

Rodeo Literature Roundup

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"I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized help on this work."- Haleigh Altersitz

Abstract

Modern rodeo can trace its roots further back than most people think. It is more than just American Cowboys riding a bull for eight seconds, roping a calf, riding a horse that bucks and kicks, weaving thorough barrels on horseback, or even children riding on the backs of sheep (Mutton Bustin). There is a reason for everything, from the historical dates and locations, the socioeconomics of the sport, even gender roles. Rodeo is a microcosm of society, and the works of many authors reflect this, both overtly and in more subtle ways.

When the world thinks rodeo, it immediately turns to cowboys and an image of the old American West often portrayed in film and media. Bull riders, Broncos, Barrel racers, and so forth, with old photos of Buffalo Bill and other figures coming to mind, not the actual sport responsible for creating this image of the American West. As a result, literature genuinely explains what this sport is, where it comes from, how it has developed, and where it is now.

What is not lost to cowboy fiction relatively sparse as most works that focus on rodeo were published from the late 1970s to the 1990s and portions of the 2000s, with most providing a few pages about the actual history. With what is available and talks primarily about rodeo, there is often a fair amount of contradictory information from source to source as most take on different perspectives, making the research process confusing. However, it does provide a good foundation for further work to be done in this field, setting a base in which to start bringing rodeo in to focus.

In most works that specifically talk about rodeo, at least one section gives a version of rodeo origins. These range from historical, Anthropological evidence to owing its very existence to cowboys¹. With most implying that the rodeo is a product of western culture, emblazoned with the settlers and spirit of adventure gumption to thrive in the unknown.

The idea that rodeo did not come from these attributes is interesting. In 1996's *Rodeo in America*, by Wayne S. Wooden and Gavin Ehringer, the authors provide a history that most other literature do not consider. Thanks to Wooden and Ehringer, readers are made aware that the concept of rodeo origins did not come to form the United States of America.

¹ Le Compte Mary L., *Cowgirls of the Rodeo: Pioneer Professional Athletes* (Urbana u.a.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1993), 6.

According to Wayne S. Wooden and Gavin Ehringer, "ever, since humans began to domesticate an animal, they have participated in a contest that pit man against beast."² Following this statement, Wooden and Ehringer also explain how rodeo came to the western hemisphere by way of the Spanish. Spanish noblemen would put on horsemanship exhibitions as well as riding contests³. Though this is covered in a mere two pages, it covers how rodeo was brought in its earliest form to the Americas. It is in America where it began to evolve even further. Even in just the two short pages, *Rodeo in America* begins to show how truly interconnected the world is and gives an idea of how concepts and traditions can travel the globe and be kept throughout the ages. This is different compares to other books related to rodeo, which tend to focus on regional experiences. It is not to say that *Rodeo in America* does not discuss the evolution of the American experience of Rodeo. However, the single thought process is enlightening from a global perspective.

American Rodeo from Buffalo Bill to Big Business by Kristine Fredericksson, written in 1985, gives a different perspective and provides information on how rodeo has developed. The selection dives into its origins has more to do with why American cowboys created the American concept of rodeo. This book is like many that put rodeo in the background and cowboys the forward ground while providing a relevant viewpoint. Seeing Rodeo is a source of income for many riders⁴. This is one of a few books that talk about rodeo as a means of income. It gives an understanding of the economic impact that surrounds rodeo. This is an important point of view because it helps bring a human aspect of the sport. That aspect is that people need money to get

² Wayne S. Wooden and Gavin Ehringer, *Rodeo in America: Wranglers, Roughstock & Paydirt* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 7.

³ Wooden and Ehringer, *Rodeo in America*, 7.

⁴ Kristine Fredriksson, *American Rodeo: From Buffalo Bill to Big Business* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1993), 171.

by and to make a living. The title really brings the socio-economical ideas to mind when using the materials and reading between the lines of what is being discussed. This is in contrast to most other pieces within the literature, once again getting lost in that cowboy charm, such as books like *The Cowboy Hero*.

