

# The Ox-Bow Man: A Biography Of Walter Van Tilburg Clark (Western Literature Series)

Jackson J. Benson

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Walter Van Tilburg Clark was one of the West's most important literary figures, a writer who contributed mightily to the tradition of viewing the West realistically and not through the veil of myth and romance. As a comparatively young man, he published three compelling novels and a collection of short stories, then remained almost silent for the rest of his life, the victim of a paralyzing case of writer's block. Now Jackson J. Benson, one of the country's fore-most literary biographers, has produced the first full-length biography of this brilliant, enigmatic, and ultimately tragic figure. Based on widely scattered sources - personal papers and correspondences interviews with family members, friends, and others; and Clark's unpublished stories and poems - Benson's biography focuses on Clark's intellectual and literary life as a writer, teacher, and westerner. Benson masterfully balances his engaging account of the experiences, people, and settings of Clark's life with a penetrating examination of his complex psyche and the crippling perfectionism that virtually ended his career, as well as offering up a thoughtful assessment of Clark's place in Western writing. In these pages, Clark lives again, a warm, complex, and ultimately anguished human being. Benson's remarkably astute and sensitive biography is destined to be the book that readers and researchers consult first for information about this major Western writer.

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