

Acts of Discovery: Visions of America in the Lewis and Clark Journals

Albert Furtwangler

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Albert Furtwangler : Acts of Discovery: Visions of America in the Lewis and Clark Journals before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Acts of Discovery: Visions of America in the Lewis and Clark Journals:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Insight without the HooplaBy Thomas HallockFull disclaimer ... I reviewed this book a decade ago. Back then I thought Furtwangler had written a smart, unpretentious book. I still think that. If you're looking for insight without the same-old-same-old on this tired subject, check out Acts of Discovery. Also check out the collection of essays edited by Kris Fresonke and Mark Spence. Very worthwhile.8 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Pretty goodBy A CustomerThis book very well depicts the ways in which Lewis and Clark explored the West. I would reccomend it to anyone who needs straightforward information for a report.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark wove science and raw adventure together in their journals as they blazed a trail from St. Louis to the Pacific. Now, with fresh information drawn from many fields, Albert Furtwangler mines those journals for valuable insights into western American history as well as the process of discovery. Acts of Discovery argues that Lewis and Clark surpassed the enlightened instructions given to them by President Thomas Jefferson. They made a literal, large-scale experiment, probing the interior of a continent and weighing information that eventually would supersede the science, the politics, and even the artistic ideals of Jefferson and his age. Drawing on a

background of interdisciplinary learning, Furtwangler illuminates the achievements of Lewis and Clark as naturalists, navigators, and diplomats who faced ever-new surprises as they worked their way west. He shows that their journals trace two very different patterns at the same time - as records of modern scientific reasoning and as a narrative of epic deeds in an American epic setting. Furtwangler also attempts to define Lewis and Clark's place in American history. He examines some ironic outcomes of westward expansion and conquest and brings out the peculiar courage of explorers who were the first (and almost the last) to cross the continent by pulling their way up the Missouri. He also compares Lewis and Clark's discoveries to those of other generations (from George Washington's early years as a surveyor of the new American interior, to the Apollo moon landings), discussing them in light of questions about progress posed by Francis Bacon, Henry Adams, and modern experimental scientists.

"Albert Furtwangler's unpredictable meandering gives the dry, plodding words of Lewis and Clark a new life." - Times Literary Supplement "There have been good accounts before of Lewis and Clark's journey across the North American continent and of the journals in which they recorded their observations, but few of them match this critical study in placing that adventure and its text in such interesting and meaningful contexts for students of American culture." - Nineteenth-Century Literature "Destined to become a valued contribution to literature on the trans-Mississippi West for its recapitulation of the major events of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and for its up-to-date assessment of their historical meaning. The author is articulate in his diagnostic treatment of the expedition's remarkable documentation and its place in America's 'age of enlightenment.' His evaluation of the expedition within the context of the pursuit of human progress is fortified through his incorporation of the works of classical scholars and modern scientists." - Irving W. Anderson, South Dakota History "An extraordinary book-extraordinary in its scholarly range and imaginative reach. The answer to the question 'Is there anything left to be said about Lewis and Clark?' is a resounding 'yes' in good measure because of this compelling book."-James P. Ronda, Western Historical Quarterly "Albert Furtwangler's work not only is splendidly written but also offers a fresh perspective on a well known story... It is a remarkable new appraisal of one of America's literary epics. As such it belongs on the bookshelf of all those interested in the American experience."-John L. Allen, Journal of American History "The evidence marshaled by Furtwangler in supporting his rather striking claims is substantial and quite interesting to both the general and scholarly reader... Furtwangler's book is a wonderfully told and well-researched account of the historical expedition itself, as well as a record of important aspects of the cultural and social milieu in which it took place." - Harold K. Bush, Jr., Western American Literature