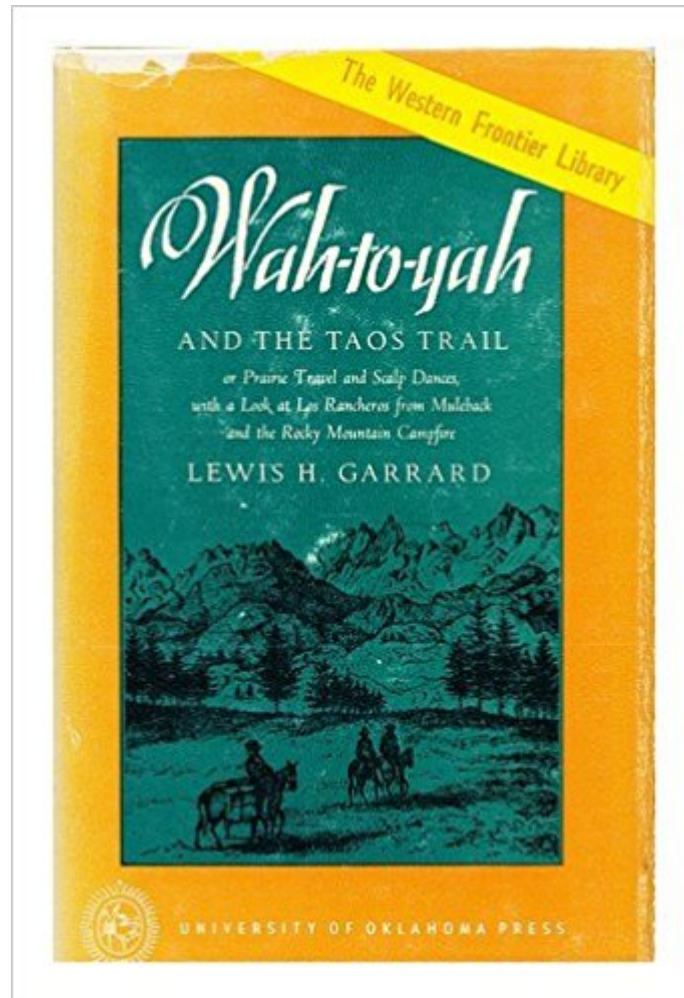




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# Wah-to-yah And The Taos Trail



## Synopsis

In the bright morning of his youth Lewis H. Garrard traveled into the wild and free Rocky Mountain West and left us this fresh and vigorous account, which, says A. B. Guthrie, Jr., contains in its pages "the genuine article-the Indian, the trader, the mountain man, their dress, and behavior and speech and the country and climate they lived in." On September 1, 1846, Garrard, then only seventeen years old, left Westport Landing (now Kansas City) with a caravan, under command of the famous trader C  ran St. Vrain, bound for Bent's Fort (Fort William) in the southeastern part of present-day Colorado. After a lengthy visit at the fort and in a camp of the Cheyenne Indians, early in 1847 he joined the little band of volunteers recruited by William Bent to avenge the death of his brother, Governor Charles Bent of Taos, killed in a bloody but brief Mexican and Indian uprising in that New Mexican pueblo. In fact, Garrard's is the only eyewitness account we have of the trial and hanging of the "revolutionaries" at Taos. Many notable figures of the plains and mountains dot his pages: traders St. Vrain and the Bents; mountain men John L. Hatcher, Jim Beckwourth, Lucien B. Maxwell, Kit Carson, and others; various soldiery traveling to and from the outposts of the Mexican War; and explorer and writer George F. Ruxton. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hector Lewis Garrard (alias Lewis H. Garrard) returned in the summer of 1847 to his home in Cincinnati, where he studied medicine and perhaps law. One of the early settlers of southeastern Minnesota and a man of civic consequence, he finally went back to Cincinnati, where he died at the age of fifty-eight. A. B. Guthrie, JR., Reporter, editor, and teacher, author of *The Big Sky* and *The Way West*, and winner of the 1950 Pulitzer Prize for Distinguished Fiction, A. B. GUTHRIE, JR., needs no introduction to American readers. His enthusiasm for Garrard's book sets the reader on

his way in full possession of the background. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

