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Sommario/riassunto

Laws and Societies in the Canadian Prairie West, 1670-1940 examines the legal history of the north-west frontier, from the earliest years of European-Native contact in the seventeenth century to the mid-1900s. Challenging myths about a peaceful west and prairie exceptionalism, the book explores the substance of prairie legal history and the degree to which the region's mentality is rooted in the historical experience of distinctive prairie peoples. The chapters, written by a cross-section of established and emerging scholars working in the allied fields of law, legal history, sociology, and criminology, focus on what is distinctive in prairie legal culture. By approaching the issue from a variety of perspectives those of colonial administrators, fur company employees, Native peoples, women, men, entrepreneurs, judges, magistrates, and the police, among others the authors find evidence of a conscious effort to apply broad, non-regional experiences to seemingly familiar, local issues. The ways in which prairie peoples perceived themselves and their relationships to a wider world were directly framed by notions of law and legal remedy shaped by the course and themes of prairie history. Legal history is not just about black letter law. It is also deeply concerned with the ways in which people affect and are affected by the law in their daily lives. By examining how central and important the law has been to individuals, communities, and societies in the Canadian Prairies, this book makes an original contribution.
