

WESTERN HERITAGE AWARD

The Western Heritage Award was established in 1961 by the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. The award honors the legacy of men and women for their works in literature, music, film, and television.



Winners receive “The Wrangler,” a bronze sculpture of a cowboy on horseback.

For more information about the Western Heritage Awards:
<https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/awards-halls-of-fame/western-heritage-awards/>

WESTERN HERITAGE AWARD
FICTION

ALL THE PRETTY HORSES: THE BORDER TRILOGY, VOLUME I

McCarthy, Cormac

Texas 1949. John Grady Cole, sixteen, is on the threshold of adulthood when his world turns upside down. His grandfather has died, and his mother has no desire to keep the 18,000-acre ranch, which is the only home and way of life John knows. With a friend he sets out for Mexico and finds work on another ranch. But John falls for the owner's daughter and finds himself in jail. Strong language and violence. Bestseller. 1992. National Book Award for Fiction.

DB 34043

BROKEN TRAIL

Geoffrion, Alan

While driving a herd of horses to Wyoming, aging cowboy Print Ritter and his nephew Tom become the unlikely guardians of five Chinese girls destined for prostitution. Print and Tom vow to see the girls to safety despite dealing with other trail dangers. Violence and some strong language. 2006.

DB 63779

BUFFALO GIRLS: A NOVEL

McMurtry, Larry

It's the late 1800s, and Calamity Jane, now drunk most of the time, reminisces by writing imaginary letters to her daughter Janey. When Buffalo Bill Cody appears on the scene, he convinces her and other well-knowns of the old West to join him in forming his Wild West Show. They go off to Europe to perform, but when they return home tragedy strikes, and Calamity Jane makes some startling confessions in her letters. Some strong language. Bestseller. 1990.

DB 31992

CONTRACT SURGEON

O'Brien, Dan

Fictionalized account of the friendship between Dr. McGillicuddy and Sioux leader Crazy Horse. McGillicuddy, a private physician working under contract for the army, must decide whether to act as a doctor or a friend when the seriously wounded chief faces cruel imprisonment. Some violence and some strong language.

DB 51305

ENGLISH CREEK

Doig, Ivan

Adolescent awakening in Montana during the 1930s. Young Jick McCaskill remembers older brother Alec's rebellion against the family and his own adventures on a sheep-counting trek with his forest-ranger father.

DB 22316

GATES OF THE ALAMO

Harrigan, Stephen

Saga of the legendary mission in the Mexican territory called Texas in 1835-1836. Incorporates the fictional characters of Edmund McGowan, a traveling botanist; widow Mary Mott, a San Antonio innkeeper; and her sixteen-year-old son Terrell, with historical personalities. Some descriptions of sex and some strong language.

DB 51379

GOOD OLD BOYS

Kelton, Elmer

Will easy-riding, old-time cowboy Hewey Calloway finally settle down? He realizes that a new era is coming to Texas in the early years of the century, but at the age of thirty-eight doesn't want to change with the times. Prequel to THE SMILING COUNTRY (DB 48506).

DB 48505; LB 07610

HARPSONG

Askew, Rilla

Harmonica-playing Harlan Singer marries 14-year-old Sharon Thompson, and they immediately take to riding the rails. Unlike many Okies, they never go to California but instead keep making figure eights, always returning to Oklahoma. Sometimes they steal, but only needed food and clothing, and they always try to repay their debts. This is a vivid portrait of an age and a place, of desperate poverty, near starvation, red dust, and strong biblical faith. Some strong language. 2007.

DT 07069

HOMESMAN

Swarthout, Glendon

For many women attempting to settle in the West, the rigors of frontier life proved to be too much, and they went mad. Mary Lee Cuddy accepts the task of escorting four of these women back to Iowa. To help, she takes along John Briggs, whom she saved from lynching. The many difficulties they face along the way destroys one person and rejuvenates another.

