



Rooster: The Life and Time of the Real Rooster Cogburn, the Man Who Inspired True Grit

By Brett Cogburn

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The True Story Behind True Grit

Immortalized in the classic novel and films, the real "Rooster" Cogburn was as bold, brash, and bigger-than-life as the American West itself. Now, in this page-turning account, Cogburn's great-great-grandson reveals the truth behind the fiction--and the man behind the myth. . .

He was born in 1866 in Fancy Hill, Arkansas, the descendant of pioneers and moonshiners. Six foot three, dark eyed, and a dead shot with a rifle, Franklin "Rooster" Cogburn was as hard as the rocky mountain ground his family settled. The only authority the Cogburn clan recognized was God and a gun. And though he never packed a badge, Rooster meted out his own brand of justice--taking on a posse of U.S. deputy marshals in a blazing showdown of gunfire and blood. Now a wanted man, with a \$500 reward on his head, Rooster would ultimately have to defend himself before a hanging judge. Proud, stubborn, fearless, and ornery to the bitter end.

A fascinating portrait of a true American icon, Rooster shows us the making of a legend--fashioned by Arkansas newspaperman Charles Portis with bits and pieces of historical figures, including Deputy Reuben M. Fry, one-eyed Deputy Marshal Cal Whitson, Joseph Peppers (Lucky Ned), Joseph Spurling (Mattie Ross's grandfather) and bank robber Frank Chaney (scar-faced Tom Chaney.) Behind it all stood a man named "Rooster," with two good eyes and a tale all his own.

With never-before-seen photos

Some folks are just born to tell tall tales. **Brett Cogburn** was reared in Texas and the mountains of Southeastern Oklahoma. He was fortunate enough for many years to make his living from the back of a horse, where on cold mornings cowboys still straddled frisky broncs and dragged calves to the branding fire on the end of a rope from their saddlehorns. Growing up around ranches, livestock

auctions, and backwoods hunting camps filled Brett's head with stories, and he never forgot a one. In his own words: "My grandfather taught me to ride a bucking horse, my mother gave me a love of reading, and my father taught me how to hunt my own meat and shoot straight. Cowboys are just as wild as they ever were, and I've been damn lucky to have known more than a few." The West is still teaching him how to write. His first novel, *Panhandle*, will be published in November 2012. Brett Cogburn lives in Oklahoma with his family.

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- Rank: #1014437 in Books
- Published on: 2012-08-28

- Released on: 2012-08-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.27" h x .58" w x 5.53" l, .45 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages



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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Contrary to the book's subtitle, author Cogburn makes clear early on that the lead character in Charles Portis' *True Grit* was not based on his great-grandfather John Franklin Cogburn. Portis' Rooster Cogburn "bears some resemblance" to the author's ancestor, but so do other Arkansas mountain men named Cogburn. Rather than waste our time with a lot of tenuous connections between the real man and the fictional fella with the same nickname, the author instead amazes and astounds us with the true-life story of his great-grandfather, a mountain man and moonshiner whose blood feud with a deputy U.S. marshal led to Cogburn being arrested for murder. There's also a rather sweet romantic story line—Can an outlaw find true love in the Wild West?—and plenty of history about the time in which Cogburn lived. Written in a fast-paced, novelistic style (the author's first western novel is coming out in November), the book is sure to appeal to fans of Wild West history and to readers who would like to believe that *True Grit* has real-life connections (no matter how thin). --David Pitt

Review

"Fans of frontier arcana will revel in Cogburn's readable prose and lively characters." - *Publishers Weekly*

"The author has done extensive research to bring the times and his ancestor to life. It's an interesting read, especially for history buffs. His descriptions of the Fort Smith area, Indian Territory and southeastern Oklahoma are outstanding." - *The Daily Oklahoman*

[Brett Cogburn] ...amazes and astounds us with the true-life story of his great-grandfather... Written in a fast-paced, novelistic style (the author's first western novel is coming out in November), the book is sure to appeal to fans of Wild West history... - *Booklist*

In this book, he [Cogburn] has blended family lore and good research to produce an entertaining portrait of "a good man, even if my telling of his story has shown some of his faults." - *Dallas Morning News*

Users Review

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Ismael Black:

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Jaime Howell:

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Harold Hutchison:

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Shelia Lopez:

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