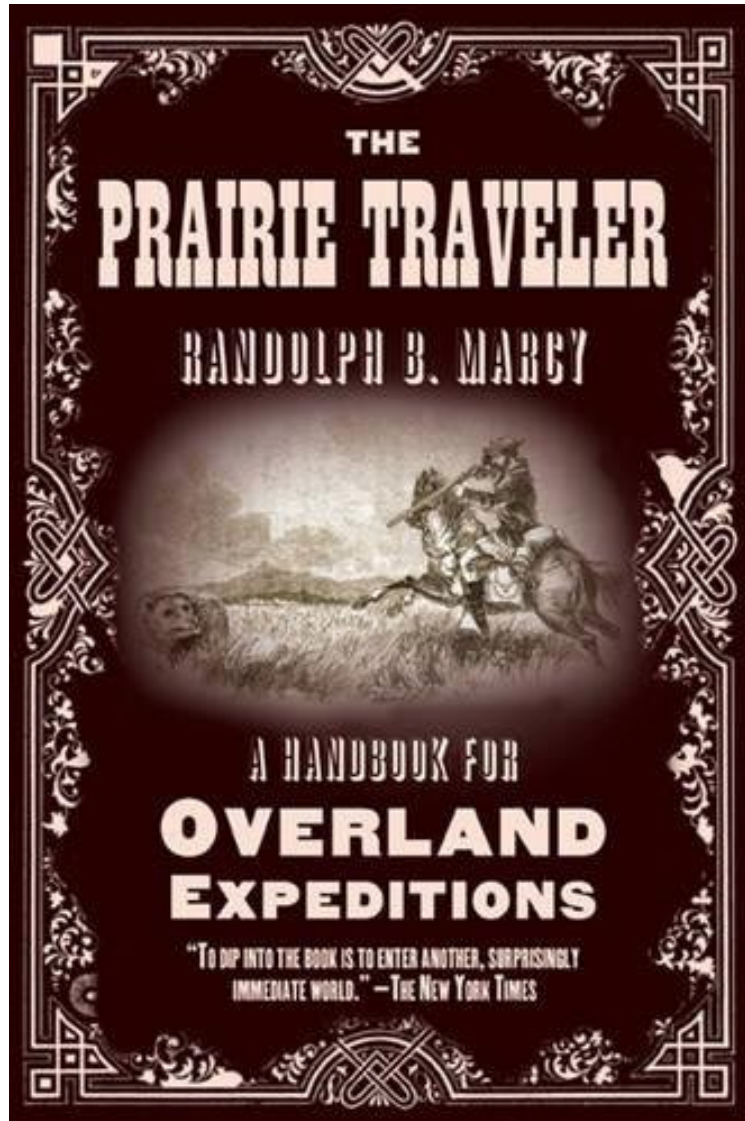


The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for Overland Expeditions

Randolph B. Marcy

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Randolph B. Marcy : The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for Overland Expeditions before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for Overland Expeditions:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Everything my great-grandparents needed to knowBy D. D. LeDuPublished by authority of the War Department in 1859, this is a handy guide in case you want to cross the continent by wagon or pack train. The author (an Army captain) wrote based on his own extensive experience and reports by fellow officers with western experience. The purpose was to give both new Army officers and civilians a

head start before entering the (then) wild west. There is a lot to learn from this book, such as the proper way of "circling wagons" at camp (Hint: What you see in the movies is ridiculously wrong). It gives advice on handling horses, mules and oxen, and how to break them in for the trail - as well as how to drive and graze them. He also discusses how to handle Indians en route. Most people know by now that great "wagon train massacres" were rare (I think limited to one - two if you include the Mountain Meadows Massacre). But thievery was a major problem, and potentially life threatening. All accounts I have read emphasize the threat of thefts and, worse, stampeding of livestock, which could be disastrous. Some of the information is dated and (to the modern man) faintly funny. For example, the author includes quotes from noted "authorities" on how the miasma emanating from low-lying moist areas causes sickness. He gives advice and how to avoid these poisonous vapors. Of course, the same steps taken also avoid insects (especially mosquitos). There is a serious discussion of how tents trap these vapors and thus sicken the men within, with no serious discussion of camp hygiene or communicable diseases. The last part of the book is a listing of trails with distances between water and grass, derived from military reports. I glanced through this, locating many places that were made poignant by the fact that I have personally visited them. It was interesting to compare my memories with the author's notes. Unfortunately, the maps are not included -- which is unfortunate but not fatally so. Over all, this is an interesting book. It helps understand the vicissitudes faced by our pioneering ancestors. It also does two other things: Firstly, it reminds us how wimpy modern American society has become. Secondly, it also reminds us how much one needed to know to survive in those harsh conditions; a person had to know as much as a computer programmer does today, with the qualifier that one's life was forfeit if he were far wrong.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. 5 stars
By reader
Great book on crossing the westward migration---if you like this book you will also want to read the following great first-hand accounts of adventures "going west":
1. By Ox Team to California: A Narrative of Crossing the Plains in 1860
2. Days on the Road: Crossing the Plains in 1865 (1902)
3. CALIFORNIA: A Trip Across the Plains, in the Spring of 1850
4. Across the Plains in the Donner Party: A Personal Narrative of the Overland Trip to California (1891)
5. Personal Experiences on the Oregon Trail Sixty Years Ago (1912)
6. Crossing the plains in '49
7. The Lost 49ers of Death Valley: A Survivor's True Story
8. The Bozeman Trail: Historical Accounts of the Blazing of the Overland Routes Into the Northwest, and the Fights with Red Cloud's Warriors, Volume 10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. First hand knowledge
By Coast Dog
This book was unknown to me until it was recommended in a history periodical. This little book is well written by someone who had performed the tasks involved and traveled the trails mentioned. This work could have easily been a source book for any western TV show or movie about the settling of the west by pack train or wagon. There is also much to be gained by a student of survival especially in the desert regions of our country. A good read authored by the genuine article.

The first and finest handbook for travelers of the Old American West. First published in 1859, *The Prairie Traveler* was the indispensable book for looking to follow the American dream, pull up stakes, head into the wilderness of the frontier, and build a new life out West. With the official blessing of the US War Department, Randolph Marcy, a captain in the US Army, published *The Prairie Traveler* as the ultimate guide for these pioneers, covering everything from the best way to move wagons over hostile terrain and what to pack, to describing over thirty-four different trails to be taken and the dangers one may face on the way. Captain Marcy also passes on the knowledge he gained from local Indian tribes, from how to cook and wage war to their subtle tribal differences and customs. *The Prairie Traveler* stands as an important piece of early American literature, and as a fascinating presentation of the now-lost Wild West: its perils, its rewards, and ultimately, the achievements of those who worked hard to survive. Captain Marcy's guide remains the essential guide for those who wish to discover the trials and tribulations of the early pioneers of America, and it is an indispensable addition to any historical collection. Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Arcade imprint, are proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in history--books about World War II, the Third Reich, Hitler and his henchmen, the JFK assassination, conspiracies, the American Civil War, the American Revolution, gladiators, Vikings, ancient Rome, medieval times, the old West, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

About the Author
Randolph Barnes Marcy was a career officer in the United States Army, achieving the rank of brigadier general before retiring in 1881. Marcy's 1859 book, *The Prairie Traveler*, has been called one of the most important works in making possible the great Western overland migration of United States settlers in the last half of the nineteenth century. He died in 1887.