



Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre-A Brief History with Documents

By Marilyn S. Johnson

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Generations of Americans have developed an image of violence in the "Wild West" through books and films. But what conditions really resulted in violence on the American frontier between the 1880s and 1910s? How frequently did violence occur, and what forms did it take? Johnson explores these questions through the lens of the mining and range wars that plagued the region during this period.

The author opens with an introductory essay that situates violence within social, political, and economic circumstances of the time, considering smaller cases of interpersonal violence and larger conflicts. Documents are then presented to illuminate two case studies of collective violence the Johnson County range war in northern Wyoming and the 1913-1914 coal strike in southern Colorado resulting in the Ludlow Massacre. The closing epilogue examines the role both incidents played in shaping the collective memory and cultural history of the American West. The book's format provides readers with both a general understanding of the history of western violence and the context of specific historical cases that allow for more in-depth study and comparison.

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Review

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