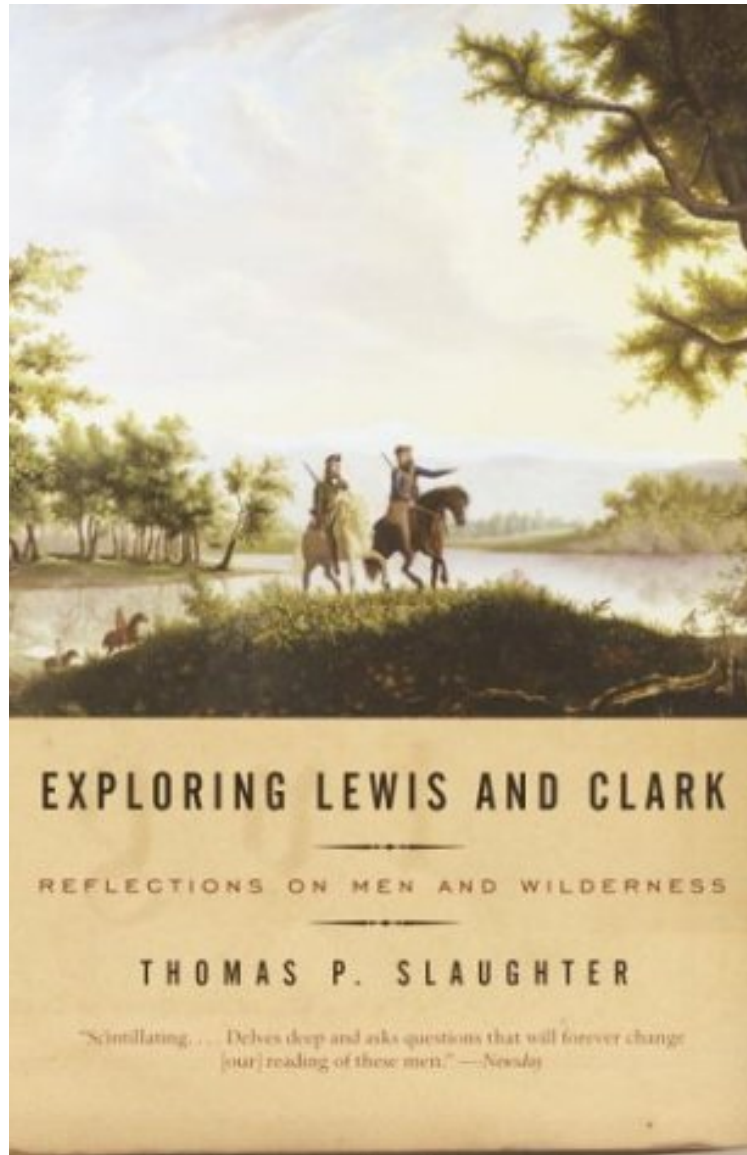


[Library ebook] Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness

Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness

Thomas P. Slaughter

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Thomas P. Slaughter : Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness:

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Read after Journals and AmbroseBy A CustomerThis may be a good book to read after you've read the Journals and Ambrose's book Undaunted Courage.The title Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness is apt. This books reads more like eight long essay with

footnotes. Slaughter compares Lewis and Clark values and views with that of the Indians they encountered. He considers the difference between dream states (natives) and rational scientific explanations (LC) for the phenomena they experienced. One chapter looks at the role of Sacajawea and deeply explores the two versions of her death. Another chapter looks at York and his role in the expedition and what happened between York and Clark afterwards. This book is essentially an interpretation of the journals, as 90 % of his citations are from the journals themselves. The tone is often sarcastic and critical and even tries to be cute. I found myself challenging and disagreeing with many of Slaughter's assertions. The chapter on hunting was fascinating. It describes the Native view of hunting versus Lewis and Clark's view of killing. Here and there I found things to think about in this book and different ways of looking at episodes of the expedition already much documented. If you are a fan of the expedition, you should find some provocative ideas here, and it is worth wading through the mire to reach them. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Florin Good book very surprising 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fast and loose with opinions. By Eric B. Borgman I like books on history, however, this book seems to bypass history in places. The first two chapters were unreadable and I skipped them. I did find some of what Slaughter wrote regarding the re-writes and editing of the journals interesting as well as the stories regarding the Indian woman and the slave York who also made the trip, but all-in-all the book is made up of a lot of the author's own opinions and some ridiculous conclusions he makes. I can only assume it is because Slaughter was a college professor when writing this book that he made so many silly claims in this book. We all know how so many professors play fast and loose with the truth.

