



Riding Astride: The Frontier in Women's History

Patricia Riley Dunlap

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Riding Astride is a study of the eccentric and extraordinary women of the frontier West whose extreme and sometimes even militant behavior helped break down the strict social codes of the nineteenth century and transform American culture.

Historian Patricia Riley Dunlap discards the glamorized, romanticized wild and woolly West found in other portrayals, revealing the fascinating reality of the lives of exceptional frontier women. These women branded cattle, mined for gold and silver, farmed, ranched, performed in rodeos and wild west shows, worked as journalists, doctors, and attorneys--and rode horseback astride rather than sidesaddle.

Because they didn't conform to the idealized vision of female as pure, moral, domestic, and delicate, these women were considered peculiar and thus have been either ignored or maligned by historians. Now, in *Riding Astride*, these "peculiar" women are recognized for redefining the social and economic roles of their gender and for initiating the struggle for women's rights in the United States.

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