of their day while controlling much of the local land. They are each elected to political office to represent their neighbors. After such an abundance of accomplishments, they

pass away as near-millionaires (millionaires converted to 2008 dollars) and are two of the richest and most prominent business and political names in the history of the North American west. Remaining immortalized by Parks Canada and the National Park Service (NPS) respectively, through the designation of their ranches as the preserved example of the western ranch, they leave behind this and the legacy of their descendants.

Although much has been made in this report of the parallels between Lane and K&B, along with the many links between and potential adoption of practices from K&B by Lane, the Bar U is first and foremost a uniquely Canadian enterprise and should be viewed that way. As the first encompassing history of the Bar U, Evans notes near the end of *The Bar U and Canadian Ranching History* that despite connections with the western U.S., the land, much of the labor, and the capital came from Canadian sources.⁴ The initial owners and manager, the Allans and Stimson respectively, were eastern Canadians of Quebec. While a U.S. citizen by birth and initially a cowboy by way of Montana, Lane made his first large sums of money in western Canada and that would allow him to purchase and operate the Bar U. Lane's shipping partners, GIF, were a Canadian outfit of Winnipeg that held and invested in numerous ranches across western Canada. While the growth of ranching across the northwestern U.S. through the mid and late 1800s contributed to the establishment of many managers, foremen, ranch-hands, cattle herds, and management practices across western Canada by the 1880s (with Montana and Alberta being the prime example of these links), the rangeland, finances, grazing, shipping, and adaptations to changing circumstances were that of western Canada. Once established, while parallels do exist in their histories and much claim can be made by Montana for helping to establish ranching in Alberta, western Canada has its

own distinct trajectory, institutions, and figures (exemplified by Lane) that eventually helped make western Canadian ranching an industry of its own character.



Photo 20. Dignitaries at the first Calgary Stampede, 1912. Lane is fifth from the left showing his advanced aging as this was during the middle of his Bar U ownership tenure. The preceding Bar U owner, Pat Burns, is eleventh from the left. Courtesy of Glenbow Archives, Calgary, AB.

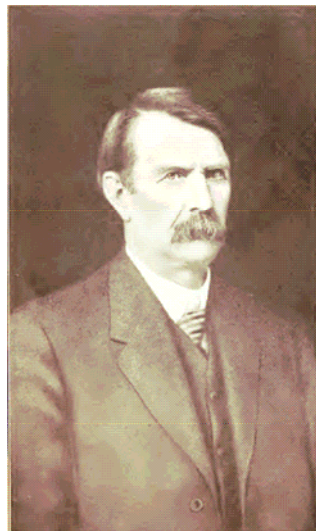


Figure 21. George Lane, n.d. Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*.

The Bar U was one of the longest-standing and most successful ranches of the initial half-century of western ranching in Canada. Just as GRKO was this for the western U.S. under K&B, the Bar U was this for western Canada under Lane. Formed in 1882, the Bar U stood as a private operating ranch into the mid-twentieth century, a nearly parallel timeframe to GRKO from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The Bar U easily outlasted their main large ranching competitors. As early as 1900, the other largest Alberta ranches such as the Cochrane Ranch and Oxley Ranch were in the process of closing down part of their operations with the Oxley selling out during that first decade of the twentieth century.⁵ Having operated from the earliest days of its regions' respective ranching industries and besting its competitors within a few decades and into the turn of the twentieth century, the Bar U and GRKO were resilient mostly due to their owner-managers.

Lane had a dynamic personality, a skill-set for managing a large ranch, and through his work, has left behind a legacy of international proportions. Born in the U.S. Midwest, shipping and buying cattle across the U.S. and Canada, selling beef to Great Britain, and purchasing and improving upon top grade Percherons from France, Lane was an international figure. Most of his and the Bar U's existence, however, is due to Alberta and Montana. These are the places where Lane acquired the knowledge and practices that would carry him into being a successful ranch manager and continue the Bar U towards success and fame as the designation of ranching in western Canada. Lane is a reminder of Canada's, Montana's, and each nation's ranching legacy and just how large it can be.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

¹ See David H. Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) and Warren M. Elofson, *Cowboys, Gentlemen & Cattle Thieves: Ranching on the Western Frontier*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

² Simon M. Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), xvi.

³ *Ibid.*, xiv, 301.

