



Dodge City: The Early Years, 1872–1886 (Western Lands and Waters Series)

Wm. B. Shillingberg

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The most famous cattle town of the trail-driving era, Dodge City, Kansas, holds a special allure for western historians and enthusiasts alike. Wm. B. Shillingberg now goes beyond the violence for which the town became notorious, more fully documenting its early history by uncovering the economic, political, and social forces that shaped Dodge.

The author cuts through legend and myth to depict a Dodge City that few people really know. He takes readers back to the southwestern Kansas frontier and traces a town's evolution from a military site for protecting Santa Fe commerce, to a wild and lawless buffalo hunters' rendezvous, to a regional freighting center and the primary shipping point for Texas cattle on the central plains. Amid all this activity a community sprang up in 1872 and was still stumbling toward maturity fourteen years later when the great herds no longer came. Shillingberg describes this transformation of place and purpose, along with its attendant political machinations and business fervor, revealing singular personalities, social turmoil, and a local economy in flux. Along the way, the book offers new perspectives on the Battle of Adobe Walls, the constant maneuvering of railroad moguls and cattle barons, and the exploits of such legendary figures as Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp.

Drawing on a wide range of primary sources, from city records to personal papers, *Dodge City: The Early Years, 1872–1886* surpasses previous accounts of the town by depicting complex individuals and events in greater depth and detail. It shows us a community concerned with more than brothels, saloons, and gunplay. It will stand as the authoritative history of this quintessential western town.

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