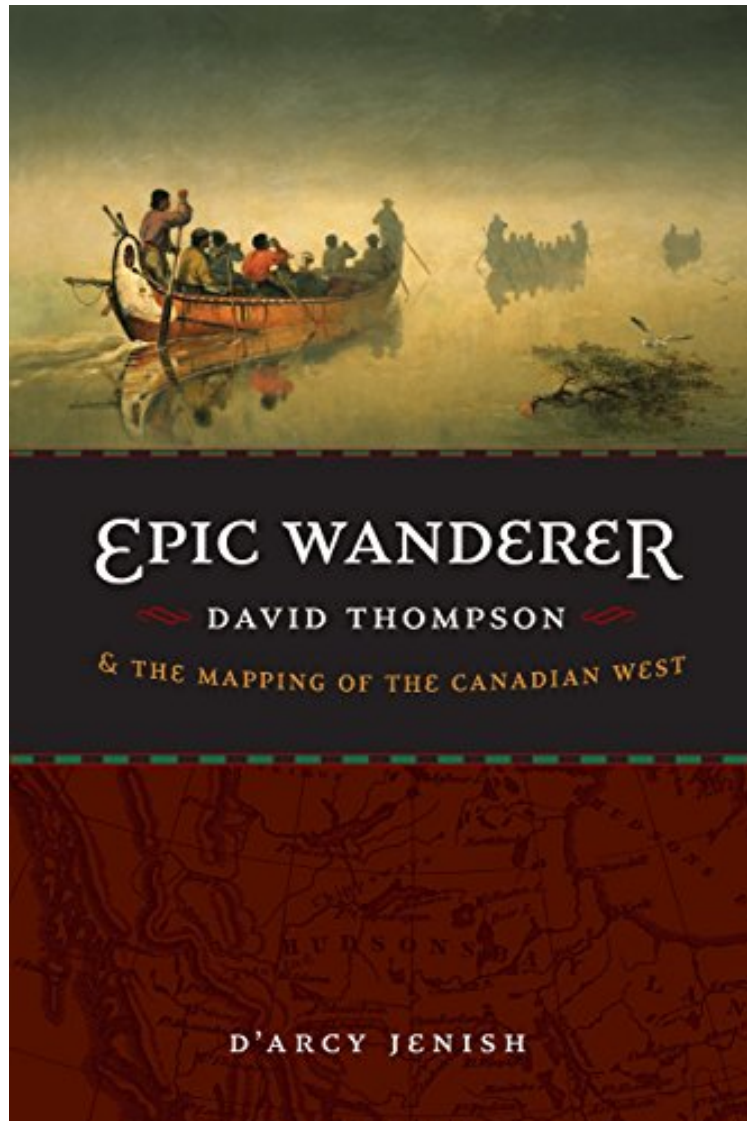


(Ebook pdf) Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West

Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West

D'Arcy Jenish

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#402189 in Books Jenish D Arcy 2009-06-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.90 x .90 x 6.001, .95 #File Name: 0803224524320 pages Epic Wanderer David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West | File size: 32.Mb

D'Arcy Jenish : Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Engaging story of astonishing adventures By The HeadhunterI first

