



The American West

By Dee Brown

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The American West By Dee Brown

Renowned storyteller Dee Brown, author of the bestselling *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, recreates the struggles of Native Americans, settlers, and ranchers in this stunning volume that illuminates the history of the old West that's filled with maps and vintage photographs.

Beginning with the demise of the Native Americans of the Plains, Brown depicts the onrush of the burgeoning cattle trade and the waves of immigrants who ultimately "settled" the land. In the retelling of this oft-told saga, Brown has demonstrated once again his abilities as a master storyteller and an entertaining popular historian.

By turns heroic, tragic, and even humorous, *The American West* brings to life American tragedy and triumph in the years from 1840 to the turn of the century, and a roster of characters both great and small: Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, Geronimo, Dull Knife, Crazy Horse, Captain Jack, John H. Tunstall, Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett, Wyatt Earp, the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang, Wild Bill Hickok, Charles Goodnight, Oliver Loving, Buffalo Bill, and many others.

The American West is about cattle and the railroads; it is about settlers who came to claim a land not originally their own and how they slowly imposed law and order on these wild and untamed places; and it is about the wanton destruction of the Native American way of life. This is epic history at its best and popular history at its most readable.

This new work is culled from Dee Brown's highly acclaimed writings, which instantly established him as one of America's foremost Western authorities. Fully revised, rewritten, and edited into one seamless account of America's most famous frontier, this epic narrative, along with the introduction and a chronological table of events, etches an unforgettable and poignant portrait. *The American West* is at once a tribute to the West and a majestic new peak for a writer whose long and successful career has been synonymous with excellence in frontier history.

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The American West By Dee Brown Bibliography

- Rank: #113152 in Books
- Brand: Touchstone
- Published on: 1995-11-01
- Released on: 1995-11-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.10" w x 6.12" l, 1.26 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 448 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Drawing on his earlier books coauthored with Martin Schmitt (The Settlers West; Trail Driving Days), Brown focuses here on the inland American West during the last half of the 19th century as the railroads opened up the area to settlers, the Plains Indians made their final stand and cattle ranches spread from Texas to Montana. Brown examines the origins of the Western myth in literature, from the dime novels of Mayne Reid and Ned Buntline to Owen Wister's *The Virginian*, and traces the rise of rodeos and Wild West shows. Here is a galaxy of famous characters: Geronimo, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull; Wyatt Earp, Buffalo Bill, Charles Goodnight, Billy the Kid, Teddy Roosevelt, Generals Crook and Custer. The author takes us on cattle drives to Dodge City and other western towns, then completes this sprightly history with the arrival of law and order and the birth of populism. Informative and entertaining. Illustrations.

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From Library Journal

Historian and prolific author Brown presents a lively history of the settling of the West from the vantage point of the Native Americans who suffered in the wake.

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From Kirkus Reviews

A pleasant but uninspired collection of vignettes about the history of the West that offers nothing new. Noted Western author Brown (When the Century Was Young, 1993, etc.) serves up a new volume detailing the life and history of the American frontier. The material is culled from the text of three previous picture books-- Fighting Indians of the West, Trail Driving Days, and The Settlers' West--that he co-authored in the 1940s and 1950s with the late Martin Schmitt (editor of General George Crook: His Autobiography, 1946); this version also includes several photographs from the earlier volumes. Always sensitive to the long, losing struggle of the Indians, Brown movingly depicts Sioux chief Red Cloud's successful war to close the Bozeman Trail (including the so-called Fetterman Massacre) and Cheyenne chief Black Kettle's unsuccessful attempts to keep the peace, shattered by the Sand Creek and Washita massacres. But the white West is also covered, with glimpses of life on the great cattle drives and of the boomtowns at the end of the beef trails-- towns like Abilene, Tex., and Wichita, Kans., which thrived as rail centers for the shipment of cattle. The mythmaking process that shaped the West of popular imagination is also dear to Brown's heart, and he brings into focus the impact of tall tales (Paul Bunyan, etc.), Wild West shows (Buffalo Bill, et al.), rodeos, Billy the Kid's inflated legend, and *The Virginian*, a novel by Harvard-educated Philadelphia lawyer Owen Wister that supplanted real-life cowboy Charlie Siringo's much more authentic *A Texas Cow Boy* in the public imagination. Brown writes in an engaging style, but our view of frontier history has changed a lot in 40 years. Rather than this recycled material, itself seduced by the myths it seeks to expose, better to read Brown's own *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. -- *Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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