DB 29819

LITTLE BIG MAN

Berger, Thomas

The fictitious memoirs of Jack Crabb, 111-year-old ex-cowboy who claims to be the only survivor of Custer's Last Stand. Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, Calamity Jane, and many other characters of the Old West appear in this humorous, sometimes absurd re-creation of the Western frontier.

DB 32463

MAN WHO RODE MIDNIGHT

Kelton, Elmer

Seventy-year-old rancher Wes Hendricks is trying to fight off ruthless encroachment by the powers that be in the little town of Big River. Hendricks's ranch stands where the bigwigs want to create an artificial lake to generate tourism. He holds steadfastly to his land while things conspire against him, and an unexpected twist resolves the situation. Some strong language. 1987.

DB 27406

MASTER EXECUTIONER

Estleman, Loren D.

Idaho, 1897. Oscar Stone is a professional hangman traveling throughout the West practicing his craft. He prides himself in performing his task efficiently, causing condemned persons minimal pain. Then Stone learns a terrible truth from an encounter with his former wife. 2001.

DB 55287

MERCY SEAT

Askew, Rilla

In February 1887, the Lodi brothers leave Kentucky and head west. They carry with them their families, their belongings, and an ancient tragedy that will play itself out in the mountains of Oklahoma. The story is told by ten-year-old Mattie, who, following her mother's death, attempts to hold her disintegrating family together. Some strong language and some violence.

DB 46204

MOON OF BITTER COLD

Chiaventone, Frederick J.

A novelization of the frontier conflict known as Red Cloud's War (1866-1868). Red Cloud—a controversial figure in Lakota history—watches as settlers and soldiers flood the West. To drive them back the warrior forges an alliance between the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and his own people—an unprecedented act of resistance. Strong language and some violence. Wrangler Award. 2002.

DB 86994; DB 59067

MOUNTAIN MAN

Fisher, Vardis

A fur trapper in the Rocky Mountains during the 1830s befriends a woman whose children have been slaughtered by Indians. When his wife and unborn child are killed, the trapper declares a one-man war against the tribe. Some violence.

DB 44306

NORTH TO YESTERDAY

Flynn, Robert

For years storekeeper Lampassas listened to tales about cattle drives and longed to lead his own. Following his wife's death, he takes his son Jamie, who is more interested in the new railroads than cattle, gathers up a motley crew of men and a herd of longhorns, and heads for the Kansas cattle yards, unaware they have been closed for years. Along the way he picks up Covina, a young girl and her illegitimate baby.

DB 47610

POACHER'S DAUGHTER

Zimmer, Michael

After vigilantes hang her husband and burn down her cabin, Rose Edwards journeys to her childhood homeland, where she lived with her father, a trader. Soon, however, she finds herself a reluctant hero in a fight against invading aristocracy. Strong language, some violence, and some descriptions of sex. 2014.

DB 85386

ROBERT B. PARKER'S BLACKJACK: A NOVEL

Knott, Robert

Appaloosa continues to prosper, but this draws in a slew of trouble in the form of carpetbaggers, gamblers, thieves, and more. The newest menace in town is Boston Bill Black, the owner of the new casino. After finding himself wanted for murder, Boston Bill vanishes. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2016.

DB 85261

SON

Meyer, Philipp

1936. One-hundred-year-old Eli McCullough, the first male born in the Republic of Texas, recounts his life. When his mother and sister are murdered, twelve-year-old Eli is taken in by Comanches. Over the decades he and his descendants make their way in the world. Violence and some strong language. Bestseller. 2013.

DB 76883

SPARK ON THE PRAIRIE: A GUNS AND GAVEL NOVEL

Boggs, Johnny D.

Texas, 1871. General William Tecumseh Sherman brings Kiowa leader Satanta and young brave Big Tree to trial for the murders of seven members of a wagon train. Lawyers Thomas Ball and Joe Woolfolk attempt to save the men from the death penalty. Some violence and some strong language. 2003.

