



## Tough Trip Through Paradise, 1878-1879

*Andrew Garcia , Bennett H. Stein (Editor)*

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**Tough Trip Through Paradise, 1878-1879** Andrew Garcia , Bennett H. Stein (Editor)

*Distributed by the University of Nebraska Press for the University of Idaho Press*

This book grew out of a manuscript left by Andrew Garcia on his death in 1942. Ben Stein acquired the manuscript and edited it to tell Garcia's story of the 1877 war between the U.S. government and the Nez Perce people, the end of the buffalo herds and other historic events in western life.

### Tough Trip Through Paradise, 1878-1879 Details

Date : Published January 1st 1967 by Caxton Press

ISBN : 9780893012502

Author : Andrew Garcia , Bennett H. Stein (Editor)

Format : Paperback 409 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, History, Autobiography, Memoir, Westerns, Biography

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## From Reader Review Tough Trip Through Paradise, 1878-1879 for online ebook

### Steve Heikkila says

This book is amazing. I stumbled upon it at a book store in Yellow Stone National Park. Garcia was a Mexican American who headed into the Mussell shell area of Montana after serving in the US Army to become one of the last mountain men. He traded with the indians, married a Nez Perce woman, fought with a grizzly bear, and ultimately ended up a rancher. He tried to write a memoir much later in life (its surprising that a fellow like him was even literate) but wasn't so hot on stringing the stories into a narrative (or as is more likely the case, not sure how to 'end' the thing). His family gave a trunk full of notes to a writer in the mid 20th century, who strung this memoir together. I was utterly fascinated with this book. It completely captured my imagination. It was one of those books I devoured, which is rather rare for me.

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### Rich Manry says

Great book. As a modern-day participant chained to our American culture of a fast-paced life, marriage, kids, a house, a yard, a pet, a career and a mortgage, living "the American Dream" in the middle of poured concrete, shopping centers and Public grocery stores, I represent the horror of what the native American's feared most.

Having a heart for the untamed West (for that matter, all of North America) and a sadness of its demise, this book allowed Andrew Garcia to take me back to a place and mindset of what used to be; what was wild, untamed and innocent. Garcia's character and landscape descriptions allows the reader to have an almost personal relationship with each character and a detailed imagination of the view.

I have spent some time in Montana and on the same grounds that Mr. Garcia sadly watched an enormous change over a short period of time. Spending several week-long summer trips to Red Lodge, MT in the mid-late 1990's and venturing out, I was fortunate enough to be in the company of an old Montana mountain-man who was much like Mr. Garcia as the more I read, the similarities of the two were striking! Both were historians and writers and both had an appreciation of the untamed freedom and glory of The Great Plains Indians and the innocence of their culture and indeed, an appreciation of awareness of an end of an era of nature like it will never be again.

This book took me back in time and I was saddened at its conclusion. It made me laugh often and it made me sad. I loved the book and the "escape" back in a time and place that will never be again.

Get the book! Great read!

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### Mark Lisac says

A thoroughly engrossing and entertaining memoir of life on the Montana frontier in the late 1870s. Garcia's voice alone, a vigorous and colourful vernacular, could probably serve as a guide in writing classes. Highlights, and there are many, include: young Andrew Garcia falling in with a dodgy crowd led by one "Big Nose George" as he rides into Montana territory to escape violent Texas; a scrape over a girl with a

Metis trader who had moved south from what became Alberta; a terrifying encounter with a bear. It's a well told tale of a legendary time and place by someone who was there, giving the feeling that this was how things were really like.

Investigators have raised questions about how much the book owes to editor Ben Stein and about Garcia's truthfulness — at times even suggesting the possibility of serious criminal action on his part. Maybe you have to read it with a few grains of salt. Still, the atmosphere of the frontier and the reactions of a young man trying to make his way in a sparsely settled land are bound to be authentic. They also make an exciting adventure story.

