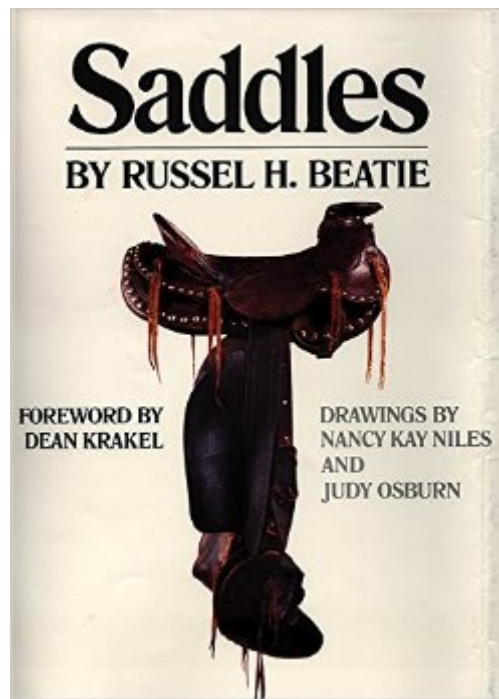


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# Saddles



## Synopsis

Saddles is the first complete work on the subject to appear in print. It is an exhaustive survey, in words and more than eight hundred illustrations, of the one indispensable item of horse equipment, whose history began about the time the horse was domesticated, in the dim mists of unrecorded time. More than history, Saddles also explains the construction of the basic saddle, describes the different saddle types, and explains how they have been altered to meet the changing needs of riders down through the centuries. Those who work with horses for pleasure or profit, from novices looking for suggestions on buying saddles to professionals who want to round out their knowledge, will find this book useful, absorbing, and a delight to the eye. It covers virtually every aspect of saddlery, saddle measurement, selection, and care, plus tips from a knowledgeable horseman on the intricacies of fitting horse, rider, and saddle into a dynamic whole. The aesthetics of the craft are also presented in detail: the uniquely American leatherwork of the show saddle, the elaborate use of silver (now undergoing a revival), the adoption by American saddlemakers of useful accessories from other lands (the tapadero from Mexico, for example). The construction of the saddle is described and illustrated in careful detail, along with descriptions of the many accessories of early and modern times. The section on famous saddles shows now-priceless gem-studded examples of the saddlemaker's skill. The first compilation of American saddlemakers is given in the appendix. A glossary of saddle terms and a thoroughly researched bibliography conclude the book. In undertaking the enormous task of compiling this work, one of the author's underlying purposes has been to enhance interest in the few surviving old saddles as collectors' items and as artifacts of American history. For, as he says, "Much of that history was made on horseback."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mr. Beatie researched and wrote this book in the late 70's. I agree with other reviewers that there is some lack of information in certain areas. However, I urge those who treasure saddles for their artistry and historic value to forgive these criticisms and to see the book as it is--a beautifully presented depiction of the history of the saddle in the U.S. The author begins his book in earlier times, but quickly moves to this country. It is apparent that the author is in love with the western saddle for it is on this piece that he devotes most energy. I have collected, conserved, researched, and restored old saddles since I was 11 years old (I'm 41 now) and I can tell readers that in the 70's, and even until the last 12 years or less, it was very difficult to research saddlery due to the fact that one often needed to physically examine a saddle to secure one's own conclusions regarding its history, origin, and age. Often, photographs could not provide enough detail to offer conclusive information. Authors of saddlemaking and saddle collecting books in this decade are fortunate to have at their disposal the technology we now take for granted. Information is more accessible, and many saddle owners who were heretofore unknown are now able to connect across thousands of miles to share their knowledge with each other. And, there are now more of us out there, discovering these treasures in barns and attics. So, please, if you love saddlery, forgive Mr. Beatie for being on the forefront of the writers on this subject, forgive him for having published his book twenty-two years ago instead of two years ago, and enjoy this big, beautiful book for what it is--a splendid visual homage to the western saddle.

This book contains hundreds of photos and illustrations of the construction, evolution and variation of the saddle. Content focuses on the western saddle with ample photographs of famous saddles. The beginner will learn the parts of the saddle, proper selection, use, fit and how to care for a saddle. Collectors will find the guide an invaluable resource for dating and identifying saddles and their makers. The book stays on topic and does not deal with horsemanship or biting.

The book "Saddles" was a once in a life time research effort. The topic of saddles, by itself, is a small aspect of the American West but it had a very big impact just as the car does today. The saddle was like the seat in your car. If it was cheap, it did not last. If it did not fit, it did not feel good. Think of it, if you have a sore back from driving all day, you will cover fewer miles than if the seat in your car was

very comfortable. The saddle had the same impact. If it was cheap and it did not fit, you could not cover ground for any period of time. So the saddle was very important to all citizens in the American West. Mr. Beatie knew several points of contacts that had excellent knowledge of the "American Saddle" heritage. Many of these contacts have passed away. Their knowledge of saddles can be found in this book. The photos, that are in this book, cannot be found anywhere else. If Mr. Beatie had not included the drawings or photos,(some of them, not all) you would not find them anywhere (not even at the Smithsonian Museum). This book gives us a distant view of what the cowboy, cavalry trooper and pioneer all had in common, saddles and horses. You can see that the people of the 16th to the 20th century were as concerned about saddles as we are about cars today. A great book for a narrow topic, however, despite that, we can still see something we have in common with our past. May you rest in peace Mr. Beatie you covered this topic very well.

SADDLES is a lavishly illustrated book dealing predominately with Western Saddles. It does cover other things like saddle development from prehistoric times, riding mechanics, sidesaddles, English saddles, American Cavalry Saddles, and famous saddles. Still, it spends most of its time on Western Saddles and this is its strength.

Provides hundreds of detailed photos and drawings from the first saddles in history to modern day. Great detail on construction and styles. The bibliography lists tons of book titles and their authors that the information was compiled from. Also, a long list of early saddlemakers listed by state. Helpful in identifying possible age for antique saddles. This is THE book on saddles! Truly, a rare find!

The title of this book is less than adequate for so fine a work as Russel H. Beatie has put together. It is more accurate to describe this work as a "Natural History Of Saddles"... from their first primitive inceptions until modern times. Every improvement along the way is detailed, and every detail is presented in an understandable and pleasurable way. If you collect saddles, ride them for work or pleasure, fix them, photograph them, or just plain enjoy seeing them, this book will be a fine addition to your collection. Beatie has excellent illustrations and photographs... as well as text to match. I found only a few small differences in terminology and opinion than what I know of saddles, and they might be regional differences rather than actual error on the authors or my part. The book starts slow in the earliest of times, when saddles did not exist at all. If that is not important to you, skip ahead a few chapters and begin anywhere you want to in this chronological journey. There is

something here for everyone to see, learn, and enjoy. This is not a "how to" book about building saddles, although it may in fact help you to build a better one should you attempt to; It is a true "Natural History" of saddles that will warm your heart and educate you at the same time. Enjoy.

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