



In Mountain Shadows: A History of Idaho

Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes

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Idaho is now seen as one of the most intriguing and attractive states in the Union. Any view of the Gem State is likely to be broadened and deepened by this superbly written history of it, *In Mountain Shadows*. Carlos A. Schwantes illustrates the extent to which Idahoans have always been divided by geography, transportation patterns, religion, and history. Although the state motto should have been "Divided We Stand," as he says in affectionate jest, it is also true that Idahoans come together on some basics—on avoiding crowds and maintaining the good life close to scenic mountains and streams.

Schwantes reaches back to 1805, when Lewis and Clark were among the first white men to enter present-day Idaho. He describes the Indians then living in the Great Basin and Plateau, and proceeds through layers of history to show how fur traders, missionaries, and overland emigrants defined the land that became a territory in 1863 and, finally, a state in 1890. The vigilantism, Indian wars, mining booms and busts, and animosity toward Mormons and Chinese immigrants that marked the territorial years gave way to more troubles in the early years of statehood: an economic downturn, industrial violence, political protest. The arrival of automobiles promised to end isolation, but the formidable terrain slowed the building of north-south highways, just as it had railroads. Nevertheless, future Idaho would be a product of engineering and witness the coming of irrigation systems and hydroelectric plants. Schwantes brings his history through the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War, noting everyday life, colorful personalities, political and economic cycles, raging controversies, and current trends.

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