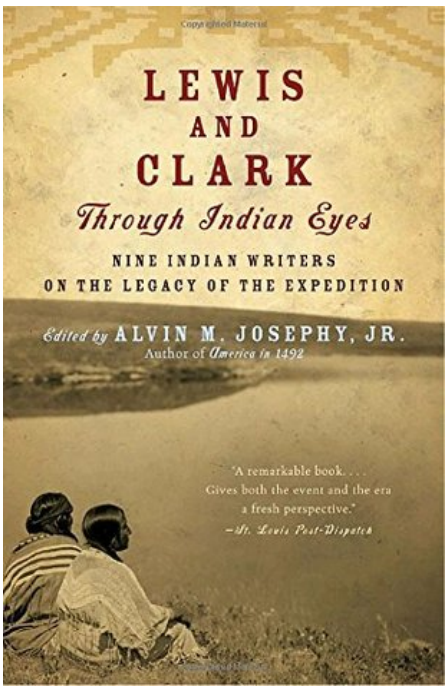

Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes: Nine Indian Writers on the Legacy of the Expedition

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At the heart of this landmark collection of essays rests a single question: What impact, good or bad, immediate or long-range, did Lewis and Clark's journey have on the Indians whose homelands they traversed? The nine writers in this volume each provide their own unique answers; from Pulitzer prize-winner N. Scott Momaday, who offers a haunting essay evoking the voices of the past; to Debra Magpie Earling's illumination of her ancestral family, their survival, and the magic they use to this day; to Mark N. Trahant's attempt to trace his own blood back to Clark himself; and Roberta Conner's comparisons of the explorer's journals with the accounts of the expedition passed down to her. Incisive and compelling, these essays shed new light on our understanding of this landmark journey into the American West.

Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes: Nine Indian Writers on the Legacy of the Expedition Details

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From Reader Review Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes: Nine Indian Writers on the Legacy of the Expedition for online ebook

BJ Rose says

Nine Indian writers tell about the people in the Corps of Discovery Expedition of Lewis & Clark, and about the people they encountered. It is mostly told by descendants of the Indian people described in the journals, and gives a contemporary Indian perspective as well as historical information. It shows how invaluable Sacajawea was to the success of the expedition - that without her skills, there could have been totally different results. There's a beautifully-told eye-witness account of the death of Sacajawea at age 82 in 1869. The authors use the journals of both Lewis and Clark, and the oral history of the Indian tribes, and show how the two perspectives were often at odds with each other. One example: the oral history of the Umatilla/WallaWalla Indians tell how the explorers were poor housekeepers and existed precariously in the region; Lewis & Clark described the Indians as "the most hospitable, honest, sincere people we have met in our voyage."

Ashley says

This collection of essays commemorates the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark's expedition to the Pacific Ocean and back, and does so through contemporary Native American perspectives. The essays travel through the various tribal regions of the land, giving readers the opportunity to imagine what it was like for the first people on the land to encounter the pair of explorers and their Corps of Discovery.

The writing is honest, poetic, and hopeful, and a fresh perspective on an event that everyone with a Euro-centric American education has heard about in a rather different context. We gain exposure to deeply engrained Native American principles of respect and generosity, and see many ways in which Lewis and Clark misjudged the people they encountered.

My favorite essay is the last, Pulitzer Prize winning author N. Scott Momaday's "The Voices of Encounter," a profoundly poetic history of early Native American history with white men. Ultimately, to me, the message of the book is summed up in the final sentence: "All that we are, good and bad, was in it."

Wendy says

I thought this book was going to be really cool all about Lewis and Clark and how the Indians viewed their expedition; instead it was more of a anti-"white-Man" tirade. I already feel guilty for being in America, but I have no control over what my ancestors did in the past. I would go back to my country of origin but sadly I do not feel any close connection to any of the seven countries my ancestors originated from. I must do more geneology and hopefully I have at least one ounce of Native American blood in me, then I can legitimize my existence here. Arrgghhh, my hubby's ancestor was the chief of the Nartagansett Tribe in Rhode Island, so maybe I'm legitimate here now by defualt since both my hubby and my three little braves are Native American?

Lynn Mulhall says

Interesting but not what I expected. Slow read.

Randy says

This book tells of nine different stories. Not all necessarily talk of the Lewis and Clark expedition itself, but what was left from it. It discusses a number of different tribes that ran into them, and how they effected their future.

It talks of good and horrible times, but the similar result of all of these stories is how all of these tribes did not disappear fully, and are in fact, building again. Not to lose the history, but to preserve it for their people.

Billy says

A very different view of the impact of the Corps of Discovery, discovering what the Indians already knew.

Velora says

Out of the nine essays, only three were very interesting to me, as they seemed to capture what I assumed the whole book to be about (or maybe what I wanted the book to be about!)...the actual Indian experience of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Maribel says

We all know that history is written from the victors' perspective; It was refreshing to read essays by people who actually knew those who Lewis and Clark encountered and what their interactions were like from the Indian perspective. I was especially impressed by the prophecies that the ancients talked about and told to their children. I kept thinking and wondering if the writer had been given the chance to read the Book of Mormon because what they said and how they said it reminded me so much of the language and prophecies in it. I now have a different perspective on the Book of Mormon itself as I read it with the Indian perspective in mind.

James (JD) Dittes says

I would describe the nine essays in this book in the terms of a baseball line-up: mostly misses, a few hits, no home runs.

