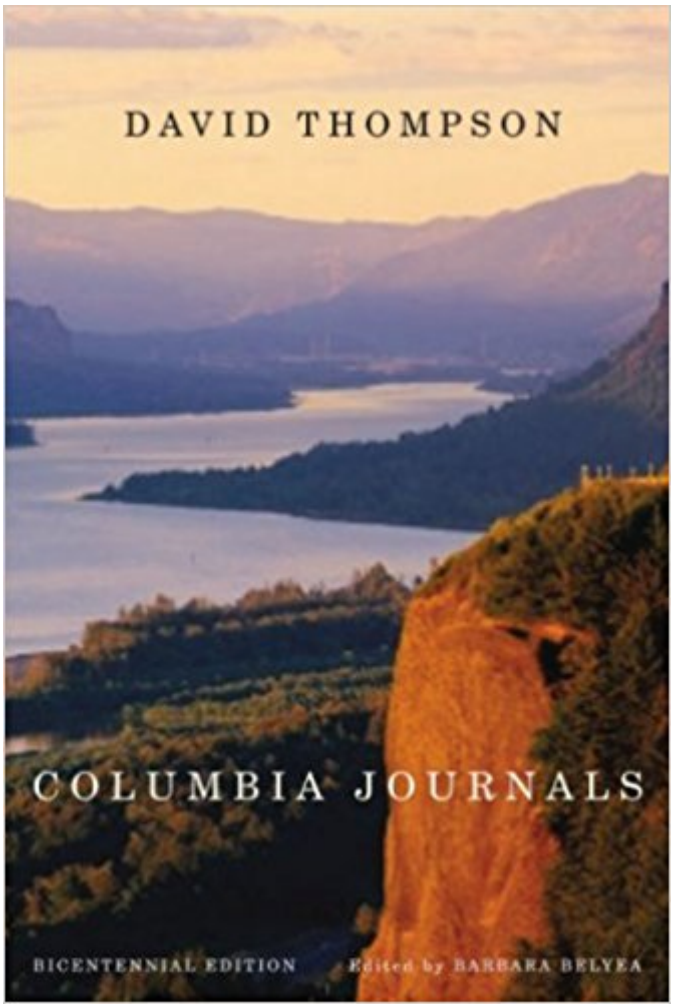
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Columbia Journals



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Synopsis

David Thompson (1770-1857) is considered by many to have been the most important surveyor of North America. His achievements -- mapping the Saskatchewan River, the great bend of the Missouri River, the Great Lakes and the headwaters of the Mississippi as well as the Columbia watershed -- are the stuff of legend. Late in life Thompson wrote a retrospective memoir of his explorations, but the best way to understand his years in the fur trade is by reading his journals.In her new Preface to the Bicentennial Edition of Columbia Journals, Barbara Belyea considers the fur-trade context of journals, reports, and memoirs that shaped both ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s perception of contemporary people, places, and events and our own perception of ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s historical importance.In Columbia Journals, the fur trader, explorer, and cartographer records his exploration of the Columbia River basin and his efforts on behalf of the North West Company to establish good trade routes across the Rocky Mountains. The journals provide a detailed picture of the fur business during its period of greatest expansion, offer a glimpse of Native culture at the moment of contact with Europeans, and describe landscapes that have since been transformed by settlement and industry. ThompsonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s hand-drawn maps preserve a contemporary image of the country he explored.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Columbia Journals allows us to evaluate David Thompson more fully as an actor in the history of the west, and to understand more critically the assessment and misinterpretations made by a number of earlier researchers."Ã¢â ¬â ¢Richard Ruggles, emeritus professor, Queen’s University

"Columbia Journals allows us to evaluate David Thompson more fully as an actor in the history of the west, and to understand more critically the assessment and misinterpretations made by a number of earlier researchers." - Richard Ruggles, emeritus professor, Queen's University

David Thompson was an explorer and cartographer of great magnitude. These personal journals document his explorations in the Canadian Rockies and northwestern U.S. from 1800-1811. His responsibilities were to discover and map new trade routes for the North West Company across the mountains and eventually to the Columbia River Basin. The journals depict the many hardships he and his men endured while on several exploratory trips: the impenetrable mountain snows; surviving severe winters of -30 F; the trials and tribulations of building trading posts, canoes, sleds; the demeanor of local Indian tribes; lack of food; etc. As Dr. Belyea says in her introduction, "David Thompson's Columbia journals require of the reader a perseverence that is well rewarded..the journals are dry and difficult..and the reader must work hard to create his or her own pattern of understanding". It is a worthy book from an exceptional man. The seven reproductions of maps by Arrowsmith, Thompson, etc. are quite poor in quality and I would therefore suggest an atlas for those unfamiliar with the geography of the area so as to follow his whereabouts.

First person account, therefore primary source of David Thompson's fur trading and exploring trips. Works well with other books to see his point of view, not just another author's.

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