

## George Lane

“Always keep yourself in a position to look any man straight in the eye and tell him to go to hell.”

George Lane's education was the school of horse knocks. This cowboy from Montana became a giant in the development of Alberta agriculture. He bought and sold beef, exported and imported Percherons and, in 1902, outmanoeuvred big money to purchase the beautiful Bar U Ranch. This plain-spoken stockman, who had arrived with \$100 in his pocket and who worked for \$100 a month, pulled off the largest ranch deal in Alberta's history.



George Lane in front of ranch office/post office at Bar U Ranch,  
Pekisko, Alberta  
Glenbow Archives PD-299-1

Knowing that ranching's heritage was fleeting as summer rain, Lane was one of the Big Four who agreed to back Guy Weadick's idea of an agricultural exhibition and stampede. The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede continues Lane's desire to celebrate the traditions of ranching.

Lane's old cutaway coat and battered hat were as dressed up as he got, no matter who visited. And visitors came. Even the Prince of Wales declared that although he had only visited the Bar U Ranch for 24 hours, he wished it had been 24 years.

### The Bar U Ranch

George Lane learned the cattle trade while working for the best cattlemen in Montana. He knew ranches like the Bar U could not prosper without the day-to-day labour of cowboys to drive herds, brand calves, and patrol the ranch's perimeter.

As foreman and the owner of the Bar U, Lane had firm opinions on how to produce beef cattle under western conditions. Ranch hands said cattle were almost sacred to Lane; it was nearly sacrilege to laugh or spit within ten feet of a steer.

Many people came to see the Bar U's impressive operation – even royalty. In 1919, the Prince of Wales visited the ranch. “We were in time to help the cowboys and Indians to round-up the last odd, hundreds of cattle,” the Prince recalled. “And they collected close to 2,000 head... It was quite good fun, lots of hard riding, doing my best imitation of a cowboy...”

## Lane's Percherons

As farms and settlers crowded the borders of his sprawling ranch, George Lane saw an opportunity to grow and diversify. He would supply new settlers with the horse power they needed to run their farms.

Lane knew the Percheron was a good heavy horse breed, suited to hard work in the fields. In 1907 he made the first of many trips to the home of the breed in Le Perche, France and invested in the best Percheron stock possible. Two years later the first major Percheron imports arrived at the Bar U Ranch.

By 1909, the Bar U was recognized internationally as having the largest herd of purebred Percherons in North America. Prizes won at horse shows across the prairies filled the walls of Lane's family home.

Born: March 6, 1856 – Died: September 24, 1925

## Additional Resources

- **Dictionary of Canadian Biography**  
[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lane\\_george\\_15E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lane_george_15E.html)

## Our Collections

### Glenbow Museum

<https://www.glenbow.org>

### Glenbow Western Research Centre | Glenbow Library and Archives

<https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/glenbowlibraryandarchives>

### Glenbow Library and Archives | Digital Collection

<https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R340826N9XM?WS=PackagePres&Flat=1>