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The American Cowboy: The Myth and the Reality

Joe B Frantz, Julian Ernest Jr. Choate

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The cowboy, America's most popular folk hero, appeals to millions of readers of novels, histories, biographies, and folk tales. Cowboys command a vast audience on country radio, television, and at the movies, but what exactly *is* a cowboy?

Authors Joe B. Frantz and Julian Ernest Choate, Jr., reveal the real, dyed-in-the-wool cowboy as a heroic being from the American past, who richly deserves to be understood in terms of reality, instead of myth. Here, then, is the definitive portrait of the American cowboy—in frontier history and in literature—reexamined, revitalized, and set in the proper perspective.

Many exciting accounts of cowboy life have been presented by such talented writers as J. Evetts Haley, J. Frank Dobie, Wayne Gard, Walter Prescott Webb, Edward Everett Dale, Helena Huntington Smith, Ramon F. Adams, and C. L. Sonnichsen. But Frantz and Choate see the cowboy in relation to the entire panorama of Western history and as part of a continuing tradition: "The American cowboy has carved a niche–*niche* nothing, it's a gorge–in American affection as a folk hero, and in this role we have surveyed him."

The American Cowboy: The Myth and the Reality is illustrated with sixteen pages of the great cowboy photographs made more than a century ago by Erwin E. Smith.

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