

New Book on Gambling Games of the Old West

Texas, Kerrville, Mar 30, 2021 (IssueWire.com) - G.R. Williamson's new book, ***Gambling Games of the Old West***, tells the story about frontier gambling where gambling played a major role in the lives of the men that drove the western movement of Americans across the continent during the nineteenth century. Games of chance were dear to the hearts of not only cowboys but also gold miners, plantation owners, bankers, merchants, soldiers, trappers, buffalo hunters, muleskinners, and most of the other men of the American West, even including some preachers.

Wherever there were men with money there was gambling – and most of it was crooked. Whether it was rigged, fixed, double-dealt, cold-decked, braced or otherwise manipulated - very little was left to luck and skill.

Though there were some gamblers who were known as "on-the-square" or "legitimate" if that word can be used when referring to the players of the day, most used some form of "advantage" to win much more often than they lost.

Some were not gamblers at all but mere con men skinning suckers as fast as they could find them.

With this in mind, exactly what were the casino games of chance played during the wild days of the West, what were the rules, and how were they played? Who were the major players and where did they ply their trade? How did they employ "tricks" to cheat the other players without being detected? Why did most of the games of the western frontier pass into oblivion and why are these same games not played in gambling casinos today?

Though most of us think we have a fairly good running knowledge of Old West gambling, largely provided by the westerns of television and movies, this book takes a closer look at this integral facet of our history that provokes both condemnation and revelry.

Whether it was a game of poker played on a blanket or a faro bet placed in an elegant saloon, it is a safe bet to say that gambling fulfilled one of the basic needs of the early frontiersman – liquor, lust, and luck.

Williamson's books are available on online book retailers.

His web site is grwilliamson.com

Media Contact

Indian Head Publishing

grwilliamson1943@mail.com

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