⁴ Regarding farm settlement and encroachment on ranchers in western Canada, see Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier*. For this happening in the western U.S., see Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 236-9.

⁵ In support of the argument that Canadian ranchers were a separate entity from U.S. ranchers, see Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924*.

⁶ For support of this perspective, see Ian Hundey, *John Ware*, (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2006), 10.

⁷ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 300.

⁸ See Kristi Benson, "Cowboys and Cattle Barons: Status and Hierarchy on Alberta's Early Corporate Ranches," *Alberta History* 48 (2000).

⁹ See Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*.

¹⁰ Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924*, 9; Hundey, *John Ware*, 10, 11; Sheilagh S. Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1987), 7; L.V. Kelly, *The Range Men: The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1913), 111. There may be a slight disagreement on the earliest cattle in Alberta. Breen and Hundey claim McKenzie was the first and he drove them in during 1873, while Jameson states the McDougalls were first with McKenzie arriving a year later in 1874. Kelly also states the McDougalls were the first. Perhaps the McDougalls brought the first cattle into Alberta with McKenzie was the first to drive a herd from over the U.S. border.

¹¹ Aritha Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2007), 19.

¹² Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, (Nanton, AB: Nanton and District Historical Society, 1975), 11.

¹³ Hundey, *John Ware*, 11.

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- ¹⁴ Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 7; Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 112, 113.
- ¹⁵ Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924*, 9.
- ¹⁶ Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 7; Grant MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, (Edmonton, AB: Institute of Applied Art, 1960), 40, 41.
- ¹⁷ MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 53, 54. The initial establishment of a ranch by the Allan family and managed by Fred Stimson, which was the foundation of what would become the Bar U home ranch, is often referred to as the NWCC. The name "Bar U" originated during this pre-Lane era, however, as this is what the home ranch was named during Stimson's period as manager. The term refers to one of the cattle brands registered with the territorial government during Stimson's management of the ranch. The Bar U brand was shown registered under Stimson's name as of October 1881, even before the start of the NWCC operating the ranch. Thus, I refer to the NWCC's ranch, which is the subject of this report, as the Bar U since it was an established term for the operation during its earliest years.
- ¹⁸ Hundey, *John Ware*, 11; Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 8.
- ¹⁹ Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 14.
- ²⁰ Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 147.
- ²¹ Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 22, 23.
- ²² Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 114.
- ²³ Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 11-3.
- ²⁴ Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 14.
- ²⁵ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 8, 9.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 11, 13.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.
- ²⁸ Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 27; MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 79; Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 158.
- ²⁹ Hundey, *John Ware*, 12, 13.
- ³⁰ Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 26; MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 74.
- ³¹ Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 28.
- ³² Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 9.
- ³³ Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924*, 11-3.
- ³⁴ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xiv. Lane started as foreman with the Bar U in 1884.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁶ Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924*, 39, 40.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 52, 53.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 56, 57.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 58, 59.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 61-9.

⁴¹ Hundey, *John Ware*, 11, 12; Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 8; MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 41; A.B. McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares," *Manitoba History* 41 (2001); Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, 43.

⁴² Hundey, *John Ware*, 32.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁴ e.g. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*. See chapters 7 through 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 208-10, 213.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 267.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 272-74. For an overview of K&B's use of shorthorn and Hereford cattle, see Chapman, Brandon M. and Matthew S. Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*, (Deer Lodge, MT: Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, 2009).

⁵⁰ Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*, 299.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 9.

Chapter II

¹ e.g. Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*, 300.

² MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 80.

³ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 114, 115.

⁴ cf John Albright, *Historic Resource Study, Cultural Resources Statement, and Historic Structure Report*, (Denver: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1979). As the first history of K&B's ranch and as part of a larger project on documenting historic structures on-site, Albright's report was not intended to be a

comprehensive history of GRKO, but rather an introduction to the scope of practices and activities at the ranch through its history.

⁵ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

⁶ Hundey, *John Ware*, 24.

⁷ See Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 115, 116.

⁸ Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, 34.

⁹ See Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*, 300. Ford was another example of a Montana rancher bringing midwestern ranching culture to the area. Having setup a large ranch in the Sun River area of Montana, Ford had migrated from Missouri.

¹⁰ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 116; Barbara Holliday, "Herb Millar of the Bar U," *Alberta History* 44 (1996), 17.

¹¹ Hundey, *John Ware*, 48.

