



Crossing Rio Pecos (Chisholm Trail Series)

Patrick Dearen

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The Pecos River flows snake-like out of New Mexico and across West Texas before striking the Rio Grande. In frontier Texas, the Pecos was more moat than river—a deadly barrier of quicksand, treacherous currents, and impossibly steep banks. Only at its crossings, with legendary names such as Horsehead and Pontoon, could travelers hope to gain passage. Even if the river proved obliging, Indian raiders and outlaws often did not.

Long after irrigation and dams rendered the river a polluted trickle, Patrick Dearen went seeking out the crossings and the stories behind them. In *Crossing Rio Pecos*—a follow-up to his *Castle Gap and the Pecos Frontier*—he draws upon years of research to relate the history and folklore of all the crossings—Horsehead, Pontoon, Pope’s, Emigrant, Salt, Spanish Dam, Adobe, “S,” and Lancaster. Meticulously documented, *Crossing Rio Pecos* emerges as the definitive study of these gateways which were so vital to the opening of the western frontier.

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