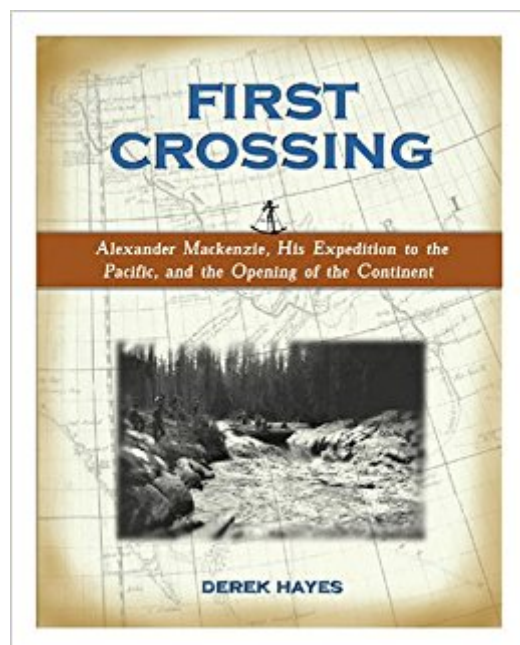




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First Crossing: Alexander Mackenzie, His Expedition Across North America, And The Opening Of The Continent



Synopsis

Timed to coincide with the anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition is this remarkable account of Alexander Mackenzie--the explorer who beat Lewis and Clark across the North American continent. Mackenzie accomplished this feat an astounding twelve years before the Corps of Discovery. Drawing extensively on the journals of Mackenzie and other turn-of-the-century explorers--and featuring historical and contemporary photographs, illustrations, and maps--Hayes presents a lively portrait of the explorer who both preceded Lewis and Clark and provided an impetus for their expedition.

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Customer Reviews

Why do Lewis and Clark get so much attention when explorers of Hudson Bay and what become the North West Companies made earlier and much more daring crossings of the continent? It is the same old myopia which makes invisible our biggest trading partner, crucial supplier of oil, and much more civilized neighbor to the north. Although this book gives no evidence of it I have often suspected that Lewis and Clark were not the first Europeans seen by the inland Indians of the US Pacific Northwest. In pursuit of furs and shipping routes via the Pacific Ocean, especially to the orient, the fur companies sent lightly loaded explorers north and west. Starting with Champlain in early 17th century French trappers began exploiting the interior of what is now the mid-western border of the US and Canada. Until late in that century the English were restricted to lands lying near the middle western coast of Hudson's Bay. The defeat of France in what was truly the first world war, the Seven Years War, in 1763 utterly changed the history of North America. The Hudson

Bay Company took over the network of Voyageurs and pushed westward. In 1771 Samuel Hearne was sent with a group of Chippewas to find both copper and a northwest passage. He made it to the Arctic Ocean going down (up on the map) the Coppermine River where at Bloody Fall his First Nations companions massacred some Inuit. The copper was minimal and he arrived at the wrong ocean. Trading in furs was truly and international corporate business: it required credit, stocks of goods, and pelts all of which took months and months to arrive. A complete cycle of exchanges took four years.

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