1979's *The Cowboy Hero, His Image in American History & Culture*, by William W. Savage, JR is often lumped into rodeo literature when it has nothing to do with rodeo in the literal sense. This is because, as with many of the books on this topic, there is more exploration of manhood. While this is true, there are social implications behind the images of what cowboys and rodeo represent, giving a justification as to why rodeo is a competitive sport. While there is a place for this discussion, there is no mention as to when American cowboys started doing this sport. This particular book did state when the sport was formalized and the origin of the word Rodeo itself⁵. This is rather interesting as this is something that most would expect to come from an anthropological perspective in the literature.

Having an anthropological viewpoint is important when attempting to build a comprehensive picture of the topic of rodeo and or cowboys/participants of the sport. However, the availability of these works is sparse. As it is in Elisabeth A. Lawrence's 1982 book entitled *Rodeo, an anthropologist looks at the wild and the tame* as this does not talk about the actual origins of rodeos; instead, it gets into a conversation about rodeo as a part of the human condition. Again while this is no less interesting and important when researching rodeo, it does not provide any historical data. At the same time, it does provide a general overview as to why the sport is notorious for particular events and its cultural impact on those in the community.

⁵Savage, *The Cowboy Hero*, 123-124.

Most of the available literature points to a trend that has very little information regarding the sport's origin in general. The titles and works do bring well-rounded images and ideas to the world of rodeo. It is allowing for other aspects of the other issues and ideas to be looked at in the subset of the cultural environment that surrounds the sport. From a pure data analytical perspective revolving around dates and historical events, many of the works lack that true aspect. The gathered works do have a copious amount of information about how it has evolved.

The literature indicates the overwhelming evolution of the sport. As seen in the book *American Rodeo From Buffalo Bill to Big business*, rodeo went from a version of the circus that dealt primarily with what people thought the Wild West was to what it is known for today. Professional Rodeo is a multi-million dollar industry and a very successful sports genre that gains support from countless sources of revenue and is responsible for thousands of jobs every year. Within that literature, we see the refinement of rodeo that makes it more palatable for the average businessman. That is also now much more aware animals will be thanks to able rights activist groups. That has now made the sport much more sustainable for those who participate in it and those ridden. As for an anthropological standpoint, they were both agree and disagree that rodeo has evolved.

According to authors such as Dr. Lawrence, provide follows mostly wow this is very blunt and a little cruel there is a valid point to this as indicated by kinds of literature such as radio in America an American rodeo from Buffalo Bill to big business and a respected sport. The sport itself has never been a particularly peaceful sport, but by having this in the literature, it does not dissolute people as to what rodeo is. This is one of the few books that does not romanticize Cowboys, and tiredly this is very refreshing and well earned as the rodeo is very much E

multifaceted and complex sport that though simple, takes a little bit of time to fully understand. But as in most works of literature, there are some flaws that need to be addressed.

As many of the books written on rodeo were written before this current century, there are very few books published that could improve the literature. However, there is a contribution provided by articles. The problem is they have been primarily wrapped up in by cowboys as well. Another problem that faces is literature. It's how they are pooling their information as the academic community does not recognize non-academic sources. As a social media, there is ample more information out there that what is not produced by academics is actually produced by those who participate in the sport itself. Who, for argument's sake, are the most expert when talking about rodeo. If other avenues of the collection were used, she writes more books currently, the sparsity of Freddie's literature would not be as it is now.

For all the difficulty and cowboys within this literature, all fascists of the literature are very adamant about how much the sport has changed in nearly every way. However, there is security when it comes to some of the information. There has been much mention about cowboys. What about cowgirls or people of color? If finding basic historical information about the basics is sparse, then locating books on cowgirls and people of color that are not children's books is like looking for a needle in a haystack. In literature, rodeo is a white man's sport, with both groups having a mere three books devoted to their contributions to the sport in the United States. However, none of them talk about when women and groups such as the African American community started to compete in American rodeo. 2016 saw the publication of *Black Cowboys in the American West: on the Range, on the Stage, behind the Badge*. This is, in many ways, an essential topic as a large portion of cowboys were black⁶. While there is only one chapter about

⁶Bruce A. Glasrud, Michael N. Searles, and Albert S. Broussard, *Black Cowboys in the American West: on the Range, on the Stage, behind the Badge* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 3.

their experience in rodeo before the end of segregation while this is something that needs to be covered more in the literature as this would not only potentially empower current riders within the African American community to pursue rodeo but also this book proudly would further the literature on the Civil rights movement. This is true for the rest of the literature

