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# Cowboys and the Wild West: An A-Z Guide from the Chisholm Trail to the Silver Screen

*Don Cusic*

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**Don Cusic : Cowboys and the Wild West: An A-Z Guide from the Chisholm Trail to the Silver Screen** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cowboys and the Wild West: An A-Z Guide from the Chisholm Trail to the Silver Screen:

This is an encyclopaedic reference devoted to the subject of cowboys, cowgirls, and the old west - including its portrayal on TV and in film in modern times. Organized as an encyclopaedia "Cowboys and the Old West" comprises over 1000 entries on the legends, the places, the films, the musicals, the cowboys, the cowgirls, and the frontiers-men of the wild west. From cattle branding and rodeos to saloons and showdowns, from the fictional Lone Ranger to modern day cowboys, this compendium of the American wild west covers everything you ever wanted to know - and a great deal more besides. The legends, the characters, the history, the tall tales and the true tales, the anecdotes, the TV shows, the movies, the terminology are covered from Calamity Jane to Little House On the Prairie, and from Dead Man's Hand to Judge Roy Bean.

From BooklistThis work differs from other dictionaries of western terms and topics in that it is largely concerned with persons who have recently, rather than historically, lived as cowboys in the West, or who have appeared in movies or

on television in westerns. The entries range from brief (sometimes only a few words of definition of a colloquial expression) to quite long; the entry Art, for example, runs to nearly eight pages. The average length of a biographical entry or of a description of a movie is about one-third page. The chief feature of the work is the wide variety of its entries: definitions of terms; locations of geographic or topographic names; biographies; plots of movies and TV shows, with a listing of the cast; photographs (more than a hundred of them) of famous people in the West or in the movies; and much miscellanea, such as Indian tribes, the Ghost Dance, etc. Recency of biographical data is sometimes rather poor; Gene Autry is carried forward only to 1969, and Roy Rogers only to 1976. There are also references at the end of significant articles, a feature not found in Thrapp's three-volume *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography* [RBB Ja 15 89]. Most biographical articles in these two works supply similar factual material, but the book under review is at times more detailed. However, it does not cite authorities, which Thrapp does regularly. At the end of the book is a valuable 13-page, double-column bibliography. This work does not replace or duplicate any previous western dictionary, though its contents may be found in several of them. But it combines in one volume a succinct answer to questions about words, places, tribes, old-timers, gunslingers, outlaws, heroes, and above all, the movies and the TV series that made them all famous. Recommended for almost any library.