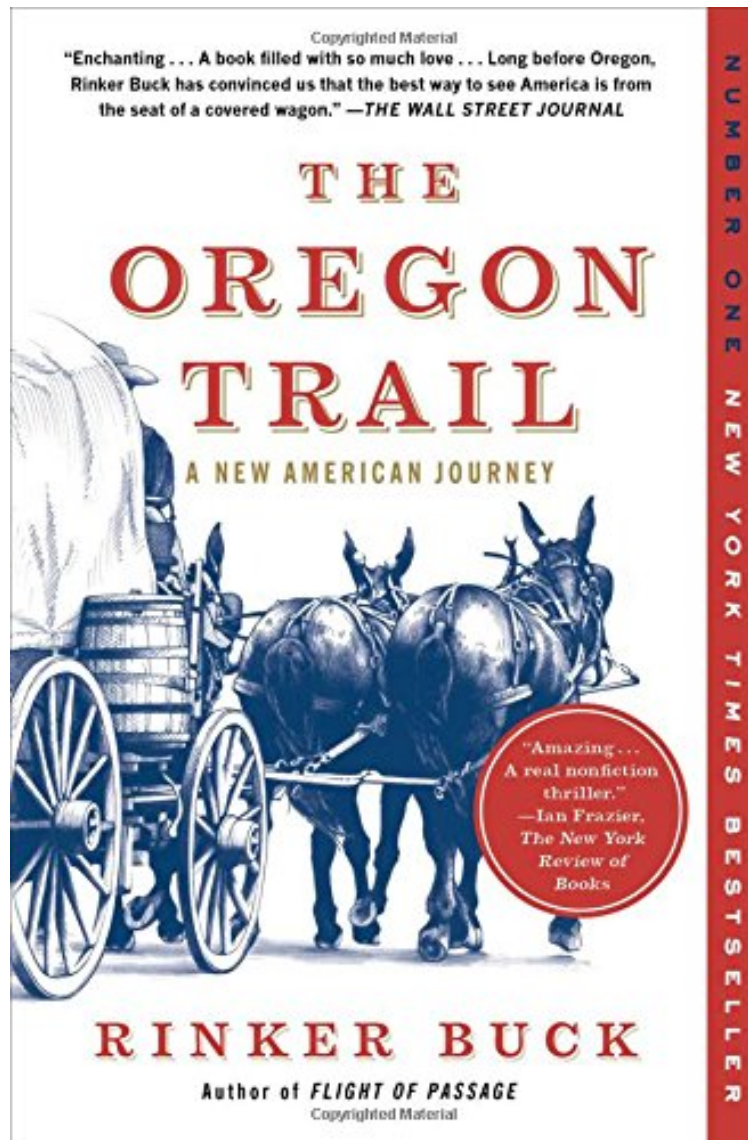


# The Oregon Trail: A New American Journey

Rinker Buck

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**Rinker Buck : The Oregon Trail: A New American Journey** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oregon Trail: A New American Journey:

119 of 126 people found the following review helpful. A History Of The Oregon Trail And A Personal Journey By scsqRinker Buck and his brother got to live the dream of many a history buff and in doing so wrote a history/travel book that is very enjoyable to read. In doing so he got the chance to learn about life, think back to times with his family and make the history and experiences of the Oregon Trail come alive. This could have been two books. It could

