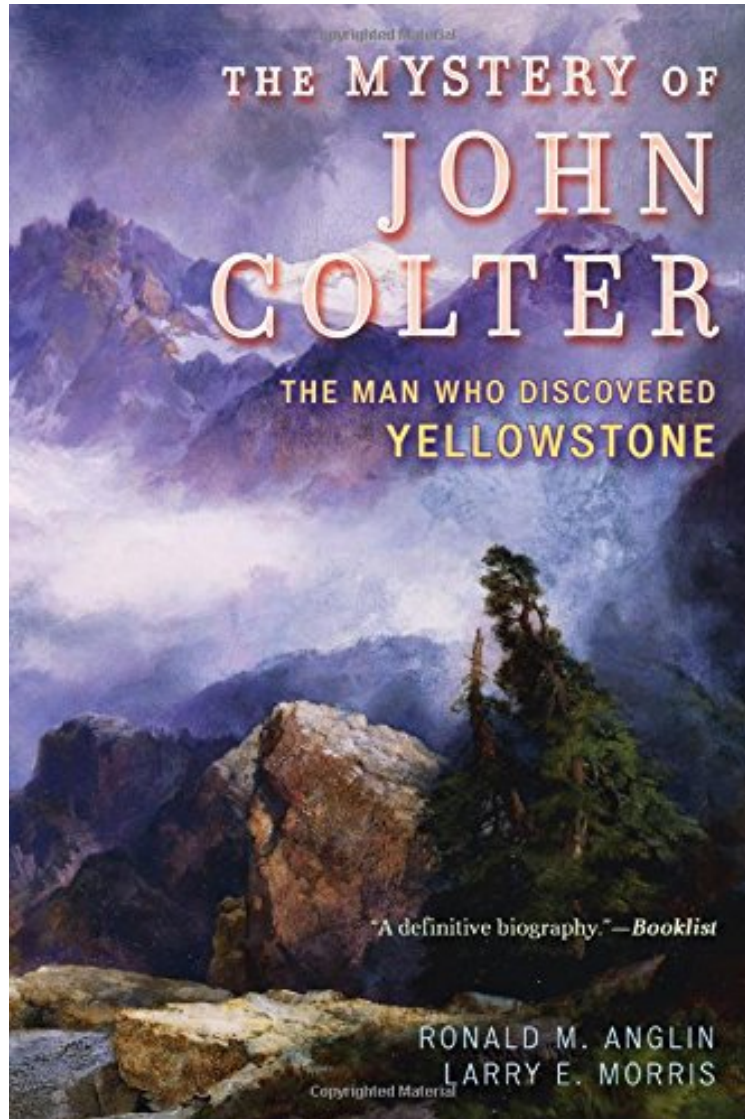


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The Mystery of John Colter: The Man Who Discovered Yellowstone

Ronald M. Anglin, Larry E. Morris

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Ronald M. Anglin, Larry E. Morris : The Mystery of John Colter: The Man Who Discovered Yellowstone
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From the first account of Colters Run, published in 1810, fascination with John Colter, one of Americas most famous and yet least known frontiersmen and discoverer of Yellowstone Park, has never waned. Unlike other legends of the era like Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and Kit Carson, Colter has remained elusive because he left not a single letter, diary, or reminiscence. Gathering the available evidence and guiding readers through a labyrinth of hearsay, rumor, and myth, two Colter experts for the first time tell the whole story of Colter and his legend.

In the annals of American history, John Colters name is often mentioned in the same breath as Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett as one of the expanding frontiers original frontiersmen. Colter is frequently cited as the discoverer of Yellowstone and holds a legendary reputation for outrunning a tribe of Blackfoot Indians hell-bent on hunting him down like an animal, a feat for which the yearly Colters Run foot race in Montana is named. Yet, because Colter left behind almost no written documents, such as journals or letters, precious little is known about the explorers life other than information gleaned from second- and third-hand accounts. . . . [The authors] devote themselves to separating the myths from the facts while offering fascinating tidbits about other people associated with Colter, such as Lewis and Clark. Readers new to Colter will be intrigued, while those familiar with his standing will be pleased to finally see a definitive biography of this noteworthy American pioneer. (Booklist) John Colter often 'travelled day and night' into uncharted territory like fellow 19th-century frontiersmen Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, and Samuel Brady. Unlike those 'other mythmakers of the era,' however, who 'left documents behind that allow access to the men themselves,' Colter apparently left nothing. To pull together this volume on his feats and his forays into what would become Yellowstone National Park, authors Anglin and Morris relied on second- and third-hand accounts to give Colter his due and satisfy their own curiosity about his achievements. Among those from Kentucky handpicked by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to journey westward toward the Pacific, Colter had 'an exceptional sense for survival' and an instinct for direction. A rugged backwoodsman, he could endure 'fatigue, privations, and perils,' and had also 'learned how to track men and animals.' Colter later became the first white man to go into Yellowstone, and the authors address how and why he went, and what he experienced along the way. Anglin and Morris make a valiant effort to tell Colters fascinating, if complicated, story and celebrate his legacy. (Publishers Weekly) Historians have difficult enough task writing about people who lived hundreds of years ago, when reliable first-person sources may be scarce. So imagine the challenge of writing about John Colter, who did not leave behind a single written document. . . . This is the first biography attempted on the elusive Colter, and its as fascinating . . . as you might expect. (Cowboys and Indians) It is a fine addition to the annals of the fur trade. (True West) Long-term, indefatigable research efforts by Ronald M. Anglin and Larry E. Morris give us an incomparable telling of the John Colter story. . . . Anglin and Morris revelations and conclusions are many and often ground breaking. . . . The authors are highly commended for bringing the greatest amount of clarity as possible to the Colter story, for which a number of mysteries will always remain. (We Proceeded On) I could not help wonder what it would be like to explore such a wild and unforgiving place [as Yellowstone] alone. The authors of this book did not tell me, because Colter did not tell anybody. The authors did, however, lure me into contemplating the mystery of a man for whom there are no records prior to the Lewis and Clark journals and payroll. If you choose to read this book about first encounters between native tribes and frontiersmen, get a good map of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho for reference. Then get lost in a story of a time now so hard to imagine. (ricklibrarian) Gloomy Terrors is worth reading and having in one's library. (Montana The Magazine of Western History) A unique insight into the life of one of Americas most famous, and yet least known, early frontiersman: John Colter. The authors manage to use and cite a great deal of evidence while preserving an almost adventure novel feel to the narrative a difficult achievement. Through the life of John Colter the reader gets a first-hand view of the early frontier from the Louis Clark expedition to the founding of Yellowstone National Park, mixed in with numerous tales of adventure heroism. (Benjamin Kline, De Anza College) About the Author Ronald M. Anglin is the author of *Forgotten Trails: Historical Sources of the Columbias Big Bend Country*. He is retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where he spent thirty years in land management in the National Wildlife Refuge System. He feels strongly that to be a good steward of an area, one must first understand its history, so that ones mark on the land will be with love and respect, not cruelty or disdain. He and his wife, Kathy, live in Fallon, Nevada, and have two sons who are happily married with six children between them. Larry E. Morris is the author of *The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers After the Expedition* and *The Perilous West: Seven Amazing Explorers and the Founding of the Oregon Trail*. He is a curator with the Historic Sites Division of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was born and raised in Idaho Falls, Idaho, in the Snake River country roamed by the likes of Jedediah Smith, Jim Bridger, and Kit Carson in the 1820s and 1830s. Larry and his wife, Deborah, are the parents of four

children and have six grandchildren.