



Trail to Disaster (Monographs in Colorado History)

Patricia Joy Richmond

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In October 1848 John Charles Fremont and an expedition of thirty-five men set out from Westport, Missouri, to find an all-seasons railroad route through the central Rockies. Their failure in the deep snows and below-zero winds of Colorado's San Juan Mountains--and the deaths of nearly a third of the expedition--left not only vestiges of disaster but persistent questions. What was the exact route taken by the expedition? Where are its camps located? What were the motives of veteran guide Bill Williams, who directed Fremont away from the most sensible trails leading across the Continental Divide.

In Trail to Disaster, Patricia Joy Richmond takes both armchair readers and modern-day explorers along Fremont's route to relive an important episode in western exploration. The result is a unique combination -- a bookshelf history and a backpacker's guidebook, enriched by the author's long familiarity with Fremont's route and enlivened by her clear, authoritative style.

For readers who want to follow four-wheel-drive roads and hiking trails to the La Garita campsites, a detailed map is available with this book. Other essential materials for a close study of Fremont's route are National Forest Service maps of the San Isabel, Rio Grande, and Carson national forests.

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