have been a history of the Oregon Trail. I learned a lot about what the settlers who traveled on the Oregon Trail faced daily. It could also been a travel book talking about how two brothers learned a lot about the world and themselves while traveling the Oregon Trail The author does an remarkable job of merging these two books into one and in doing so creating a work that I read in three sittings. I literally did not want to put this down. This book is a rare example of excellent writing combined with a fascinating story about a recreated journey from the past. There have been a number of books written by people who have recreated journeys made by explorers in the past. There are television shows where people live like people did in the past. Most of these fail because they get caught up in the “gimmick” of modern people living in the past. While the premise of this book is that two modern men take an old wagon and three mules on the Oregon Trail, the end result is so much more. What makes this book different is the author is an exceptionally good writer who knows how to write about history as well his journey and I wound up caring both about the history and the journey. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Terrific story captured through terrific writing! By Julie A. Fleming I loved this book! Buck has a distinctive voice and persona, and even though I disagree with plenty of his political views and other assessments, I enjoyed his take on life as he crossed the Oregon Trail. I've always been fascinated by the trail, and I savored every page. "I believe in crazyass passion... My corporeal self would be driving miles across the plains, but it was crazyass passion that would deliver me to the trail." I'm delighted that passion did indeed deliver Buck to the trail and that, through his book, he took me along for the ride. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I'm glad I did and I'd suggest that to anyone reading ... By Coreen Borisy I'd heard about the Oregon Trail, but didn't really know much about it. I bought this book at the suggestion of a friend. There are many books on the subject, old and newer. This one is current and informative, entertaining and a picture of the changes in the trail which was at its height in the 1840's. Obviously, Buck and his brother had very different problems than the original pioneers. That's why I decided to first read a first hand experience written by Francis Parkman in around 1845. I'm glad I did and I'd suggest that to anyone reading this recent account. Both old and new books are easy reads and excellent glimpses into an important part of American history. The newer book however might appeal to a man or someone more into the technicalities of wagon construction, mule harnesses, etc., but this doesn't take away from the relationships of people on the trail or that of the two brothers. Both good reads!

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • #1 Indie Next Pick • Winner of the PEN New England Award

“Enchanting...A book filled with so much love...Long before Oregon, Rinker Buck has convinced us that the best way to see America is from the seat of a covered wagon.” —The Wall Street Journal “Amazing...A real nonfiction thriller.” —Ian Frazier, *The New York Review of Books* “Absorbing...Winning...The many layers in *The Oregon Trail* are linked by Mr. Buck’s voice, which is alert and unpretentious in a manner that put me in mind of Bill Bryson’s comic tone in *A Walk in the Woods*.” —Dwight Garner, *The New York Times* A major bestseller that has been hailed as a “quintessential American story” (*Christian Science Monitor*), Rinker Buck’s *The Oregon Trail* is an epic account of traveling the 2,000-mile length of the Oregon Trail the old-fashioned way—in a covered wagon with a team of mules—that has captivated readers, critics, and booksellers from coast to coast. Simultaneously a majestic journey across the West, a significant work of history, and a moving personal saga, Buck’s chronicle is a “laugh-out-loud masterpiece” (*Willamette Week*) that “so ensnares the emotions it becomes a tear-jerker at its close” (*Star Tribune*, Minneapolis) and “will leave you daydreaming and hungry to see this land” (*The Boston Globe*).

.com An Best Book of July 2015: Well into middle-age, Rinker Buck found himself divorced, at the edge of bankruptcy, and growing blunt through the twin demons of ennui and alcohol. This was not a state he was accustomed to; instilled by his father with a sense of daring, Buck was no stranger to adventure, having been (with his brother) one half of the youngest duo to fly across the country, a tale documented in his celebrated book, *Flight of Passage*. On a whim, he found himself in a museum at the head of the Oregon Trail, realizing that even as a fairly serious American history buff, he knew virtually nothing about the pivotal era when 400,000 pioneers made their way West in quests for land, gold, and new lives. On a much bigger whim, Buck decided to travel the 2,000 miles of ruts and superseding highways in a mule-driven wagon on his own “crazyass” quest for a new beginning. The result is a dense-yet-entertaining mix of memoir, history and adventure, as Buck-- joined by another brother, Nick, and his “incurably filthy” dog, Olive Oyl--struggle with the mechanical, environmental, and existential challenges posed by such an unusually grueling journey. Buck is an engaging writer, and while the book pushes 500 pages, the story never lags. By the end, you’ll know more about mules than you ever thought you would (just enough, actually), and you’ll have a better perspective on the Trail, its travelers, and the role it played in shaping the modern United States. (And is Rinker Buck not a pioneer-worthy name for an tale such as this?)--Jon Foro “An incredible true story . . . Weaving a tale somewhere between a travelogue and a history lesson, Buck traces the iconic path literally and figuratively as he recreates the great migration with his brother and a Jack Russell terrier.” —*Entertainment Weekly* “Excellent . . . An amazing cross-country journey . . . Rinker and Nick Buck’s conquest of the trail, the achievement of a lifetime, makes for a real nonfiction thriller, an account that keeps you turning the pages because you can’t conceive how the protagonists will make it through the enormous real-life obstacles confronting them.” —Ian Frazier, *The New York of*