This provocative work challenges traditional accounts of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's expedition across the continent and back again. Uncovering deeper meanings in the explorers' journals and lives, *Exploring Lewis and Clark* exposes their self-perceptions and deceptions, and how they interacted with those who traveled with them, the people they discovered along the way, the animals they hunted, and the land they walked across. The book discovers new heroes and brings old ones into historical focus. Thomas P. Slaughter interrogates the explorers' dreams, how they wrote and what they aimed to possess, their interactions with animals, Indians, and each other, their sense of themselves as leaders and men, and why they feared that they had failed their nation and President. Slaughter's Lewis and Clark are more confused, frightened, courageous, and flawed than in previous accounts. They are more human, their expedition more dramatic, and thus their story is more revealing about our own relationships to history and myth.

.com The story of the Lewis and Clark expedition is one of America's most enduring myths. Of the hundreds of books that have been written on the subject, many perpetuate the heroism of the Corps of Discovery above all else, often at the expense of accuracy. Thomas Slaughter takes a different approach in this fascinating book, choosing to "look beneath the explorers' narrative for different meanings than those they intended us to find," reminding readers in the process that the journals have generally, and mistakenly, been "read as fonts of fact rather than as honed reflections designed for effect." Undoubtedly, some will label this revisionism, but Slaughter sees it as an opportunity to discover what the explorers' true thoughts and experiences were. He explains: "My observations are intended as correctives to our readings, usages, and understanding of the journals, not as a knock on the journalists or what they wrote. All texts are vulnerable to close readings, but explorers' journals are interestingly, revealingly, and essentially so." Not surprisingly, the myths scarcely hold up to such scrutiny. For instance, Lewis and Clark were not the first white men to travel overland to the Pacific coast, but they often tried to ignore this unpleasant fact by renaming places or landmarks along the way. The importance of "opening the West" is also called into question: "westward movement would have continued without a moment's hesitation had all the expedition members died on the trail," Slaughter writes. He also looks at the lives and roles of Sacajawea and York, Clark's slave, explaining how their status within the group has been exaggerated as a way to make the expedition seem more democratic than it truly was. Slaughter even surmises that the notorious gaps in Lewis's journal and his reluctance to publish it upon their return may have been because Lewis saw the journey as a failure, and therefore felt there was nothing significant to document for posterity. This book is no exercise in political correctness; rather, Slaughter digs deeply into the available evidence to offer a different perspective on the journey that helped define America, proving that yet another book on Lewis and Clark is not only welcome, but necessary. --Shawn Carkonen From Publishers Weekly In this interesting but overwrought reconsideration of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Slaughter (*The Natures of John and William Bartram*) performs a "deep reading" of the travelers' journals and examines contemporaneous sources to probe the lines between history and myth. His investigation, which is thematic rather than chronological, suggests that the fable of Sacajawea's leading role in the expedition disguises the fact that she was a slave ("we have mythologized our history by denying her enslavement, her life, and her voice"), and that the explorers were the first wave of environmental despoliation, bolstering their masculinity by slaughtering buffalo, bears and especially snakes. The expedition was a clash of civilizations, pitting the Indian's holistic worldview, in which "the past and the present, nature and human are one," and "the white men's distinction between waking and dreaming makes no sense," against Lewis and Clark's rational, secular mindset, which was stuck in "linear, sequential time" and oblivious to the "spiritual implications of hunting."

Slaughter's revisionism-especially his account of the contentious relations between Clark and his slave York, and his skepticism about the explorers' complaints of Indian thievery-often provide a needed corrective. But some may find his theorizing about the ways in which the expedition serves as "a better guide to our souls than...to our skins" overly academic-not hard to follow, but somewhat difficult to swallow. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

In a series of fascinating essays, Slaughter (Andrew V. Tackes Professor of History, Notre Dame) utilizes the journals of explorers Lewis and Clark to investigate their epic journey and its subsequent mythical status. What becomes quickly apparent is that these were imperfect men who have become legends. As with all legends, only part of the story is true. For example, many believe that the journals of Lewis and Clark are original notes taken in the field on a daily basis. Actually, some of the entries were written days after an event, and the journals were edited many times by the explorers and finally by a multitude of editors. Various essays explore the Corp of Discovery's relationship with the game they hunted, their view of possessions and how this created conflicts with the Native Americans they met, and even the Corp's experiences with snakes. Two interesting essays look at how York (Clark's slave) and Sacajawea were depicted in the journals, the conflicting theories surrounding what happened to them after 1806, and the modern usage of these slaves to illustrate the supposed all-inclusive nature of the expedition. Highly recommended. Margaret Atwater-Singer, Univ. of Evansville Libs., IN Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.