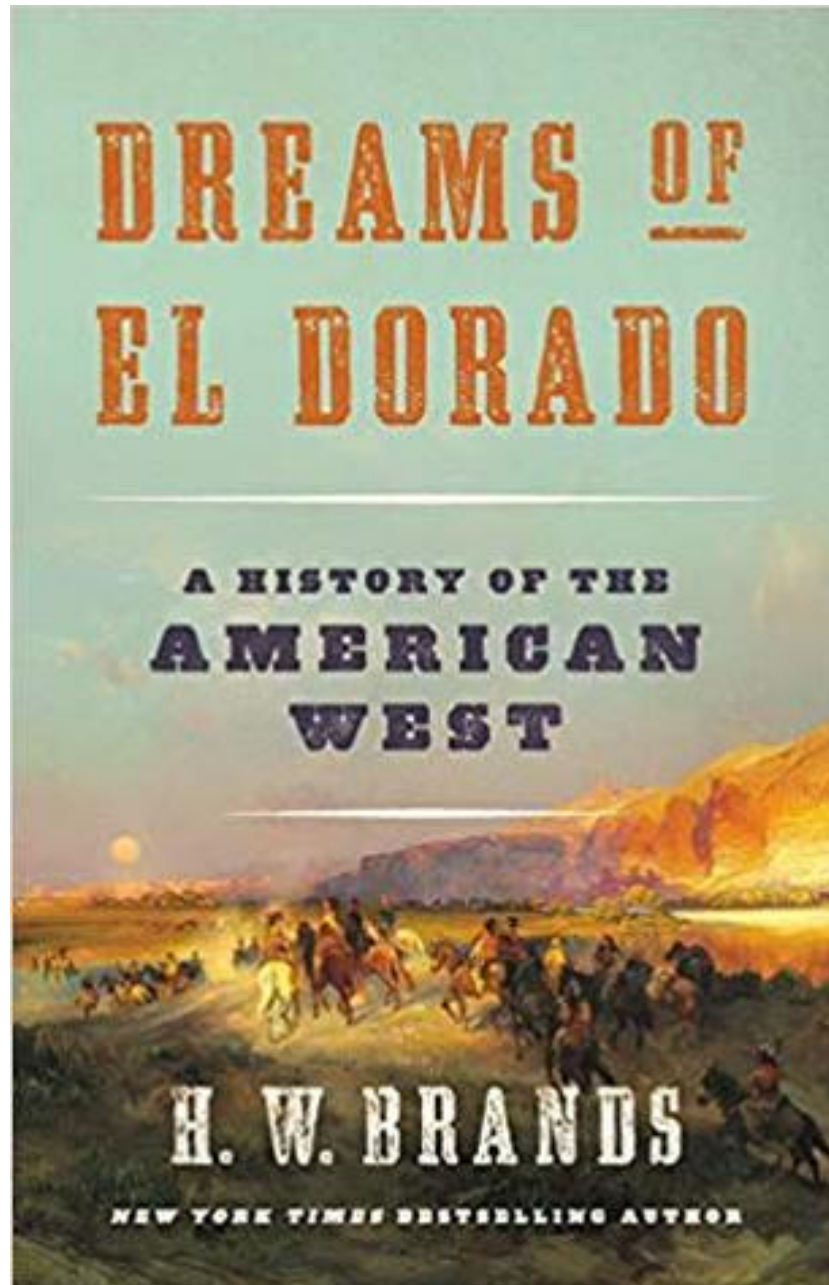


Dreams of El Dorado: A History of the American West Book PDF Download



By:
H.W. Brands

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Excerpts: ". . . Lewis and Clark's 28-month, 8,000-mile journey from St. Louis to Oregon and back not only represented an amazing feat of courage and endurance but established the precedent for federal sponsorship of exploration and scientific discovery that we still adhere to today. And despite the excitement and national pride that the expedition elicited, he reminds us that it was also something of a letdown. In

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". . . Mr. Brands takes pleasure in explaining how things work and has studded the book with illuminating asides. He describes the lifeways of the beaver and the annual cycle of a fur trapper. He catalogs the daily routine of a wagon train. He shows how the quintessentially western industries of gold mining, cattle-raising and farming outgrew their small-scale origins and soon became as industrialized as the manufacturing done at factories back east. He explains how the introduction of the horse fundamentally changed Native American culture and how the tribes' decentralized governance sometimes increased the likelihood of violence in the face of white encroachment.

This isn't a book of white hats and black hats. Neither does Mr. Brands shy away from the less heroic episodes of western history. From the beginning, he reminds us, the region was a chaotic, dangerous place. In fact, he considers violence, "humans killing one another in the struggle for

control of Western resources, as the defining characteristic of the West.

Laura

This will make a great research tool for those looking to understand some of the history of events like the Gold Rush of 1849 or the Indian Wars. Sadly, there are connections missing between events and it feels as though the author isn't making a coherent argument or telling a full story. That's not to say the individual chapters/vignettes aren't well told, just that there seems to be more here that is needed for a real understanding of how the American West evolved.

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ARC provided by publisher.

Glen

I won this book in a goodreads drawing.

A popular history consisting of various histories of chapters of the American West. Most are pretty interesting and entertaining.

David

I received a copy of this book as part of a Goodreads giveaway.

H.W. Brands' new book is an ambitious one: the story of the American west, both the history and the myth. Beginning with John Jacob Astor and the fur trade, stopping along to tell of revolutions in Texas, missionaries in Oregon, gold and land rushes in multiple territories, Mormons and ranchers, railroad expansion and native tribe decimation, Dreams Of El Dorado is a fascinating study in the history of how the American frontier was

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Additionally, Brands tackles to a certain degree the myth of the American west; particularly interesting to me is how the "rugged individualism" that to this day is so associated with the American West developed in a area that owes much of it's existence to the Federal government, its interventions and its army. He also explores the way the Western experience helped Teddy Roosevelt create his own myth, one that helped propel him from the son of Eastern wealth to America's first Western President.

A very readable, informative and entertaining book.

Gretchen

Dreams of El Dorado is a story of the western expansion examined through the lens of histories, interviews and writings of the various periods and locales. What I liked about the book was the fact that I had either lived in the various areas of Texas and California, or visited them. Fortunately when I was in school, history was a well-taught subject.

Mr. Brands tries to give an even handed treatment to his subject.

I received the paperback book through a goodreads giveaway.