



# Let's Talk About ...

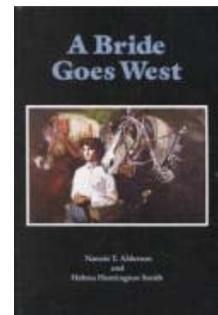
## The Western Experience

“For many the West is more than a direction found on a compass, even more than a geographical location found on a map. The word carries connotations, snippets, and images from a host of sources that all go into making up an imaginative collage of the West. The works chosen for this series add to and enrich the picture by giving us different, and perhaps even new, experiences. Within this diversity, a common thread runs through the books: the ways in which individuals confront and deal with an alien culture and a sometimes inhospitable land. Whether depicting the pursuit of the American dream, attempts to start a new life, or struggles to hold onto traditional ways, the books in this series help create a fuller, more complete picture of the complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions that ultimately make up the West.”

– James Hadden, for the Idaho Let's Talk About It, Mapping the West, 1986

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**Featured book:** *A Bride Goes West* (1942) is a collaboration between the experiences of Nannie Alderson moving West to Montana, and the writings and ideas of Helena H. Smith. The frontier memoir describes Western historical events and looks at the obstacles the Alderson family had to struggle to overcome. Alderson not only had to readjust her life in a new environment, but she also had to help her children make these crucial adjustments.



**Discussion Questions:** [compiled from Let's Talk About It program scholars]

- How would you describe ranch life in the period just before the turn of the century and just after?
- How does the role of men and women on the frontier compare to life in the East?
- Do you think Ms. Alderson regretted marrying Mr. Alderson and as a result living a life of hardship?
- In what ways does the narrative reflect the desolate, sparse setting?
- Do you consider this to be a romantic story? Why or why not?
- What values do we have today that probably generated from our pioneer heritage, especially in the western states?



Let's Talk About It is a partnership between the Idaho Commission for Libraries and the Idaho Humanities Council with generous support from U.S. Bank.