This is the eight Time Life Classics of the Old West series books I have bought, read and reviewed. All are 4 or 5 stars. Lewis H. Gerrard 1829- 1887 writes about his excursion into the Old West. He was 17 and signed up for an expedition through Indian territory to land that was to be liberated from Mexico. It was a tiring and dangerous journey, freezing in the sun and snow, wading swift rivers and sleeping on the ground. It took a lot of courage and stamina. He was observant, curious, and cheerful and made lots of friends. He danced with squaws and saw a scalp dance. He fought Indians and hunted many kinds of animals including buffalo. He saw the landmark of the Taos Trail... The Spanish Peaks or Wah- To- Yah, that was the title of this book. The original book was published in 1850. Later he was a Minnesota settler, politician and banker. He died at 58 and wrote two other books. Some say not of the caliber of this book. Anyone interested in the true happenings in the Old West around 1846-1848 will like this book. Chocked full of interesting facts about the hard life of the prairie and mountain men and different Indian tribes. I would of rated this book 5 stars but some parts of the book had the Old West mountain language with contractions, misspellings and lots of the "n" word. Not putting the talk down as this was how the mountain men talked back then. However for reading purposes these talks slowed down my reading and would of been an easier, and slightly faster read if stated in plain English. Even so the 349 page book was an enjoyable fast read that I read in three days. What was nice is that I learned several Indian words, adding to my Indian vocabulary. Proudly added to our Classics of the Old West collection in our family library. 4 1/3 stars.

On September 1, 1846, just a few months after the declaration of war between the United States and Mexico, 17 year old Louis Garrard left Independence, Missouri and traveled down the Santa Fe Trail to Taos, New Mexico, capital of the fur trade in what is now the US southwest. He was quick to make friends and learn the customs of the mountain men and teamsters on the trail. This book is one of the few first hand accounts we have from that period and records his travels on the trail, his stay at Bent's Fort, his experiences in Taos, New Mexico just after the Pueblo / Mexican revolt and his return to the States to include a brief interlude as part of the garrison guarding Ft. Mann. It is a remarkably well written book. Garrard spent 6 months living the life of a Mountain Man. It appears he was good at it, well accepted by red and white man alike and enjoyed himself tremendously. He met and initially traveled with Ceran St. Vrain of Bent Vrain & Co., met Jim Beckwith, Kit Carson and befriended noted Englishman George Ruxton, who would go on to write several books on his many

experiences in the Rocky Mountains, George Bent and many other notables in the history of the early American southwest. He was present at the trials and participated in the executions of the Taos rebels, lived for an extended time in a Cheyenne village and was engaged in two separate fights with Comanche Indians. Not bad for a six month vacation. You will enjoy these first hand observations but more importantly you will enjoy Louis himself. He was an excellent observer, reporting on every day frontier life while corroborating history in a way that was second to none. Life in the West was not easy yet he is never heard to complain or belittle those around him. Louis makes friends as easily today as he did during his amazing experience of 1846.

an interesting story from long ago.

One of the best books of First Hand Accounts on the early Western Frontier. Stunning writing by a 17 year old boy, one gets the feeling of actually experiencing traveling, surviving new environments... the hardships and the thrills. Wonderful reading book.

Garrard's Wah-to-yah in the new leather bound version belongs on every select history shelf and makes for exceptional reading. This western traveler shares shrewd observations on settlers, traders and indians. He is present at the Taos Massacre and its aftermath. The assassination of Gov. Bent of New Mexico has often been politized by historians, so seeing it through Garrard's eyes is refreshing. The sensitivity of this author at a critical time and place in American history is a rare find of comprehensive information.

Provides interesting insights via a journal kept by a 17 year old who actually experienced these times. One of the few written eye witness accounts of the Taos experience right after the Taos rebellion. Reads like a journal written by a teenager.

Written in a long ago prose, the book was hard to get into. The experiences are real, the people are real and it is a remarkable journal of a young mans travel. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is researching the history of the west and the Santa Fe Trail during the Mexican American War. It is a must read for history buffs.

I read the book because Bernard DeVoto spoke highly of it in "Year of Decision, 1846". I was not disappointed with this eye-witness account of life in the Rockies and would recommend it to anyone

interested in living history. One can be critical of the book. Some of the flowery descriptive prose does not sound like it came from the mouth of a 17 year old, but even if a "ghost writer" did some of the work, the kid kept the notes and did live the story. Garrard's observations on Indian life, mountain men, Taos women compared to well-bred Eastern women, and his comments about Jim Beckwith, a black mountain man are priceless as were his views on the hanging of the Taos rebels. This story would make an excellent film.

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