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Review of *A Book on the Making of Lonesome Dove*

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A Book on the Making of Lonesome Dove entrenches the epic deeply among Western history lovers. John Spong's forty interviews with author Larry McMurtry and many of the cast and crew take you behind the scenes as you reexperience the life of American cowboys and westward expansion. Stunning film photography by Jeff Wilson, joined by exciting on-set stills by executive producer and screenwriter Bill Wittliff, bring readers a feast of visualization. A part of the Southwestern and Mexican Photograph Series of the Wittliff Collections in San Marcos, Texas, the book adds yet another chapter to the pioneer legend.

Despite often being considered a Texas story, much of *Lonesome Dove*'s action takes place across the Great Plains. Dust of the Kansas Plains swirls around the cattle herd, while scenes of early Ogallala, Nebraska, evidence early urban development. Buffalo roamed the continent, yet the story of their history and near extinction holds prominence in the Great Plains. The tenuous lives of the prairie pioneers, buffalo hunters, and farmers are clearly defined, as are the dangers of crossing rivers such as the Canadian, Platte, and Yellowstone. Angelica Huston's Clara amazingly depicts the women who survived the isolated loneliness of the Great Plains frontier. Native Americans get the too-often bad press, but were decidedly a force to be contended with as they maintained claim to their rightful homelands.

Offering a new understanding and greater appreciation of casting and production problems,

The Making of Lonesome Dove omits nothing, igniting further admiration for the 1989 miniseries's success in capturing the grandness of the western panorama. It was the 1989 *Lonesome Dove* miniseries, now one of the best-selling DVDs on the market, that became the visual embodiment of McMurtry's vision, after years of ill-fated Hollywood interests in producing a feature film. Those who participated in the miniseries's epic evolution exemplify significant insight and imagination.

Whatever your interest—*Lonesome Dove* or America's westward expansion and the strong individuals who made it real—this book will lead you to new heights of entertainment and appreciation. *A Book on the Making of Lonesome Dove* captures the breathlessness of the novel and the miniseries.

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