I'm happy I stumbled across this work in an Edmonton used-book store. It seems to have been published in some editions not listed on Goodreads. My paperback copy is a 1986 printing from Comstock Editions, published in arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company.

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### **Lydia says**

It is often hard to believe people roughed it the way they did, choosing a hard, often short life of adventure in the wilds, hoping to make a profit on furs and then wasting away their money on booze once they did...but that was true of the white men who first traveled into the Montana wilderness, and Garcia's first person account is humorous, sad, uplifting and enthralling all at the same time.

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### **David Gross says**

I just happened on this book at my independent bookstore. It is an amazing story told from the standpoint of the Nez Perce. Unique language expertly edited to retain the flavor and voice of the author who lived it. Humor, pathos and a damn fine tale, true as the author remembered it.

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### **Beth Sohlberg says**

This is the memoir of frontiersman Andrew Garcia condensed and edited. Its doesn't read like a novel, because it is a memoir, and Garcia tends to ramble, but it is a fascinating read, particularly for those who live in, and love, the American West. Garcia lived in the wild west during the time when only Native American tribes hardy frontiersmen and trappers inhabited the country. Garcia went west for the excitement of being a trapper, but fell in love with the tough and sassy Indian girls, and this is the story of his first Indian wife, and the great love of his life. She was a Nez Perce, who had been with the infamous Chief Joseph band when they fought and died, and her story is told here too. She is still a teenager when she meets Garcia. He marries her and they embark on an epic journey, just the two of them barely out of their teens, with 7 horses, 5 dogs, some guns and provisions, from North Dakota to the the Hells Canyon area in Oregon for a sad return to her homeland, and then, partly running for their lives north to Montana. It's an enormous area to cover by horseback, looking at a map I am amazed they could do it. The journey, as the title notes, is through paradise, some of the most beautiful and wild land in our nation, but it is dangerous and heart-breaking. Andrew Garcia tells his story without prejudice or political correctness, straight from the heart. It felt like I was there reading it. The only thing I would like to have had more of was description of the land, often Garcia skips the scenery in favor of the game animals, probably because he was always hungry. The most beautiful land for him is the land filled with elk, deer and buffalo.

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## **Megan says**

This was really a great book on frontier history. This book presents a true account from a point of view that is generally not acknowledged (how poorly our country treated Native Americans). Not only does this book give us insight into the battle at Big Hole but it depicts the natural community before the land was colonized. It details a land abundant in wildlife, without exotic plants and animals, and consisting of pure air and water.

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## **Sandy says**

AS CLOSE AS I'LL GET TO KNOWING HOW THE WEST REALLY WAS

This book's handwritten manuscript was found in a dynamite box in its author's Montana cabin after his death at age 88. Garcia was an original Western settler, arriving in Montana in 1878, one year after the famous Nez Perce Chief Joseph's surrender. If you want authentic Old West, here it is. Garcia tells it like he saw it, favoring neither Native Americans or Europeans. He marries three Indian women (sequentially) and leaves his past world behind. This book has romance, beauty, humor, deadly adventure. Danger. Thrillers come nowhere near this true story. Most of all, Andrew Garcia's soul shines through his writing. What a dear, good man. I wish I could have met him.

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## **Michael Smith says**

I just read this book for the second time - or maybe it's the third. This straightforward, non-fiction account of life in the American west in the 1870s is one of the most compelling adventure stories I've ever read. It owes its charm in part to its simplicity, its matter-of-fact relation of events that it would have been easy to romanticize, but that need no embellishment. It is one of the great disappointments of my life that someone has already written a book called "Tough Trip through Paradise"; I dearly wish it were still unclaimed so I could use it myself.

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## **Rrshively says**

This memoir is a brutally honest portrayal of what life was really like for a young Montana fur trader who married an Indian in the 1870's. Because he was one of the few who followed this life who was both literate and didn't drink alcohol his tale rings true. Although he lived well into his 70's, he could have been killed almost any of the days in the less than two years he writes about. I'm glad this has come out in paperback. I couldn't find it anywhere, so I got a 1967 edition through inter-library loan. Hopefully, this important historical account from Montana history will continue to be in print. It is both an informative and engaging story where one never knows what exciting adventure will happen next.