Women are one of the other marginalized groups within academic literature about rodeo and contribute to how scarce it is for researchers to get a hold of. Which, given that books such as *Rodeo in America*, state that there is evidence in Manonin art that both men and women participated in an ancient form of rodeo⁷. This information is in the literature. However, other works about cowgirls make no reference to when women first started participating in the United States or are the cowgirls roped in with the information about the cowboys. As historians and researchers are left wondering why this information is so sparse, series in multiple avenues date is that are not utilized in a way that could help further their research and literature itself. For example, by adding more avenues of data collection and literature books such as *Cowgirls*, the rodeo would not be needed. This 1993 book is very misleading as readers who are expecting factual data about rodeo are met with experiential data; as a result, the book containing over 600 letters from women lucky Parton rodeo in its heyday and up into the 20th century. This particular book spends a lot more time looking at rodeo through this lens though helpful, doesn't provide actionable historical data to researchers. It is, in essence, a fluff piece as one might call it, providing yes their accounts, but it does not provide more explanations about why events were playing out the way they were for them as well have been beneficial for readers. As for each instance, they could easily gain background knowledge before being thrust into something that is already not well understood and is now very much confusing.

⁷Wooden and Ehringer, *Rodeo in America*, 7.

Rodeo, like its people, can be straightforward and honest if the literature was allowed, so follow this path. While it is enjoyable to read countless books of Cowboys and glories of the Old West, it is nothing for the rodeo and his history. This sport's slowly but surely dying in our current times. For those who seek rodeo preservation a literature that explains why this sport is so vital and has a place in our modern world as you continue this longstanding tradition. Without rodeo, certain breeds of animals and species of animals will actually go extinct because they are specially bred for the rodeo. As well this takes away from countless American jobs, with at least several thousand people being employed every year thanks to this sport. Weather be as rodeo clowns event callers, veterinarians, medical personnel, food services, and the list goes on and on. For many many people rodeo isn't just a sport is a way of life and by not having a straightforward and comprehensive literature that actually explains what rodeo is does a great disservice to these people and today American identity. After all Americans on the international stage are seen as Cowboys. While this may be seen as an insult is an insult that we can be proud of.

the literature of rodeo is one that receives very little attention for all that it could do . Whether it be the factor is losses in countless tales of Cowboys and the glory days the bygone era rodeo is not just a sport or an activity that gets put into the background of history it is one that needs to be in the forefront as rodeo itself brought about different means of agricultural preservation and how trade of cattle other livestock was perpetrated for several 1000 years. Once again by doing so not having this literature is hurting this industry rather than helping it. Has rodeo become politicized it probably has many ways but for those who compete there is no politics is just then and what they're doing whether that be riding a Bronco, cow, roping, it's all in that moment. A moment of pure bliss that comes from connecting with the wild and the untamed.

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Rodeo roundup by Haskel Frankel, unknown edition. Last edited by Clean Up Bot. February 13, 2020 | History. An edition of Rodeo roundup (1962). Rodeo roundup. 1st ed. by Haskel Frankel. The Rodeo Round Up. Its all about the ride. Home. YouTube Video. About. About. Who's That? Three short weeks prior to the beginning of round one it was decided that the WNFR would go on and what came to fruition in that short time has been nothing short of remarkable. The excitement and anticipation of what was at the end of tonight's tenth and final performance have been in the back of everyone's minds since the day that they arrived here in Arlington, Texas. Rodeo Roundup! By Melody Bober Piano Sheet Level: Intermediate Item: 00-W9034. \$2.25. Add to Cart Add to List. Share. Product Details. Description. Added to cart. Rodeo Roundup! By Melody Bober. Piano Sheet. Level: Intermediate. \$2.25. Qty: View Cart & Checkout Continue Shopping. The 2021 Rodeo Roundup has been canceled. Dates for the 2022 event will be posted once available. Join us at Rodeo Roundup, located in front of City Hall in downtown Houston, for music, free food and games as Mayor Sylvester Turner declares Go Texan Day in Houston. Learn about your Rodeo's contributions to the community. Hear City of Houston Mayor's Go Texan Day proclamation.