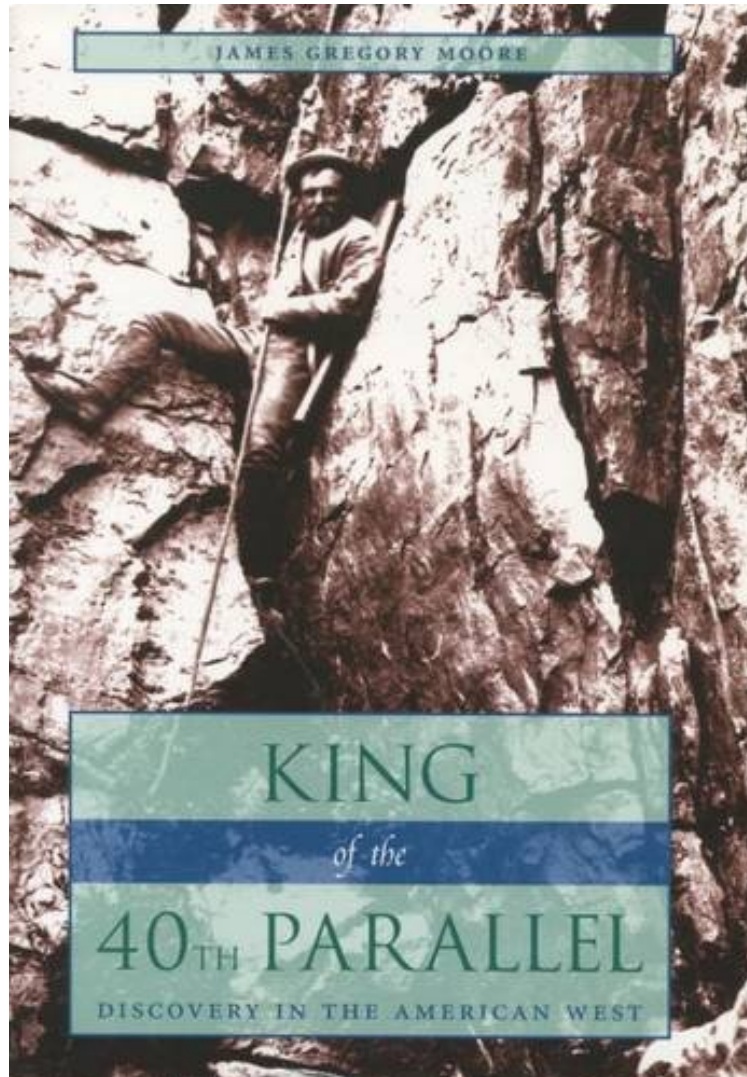


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King of the 40th Parallel: Discovery in the American West

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#1420267 in Books Stanford General Books 2006-02-06Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 10.00 x 1.00 x 7.00l, 1.59 #File Name: 0804752230416 pages | File size: 23.Mb

James Gregory Moore : King of the 40th Parallel: Discovery in the American West before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised King of the 40th Parallel: Discovery in the American West:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Anne F. BealsIt would make a great movie!5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Scientist's Take on an Extrordinary SurveyorBy Rowland W. TaborI really enjoyed King of the 40th Parallel by James Moore. Much has been written about the extraordinary Clarence King, the leader of the 40th Parallel Expedition and the first director of the United States Geological Survey. And no wonder,-King is fascinating, not only for his contributions to the exploration of the West, but for his superstar