saw this book in a store in Banff, at the tail end of a 10-day hiking trip through the Canadian Rockies. I didn't want to lug a book home, so I ordered through . Perhaps I like this book because I hiked a bit of the area it describes, but more important to me is the astonishing story of David Thompson by itself. To get from the east coast to the west, we get an airline ticket. Thompson routinely traveled thousands of miles each year in the late 1700's and early 1800's - mostly in canoes, hauling thousands of pounds of goods to trade for thousands of pounds of pelts and furs. Most astonishing is that armed with only a compass and sextant, Thompson and his little teams found their way across a continent to trade with native tribes. They did 100 miles in a day with nary a thought. What engages me the most is Jenish's ability to weave multiple sources including Thompson's diaries into a compelling you-are-there story of the crossing and mapping of the Canadian west. My highest compliments to the author. If you like adventure and the tingle of learning how men and women (Thompson had his wife and kids with him) did things we'd never attempt today, you'll love this book. It'll make you want to get up and go do something outdoors. It'll make you realize we have fallen behind in 200 years. We are lazy, and we are missing the adventures of our world.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. David Thompson was more than a Map maker !By J. Milligan This is the book you need to read to understand David Thompson's life. I previously read his personal account and struggled through some of the raw entries from his journals, D'Arcy Jenish straightens the record by including important Background before the trip and missing information about the aftermath. He does this with an even hand and shows very little bias to the final outcomes. I read the book quickly and reread some parts of it just to be sure I understood what the chronology and geography truly was. The comments and observations that Thompson made , essentially in the margins of his journals, provides an equally fair and unbiased descriptions of the many local and regional native groups Thompson encountered. I was somewhat surprised by his descriptions of the personal and cultural practises he encountered. The die was cast for interactions between Natives and Europeans long before Thompson's encounters. I saw no compelling evidence of any "destruction" of a benign, peaceful and loving Utopia.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Compelling tale of exploration of the west, but needs better mapsBy Gordon Bruce Smith If you have ever canoed for a few days or ever trekked in the wilderness with a pack on your back, you will be astounded by the extraordinary physical and intellectual energy of this English-born Canadian explorer. From 1784 to 1812, he traveled many tens of thousands of miles between Montreal and the mouth of the Columbia River, and mapped much of the region in between -- well over one million square miles. Perhaps the single most impressive physical feat of his decades-long career as a fur trader and surveyor was his crossing of the Canadian Rockies, in the depths of winter, to discover the upper reaches of the Columbia River. It's a daunting enough landscape even in summer. How he ever crossed in winter, dragging heavy supplies and trade goods over high passes in deep snow, I can hardly imagine. For nearly 30 years he worked for the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-west Company, the two great fur-trading companies of the era in the northern part of North America. At the age of 14, he was transplanted from London to the bleak, treeless, windswept shores of Hudson's Bay, there to serve out his seven years apprenticeship at a fur-trading post. He somehow survived the wrenching transition, avoided hungry polar bears, learned French and at least a couple of Indian languages, and mastered the business of fur-trading as well as the art of surveying. The maps he created in the early 19th century were so accurate that they were still in use at the end of the century, despite the immensely greater resources available to the government surveyors who followed him. He also, after he retired as a fur-trader, worked as the chief surveyor for the British as part of the US-British boundary commission that defined much of the border of Canada and the US after the War of 1812. He was one of the greatest map-makers of his time. He was also a man of interesting character, working in a very rough wilderness well beyond the bounds of urban civilization or any kind of government. He was very religious. He married an Indian woman when he was 29 and she was 13, had 10 children with her, and stayed with her until he died at the age of 80, despite the prejudices of pioneer society. He opposed the alcohol trade that was destroying so many Indian tribes and refused to deal in it. He worked extraordinarily hard, away from his family for a year or more at a time. Even in his old age he continued working, writing a several hundred pages-long Narrative of his travels and explorations, which was only published decades after his death. The author of this biography, D'Arcy Jenish, does an excellent job of weaving all this material together in a way that is always interesting and often compelling. Ironically, if I have one complaint, it is this: a book about a map-maker should have a lot more maps in it! The only way to follow Thompson's progress is to sit with the book in hand and an atlas open in your lap. This is a pretty major failing for the book, but if you an atlas with a decently detailed map of the Canadian west and of the US north-west, you will do fine.

Epic Wanderer, the first full-length biography of mapmaker David Thompson (1770-1857), is set in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries against the broad canvas of dramatic rivalries between the United States and British North America, between the Hudsons Bay Company and its Montreal-based rival, the North West Company, and among the various First Nations thrown into disarray by the advent of guns, horses, and alcohol.