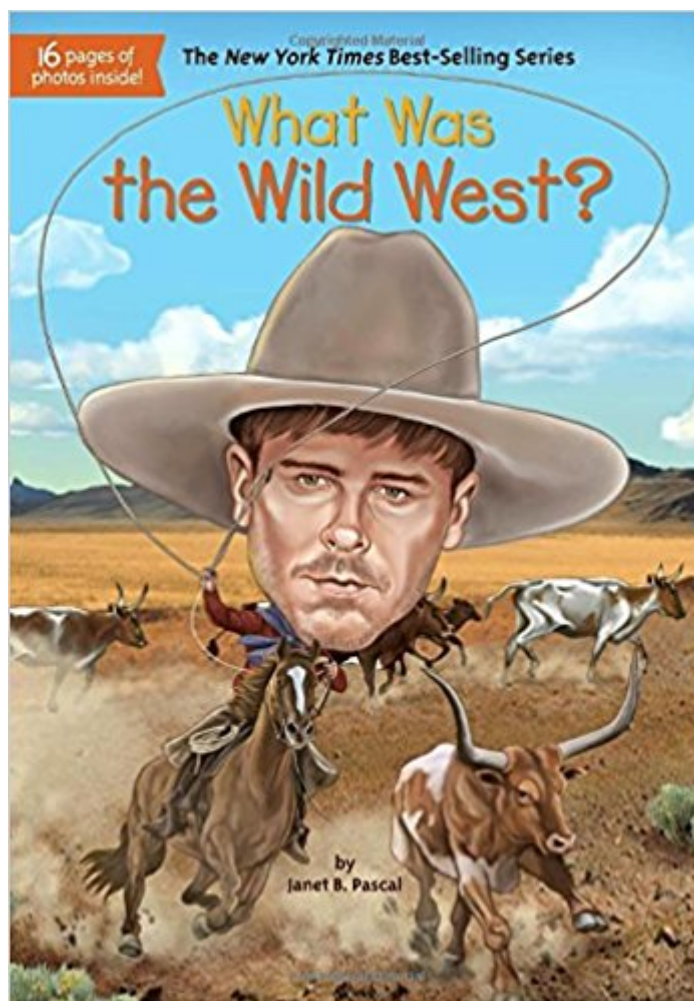


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# What Was The Wild West?



## Synopsis

Saddle up and get ready for a ride back into the wild and woolly past of the American West. The west was at its wildest from 1865 to 1895, when territories west of the Mississippi River remained untamed and lawless. Famous for cowboys, American Indians, lawmen, gunslingers, pioneers, and prospectors, this period in US history captures the imagination of all kids and now is brought vividly to life.

## Book Information

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Series: What Was?

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #36,270 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Children's Books

> Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Native North & South Americans #33

in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1800s #86

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Janet B. Pascal is the Executive Production Editor at Viking Children's Books and the author of *Who Was Dr. Seuss?*, *Who Was Maurice Sendak?*, *Who Was Abraham Lincoln?*, *What Is the Panama Canal?*, and *What Was the Hindenburg?*

What Was the Wild West? In 1886, crowds gathered in New York's Madison Square Garden to applaud one of the decade's biggest traveling shows. Buffalo Bill's Wild West. The cast included real cowboys and hundreds of Native Americans. Over the course of two thrilling hours, the audience saw the

story of “how the West was won.” Indians on horseback hunted live buffalo. Bandits attacked an actual stagecoach. The famous sharpshooter Annie Oakley shot a cigar right out of her husband’s mouth. Cowboys rode bucking broncos and roped cattle. In the end, a band of Indian warriors attacked a pioneer settlement and were soundly defeated. Buffalo Bill Cody, who ran the show, was a genuine Wild West hero. As a teenager, he rode a horse across the prairie for the Pony Express mail service. He scouted in the Indian Wars. He earned his nickname by killing 4,282 buffalo in eighteen months to feed workers who were building a railroad across the country. Buffalo Bill’s show was wildly popular. At the world’s fair in Chicago in 1893, millions of people came to see it. When it toured Europe, England’s Queen Victoria was a fan. The show was largely responsible for the popular legend of the Wild West that movies, TV shows, and novels still draw on. The real story of the western frontier, however, is much more complicated.

### Chapter 1: The Frontier

So what and where was the Wild West? To the Indian nations that had been living in North America for thousands of years, the West wasn’t “wild.” It was part of their home. From the Seminole in the Southeast to the Duwamish in the Northwest, there were many nations. Each had its own culture with distinct beliefs, languages, and lifestyles. The different tribes all believed in respecting the land they lived on. They didn’t think that a single person could own a piece of land privately. A Wampanoag leader told some of the first settlers, “The land is our mother, nourishing all her children. The woods, the streams, everything on it belongs to everybody and is for the use of all. How can one man say it belongs to him only?” The American Indians didn’t see the lands where they lived as wilderness. However, to the first white settlers from Europe, anywhere farther inland than the colonies along the Eastern Seaboard was wilderness—the “Wild West.” It was untamed, and untouched by civilization. These settlers often lumped different native people together into one group. They considered them all savages. Europeans thought land was meant to be owned, and that it was humankind’s duty to tame nature and make the land useful—to grow crops, build towns. In the New World, they cut down forests, built roads, bridged rivers, and started farms. They brought their laws and religion to people they saw as uncivilized. As the population grew, people moved westward. A line—not a real one, but a line on a map—marked the border between settled territory and the land the colonists hadn’t explored yet. That line was called the frontier. Native Americans saw the frontier as the line where a strange people challenged their ideas and values, and tried to force a new way of life on them. As the line moved farther and farther west, their civilization was pushed

into a smaller and smaller space. It's no wonder the frontier, where the two cultures met, was often a violent place.

Another great book from the series.

Love these books for my 8 yr old son.

This is our favorite series. We own all these books.

The Who Was and What Is/Was Series are wonderful for exposing young minds to people and places they might not otherwise experience at such a young age. However, this book in particular disappointed me and I was compelled to return it for the use of one word. The word was "prostitute". The word was used to describe who took advantage of the cowboys when they would "go to town". I do not believe a 3rd or 4th grader, which these books are marketed for, needs to be confronted with this word or its meaning. I was very disappointed in the author that it would be included in this book. I did not want a student coming to me with the question, "What's a prostitute?" Or the student's parent demanding to know why I allowed their child to read a book that required them to know the meaning of the word prostitute. What was this author thinking was all I can say!??

Love these books!

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