



Cowgirl Up!

A History of Rodeo Women

by Heidi Thomas



Non-Fiction - Historical

208 Pages

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Book Review

Reviewed by Ray Simmons for Readers' Favorite

Cowgirl Up! A History of Rodeo Women by Heidi M. Thomas captures a small piece of American history that might otherwise be forgotten. I'm talking about the contribution of women to the world of rodeo. Cowgirl Up! specifically concentrates on the contribution of women from Montana during the golden age of rodeo in America. Montana became one of the states holding commercial rodeos in 1896, but rodeo derived from the working world of ranching. Long before the commercial rodeos sprang into being, there were informal local contests to see who was best at roping, riding, and bronco busting. Conditions were terrible sometimes and the pay was not good by today's standards, but that didn't stop women from wanting to compete.

Cowgirl Up! takes this early history and weaves it into colorful legend. There are many famous names from American history here. Theodore Roosevelt, Will Rogers, Dale Evans, and Annie Oakley are the ones I knew. If you are a real rodeo fan, you will probably recognize names like Lucille Mulhall, Prairie Rose Henderson, and Fanny Sperry. The characters, both men and women, are colorful. The history is rich, and the anecdotes, facts, and biography are very well written. It is obvious that Heidi M. Thomas loves her subject and, if you are a fan of the American West and American history, you do not want to miss Cowgirl Up! It should be on the bookshelf in every school library across America, but especially in states where rodeo played an important part in their history. These women and this sport should not be forgotten.