personality. I have known the author as a friend and colleague for many years and as a geologist, I appreciate Jim's details of King's geographical and geological explorations. Jim Moore brings to King's biography his own expertise in geology and geography, having spent many years studying the geology of the Sierra. Moore's varied geological adventures, from mapping Sierra granites to seabottom explorations off Hawaii, give him an explorer kinship with King. Jim has enriched King's story with background material of the procedures and instrumentation of that early cartography. He expands on the lives of King's significant colleagues, and he has noted the many firsts in geologic and geographic discoveries. The meticulous observations and recordings of King's surveys became baseline standard for the U.S. Geological Survey when it was established in 1879. Jim has not dramatized some of the stranger twists in King's life, but presented them in a straight forward manner. Jim's book is rich in material from original letters, especially newly-discovered letters of King's colleague, James Gardner, to his mother during the explorations. Gardner was a life-long friend of King and chief topographer on his expeditions. In addition, the book is rich in pictures and drawings, bringing a feeling of the times. Extensive appendixes include original letters. Some, accounting for government equipment, seem a bit superfluous, but they do flavor the history and at least show that government bureaucrats have not changed much in the last 140 years.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Captivating Account of Science and Adventure in the Early West By Louis A. Richardson Who ever said that history was dry? Moore has interwoven first rate field science history with a series of captivating adventures in which American geologist Clarence King and his best friend, James Gardner are repeatedly thrown into life-threatening situations, including being spread-eagled by Indians with the makings of a fire set upon their stomachs in order to effect the most slow and unbearable death; another adventure finds King galloping ahead of bandits intent on taking his life. Moore's account of the life and accomplishments of Clarence King, whom Henry Adams (the prominent Harvard professor and descendant of two presidents) called the greatest American of his age, is based partly on letters and other primary historical materials that Moore himself unearthed. In the 1850's, Yale-trained prodigy King, at age 25, organized and led a precursor to the U.S. Geological Survey called the "United States Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel", hence the book's title: "King of the 40th Parallel". Such a lofty appointment of one so young certifies to the inordinate esteem in which the young King was held by those in power in Washington. King's fortieth parallel survey was so brilliantly conceived and cornucopian in its accomplishments, that three competing federal surveys, formed shortly afterward to map other regions of the nation, patterned themselves after his model. His singular performance in leading the survey for twelve years and writing and editing a landmark series of volumes and atlases propelled him at the age of 37 into the directorship of the U.S. Geological Survey at its founding in 1879. And the astonishing, secret details of King's private life -- unknown to all until his death -- will make the reader yearn for a full length sequel. Who better than to have written this history? In the preface to this excellent and fascinating book, science historian William Glen notes that James Moore is uniquely equipped for the job. That claim seems justified as the thoughts, activities, and scientific products of Clarence King are voluably unfolded, revealing significant overlap with much of Moore's own distinguished geologic career. Both men earned their exceptional reputations in Earth science mainly through years of pioneering field work in the American West.

This book recounts the life and achievements of Clarence King, widely recognized as one of Americas most gifted intellectuals of the nineteenth century, and a legendary figure in the American West. Kings genius, singular accomplishments, and near-death adventures unfold in a narrative centered on his personal relationship with his lifelong friend and colleague, James Gardner. The two, upon completing their studies at Yale, traveled by wagon train across the continent and worked with the California Geological Survey. King went on to establish the Geological Exploration of the 40th Parallel, a government mapping program that stretched across the western mountain chains from California to Wyoming. This was the precursor to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Founded in 1879, with Clarence King as its architect and first director, the USGS became the most important and influential science agency in the nation. The adventurous aspects of conducting geological fieldwork in the West, much of them documented by letters written by King and Gardner, punctuate a book copiously illustrated with historic maps and photographs showing localities and people important to the story.

"Post-Civil War years were extraordinary times in the American West. Clarence King the larger-than-life geologist, entrepreneur, and bon vivant led the way. In this marvelously engaging and well-illustrated book, the eminent geologist James Gregory Moore captures the excitement of King and his times." (Richard S. Fiske Research Geologist and Former Director of the Smithsonian Institutions National Museum of Natural History) "Writing from new sources and intimate personal knowledge of the western landscape that challenged King, Moore illuminates the genius, dedication and energy that enabled King to pioneer his acclaimed survey of the United States along the 40th parallel west of the 100th meridian. This adventure-filled book should appeal greatly to Earth scientists, western historians and the general public." (Dallas L. Peck, Emeritus Scientist (and Former Director) U.S. Geological Survey) "King of the 40th Parallel offers a fascinating history of origins of geological fieldwork in the American West." (Southern California Quarterly) "This comprehensive account of the life and work of Clarence King (1842-1901) entrepreneur, naturalist,

and geologist will appeal to geologists, historians of science, and those interested in nature." (CHOICE) From the Inside Flap This book recounts the life and achievements of Clarence King, widely recognized as one of America's most gifted intellectuals of the nineteenth century, and a legendary figure in the American West. King's genius, singular accomplishments, and near-death adventures unfold in a narrative centered on his personal relationship with his lifelong friend and colleague, James Gardner. The two, upon completing their studies at Yale, traveled by wagon train across the continent and worked with the California Geological Survey. King went on to establish the Geological Exploration of the 40th Parallel, a government mapping program that stretched across the western mountain chains from California to Wyoming. This was the precursor to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Founded in 1879, with Clarence King as its architect and first director, the USGS became the most important and influential science agency in the nation. The adventurous aspects of conducting geological fieldwork in the West, much of them documented by letters written by King and Gardner, punctuate a book copiously illustrated with historic maps and photographs showing localities and people important to the story.