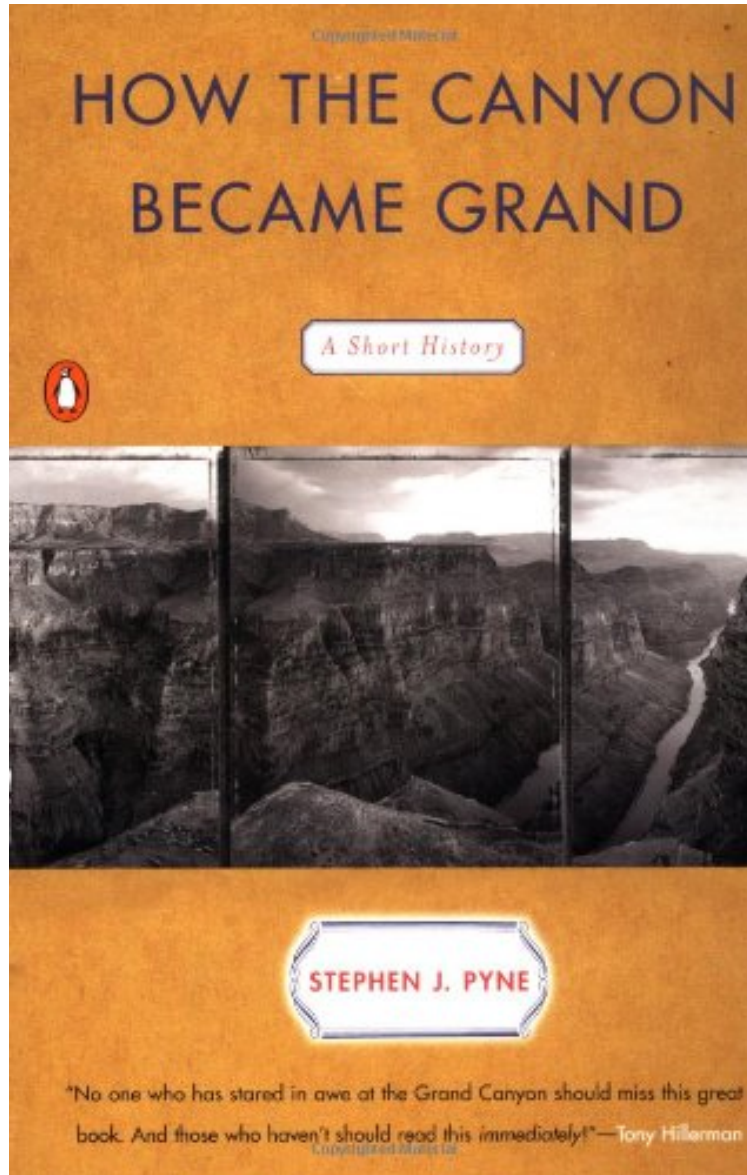


(Mobile library) How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History

How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History

Stephen J. Pyne

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Stephen J. Pyne : How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How the Canyon Became Grand: A Short History:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Take time to read this before you go. By kathy bishop This book is full of excellent info for those traveling to the Canyon. Knowing the history of the Canyon through explorers, scientists and those with political interest helped to appreciate the value of this Grand and thought provoking

American icon.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Heather H.the story is much more complicated than we ever imagined0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Rebecca ModrellGood experience

Dismissed by the first Spanish explorers as a wasteland, the Grand Canyon lay virtually unnoticed for three centuries until nineteenth-century America rediscovered it and seized it as a national emblem. This extraordinary work of intellectual and environmental history tells two tales of the Canyon: the discovery and exploration of the physical Canyon and the invention and evolution of the cultural Canyon--how we learned to endow it with mythic significance. Acclaimed historian Stephen Pyne examines the major shifts in Western attitudes toward nature, and recounts the achievements of explorers, geologists, artists, and writers, from John Wesley Powell to Wallace Stegner, and how they transformed the Canyon into a fixture of national identity. This groundbreaking book takes us on a completely original journey through the Canyon toward a new understanding of its niche in the American psyche, a journey that mirrors the making of the nation itself.

.com Arizona-based environmental historian Stephen J. Pyne has fought fires on the Grand Canyon's north and south rims, traveled on foot and muleback into its depths, floated its length down the Colorado River, explored its hidden recesses--and spent years looking into its history, especially into what he deems the "intellectual miracle" of the canyon's transformation into a celebrated symbol of the American wild lands. American explorers, who first came to the canyon's walls after the U.S. took the Southwest as the spoils of victory over Mexico, were inclined to describe it in harsh terms. As Lt. Joseph Ives remarked in a report to Congress in 1858, "The region is, of course, altogether valueless...." But 11 years later, when John Wesley Powell surveyed the length of the Colorado River, he brought to the canyon a poetic, even romantic sensibility. Through Powell and his companions, especially the geologist Clarence Dutton, the harsh landscape of the Grand Canyon would come to be regarded as "the coliseums, temples, and statuary of an inspired nature." "The Canyon claims standing," Pyne remarks, "not because of its size or antiquity but ... by virtue of its ever-evolving ensemble and the ideas continually made available by which to interpret it." Those ideas--from men and women like Theodore Roosevelt, Wallace Stegner, Joseph Wood Krutch, Edward Abbey, and Ann Zwinger--would come to influence the national discussion on all public lands. As such, Pyne suggests, the Grand Canyon became a laboratory for the environmental movement as a whole, influential far beyond the borders of the arid Southwest--in short, as Pyne calls it, "a planetary monument." --Gregory McNameeFrom Publishers WeeklyDon't expect a mere geology lesson from Pyne. Here, the acclaimed environmental writer (*Fire on the Rim*; *The Ice*; etc.) and MacArthur Foundation Fellow places America's most notable natural wonder in cultural context. While today we may take the Grand Canyon's splendor for granted, as far back as the 1500s, when the canyon was "discovered" by European explorers, it earned little more than a brief mention in journals. The explanation for this, Pyne reasons, is that there was then no cultural, artistic or monetary tradition or value attached to natural monuments: "Probably no European country was prepared to appreciate a phenomenon like the Canyon." It wasn't until the mid-19th century that the canyon began to become fully appreciated, both for its natural beauty and as a geological phenomenon. The canyon increasingly became the subject of paintings, photographs, travelogues and intense scientific study. A professor of history at Arizona State University, Pyne writes eloquently as he sketches early explorers, scientists, artists and engineers who applied themselves to the study of the canyon and who, in so doing, nurtured our love for it. Anyone interested in the Grand Canyon and the Southwest, or in the evolution of cultural evaluation of the natural world, should cotton to Pyne's first-rate history. Illustrations. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThe leading expert on the history of fire, Pyne first developed an appreciation for the Grand Canyon during his 15 seasons as a forest firefighter on the canyon's north rim (*Fire on the Rim: A Firefighter's Season at the Grand Canyon*, Univ. of Washington, 1995). To understand the canyon as a place and as a perspective, Pyne traces its history from the time of the Spanish conquistadors and later explorers like John Wesley Powell and Clarence Dutton to its status today as a natural wonder attracting more than five million visitors annually. He also explains how our attitude toward the canyon has changed. Once feared and avoided, it became a vital part of America's cultural landscape when Americans matured economically, politically, and socially with a focus and awareness on environmental issues that allowed them to appreciate "the genius of the place." Pyne's extended interpretive essay places the Canyon and its history within a larger social and cultural context. Recommended for all libraries especially those with environmental collections.?Patricia Ann Owens, Wabash Valley Coll., Mt. Carmel, ILCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.