



In the Days of the Vaqueros: America's First True Cowboys

Russell Freedman

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In this rousing account of the first true cowboys, Newbery Medalist Russell Freedman brings to life the days when the vaqueros rounded up cattle, brought down steers, and tamed wild broncos. In the service of wealthy Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century, Mexican ranch hands began herding cattle, often riding barefoot. They soon developed and perfected the skills for this dangerous work and became expert horsemen. Hundred of years later the vaqueros shared their expertise with the inexperienced cowboys of the American West, who adopted their techniques and their distinctive clothing, tools, and even lingo. Yet today it is the cowboy whom we remember, while the vaquero has all but disappeared from history. The vaqueros are at last given their due in this dramatic narrative, lushly illustrated with beautiful period paintings and drawings.

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