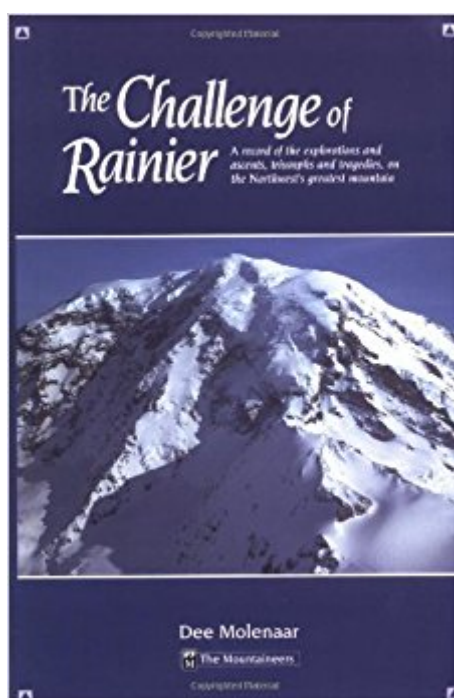


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The Challenge Of Rainier: A Record Of The Explorations And Ascents, Triumphs And Tragedies, On The Northwest's Greatest Mounta



Synopsis

Complete climbing history of Mt. Rainier. Loaded with anecdotes, sketches, over 100 photos.

Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

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Customer Reviews

3 stars because I NEED maps!! The author/artist relies on sketches to show the mountain, glaciers, and various routes. Very few maps are used to orient the reader to the mountain's location, trails, camps and routes used, etc. I needed to keep my laptop close by to help figure out where things were happening. This book was written in the 70's with an update in the 90's, which perhaps could have included more detailed mapping. An earlier reviewer mentioned the book's age showed but was still worth the read, and I agree. It was obvious the author loved the Mountain and passes it along to the reader.

EXCELLENT ACCOUNT

A good history of the ascents of Rainier, via different routes; Molenaar is a prior guide and climbing ranger at Rainier and is one of the true legends of the area. The book is getting a little dated now. If you want a more updated route guide w/descriptions, I would strongly recommend Mike Gauthier's book - Mt. Rainier: A Climbing Guide. Gauthier is a current climbing ranger at Rainier.

I am climbing Rainier for the first time later this year, so my wife bought this for me as a Christmas gift. I was a little disappointed. The practical information is very outdated. If you are looking for a

great history of Rainier and former climbing expeditions, this is the book for you. Keep in mind that this book was originally written in 1973 so there is not much modern information. There are very few photos in this book. Most are black and white pencil illustrations. Unfortunately, there are very few books on Rainier and this is probably among the best. If you are looking for general mountain adventure books, look elsewhere. This reads more like a textbook.

All too often we climbers get all caught up in ropes and crampons, figure 8 knots and ice tools, yet mountains can represent so much more. To climb a mountain like Rainier, a mountain simply referred to as "The Mountain" seems, to me, to require a little bit deeper understanding than just where to rest on the top of the DC. Dee Molenaar introduces you to The Mountain in a way that gives it history, depth, and character. There are many stories in this book that take place throughout the history of climbing the mountain. Dee Molenaar was there (he was a guide and ranger in the 40's and 50's) and what he has not learned first hand, he researched very well. This is a man who loves the mountain, and it shows. His beautiful hand-drawn illustrations give just a hint of what is up there. Another fun part is learning the stories behind the many names of the features you climb past. Just why is it called "Cadaver Gap" anyway? There are many great stories and facts in here, but two of the very best are: The map of the steam caves and tunnels on page 187. I have never seen this anywhere else and it is accurate. Make a copy, put it in a Ziploc bag and take to the summit. The entrances to the caves are just where he says. The second is the story of Delmar Fadden's winter ascent in 1936 in chapter 25. How can you not love this poem: "If I knew, My hand of fate, Would I do - or hesitate." He didn't. Read this book and tell stories all the way up and down the mountain. It might even distract you and your partners some from the pain in your chest from breathing so darn hard.

Dee Molenaar's "The Challenge of Rainier: A Record of the Explorations and Ascents, Triumphs and Tragedies, on the Northwest's Greatest Mountain" is a comprehensive history of the exploration of Washington's Mount Rainier. Molenaar was a famous climber and park ranger on Rainier and was a participant or observer of many of the exploits in this book. Molenaar begins with a short background on the mountain - its geology, climate, and ecology. Then he recounts the history of the early attempts to climb the mountain, highlighting many of the men with the now-famous names that now adorn the mountain and area (Longmire, Kautz, Emmons, etc.). He continues to tell the stories of the other "firsts" as each climbing route on the mountain was opened, and many of his accounts are based on contemporary magazine or newspaper accounts, often augmented by interviews or

correspondence with the participants. Molenaar also tells of many unusual occurrences on the mountain (such as the landing of a small plane on the summit, or the discovery and exploration of the ice caves in the crater). The book also includes a list of all of the first climbs, major events, and even the major tragedies on the mountain, so it serves as an excellent resource as well. Although a bit dated and at times repetitive (as each climb is recounted in detail), this book is an excellent history of Mount Rainier climbing. Anyone with an interest in climbing Mount Rainier would enjoy this book for the history it tells.

This is an unforgettable history of Mt. Rainier, its pioneering and more recent explorers of trails to the summit, its geology and natural environment, and its inevitable human disasters. Molenaar's many explanatory sketches of climbing routes and his inclusion of numerous historic photos of famed climbers, guides, and ascents help immensely to illustrate the absorbing text. As one who is intimately familiar both as a guide, an artist, a scientist, and a world-famous mountaineer, he is uniquely fitted to write this story--one which anyone contemplating an ascent of "the mountain" could hardly do without--and he has succeeded beyond measure.

Dee Molenaar eschews the glib, self-serving, and obnoxious style so prevalent in this genre. Instead, Molenaar presents a chronicle of human history on "The Mountain" that is well written, informative, and self-effacing. He barely touches his own remarkably impressive mountaineering achievements and I am hopeful he publishes his memoirs soon. Further, it is a pleasure to read a writing style reflecting a generation which held manners and chivalry with esteem. Indeed, there is an element of anachronism in this revised edition, and it is worth preserving. I am honored that my copy is signed by the author!

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