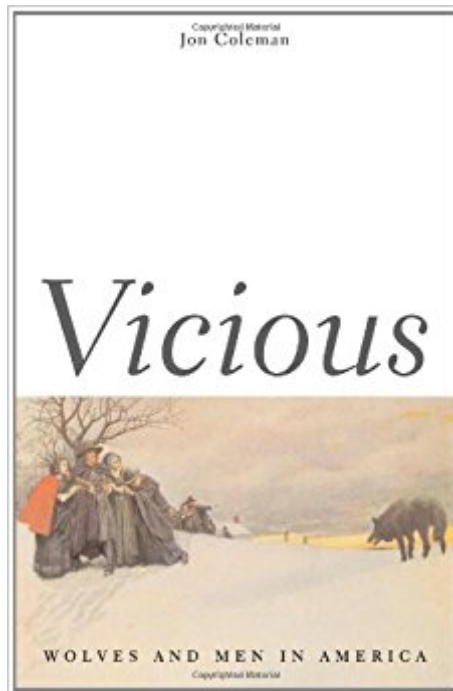


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Vicious: Wolves And Men In America (The Lamar Series In Western History)



Synopsis

Over a continent and three centuries, American livestock owners destroyed wolves to protect the beasts that supplied them with food, clothing, mobility, and wealth. The brutality of the campaign soon exceeded wolves' misdeeds. Wolves menaced property, not people, but storytellers often depicted the animals as ravenous threats to human safety. Subjects of nightmares and legends, wolves fell prey not only to Americans' thirst for land and resources but also to their deeper anxieties about the untamed frontier. Now Americans study and protect wolves and jail hunters who shoot them without authorization. Wolves have become the poster beasts of the great American wilderness, and the federal government has paid millions of dollars to reintroduce them to scenic habitats like Yellowstone National Park. Why did Americans hate wolves for centuries? And, given the ferocity of this loathing, why are Americans now so protective of the animals? In this ambitious history of wolves in America and of the humans who have hated and then loved them, Jon Coleman investigates a fraught relationship between two species and uncovers striking similarities, deadly differences, and, all too frequently, tragic misunderstanding.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Vicious by Jon T. Coleman
Jon Coleman's *Vicious* is like a Jackson Pollock painting. With its splashes all over it has appeal to some, but not to others. It was a book I wanted to like, but was ultimately disappointed. I initially almost put the book down due to violence toward wolves by man

as rendered in his first story. Coleman does make the valuable connection, that while a wolf may seem vicious, living/killing with its teeth, the true vicious species on Earth is none other than us humans, to ourselves and to the other species with which we share the planet. Our history is testament to this viciousness. Coleman tries to do too much, and as a result, accomplishes too little. He begins well with the communication difficulties between the early Euro-Americans and the indigenous people with whom they encountered. As conflict arose, verbal communication was more like that of animals, with shrieking and hollering. But, then the book drifts into ethology, paleontology, and genetics among others without yielding any new or pertinent information. In fact, he ventures out on very thin limbs with some of his destinations such as his suggestion that at times two different species mate and hit the procreational jackpot. Perhaps on the subspecies level yes, but not on the species level as chromosome number and gene sequences must align. Coleman's *Vicious*, with a publication date of 2004, predates the killing by wolves of Kenton Carnegie, and Candace Bernier. Some slack may be given him in respect to those two individuals when he writes that in that there are no credible sources in regard to wolves killing people in North America. However, as a historian, why did he not at least refute some of the "non-credible sources?"

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