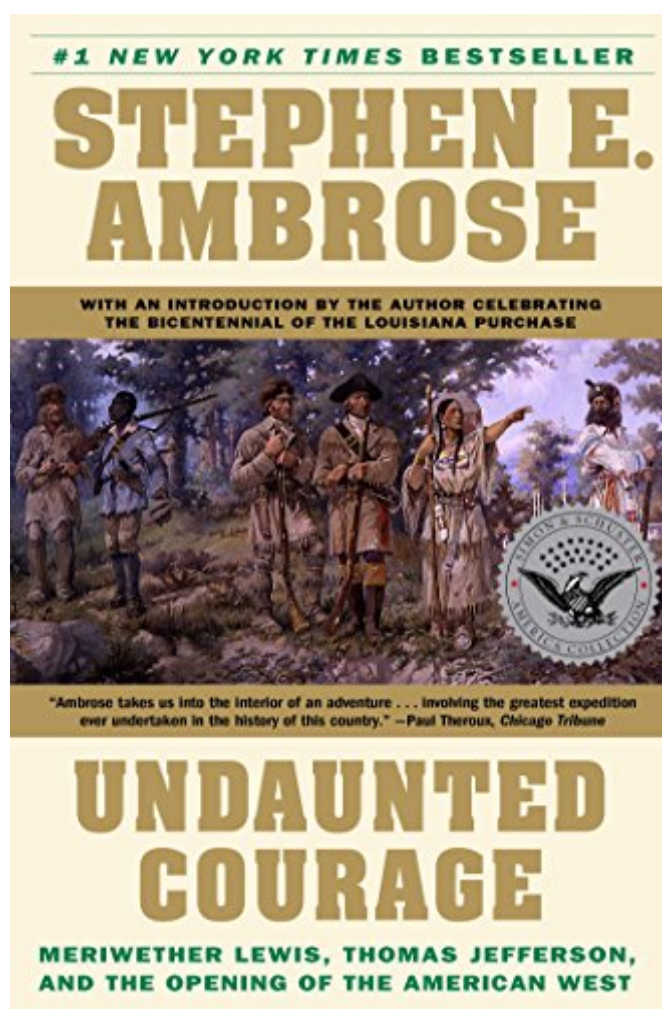


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Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson And The Opening Of The American West: Meriwether Lewis Thomas Jefferson And The Opening



Synopsis

From the bestselling author of *> and >*, the definitive book on Lewis and Clark's exploration of the Louisiana Purchase, the most momentous expedition in American history and one of the great adventure stories of all time. In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson selected his personal secretary, Captain Meriwether Lewis, to lead a voyage up the Missouri River to the Rockies, over the mountains, down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean, and back. Lewis and his partner, Captain William Clark, made the first map of the trans-Mississippi West, provided invaluable scientific data on the flora and fauna of the Louisiana Purchase territory, and established the American claim to Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Ambrose has pieced together previously unknown information about weather, terrain, and medical knowledge at the time to provide a vivid backdrop for the expedition. Lewis is supported by a rich variety of colorful characters, first of all Jefferson himself, whose interest in exploring and acquiring the American West went back thirty years. Next comes Clark, a rugged frontiersman whose love for Lewis matched Jefferson's. There are numerous Indian chiefs, and Sacagawea, the Indian girl who accompanied the expedition, along with the French-Indian hunter Drouillard, the great naturalists of Philadelphia, the French and Spanish fur traders of St. Louis, John Quincy Adams, and many more leading political, scientific, and military figures of the turn of the century. High adventure, high politics, suspense, drama, and diplomacy combine with high romance and personal tragedy to make this outstanding work of scholarship as readable as a novel.

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Customer Reviews

"Undaunted Courage" is historian Stephen E. Ambrose's masterfully told and compelling account of The Lewis and Clark expedition, one of the most historically significant journeys of exploration in American history. Relying extensively on the Journals of Lewis and Clark, Ambrose has put together a highly entertaining, meticulously researched, wonderfully readable, and fast paced narrative that interweaves a fascinating biography of Meriwether Lewis with a spellbinding account of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Ambrose captures completely with his fast-paced narrative the key events of the Lewis and Clark expedition. With a keen eye for detail, he describes the formation of the Corps of Discovery; its ascent to the headwaters of the Missouri River and its many encounters with native tribes along the way; the crossing of the "Great Portage," the Continental Divide, and the Rocky Mountains; and its encampment in November 1805 on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, at the mouth of the Columbia River. Also described is the expedition's return voyage, when the expedition once again searched in vain for a water route to the Pacific, and also when the expedition had its one and only hostile engagement with natives. Finally, Ambrose describes the aftermath of the expedition - how the Journals of Lewis and Clark came to be published, and the divergent (and, for Lewis, ultimately tragic) careers of these two great explorers. I found Ambrose's portraits of the key players in this real-life drama to be superb! Lewis is a born naturalist with a keen eye for scientific observation. He's also a gifted leader of men, ever conscious of his subordinates' welfare, and always gaining from them loyalty that is complete and willingly given.

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