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## **Kirsten McKeown says**

All sorts of "deviltry" and implausible but true adventures, told with an amusing "old fart" voice. There are equal parts sass and sadness, so there is something for everyone in here. A "tough trip" is putting it mildly.

This book is an edited 1960s version of Andrew Garcia's memoirs, composed by him around the 1930s, about a year of adventuring as a horse and fur trader—and Cassanova to all First Nations ladies—in Montana and Idaho in the late 1870s. He's a campfire storyteller—lots of historical digressions and absurdly detailed conversations retold via translators and sign language. He carefully relays tragic battles and consequences as told to him from Native American perspectives. One of my favorite passages involved his first night alone in the middle of nowhere—he admits that he didn't sleep a wink. (And I thought all badass backwoodsmen slept like logs?)

On an academic angle, it's interesting as a reader to be tossed around through the first-person accounts from a man who straddled White and Native worlds—and how he talked about “us” and “them” before people went to college to learn how to talk about "us" and "them." His cross-cultural commentary feels fresh and is surprising—as he offers up ideas that are at once predictably offensive by modern standards... but also at times quite open and progressive and free from preconceptions about humanity. (He's also got quite a lot to say about women! And much of it is quite respectful.) He saw both good and bad in everyone—including himself.

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### **Bonnie\_blu says**

While some of the story is obviously conjecture (relating conversations to which the author was not privy), the meat of the tale smacks of authenticity. It is a fascinating look into an era as experienced first-hand by a white man. His exploits, both good and bad, bring the era and the Native Americans to life. Of course, since it was written by an undereducated man, it is choppy and awkward in places. However, rather than being off-putting, it adds to the authenticity.

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### **Jessaka says**

This book was a slow read, not much action. Being a true story, I wouldn't expect it to be as action packed as a William Johnstone western.

Towards the end of the book there is a grizzly bear scene that was frightening and then a war against Indians by white men. I can't say that I found that interesting. Tragic, yes.

What was interesting was knowing that this was a true story written by a man who lived into the 1940s. I would really like to learn about the rest of his life but only found a short story on his life. I learned that he had remarried, and that his wife didn't like his manuscript because it was coarse and told the story of his love for his first wife. The manuscript was actually much harsher than what was finally published.

There is a great story about his decedents if you follow this link: <http://www.mtpioneer.com/March-cover-...> and here: <http://www.franksrealm.com/Indians/mo...>

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### **Jae says**

Andrew Garcia's tale of trading with Native Americans in the Musselshell River valley and traveling across Montana with his Indian wife is one of the most honest accounts of life in the old west that I've read. I loved

it. Garcia's honest and simple voice engages the reader as he narrowly dodges death at the hands (or claws) of horse thieves, whiskey traders, Blackfeet, Piegans, grizzly bears, and miners.

Granted, being from the area, I loved reading about bands of Indians living up the Boulder River valley, Crow raiding parties running up the Yellowstone River, and Garcia and his wife crossing the Bitterroot Mountains without a trail. But I think anyone who enjoys non-fiction from the Old West would like this book.

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### **Don Becher says**

The book was recommended to me by someone I met at the Big Hole National Battlefield in Montana. The site commemorates a battle (actually ambush of the Nez Perce) between soldiers & volunteers and a Native American group led by, among others, Chief Joseph. The book is taken from the journal of a rather colorful fur trader in the area who married a surviving Nez Perce. The book is not exactly a literary work, but its stiltedness and sometimes currently politically incorrect descriptions lend an air of authenticity to the work. It is a real time primer of the thoughts and prejudices of the settlers and Native Americans involving how they viewed themselves and the various tribes of the area.

Worth a read, particularly if you are familiar with the Chief Joseph saga and the area of Montana involved.

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