



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

By Marilynn 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Part One: Introduction: The American West: A Violent Land?

The Range Wars / The Johnson County War / The Mining Wars / The Colorado Coal Strike / The Taming of the West

Part Two: The Documents

1. The Johnson County War

1. Cattle Raising on the Plains of North America, 1885 (Baron Von Richthofen)

2. The Rustler, 1897 (Hough)

3. Frontier Trails, 1930 (Canton)
4. The Waterloo of the Barons, 1892 (Flagg)
5. Two Notorious Characters Hanged for Cattle Stealing, 1889 (Cheyenne Daily Sun)
6. Neither of Them Ever Stole a Cow, 1955 (Fales)
7. My Life on the Range, 1924 (Clay)
8. The Banditti of the Plains, 1894 (Shinn Mercer)
9. Riding with the Regulators, 1892 (Clover)
10. The Siege at the TA Ranch, 1892 (Flagg)
11. Time for Decided Action (Editorial), 1892 (Cheyenne Daily Leader)
12. It Is Tough (Editorial), 1892 (Cheyenne Daily Sun)
13. The Wyoming Cattle War, 1892 (Meredith)
14. The Suggs Affair, 1892 (Officers of the Ninth Cavalry)
15. The Trial of the Invaders, 1894 (Shinn Mercer)
16. The Invasion Song, 1890s

2. The Colorado Coal Strike

17. Strike Resolutions, 1913 (United Mine Workers of America, District 15)
18. Report on the Colorado Strike, 1915 (West, U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations)
19. Correspondence on the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and the Colorado Strike, 1913 (Office of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and L. M. Bowers)
20. Governor Elias M. Ammons, Spineless Tool of the Coal Operators (Cartoon), 1914 (United Mine Workers of America)
21. Militarism in Colorado, 1914 (Colorado State Federation of Labor)
22. In Rockefeller's Prisons, 1925 (Mother Jones)
23. The January 22 Riot, 1914 (Rocky Mountain News and United Mine Workers Journal)
24. The Battle of Ludlow, 1914 (Colorado Adjutant General)
25. Escape from Ludlow, 1971 (Thomas O'Neal)

26. Under Fire in the Ludlow Tent Colony, 1914 (Jolly)
27. Affidavit Given to the Commission on Industrial Relations, 1914 (Snyder)
28. The Killing of Louis Tikas, 1914 (Irwin)
29. Class War in Colorado, 1914 (Sloan)
30. Labor and Capital Partners, 1916 (Rockefeller, Jr.)

Part Three: Epilogue: Remembering Johnson County and Ludlow

Appendices: A Chronology of the Johnson County War (1879-1893) / A Chronology of the Colorado Coal Strike (1913-1918) / Questions for Consideration / Selected Bibliography

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Review

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