

Review by Dr Robert J. Chandler

Book Club of California

Retired English physics teacher and world traveler Raymond John Howgego is two-thirds completed of a massive exploration of exploration. At a young 59, he has gone where his subjects tread before. Just as avidly, Ray Howgego sought their written memories.

Richard H. Dillon masterly reviewed the first volume of the *Encyclopedia of Exploration* (2003) in the Spring 2005 issue of the QN-L. The pioneer book encompassed from the earliest times to 1800, and was twice the size of the second, contained three times as many articles, and covered more than twenty times the number of years. A third will explore until 1920. The boxed "Double H" press mark signifies quality publications. Period. 'Nuf Said. Treat it like a Book Club publication and buy immediately.

Yet, for readers wishing illumination of contents, Volume Two, covers the half century from 1800 to 1850. Howgego gives a state of the world message on geographic knowledge, region by region. The tsunami of writings threatens to engulf him: "One senses that every traveler who set foot outside their native land felt a need to commit his or her experiences to print," and the "professional traveler writer," who lived off royalties, emerged. (vii). He, therefore, restricts citations to a mere 10,000.

Overviews of areas have either their own entries or are appended to specific explorers. The introduction, viii-ix lists them. For instance, "Central Africa" incorporates Portuguese exploration, European concepts, and early crossings, while the entry for William Henry Ashley provides a general bibliography for the fur trade in the Far West and Canada.

Similarly, the second book continues the arrangement of the first: Name, locales explored, active dates, and bibliography. Starting with this volume, Howgego attaches minor associates with their major explorer. Each, though, appears separately in the index. For example, wealthy supporter Edward Harris appears with birdman John J. Audubon and topographer Charles Preuss joins John Charles Fremont.

The 729 alphabetically-arranged entries have a designated alpha number used in the index. For instance, Audubon is A19, and Stephen Austin of Texas, A21. The letter "U" has only two articles, "United States to the east of the Mississippi" (U1) and its eight-page bibliography of travel accounts (U2).

Surprises lurk in biographies ready to delight. Attached to Simón Bolívar are 1.5 pages of English and Irish mercenaries serving under him. China has a 3-page checklist of European contacts. Hong Kong's history stops at 1850; the next volume to 1920 will complete it. New Zealand's history is in four sections, each with bibliography: Early visitors, sealers and whalers; the New Zealand Company's arrival and settlements; exploration of North Island; and exploration of South Island.

The major omission between volumes is the influence of E Clampus Vitus in the first. A word of explanation to the uninitiated: Adam, the world's first traveler, founded this Ancient and Honorable Order. From antiquity through mountain man Jim Bridger, who has an entry, and beyond, some travelers, all Clampers, have slightly exaggerated. In the more recent times of the 1930s, brother Clampers wished to quietly replace what had been negligently lost: Clamper Sir Francis Drake's plate of brass.

Howgego, for his part, introduced a fictional explorer in the first book. His spurious article escaped detection before publication and still eludes readers. Hordern House offers a case of champagne to the discoverer, while I, as Humbug of Yerba Buena #1, ECV, will verify actual membership in E Clampus Vitus for the subject of Howgego's spoof.

The section on "California, Visitors, Settlers, and Prospectors, 1800-1850" comprises 89 short biographies of those who left printed works. Six-pages of suggested readings follow. However, Book Club members will not need it as all bought Gary Kurutz's 1997 Descriptive Gold Rush Bibliography, which is not listed. Of significance, John Bidwell's life has a camp follower: A 2.5 page checklist on wagon trains to Oregon and California.

The Russian American Company description adds a handy list of governors, plus the usual lengthy list of important books. The Panama Canal & Railroad piece is narrowly focused, both in time (look for the continuation in the next volume) and place. Nothing on the mail steamers is there, although Central American traveler John L. Stephens, who gave his name to a ship, has a well-deserved piece. Brigham Young's page-and-a-half life contains a four-page list of handcart expeditions and Mormonism, but misses Will Bagley's half-dozen classic publications.

The first two volumes lack a geographic index; a comprehensive one for the set should be a project for the third. About six percent of the entries relate to California and my sampling of thirty-eight personalities reveals encyclopedic range: Frederick W. Beechey, John Bidwell, John Ross Browne, Peter H. Burnett, Frederick Catherwood, Joseph Chapman, Walter Colton, John Coulter, Richard Henry Dana, George Donner, David Douglas, James Douglas, A.B. Duhaut-Cilly (with the BCC publication listed), William H. Emory, Thomas Jefferson Farnham, John Charles Fremont, (who rates four articles, one for each

expedition), Stephen Watts Kearny, Manjiro, William Lewis Manly, Alexander R. McLeod, John McLoughlin, Herman Melville, George Newell, Peter S. Ogden, John W. Palmer, H.A. Pierce, Nikolai P. Rezankov, William Shaw, Jehu L. Shuck, Jedediah Smith, Elisha Stevens, John A. Sutter, Joel P. Walker, Joseph R. Walker, Josiah Dwight Whitney (describing his pre-1850 explorations around the Great Lakes, Iowa, and Wisconsin), Charles Wilkes, William Wolfskill, and Ewing Young,

Ray Howgego's magnificent labor of love fulfills the promises of its subtitle and dedication: "A comprehensive reference guide to the history and literature of exploration, travel and colonization between the years 1800 and 1850." The dedicatory verse comes from poet T.S. Eliot's, "Little Gidding" (1942), the name from a Cambridgeshire village and is Number 4 of "Four Quartets":

"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."