



True Tales of the Prairies and Plains

David Dary

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Ever wonder why cowboys sing? Or where Henry Starr's treasure is buried? Or what legend lies behind the origin of the word "rawhide"? The prairies and plains are bursting with stories, a region whose flat openness belies a colorful history that's now captured in this cornucopia of colorful tales.

David Dary is a master storyteller and award-winning historian who was born in the region and still calls it home. In this book, he shares forty forgotten tales that capture the history, romance, and lore of early life on the plains and prairie—rollicking adventures set between the Rio Grande and the Canadian border that reflect the reality of life in the region during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

These stories have been gleaned from old newspaper accounts and little-known published sources, reflecting Dary's intimate knowledge of his stomping ground. A veritable treasury of lost legends, the book blends history and folklore to offer a fond look back at settlers and Indians, desperados and cowboys—including just how it is that the latter became known for singing.

In these enchanting vignettes, Dary takes readers along trails and rails to tell how the Staked Plains got their name and to recall times when women were scarce. He unearths legends of buried treasure spanning the region and spins tales of buffalo and bears. He tells of famous lawmen like Seth Bullock of Deadwood fame and outlaws like Belle Starr, and sheds light on other famous and obscure personalities, from Chief Old Wolf to Fort Mann's woman soldier, Caroline Newcomb, to Teddy Roosevelt, the badlands rancher who became president.

For anyone who thinks of America's middle as dull, *True Tales of the Prairies and Plains* offers a corrective that entertains as it informs. It is a book as wide-ranging as the land it covers, preserving nuggets of lore from perpetual obscurity and promising readers hours of enjoyment, whether on or off the trail.

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