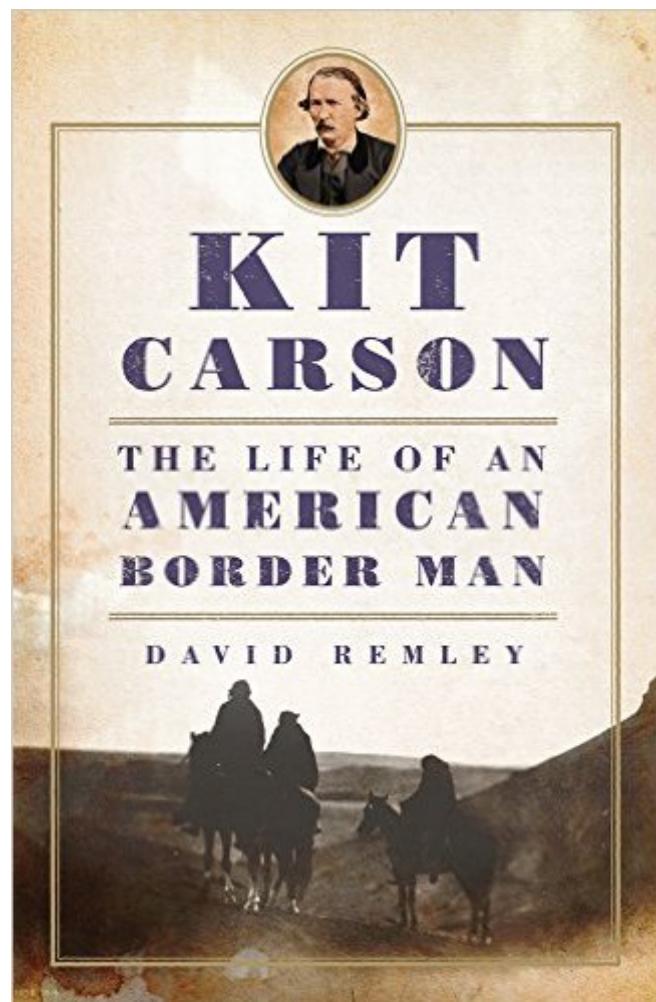


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Kit Carson: The Life Of An American Border Man (Oklahoma Western Biographies)



Synopsis

More than just another damned killerHistory has portrayed Christopher Kit Carson in black and white. Best known as a nineteenth-century frontier hero, he has been represented more recently as an Indian killer responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Navajos. Biographer David Remley counters these polarized views, finding Carson to be less than a mythical hero, but more than a simpleminded rascal with a rifle. *Kit Carson: The Life of an American Border Man* strikes a balance between prevailing notions about this quintessential western figure. Whereas the dime novelists exploited Carson's popular reputation, Remley reveals that the real man was dependable, ethical, and for his day relatively open-minded. Sifting through the extensive scholarship about Kit, the author illuminates the key dimensions of Carson's life, including his often neglected Scots-Irish heritage. His people's dire poverty and restlessness, their clannish rural life and sternly Protestant character, committed Carson, like his Scots-Irish ancestors, to loyalty and duty and to following his leader into battle without question. Remley also places Carson in the context of his times by exploring his controversial relations with American Indians. Although despised for the merciless warfare he led on General James H. Carleton's behalf against the Navajos, Carson lived amicably among many Indian people, including the Utes and Jicarillas, whom he served as U.S. government agent. Happily married to Waa-Nibe, an Arapaho woman, until her death, he formed a lasting friendship with their daughter, Adaline. Remley sees Carson as a complicated man struggling to master life on America's borders, those highly unstable areas where people of different races, cultures, and languages met, mixed, and fought, sometimes against each other, sometimes together, for the possession of home, hunting rights, and honor.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dear Dave: I count as my good fortune the privilege of knowing a writer of such high caliber. I finished the "Kit" book, having found some blocks of time to read lengthy sections, so I could grasp more of the integral wholeness of your labors. It was quite what I expected of your expertise as a scholar, perhaps reaching a pinnacle of your art in your late life. What I know to expect is that you research, read, and sift through a vast landscape of resources, and then integrate bits and pieces of that exploration into your own "story," painting for the reader a consummate new vista. All the particles one knows of western heroes like Carson are, for me, finally given wholeness, and I have now, through you, a vicarious sense of who and what this man was in the development of the West. A giant! Your seemingly tireless efforts to achieve enlightenment about Kit Carson are clearly shown by the "Bibliographical Essay" at the end. What a labor! You have the intensity, through skill and practice and training, to work your way with all this material. Few minds can grasp this method with such determination and concentration as you exhibit. From you, I know to expect exactly that. It is a gift, finely honed, and you have achieved mastery with it. I know, too, of course, what a toll it takes to produce such a work, and why you seemingly become oblivious to all else when laboring to create your next literary work. These sorts of projects have fulfilled the meaning of your life and represent, in their totality, a valuable contribution to the American literary landscape of the West, which you know so well. Even with my much more limited knowledge, I can infer how damned smart you are about the details, the finer points, the hidden, the subtle, the obscure.

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