Books“Enchanting . . . Interspersed with the story of his westward journey, Mr. Buck entertains and enlightens with discourses on American history and culture. . . . He has delivered us a book filled with so much love—for mules, for his brother, for America itself. . . . Long before Oregon, Rinker Buck has convinced us that the best way to see America is from the seat of a covered wagon.” —Gregory Crouch, *The Wall Street Journal*“Absorbing . . . The many layers in *The Oregon Trail* are linked by Mr. Buck’s voice, which is alert and unpretentious in a manner that put me in mind of Bill Bryson’s comic tone in *A Walk in the Woods*. . . . He’s good company on the page, and you root for him. . . . He’s particularly winning on how, as he puts it, ‘the vaudeville of American life was acted out on the trail.’ . . . This shaggy pilgrimage describes a form of happiness sought, and happiness found.” —Dwight Garner, *The New York Times*“Awe-inspiring . . . Charming, big-hearted, impassioned, and a lot of fun to read . . . If Buck doesn’t quite make you want to hitch up your own wagon, his rapturous account will still leave you daydreaming and hungry to see this land.” —*The Boston Globe*“A remarkable saga . . . Thanks to Buck’s utterly engaging voice, infectious enthusiasm, unquenchable curiosity, dogged determination and especially his ability to convey the interaction of two brothers (and three mules), all of whom pull together despite their strong but profoundly different personalities, the saga becomes nothing short of irresistible. . . . This tale of brotherhood, persistence and daring so snares the emotions that it becomes a tear-jerker at its close.” —Rosemary Herbert, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*“A laugh-out-loud masterpiece . . . Alternately harrowing and exhilarating . . . The book is an unremitting delight.” —*Willamette Week*“Interwoven in Buck’s adventure tale is a fascinating history of the development of the trail, its heyday, and the colorful characters that made the journey. . . . Whether their primary interest is American history, adventure travel or a captivating memoir, readers are sure to be delighted by this humorous and entertaining story that allows us to believe that *Walter Mitty*-like fantasies can indeed come true.” —*Associated Press*“A quintessential American story . . . *The Oregon Trail* attains its considerable narrative power by interweaving pioneer history with Rinker-and-Nick-and-mules interpersonal strife with poignant memories of the author’s father, who took his own family on a covered wagon journey through New Jersey and Pennsylvania in 1958. . . . This makes *The Oregon Trail* a rare and effective work of history—the trail stories of the Buck brothers bring humor and drama, and the pioneer biographies supply a context that makes every other aspect of the book snap into sharp relief. . . . The experience of *The Oregon Trail* stands squarely opposite much of what is modern—it’s slow travel with poor communication, it places struggle before comfort, and it represents a connection with history rather than a search for the newest of the new. In that sense, you’d think the book would be slow-paced and fusty, but it’s really something else: raw, visceral, and often laugh-out-loud funny. For anyone who has ever dreamed of seeing America slowly from the back of a wagon, *The Oregon Trail* is a vicarious thrill.” —James Norton, *Christian Science Monitor*“A trip back in time . . . Buck brings the land to life in a richly researched book that draws heavily from journals kept by the pioneers and their memoirs. . . . His exploration of America and himself is a joy to read.” —*USA Today* (4 out of 4 stars)About the AuthorRinker Buck began his career in journalism at the *Berkshire Eagle* and was a longtime staff writer for the *Hartford Courant*. He has written for *Vanity Fair*, *New York*, *Life*, and many other publications, and his work has won PEN New England Award, the Eugene S. Pulliam National Journalism Writing Award, and the Society of Professional Journalists Sigma Delta Chi Award. He is the author of *The Oregon Trail* as well as the acclaimed memoirs *Flight of Passage* and *First Job*. He lives in northwest Connecticut.