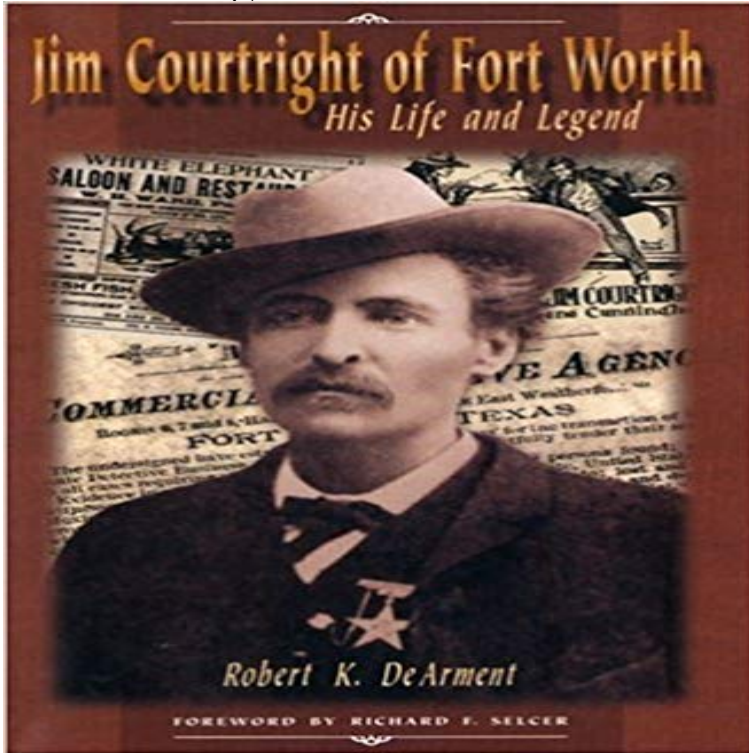


Jim Courtright of Fort Worth: His Life and Legend



Timothy Isaiah Longhair Jim Courtright operated on both sides of the law and became a legend in his lifetime and after his death. One of the most colorful characters from the wild and woolly days of Fort Worth's Hells Half Acre, Courtright was at various times city marshal, deputy sheriff, deputy U.S. marshal, private detective, hired killer, and racketeer. Today, he is almost forgotten, either as a gunfighter or a lawman, except in Fort Worth. Little is known about Courtright's early life, though he apparently served in the Union army during the Civil War. But when he arrived in the West, Courtright seemed to attract trouble. He was involved in a shootout during the 1886 railroad strikes and was accused of murder in New Mexico. Deputies were sent to Fort Worth to escort him to New Mexico to stand trial. His escape from them, complete with guns hidden under a restaurant table, is one of Fort Worth's most colorful stories. Finally, he was killed in a shootout that he apparently provoked with gambler and gunman Luke Short. To this day nobody is sure what provoked that feud, but Courtright was honored with the longest funeral procession Fort Worth had ever seen. The myth of Courtright as legendary gunfighter was built in two previous biographies: one by a novelist and the other by a Franciscan priest. After exhaustive research into contemporary newspapers and other accounts and close study of the previous two books, historian Robert K. DeArment deconstructs the myth of Longhair Jim and reconstructs the gunfighter as a real human being, complex, flawed, often courageous, usually both honorable and dishonorable. This book is a must for all those interested in the legends of the West, its lawmen, and its outlaws.

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