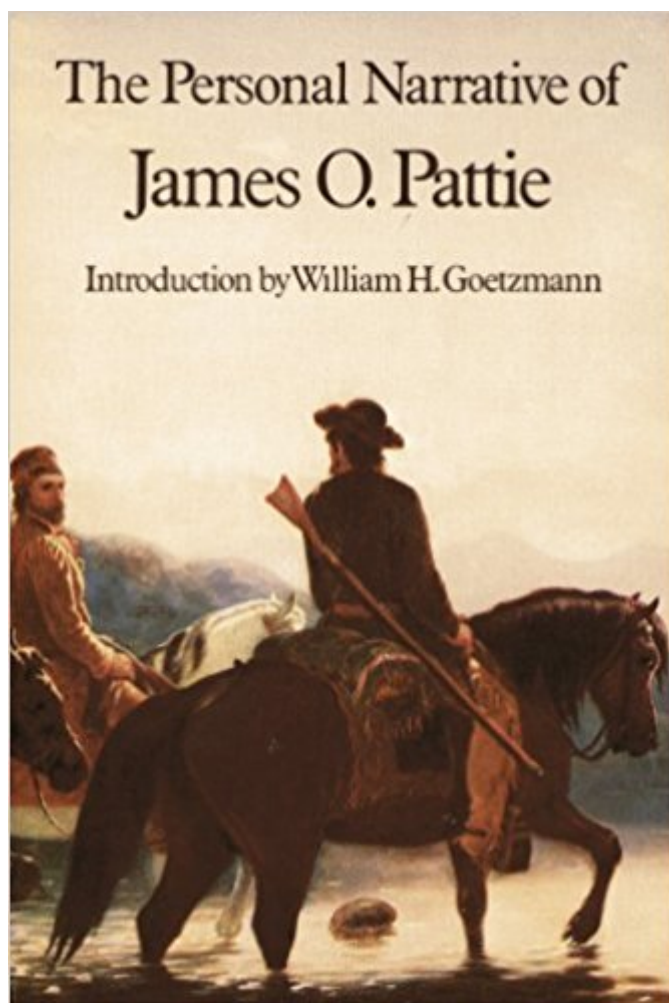


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The Personal Narrative Of James O. Pattie (Bison Book)



Synopsis

In 1824 James O. Pattie, then in his early twenties, left Kentucky with his father and headed west. This is the story of several adventures he experienced during his six-year trip. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In June of 1824 James Ohio Pattie, then in his early 20's, left Kentucky with his father, Sylvester, and headed west. They reached Taos, New Mexico, traveled down the Rio Grande, fought with Indians, rescued two white women who had been captured by Comanches, crossed over the Mogollon Mountains (they had to eat one of their horses; later they had to eat their dogs also), and for a while ran a mine and fought more Indians for the Mexicans near Silver City. In southern New Mexico, a party of French trappers, against Pattie's advice, consorted with the wrong Indians and they were massacred, their body parts strewn around the Indian village. The Patties and thirty others joined together "under a genuine American leader, who could be entirely relied on" to take revenge on the village: "Two of our men were then ordered to the show themselves on the top of the bank. They were immediately discovered by the Indians, who considered them, I imagine, a couple of the Frenchmen that they had failed to kill. They raised the yell, and ran towards the two persons, who instantly dropped down under the bank. There must have been 200 in pursuit...We allowed them to approach within 20 yards, when we gave them our fire. They commenced a precipitate retreat, we loading and firing as fast as was in our power...In less than ten minutes, the village was

