



Westerns: A Women's History (Postwestern Horizons)

Victoria Lamont

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At every turn in the development of what we now know as the western, women writers have been instrumental in its formation. Yet the myth that the western is male-authored persists. *Westerns: A Women's History* debunks this myth once and for all by recovering the women writers of popular westerns who were active during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the western genre as we now know it emerged.

Victoria Lamont offers detailed studies of some of the many women who helped shape the western. Their novels bear the classic hallmarks of the western—cowboys, schoolmarm, gun violence, lynchings, cattle branding—while also placing female characters at the center of their western adventures and improvising with western conventions in surprising and ingenious ways. In Emma Ghent Curtis's *The Administratrix* a widow disguises herself as a cowboy and infiltrates the cowboy gang responsible for lynching her husband. Muriel Newhall's pulp serial character, Sheriff Minnie, comes to the rescue of a steady stream of defenseless female victims. B. M. Bower, Katharine Newlin Burt, and Frances McElrath use cattle branding as a metaphor for their feminist critiques of patriarchy. In addition to recovering the work of these and other women authors of popular westerns, Lamont uses original archival analysis of the western-fiction publishing scene to overturn the long-standing myth of the western as a male-dominated genre.

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