

Review: Range of Glaciers: The Exploration of the Northern Cascade Range

By Fred Beckey

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Fred Beckey. *Range of Glaciers: The Exploration of the Northern Cascade Range*. Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2003. 527pp. ISBN 0-87595-243-7 (Cloth: alk. paper) US \$40.00.

From the moment one begins to read this book, it is evident that Fred Beckey has done solid research on the North Cascades' geology, history and geography. This well-written book discusses the area between the Fraser River in Canada and the Columbia River to the south. Beckey is a legendary person known to have climbed most of the peaks in the North Cascades, following every river to its source and hiking every trail.

The book is so chock full of information about the different aspects of the Northern Cascades that one could say it is the definitive work about the area. It is such a detailed description of the history and exploration of the area that it brings the reader to a greater understanding of the people who lived, explored and worked in the North Cascades. Beckey thoroughly discusses the following groups: first inhabitants (Native Americans); early explorers and settlers; government and private surveyors (American and British); the army and railroad engineers; miners, mountaineers, tourists and the people who eventually settled the Northern Cascades. Beckey lets these people tell the story through their diaries and reports which makes for fascinating reading. Their descriptions make the reader visualize the country as these people saw it: beautiful craggy mountains and their valleys, grasslands, swamps, lakes. They also bring into focus the conditions the writers endured: heat, sleeping in the cold, hiking through wet brush and snow, enduring the mosquitoes, climbing dangerous mountains. He also discusses the work the US Geological Survey and the US Forest Service did in providing accurate maps and names for the creeks and mountains in the area.

In each section Beckey begins with the earliest date and follows it through to the end. These sections overlap, so his presentation of the material moves seamlessly through the eighteenth to the early twentieth century.

Beckey has provided maps, drawings, illustrations and photographs throughout the book. In addition, there are extensive notes for each

chapter, a thorough bibliography and an excellent index.

Anyone interested in the Pacific Northwest and the Cascade mountains will find that *Range of Glaciers* is a must read. The book could be used as a valuable resource for those who want a definitive guide to the history of the Cascades and the people who explored and lived in the region. It can also be used as a textbook. Recommended to academic and medium or large public libraries, especially those in the Pacific Northwest.

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