so completely evacuated, that not a human being was to be found, save one poor old blind and deaf Indian, who sat eating his mush as unconcernedly as if all had been tranquil in the village. We did not molest him." After the battle and some similar adventures, the Patties resumed trapping and followed the Gila west to Yuma, trapping beaver and fighting with more Indians, and then crossed the California desert, reaching San Diego in March of 1828. In San Diego, the Patties and their American companions were promptly arrested by Governor Echeandia, who confiscated their fortune in furs and threw the men in jail. There they languished, and the elder Pattie died. Ever resourceful, young James struck up a romance with a woman of high station. He recuperated under her care, and began working part-time from jail as a translator for the governor. Finally, news reached the governor of a smallpox epidemic in the north. Rather fortuitously (ahem), Pattie had a quantity of smallpox vaccine with him. He made a deal with the governor: his own and his companions' freedom in exchange for vaccinating the populace. During his six month trip up the coast from San Diego to Fort Ross, just north of today's San Francisco, Pattie claims to have vaccinated nearly 22,000 Mexicans, missionaries, Indians, and settlers. Pattie found it hard to stay out of trouble, however. In Monterey he joined a revolt against the governor, but then switched sides again. The governor (either grateful or just hoping to get rid of him) finally gave Pattie a passport to Mexico City, where Pattie met with officials and tried to obtain restitution for his jail time and lost furs. In 1830 Pattie sailed for New Orleans, arriving home again in August, six years after he and his father had headed West. He dictated his story to newspaperman Timothy Flint, and the book came out a year later. History loses track of Pattie after that. He probably died in a cholera epidemic that began near Augusta, Kentucky, in June 1833. But we will always have *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The one other reviewer (so far) gave it only two stars because he states flatly that "it isn't true". (I wonder how he could make such a flat statement, because it has been almost 200 years since the experiences related in the book occurred.) Whether or not a person would use the book for historical reference material (I wouldn't) would be a matter of individual choice. As a lifelong reader of Old West lore I found the book most enjoyable - so much so that it was hard to put down. And besides, I like a good yarn and depend on my intelligence and experience to judge the degree of exaggeration (if any) involved. And if a little fiction is mixed in with the truth, it spoils my enjoyment not at all. "Truth" and "fact" are two different things. There can be an element of illustrative truth in even a tall tale, as in the old westerner who related that he "saw a cloud of dust going up a dry river bed and thought he was about to be attacked by Indians - but no, it was only a school of Arizona trout going

upstream to spawn". Factual? Not likely. Illustrative truth? Oh yeah, as one who has lived in dry southern Arizona for 25 years can attest. So my recco to the prospective buyer is this: Read it and enjoy without being concerned about such matters as truth/fact/fiction/exaggeration. In my opinion, the essential essence of those early dangerous days related in this book is truth.

I loved the book. This is a story of a man that is almost unknown in American History. Should be read by students of early American history. Thank you.

Awesome

It was a great read and I learned a lot about my own State, in it's early years. Some is a little "hinky", but I know enough about our history to see through the "baloney". Overall, it had some really great history and I was impressed.

Lengthy detailed landscape description including narrative of relationships with Indians. Informative but not very interesting. The publisher had many disclaimers on the authenticity of the editor.

I can't recommend this book because its partly or mostly untrue. Pattie, is one is to believe him, traversed nearly every corner of the old West from 1824 to 1830, participated in countless battles with Indians, rescued Mexican maidens, was one of the first Mountain Men to reach California, became a hero when he vaccinated 18,000 Californians against smallpox, explored large parts of the Rocky Mountains, and ended up in a Mexican jail from whence he made his way back to the United States and dictated his story to a journalist. Pattie tells a good tale and there is an air of authenticity in many of his travels. He probably saw some country out West, and some of his descriptions are no doubt valuable, but it appears he vastly exaggerated his exploits. The problem with reading the book is that you can't be sure what is truth and what is fiction. Well, telling whoppers was a tradition among the Mountain Men and Pattie seems to have been a master teller of tall tales -- and smart enough not to make them so tall that they are manifestly untrue. There's enough authentic material about the Mountain Men in the 1820s to ignore this book without loss. If you're captivated by Pattie, the editor, Richard Batman, has written "James Pattie's West" which tries to unravel the truth in this story. Smallchief

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