I bought the book expecting some new interpretations of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, but many writings are only tangentially tied to the expedition. These essays divert the reader into irrelevant family & tribe histories (Trahant, Yellowtail, the Basches, Those who have read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* will recognize the tragic but familiar theme of Indian victimization--how many square miles a tribe lost at a subsequent treaty, the desire to bury family near the graves of ancestors, etc.

In a few essays, though, the writers bring new insights to bear on Lewis & Clark, and this is worth the price of the book. Debra Magpie Earling recounts trouble that arose between the Corps and their Mandan hosts during the winter of 1804 over adulterous relationships with married, native women. There are conflicting accounts of Sacagawea, one (Baker) that reverses conventional historical accounts by claiming she was Hidatsa, kidnapped by Shoshone, then returned to the Hidatsa to marry Charbonneau, while other accounts stick to the regular story. Rebecca Connor's essay sticks closest to the Corps, commenting on chosen passages of the Corps' trip through her tribal lands and adding local tradition to the account.

The best "hitter" on this team of native commenters isn't the clean-up, but the final essay, a lyrical, powerful reflection by N. Scott Momaday. His final line ties American and Native American accounts of the Lewis & Clark Expedition together: "It was the most difficult of journeys, marked by extraordinary triumph and defeat. It was in he truest sense a vision quest, and the visions gained were of profound consequence. All that we are, good and bad, was in it."

I will say that I picked up the book, hoping to find an essay to augment my teaching of high school American Literature, of the essays, I would say that Earling and Momaday are the most likely to be used again.

Kitty Galore says

While some of the essays digressed from the topic, it is refreshing to read new perspectives on the victims of the white man's foray into the lands that would later and forever be known as the Americas. There is nothing that we can do to change the sordid history of these noble people, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't continually try, the first being the honoring of the treaties that were broken.

Linda says

As the title implies, this book reveals a different perspective regarding the American narrative of the Lewis and Clark expedition. In addition to Lewis’ and Clark’s own journals and writings from some of the other expedition members, the history of the journey has been well documented by notable Caucasian historians. But information from the original inhabitants of the lands that Lewis and Clark traversed is harder to find.

This information imbalance implies that Americans were the first human inhabitants of the west, which is far from true. Native Americans had lived on and with the land for centuries before Europeans began poking around. And even after the first Europeans arrived, the natives had already experienced French and Spanish intruders.

Historian Josephy shows us a new vision of ourselves through the essays of nine descendants of the original inhabitants of this land. Journalist Mark N. Trahant poses a question: how do we come to know what we think we know? Whose words or voice are we vesting with such judgments? What if it happened differently,

but the voices of the other witnesses have been stilled? For example, who but an Indian, has ever considered that three centuries ago, the first natives to see Europeans wondered what manner of animal they were seeing? Who but an Indian has heard how disgustingly dirty and ragged the white travelers were?

These essays force us to contemplate the shock of having something you had assumed was entrusted to your care, ripped from your control; or to be told that something as spiritual as the air we breath (in this case, the land itself) could actually be an object of ownership—and guess what, first inhabitants don't count in the ownership game. It is also interesting that whites, despite all their technology, struggle to know their genealogy beyond 100 years, yet the native people of this country easily trace their family names and stories through three centuries of oral history that pays homage to their ancestors.

Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes is an engaging read that presents an alternative view of American history and culture.

Mark Valentine says

If today I feel like I am caught in the bowels of a rotting empire, this collection of nine essays reminds me that it started long before me to those who first inhabited the land. The Corps of Discovery came as the first lance thrust for waves of expansionistas intent on new markets of exploitation. Lewis and Clark no more 'discovered' the overland route over the continent than Columbus 'discovered' the Americas.

My favorite sections included those written by Vine Deloria, Jr., N. Scott Momaday, Debra Magpie Earling, and Roberta Conner. The passages quoted from the Journals of L & C show adventurism blinded by ideology. For all their enterprise in getting to the next stage in their treks, they completely missed the signs and cues that the Native Peoples were extending. In other words, L & C were NOT anthropologists. Too late now.

Bill O'driscoll says

Collection of essays by Native Americans presents a revisionist look back on the journey that "discovered" much of North American in the wake of the Louisiana Purchase. Of course, L&C were traversing land that had long been occupied by Native Americans, most of whom had no concept that land could be owned, let alone bought and sold. The writers -- ranging from poets and educators to historians -- emphasize that L&C and the Corps of Discovery, brave though they might have seemed to Euro-Americans, suffered the hardships they did because they had no connection to the land they traveled; the indigenous folk who'd lived there for millennia were never regarded as gutsy, because they already knew what they were doing. The writers also note that Natives aided the Corps to no end... and were ultimately rewarded for it by being driven from their land. Some of the pieces are more engagingly written than others, but this book provides a valuable perspective shift on a major historical episode.

George says

Most historians credit Lewis and Clark with a courageous exploration of new territory; this book provides a view from the perspective of the existing people on the land. This anthology is a collection of essays by nine modern-day Native Americans. In it, we learn that the expedition was about American (Jeffersonian) imperialism and commercialism. Perhaps the most revealing theme was that the expedition really wasn't a terribly noteworthy event for the tribes...just more white people coming through. In many cases, the coming was predicted by vision and the moccasin grapevine presaged their coming as they traveled West. Only a couple of the articles were interesting and talked to the title; others either beat the same old subject or completely avoided the book's theme and could be easily expunged without impact to the author's dominant idea. In the positive column, the verbal history was very enlightening.

David says

The book doesn't have much of a focus. It keeps losing focus and sidetracking and talking about random stuff. Would have been a better book if it actually stayed on topic.
