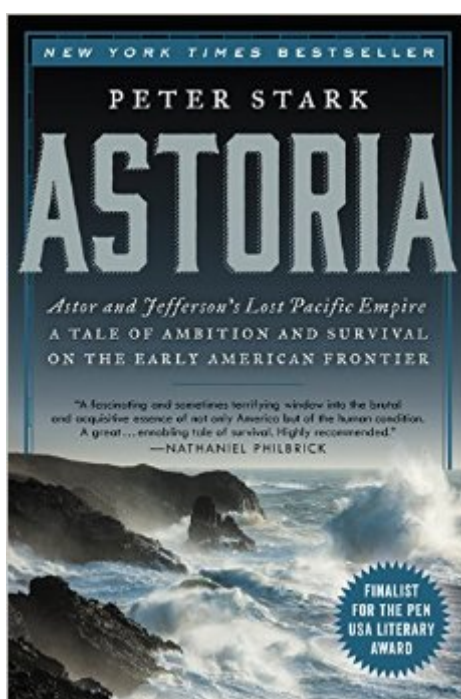


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Astoria: Astor And Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire: A Tale Of Ambition And Survival On The Early American Frontier



Synopsis

In the tradition of *The Lost City of Z* and *Skeletons in the Zahara*, *Astoria* is the thrilling, true-adventure tale of the 1810 Astor Expedition, an epic, now forgotten, three-year journey to forge an American empire on the Pacific Coast. Peter Stark offers a harrowing saga in which a band of explorers battled nature, starvation, and madness to establish the first American settlement in the Pacific Northwest and opened up what would become the Oregon trail, permanently altering the nation's landscape and its global standing. Six years after Lewis and Clark's began their journey to the Pacific Northwest, two of the Eastern establishment's leading figures, John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson, turned their sights to founding a colony akin to Jamestown on the West Coast and transforming the nation into a Pacific trading power. Author and correspondent for *Outside* magazine Peter Stark recreates this pivotal moment in American history for the first time for modern readers, drawing on original source material to tell the amazing true story of the Astor Expedition. Unfolding over the course of three years, from 1810 to 1813, *Astoria* is a tale of high adventure and incredible hardship in the wilderness and at sea. Of the more than one hundred-forty members of the two advance parties that reached the West Coast— one crossing the Rockies, the other rounding Cape Horn— nearly half perished by violence. Others went mad. Within one year, the expedition successfully established Fort Astoria, a trading post on the Columbia River. Though the colony would be short-lived, it opened provincial American eyes to the potential of the Western coast and its founders helped blaze the Oregon Trail.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Readers interested in American history, grandiose exploits, derring-do and undaunted courage will relish this terrific book by Peter Stark, renowned author of nonfiction works of adventure & exploration (The last Empty Spaces) and endurance (The limits of Adventure). He is a frequent contributor to "Outside" magazine. The story of the Astor Expedition was well publicized in the 19th century by Washington Irving's best seller (Astoria/1836) and several other reports by men who returned from the three year trek. Eventually, the failed epic faded from public memory and was lost in the fog of history until it was rediscovered by Stark. The driving impetus of the expedition was the control of the Pacific Northwest territory to dominate the lucrative fur trade and prevent it from falling under Russian or British authority. German-born John Jacob Astor (1763 -1848), one of the wealthiest men of all time (\$111 Billion today), financed the enterprise while garnering the support of President Thomas Jefferson under the guise of acquiring more land for the nascent USA. So in 1810, Just four years after the conclusion of the Lewis and Clark Corp of Discovery expedition, Astor recruited about 140 men, that set out as " two parties of voyageurs, traders and clerks to the mouth of the Columbia River at the border of the present-day states of Oregon and Washington" for the conquest of more North American territory and to establish a trading post. The Overland party, led by Wilson Price Hunt, (1783-1842), a fur trader employee of Astor, included French-Canadian voyageurs, American woodsmen, hunters, guides, Scottish fur traders, and Pierre & Marie Dorion. The former, "a half-Sioux interpreter...and son of Old Dorion, interpreter for Lewis and Clark".

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