DB 64703

SUNDOWN CHASER

Richards, Dusty

Border-hopping horse thief Thurman Baker searches for his sons, whom he deserted fifteen years ago. Meanwhile, Montana sheriff Herschel Baker contends with a murdered cowboy, bank robbers, and cattle rustlers. 2009.

DB 73892; LB 06388

WESTERN HERITAGE AWARD

NONFICTION

CHARLIE SIRINGO'S WEST: AN INTERPRETIVE BIOGRAPHY

Lamar, Howard Roberts

Charlie Siringo (1855-1928) lived the quintessential life of adventure on the American frontier as a cowboy, Pinkerton detective, writer, and later as a consultant for early western films. Siringo was one of the most attractive, bold, and original characters to live and flourish in the final decades of the Wild West. Violence, strong language, and descriptions of sex.

DBC 14459; DT 07139

COWBOY CULTURE: A SAGA OF FIVE CENTURIES

Dary, David

Comprehensive history of cowboy life from its beginnings in fifteenth-century Mexico to its great flowering in the American West. Includes the cattle industry, horses and equipment, social customs, trail life, and the modern myth of the cowboy.

DB 17130

GERONIMO: THE MAN, HIS TIME, HIS PLACE

Debo, Angie

Portrayal of the Apache war leader as a victim of white history. After his final surrender, Geronimo developed into a kindly, enterprising old man and appeared in Wild West shows. 1976.

DB 11145

HIGH NOON IN LINCOLN: VIOLENCE ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

Utley, Robert M.

Historian examines the Lincoln County War (1878-1879) in New Mexico and finds no heroes on either side. Interprets the event's significance as a case study that dramatized the economic forces and personality types underlying frontier violence and that created the legend of Billy the Kid. 1987.

DB 65490

LAST INDIAN WAR: THE NEZ PERCE STORY

West, Elliott

This entry in the acclaimed "Pivotal Moments in American History" series paints an unforgettable portrait of the Nez Perce War of 1877, the last great Indian conflict in American history. The discovery of gold led to a stampede of settlement within their ancestral homeland, and triggered the harrowing flight of Nez Perce—including many women, children and elders—across 1,500 miles of mountainous and difficult terrain.

DBC 00818

OREGON TRAIL: AN AMERICAN SAGA

Dary, David

Author of *THE SANTA FE TRAIL* (DB 53106) chronicles the history of the 2,000-mile route linking Missouri to Oregon, used primarily from the 1840s to 1869, when the transcontinental railroad was completed. Recreates experiences of explorers, Indians, fur traders, immigrants, missionaries, mountain men, and pioneers who traversed the trail. 2004.

DB 60598

REAL WILD WEST: THE 101 RANCH AND THE CREATION OF THE AMERICAN WEST

Wallis, Michael

Chronicles the rise and decline of the 110,000-acre Oklahoma ranch founded by the Miller family in the late 1800s. Assesses its influence on the formation of America's image of the West. Describes cattle drives, the 101's legendary touring Wild West show, and cowboy movies filmed on the ranch.

DB 50605

SPANISH FRONTIER IN NORTH AMERICA

Weber, David J.

Reviews Spanish exploration and colonization in North America during a three-hundred-year span that saw the forging of a Spanish empire from Florida to California. Weber focuses on the diverse aims of the Spanish colonizers, their relations with Native Americans, their conflicts with the English and French, and the continuing legacy of the Spanish presence in the United States.

DB 36770

WORST HARD TIME: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE GREAT AMERICAN DUST BOWL

Egan, Timothy

Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times reporter recounts the experiences of homesteaders who remained on their land during the 1930s dust storms that ravaged the southern Great Plains. Examines both human and ecological aspects of the disaster and the effects on survivors' daily lives, health, and communities. National Book Award. Bestseller. 2006.

BR 16831; DR 01742