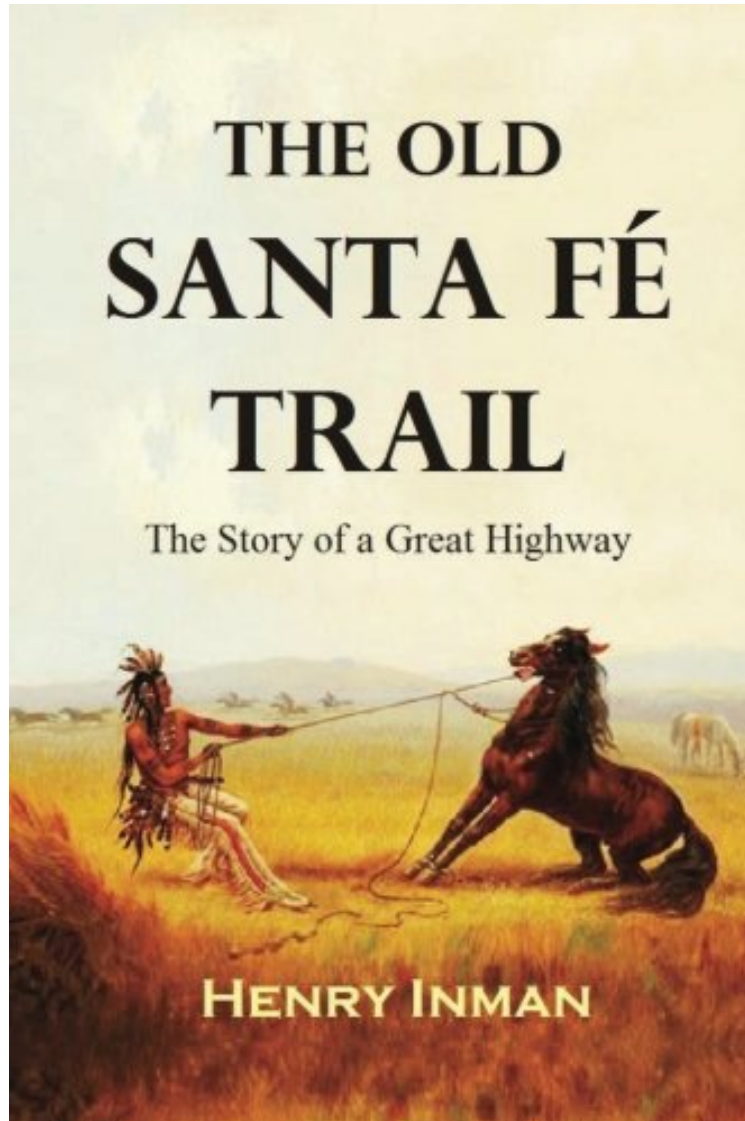


(Free pdf) The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway

The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway

Henry Inman

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Henry Inman : The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Facenating view of the old west from a (partly) first hand 19th century perspectiveBy Bill R.This book is part historical sketches, part biographical sketches (Kit Carson etc.), part anecdotes and part memoir. As such it is episodic. It is organized in roughly chronologic order, beginning with the opening of the trial and continuing through the coming of the railroad. Early chapters rely on diaries and news paper

accounts. Later chapters rely more heavily on the author's conversations with various frontiersmen and his own experience. Inman was an Army officer who took part in the Indian wars that followed the Civil War and later became a journalist in Kansas. His writings about life in the west were popular in the late 19th century. This book is well written. There is a fair amount of actual history here but this shouldn't be read as a scholarly historical work. It was clearly written to be popular with a general audience. It was very interesting to read first-hand or second-hand, pre-cinema origins of most of the clichés of western movies of the 30's 40's and 50's (circling the wagons to defend Indian attacks, outlaws and Indians holding up stage coaches, the cavalry riding to the rescue, etc.). Fair warning: Inman's descriptions of Native Americans will seem jarring to some 21st century readers. He clearly admires certain Native leaders and admires the some tribal skills. At the same time he attributes many negative qualities to Native Americans as a racial group. His attitudes are not particularly surprising coming from an 19th century man who fought the Indians but all the same some readers will find them offensive. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Classic, but disjointed and long. By Daniel Estes For all the Santa Fe Trails enthusiasts out there, Colonel Henry Inman's classic tome is worth checking out but don't be shy about skimming through most of it. The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway tries to cram too much into one collection, causing it to feel like a badly edited encyclopedia rather than having a coherent narrative. Nevertheless, the Colonel can write and many of his stories captivate like a campfire tale. I think I read somewhere that a handful of them have been proven to be historically false, but I couldn't point you to which ones. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Series of anecdotes. By Sidney Weber This book consists of a series of interesting anecdotes loosely related to the Old Santa Fe Trail and a large area nearby. The overall effect is an enjoyable book, but one that falls somewhat short of providing a distinct image of the Trail itself.

HENRY INMAN (1837-1899) was a Union soldier, veteran of the Indian Wars, author of books on the West, who was born in New York City, and the son of famous painter Henry Inman. At 20 years of age, he joined the US Army, and as a private (later a corporal) in the 9th Infantry served for four years in the Native American disturbances in Oregon and California. When the Civil War started he was transferred to the 17th Infantry, Army of the Potomac, and became a first lieutenant in 1862. At the end of the Civil War he was sent to Kansas, where he distinguished himself in the Indian campaigns, attaining the brevet of lieutenant-colonel in February 1869. On July 24, 1872, he was cashiered from the army. In 1878 Inman took over a Kansas newspaper, the Larned Enterprise. In 1882 he became manager of the Kansas News Agency at Topeka and was subsequently employed on various newspapers in the state. His great interest in the Western frontier prompted the writing of a number of historical sketches of adventure which in 1881 were published in book form as "Stories of the Old Santa F Trail". At the time of its publication in 1881 "The Old Santa Fe Trail" was called the most interesting book ever written by an army officer. It can scarcely fail to occur to the thoughtful reader of this engrossing book that the current conception of American history, as gained from the text-books and manuals in common use, is singularly narrow and one-sided. The story of the magnificent pioneering exploits of the Spaniards, and of our own subsequent conquest and development of the vast Western and Southwestern territory which they were the first to enter and to settle, has been curiously neglected. There is no chapter in this story that is richer in the essential elements of romance, or of greater and more absorbing interest to the American reader, than the one contained in Colonel Inman's book. The Old Santa Fe Trail was once the great highway from the lower Missouri River to New Mexico. The first European to traverse it was De Vaca a Spanish explorer of the sixteenth century. De Vaca was the precursor of the later caravans of pack-mules and prairie schooners, which in their turn gave way to the swift trains of the great Atchison, Topeka and Santa F Railway, which now spans the continent, and for nigh a thousand miles of its romantic course parallels and often coincides with the Old Trail. Thus the tourist who is whirled in a palace car over this route is traversing storied ground, where nearly every stream and hill and dale has its tale of peril or adventure. The thrilling story of the Old Trail and its doughty heroes is told sympathetically and in full detail by Colonel Inman. His book has a distinct historical value, and it is as readable as a romance of Scott or Stevenson. It is a book wherein American patriotism and national pride may find true nourishment; and therefore it is a book that every American youth ought to read.

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