



# Controlled Recklessness: Ed Lemmon and the Open Range (South Dakota Biography Series)

*Nathan Sanderson*

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As a cowboy, Ed Lemmon saddle-handled more cattle than any man in history. As a cattleman, he oversaw the largest fenced pasture in the world. Equally at home in both roles, Lemmon balanced reckless risk-taking and controlled management to shape the development of the cattle industry and become a central figure on the northern plains. Born in 1857 into a hardworking and resilient family, George Edward ( Ed ) Lemmon grew up learning how to bounce back from adversity. Despite several crippling accidents on horseback, he continued to pursue his passion. A full-time cowboy at twenty and a range manager at twenty-three, Lemmon finally achieved what few cowboys could: an ownership stake in one of the largest outfits on the plains, the Flying V. As the open range disappeared, Lemmon helped to transform the Northern Great Plains from a network of worn, dusty cattle trails to one of cattle towns linked by railroads. In *Controlled Recklessness*, author Nathan Sanderson explores the motivations that led one of the greatest cowmen on the plains to saddle up time and time again. Using Lemmon s own vibrant accounts, historical records, and corporate and government documents, Sanderson separates myth from reality. The result is a comprehensive look at Lemmon s colorful life and his perspective as both a cowboy and a cattleman at the end of the open-range era.



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