



# Historical Dictionary of Westerns in Literature (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts)

*Paul Varner*

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When in 1902 Owen Wister, a member of the Eastern blueblood aristocracy and friend of novelist Henry James, became a best-selling novelist with the publication of *The Virginian*, few readers would have guessed that a new kind of American literature was being born. While Owen Wister was enjoying his success, Edwin S. Porter in New Jersey was filming the first cinema Western *The Great Train Robbery*, which would usher in a new era both of movies in general and of Western movies in particular. Both events would lead to a century of cultural fascination with stories of the old West.

The *Historical Dictionary of Westerns in Literature* tells the story of the Western through a chronology, a bibliography, an introductory essay, and hundreds of cross-referenced dictionary entries on authors such as Owen Wister, Zane Grey, Max Brand, Clarence Mulford, Ernest Haycox, Luke Short, Dorothy Johnson, Louis L'Amour, and Cormac McCarthy.

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