

The Oregon Trail

Francis Parkman

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Francis Parkman : The Oregon Trail before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oregon Trail:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Parkman's journal here is an excellent reading for the 19th century historian regarding a 1st ...By Curtis W. RobertsParkman's journal here is an excellent reading for the 19th century historian regarding a 1st person account of crossing the undeveloped American west. Bear in mind it is written in the 19th century view and must be understood as such. Not a book for the politically correct college mind of the 21st century. The reader to benefit from this book must keep an open mind and understand that Parkman's view was no different then the average American of his generation.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. the oregon trail.By everett wilson jrthe oregon trail arrived within the est. arrival date. this will give me an idea of what my ancestors expeanced coming to oregon3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Good Book, But Not Quite What I ExpectedBy Nathan AlbrightWhen I selected this book to read among a collection of excess books at a friends house last summer, I expected this to be like the other books in that series this was published over half a century ago and has a great deal of historical value. Of course, I also came into this book expecting it would be like the game I grew up with of the same title, about an emigrant to Oregon who gets a nice wagon and some oxen, gets a bit of intestinal problems along the way, hunts a bit, sees a lot of fortresses, and ends up running out of money and having to take a ride down the Columbia and Willamette Rivers just to make it to the settlement. That expectation, at least, was not fulfilled, in that this book never reaches Oregon at all, although in fairness it does spend at least some time on the Oregon Trail.In that sense, this book is a bit of a tease. It is slightly more than 300 pages of 19th century travel writing

[2] that are not without interest to a historian, but that do not necessarily pass muster with the social standards of the present time. A great deal of the writing, which is written in florid mid-Victorian prose, is going to offend many readers, whether one is dealing with the authors apparent fascination with buxom young women (Im not criticizing this interest, per se, but rather noting it), and his very racist commentaries about Mexicans and indigenous peoples. That is even without getting into his hostility towards the migrants to Oregon and California themselves (not likely to make him very popular among their descendents in the Pacific Northwest), as well as the Mormons. Then, on top of this, the author makes light of the extreme wastefulness of the time in hunting buffaloes, which contributed to their near extinction, in that he comments on how he and the other hunters of his party would kill buffalo that were almost entirely harmless to him merely to cut off their tongues for meat, rather than loading up on yummy bison burgers. These are enough reasons why this book runs afoul of modern sensibilities. That said, when taken on its own merits, apart from its somewhat deceptive title, this is a book that has a lot to offer. It is far more interested in human relationships than in mere natural descriptions, though its descriptions of flora and fauna are excellent as well, especially when it comes to rivers or the Black Hills. Where this book really shines, though, is in its vivid word pictures of colorful characters like the intuitive hunter Henry Chatilion, who in the course of this books events has to bury a beloved Indian squaw and hunt for some ungrateful bosses, while making a new friend and even passing himself off as a cultured and debonair gentleman in St. Louis at the end, after they have come full circle through the Great Plains. Another well-drawn character portrait is that of Tete Rouge, a somewhat foppish thief recovering from brain fever and trying to make it home, despite a noticeable lack of work ethic and moral character, who survives mainly because of entertainment value. Ultimately, this is not a story about striking it out into the great unknown to seek a new life far from home, but about having an adventure and then returning to the comforts of home a wiser and more reflective sort of person, enriched by the experience. It is certainly a different Oregon Trail story than most people would have, though, even if it makes a worthy book on its own terms, also including some intriguing commentary about the Mexican-American War.

The Oregon Trail by Francis Parkman illustrated by Thomas Hart Benton published by International Collector's Library, American Headquarters, Garden City NY illustrations copyright 1945 this book measures approx 8 1/2" by 5 3/4". It has 328 pages. The top edge of the pages is gold-gilt. The end pages are a lovely forest green color. The page edges are rough cut. The satin book-mark ribbon The International Collector Library was a Doubleday Company book club in the 50s and 70s. The books are fancy-looking copies of great literature. Each book was made to look like some famous old book, with gilt stamping on the spines and front covers, and gilt on the top edge, and a sort of cover that resembles leather. They also have nice bound in ribbon book-marks. Some are illustrated. If you look at a bunch of them on a shelf they are attractive. But they are not high-end publications with fancy binding and fine paper. You might say that the International Collectors Library was a sort of poor person's Easton Press. on is also green.