



WESTERN

SCARVES

DIANE ZAMOST • PHOTOGRAPHS by WENDY McEAHERN

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY WENDY MCEAHERN



GIBBS SMITH

TO ENRICH AND INSPIRE HUMANKIND



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This book is dedicated to all the unknown artists and illustrators of these scarves without whom there wouldn't be a book. And to Wendy McEahern, for capturing these images so beautifully. To the singing cowboys, the poets, the balladeers, who, like the artists, keep the stories alive through songs and poetry. And, of course, the working cowboys and cowgirls, whose livelihoods and traditions, spanning nearly 150 years, inspired so much of this book.

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Thanks to all the ones along the way who said you could, and to all the ones who said I couldn't. Last, but by no means least, to Rising Star, my equine buddy, for the trail ride of a lifetime.

I thank you all.





# Western Scarves

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Table of Contents























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# INTRODUCTION

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It's been said we are all born into a place and time for a reason. My place—the newly settled northern suburbs of Chicago. The time—early 1950s. Okay, not exactly cowboy country, but the West came to me through a magic box called a television. Those early days of this “new” medium will forever be impressed upon the minds of those of us who experienced them in personal and sometimes profound ways. You can guess what my way was. In the 1950s and '60s, there were more westerns than any other genre of entertainment, and they influenced a whole generation. Who didn't play cowboys and Indians, good guys and bad guys, or white hat and black hat?



**"SO, WHERE DID THIS COWBOY THING  
COME FROM?" MY DAD ASKED, NOT LONG  
BEFORE HE WENT TO RIDE THE OTHER  
RANGE.**

Looking back, I believe it instilled in me a sense of ethics and grounding that hasn't been seen much since. And who didn't have a cowboy outfit? Mine was sent to me from Aunt Ruthie who lived in San Antonio. She had no idea what she started. The outfit was white with big red roses and green vines embroidered on the shirt and pants. It had pearl snaps on the shirt and pants pockets and a red belt. Classic! A cowgirl princess was born. I am still hunting for that now vintage outfit. I know it's out there somewhere. My look was completed by pretending my bike was a horse. The seeds were planted.

Left to my own devices at an early age, it wasn't long before I started seeking out the real horses in my area. I would walk and ride my bike miles to the stables, just to hang around and eventually trading chores for a chance to ride. Trail rides led to horse shows, which led to dude ranches, all the while I would think, "Where's all the old cowgirl and cowboy stuff? The fancy fringed gloves, the embroidered shirts? Where's the short peewee boots and colorful scarves with the images I've carried around in my head all these years? I know they're here somewhere." And they were.









I don't remember whether I saw an advertisement or if someone told me about a cowboy and Indian auction. "Auction?" I thought, "Okay, could be interesting." So off I went.

I was mesmerized by the bits, spurs, saddles, the smell of the leather, and the feel of the hand-carved, tooled grooves in the leather. All the beaded moccasins and gloves, cowgirl shirts and outfits, and blankets a girl could want! The ranch and rodeo, cowboy and cowgirl images on scarves and blankets, the geometric Indian patterns and the softness of the blankets were worn smooth by years of affection. The peewee boots with their wonderful workmanship and sexy curves from the old lasts (the wooden form the boots were built on), the underslung and stacked leather heels, the colors, stitching, and inlays were all handmade. And all were works of art.

The vintage scarves with bold, colorful graphics caught my eye. Images of cowboys and cowgirls roping, riding, chasing steers, branding cattle, bustin' broncs, singing and dancing, campfire cooking, and chuck wagons danced across the scarves. All illustrated, drawn, and originally colored by hand on silks and rayon fabrics. Seeing all the people at the auction, also interested in vintage western stuff, made my eyes pop open!

I bought my first blankets and fancy cowgirl shirts and scarves, giggling at the excitement of finding cowgirl heaven—and in Illinois of all places! I started going to antiques shows, auctions, flea markets, trade days, anywhere I could get to on weekends, even flying a few times, to find vintage western items. Friends and acquaintances started showing an interest in my newfound obsession, wanting to know where they could get some cowgirl stuff too. "Why, right here," I



thought. Wahoo! was born.











I took my collection of vintage and new cowboy and cowgirl gear and hit the road in 1993. I traveled, selling and buying along the way, to horse shows, horse expos, rodeos and ranch rodeos



(big difference between the two), stock shows, western antiques shows, cowboy poetry gathering, western music festivals, and bit and spur shows. I went everywhere I thought I'd find buyers and sellers who lived and loved a western lifestyle and appreciated antiques and collectibles. To my delight, I discovered these people were everywhere: in big cities, small towns, and all over the country.

For those of us who like to collect certain things there is no formal schooling for what we learn along the way. I learned by doing and experiencing. Some of us are lucky enough to come upon a more experienced mentor for a while, but by and large we learn as we go. A large part of it is knowledge passed around the campfire, so to speak. Heck, if you hang around other collectors and sellers long enough, something's bound to stick! And those of us blessed enough to make our way in this world, surrounding ourselves with the things we love, fueling the passions that keep us going—well, what can be more cowboy and American than that?



It's amazing what you can discover and find out in this world when you take that leap of faith and do what you love. The opportunities; the doors that open along the way; and the wonderful, fun, down-to-earth, hard-working people whom I've met along the way have been nothing short of amazing in so many ways. In time, I moved to Weatherford, Texas, and then on to Santa Fe, New Mexico. God bless Texas, but high and dry Santa Fe can spoil a gal. Nowadays I spend most of my time in the shop here in Santa Fe, still selling, buying, and collecting vintage scarves, boots, blankets, jewelry, and other cowboy collectibles and memorabilia from the "golden age." I feel like

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