



By Honor and Right: How One Man Boldly Defined the Destiny of a Nation

John C. Jackson

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The story of Captain John McClallen has long been neglected as a mere footnote to the history of the American West. But as this probing piece of historical detective work makes clear, McClallen played a crucial, if largely unrecognized, role in American western history. This is the first full study of an enigmatic figure who undertook to represent the interests of the United States when there was no one else to do it and paid a tragic price for his initiative.

The author compellingly argues that McClallen deserves to be recognized as a national hero. Jackson reconstructs the life and astonishing audacity of the first United States officer to follow the Lewis and Clark Expedition. With the original intent of opening up the Santa Fe Trail, McClallen was twice deflected from this task by circumstances beyond his control. Instead the mysterious traveler entered the Pacific Northwest, discovered a practicable route across the continent, and for a brief but crucial moment blocked British expansion of trade to the upper Columbia River. As the author demonstrates with careful analysis and painstaking documentation, if McClallen had not taken the bold (and unauthorized) step of unilaterally declaring the United States right to the Pacific Northwest, British interests might have brought a stronger claim to the Columbia River and Pacific Slope south of the forty-ninth parallel.

For devotees of American Western history as well as mystery lovers, this book will prove to be engrossing reading.

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