¹² Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 18-20.

¹³ Hundey, *John Ware*, 24.

¹⁴ Hundey, *John Ware*, 35, 59; MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 254; Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, 45.

¹⁵ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

¹⁶ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 15, 300.

¹⁷ McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".

¹⁸ Dollar amount in parentheses in this instance and through the rest of the report indicate the amount before it converted to 2008 US\$. All 2008 dollar worth estimates here and through the rest of report are based on Robert Sahr's inflation conversion factors available through links at his website (<http://oregonstate.edu/cla/polisci/faculty-research/sahr/sahr.htm>). Sahr's data is based on the U.S. Consumer Price Index, a commonly-used metric to calculate monetary conversions to find comparable worth between years. Data since 1912 has changed occasionally making conversion factors before and after that year not precisely comparable. Sahr recommends, and we follow in this report, that estimates before 1913 be rounded to no more than two decimal places. For example, \$12,658 becomes \$12,700. This rounding to the "nearest hundred" means that conversions to 2008 dollar worth will not be attempted with any amounts under \$1,000 since rounding such estimates would result in large changes as compared to the entire amount being converted. The CPI compares the cost of items the average household buys such as food, housing, transportation, medical services, etc. It can be interpreted as how much money you would need today to buy an item in the year in question if its price had changed the same percentage as the average price change. Essentially, it shows an estimation of comparable "buying power".

¹⁹ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 109.

²⁰ McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".

²¹ MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 240.

²² Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

²³ Conrad Kohrs, *Conrad Kohrs: An Autobiography* (Deer Lodge, MT: C.K. Warren, 1977), 25-6. Kohrs would also obtain a loan for \$5,000 from Nolan and Weary bankhouse of Virginia City in January 1864 to invest in Con and Peel's shop. This loan was repaid a month later at 10% interest for the month. On the Nolan and Weary loan, see Kohrs, *Conrad Kohrs: An Autobiography*, 35.

²⁴ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

²⁵ Ann Clifford, *Ann's Story: A Great Ranching Empire and the People Who Made it Work*, (Calgary: Forever in Memory, 1995); Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xiii, 200, 203.

²⁶ Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, 46. This was Kohrs' initial pay under Hank Crawford at Crawford's butcher shop and it would eventually be raised to \$100 per month. See Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

²⁷ For the Two Bar Ranch's cattle numbers, see McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 109-111.

³⁰ McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ For an overview of Lane's relationship with GIF, see Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xvi.

³⁴ McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares".

³⁵ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

³⁶ McCullough, "Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares", 112.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

³⁸ Kohrs, *Conrad Kohrs: An Autobiography*, 25, 31.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁰ Lyndel Meikle, ed., *Very Close to Trouble: The Johnny Grant Memoir*, (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1996), 134.

⁴¹ MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 251.

⁴² Hundey, *John Ware*, 51, 52, 67, 75.

⁴³ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 124, 125.

⁴⁴ McCullough, “Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares”.

⁴⁵ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xv, xvi. For Kohrs’ investment allocations, see Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

⁴⁶ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 113.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴⁸ Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 92.

⁴⁹ For a more thorough statistical breakdown of K&B’s debiting and crediting their bank accounts, see Chapter 5 in Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

⁵⁰ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 302.

⁵¹ McCullough, “Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares”.

⁵² *Ibid.*.

⁵³ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 197; McCullough, “Winnipeg Ranchers: Gordon, Ironside and Fares”.

Chapter III

¹ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 126.

² *Ibid.*, 132.

³ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

⁴ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 126.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁶ For information on Lane’s use of the home ranch’s land for grazing, see Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 115. K&B’s open range and grazing practices for their eastern ranch are outlined in Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*. Besides the ranch house headquarters in Deer Lodge, K&B owned a house on their eastern Montana rangeland claims near the town of Oswego, MT and adjacent to the Fort Peck Reservation. The half-brothers made numerous visits to this “eastern” ranch as it became an important station from which cattle were driven and traded.

⁷ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xiv.

⁸ See *Ibid.*, 6, 7.

⁹ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

¹⁰ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 120.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

¹² Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*, 236.

¹³ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 134-5.

¹⁴ See Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 18. This argues that Alberta ranchers' losses from the hard winter were at an average of about 50 percent of head per ranch. Loss estimates for the U.S. west can be found in Jordan, *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*, 238.

¹⁵ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 140-2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 144, 145.

¹⁷ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

¹⁸ Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 442, 443.

¹⁹ Conrad Warren, interview by Cheryl Clemmensen, Deer Lodge, MT, November 19, 1981. The ledger for 1886 shows cattle inventory for K&B at 24,069 head with a loss of 15,081 to the winter. Final inventory was 8,262 due to additional factors such as cattle killed by coyotes, butchered for the ranch, and butchered by others. See also Robert S. Fletcher, "That Hard Winter in Montana, 1886-1887," *Agricultural History* 4 (1930), 126-7; Dave Walter, "The Hard Winter of 1886-87: Was that Winter a Century Ago Really Montana's 'Big One' of All Time?," *Montana Magazine* 81 (1987), 65. Fletcher and Walter cited in Anna Fay Rosenberg, *Hard Winter Endurance: Conrad Kohrs' Cattle Raising Operation, 1887-1900*, (MA thesis, University of Montana, 1996), 31-2.

²⁰ Rosenberg, *Hard Winter Endurance: Conrad Kohrs' Cattle Raising Operation, 1887-1900*, 20-1, 41.

²¹ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

²² See *Ibid.*.

²³ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 126.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 177, 178.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 131, 132.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.

²⁷ For information on Lane's irrigating practices, see Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xv, xvi. Concerning K&B's irrigation, see Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

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- ²⁸ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.
- ²⁹ Cattle shipping seasons for Lane can be found in Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 130. K&B's cattle shipping schedules are reviewed in Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.
- ³⁰ MacEwan, *John Ware's Cow Country*, 215.
- ³¹ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 159.
- ³² Holliday, "Herb Millar of the Bar U", 18.
- ³³ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.
- ³⁴ Kohrs to Bielenberg, Nov. 22, 1915, MC 145, Box 1, Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company Records, Montana Historical Society, Helena, MT.
- ³⁵ Holliday, "Herb Millar of the Bar U", 17.
- ³⁶ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 182; Holliday, "Herb Millar of the Bar U", 17.
- ³⁷ Holliday, "Herb Millar of the Bar U", 18.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.
- ³⁹ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 184, 185.
- ⁴⁰ Holliday, "Herb Millar of the Bar U", 18.
- ⁴¹ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 185, 186.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 187, 189.
- ⁴³ Tom Hooban's Notebook from 1866-1869, GRKO 15722, Series 2, Subseries A, Folder 1, Kohrs Family Personal Papers, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Deer Lodge, MT; Tom Hooban's Notebook from 1879-1881, GRKO 15721, Series 2, Subseries A, Folder 1, Kohrs Family Personal Papers, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Deer Lodge, MT; Tom Hooban's Notebook from 1879-1880, GRKO 15720, Series 2, Subseries A, Folder 1, Kohrs Family Personal Papers, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Deer Lodge, MT. A summary of cash transactions made by Hooban, including a near full account of cattle drive expenses from a July to October 1879 drive, exist in these notebooks.
- ⁴⁴ Kohrs, *Conrad Kohrs: An Autobiography*, 72.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 51, 52.
- ⁴⁶ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.
- ⁴⁷ Kohrs, *Conrad Kohrs: An Autobiography*, 63, 64.
- ⁴⁸ Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

⁴⁹ See Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 117.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁵¹ Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924*, 102, 103.

⁵² Nanton and District Historical Society and Mosquito Creek History Society, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland*, 75, 76.

⁵³ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xiv; Meikle, ed. *Very Close to Trouble: The Johnny Grant Memoir*.

⁵⁴ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 317, 318.

⁵⁵ Kelly, *The Range Men; The Story of the Ranchers and Indians of Alberta*, 443.

⁵⁶ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 302.

⁵⁷ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 115. Evans attributes diversification strategies of Lane to his time spent with Kohrs during the 1870s when K&B were beginning their investment diversification. Concerning K&B's numerous monetary allocations across different economic sectors, see Chapman and Carroll, *Socio-economic Study of Historic Ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site*.

⁵⁸ See Van Herk, *Audacious and Adamant: The Story of Maverick Alberta*, 46.

Chapter IV

¹ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, xiii.

² Jameson, *Ranches, Cowboys, and Characters: Birth of Alberta's Western Heritage*, 24.

³ Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History*, 298.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 301, 302.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

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