

1-1-2007

***Brutal Journey: The Epic Story of the First Crossing of North America* by Paul Schneider**

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**Recommended Citation**

Frank, Andrew K. (2007) "*Brutal Journey: The Epic Story of the First Crossing of North America* by Paul Schneider," *Tampa Bay History*: Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/tampabayhistory/vol21/iss1/13>

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challenging volume that treats LeRoy Collins as something more than the sainted figure he is sometimes portrayed as being. In Dyckman's narrative, Collins emerges instead as a real person, with his courageous character helping to overcome his flaws.

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*Brutal Journey: The Epic Story of the First Crossing of North America.* By Paul Schneider. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006. x, 366 pp. Introduction, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, acknowledgments, index, \$26.00 cloth).

In July 1536, three Spanish men and a black Moroccan, all dressed like and accompanied by Indians, stumbled across a group of Spanish slavers in Mexico. After eight exhausting years, the Pánfilo de Narváez expedition had mercifully ended. This attempt by Spain to conquer Florida and the American Southeast began with four hundred well-armed men and unbridled optimism. When it ended, only these four men remained alive, thanks to little more than a combination of luck and their willingness to do anything to survive.

In this gripping and often compelling narrative, Paul Schneider reconstructs the harrowing story of the Narváez expedition. The journey—which began in Tampa Bay, hugged the Gulf coast to modern-day Texas before crossing to Mexico's western coast and South Sea—hardly lived up to expectations or the precedents established by Cortes and other conquistadors. The lone four survivors had traveled five thousand miles before they escaped their travails, and their journey could hardly be measured by the geographical distance they traveled. During their eight years as conquerors-turned-refugees, they “had become killers and cannibals, torturers and torture victims, slavers and enslaved. They became faith healers, arms dealers, canoe thieves, spider eaters, and finally . . . they became itinerant messiahs” (2). In short, their journey was physical, emotional, and psychological.

*Brutal Journey* creatively addresses the problem of sources that complicates all attempts to describe the early American interactions between Natives and Newcomers. In the case of the Narváez expedition, only two firsthand accounts exist. Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca published the best-known version in 1542, and Spanish authorities in Spain and Hispaniola authored the second. Schneider treats both sources with suspicion as they were both written to justify actions that occurred after the fact. Schneider augments his close reading of translated versions of these sources with various archaeological findings and ethnohistorical studies of the region. He also relies heavily on studies of other expeditions in the Americas to provide indirect insights when the direct sources are silent.

In a few places, hyperbolic and unnecessary rhetoric in *Brutal Journey* detracts

from the text. For example, Narváez's expedition was not, as the book's subtitle suggests, the "first crossing of North America," and comparisons to Lewis and Clark are both misplaced and often lead to mischaracterizations of both journeys. Perhaps just as importantly, the volume's rhetoric implicitly but unmistakably draws what seem to be unnecessary parallels to today's current conflict in Iraq. Discussions of "quagmires" (5) and "peoples waiting to be 'liberated'" (4) gloss over the nature of the expedition and the more complex Spanish outlook on the world and Native peoples.

Academics will likely be disappointed by the sparseness of citations in the volume. This is more than academic quibbling. Schneider certainly provides citations for all of his quotations, but one of his great achievements is to piece together a wide range of sources and to sift through conflicting evidence. For example, in several places Schneider's infers "further details about the expedition . . . from the many other, better-documented Spanish intrusions into the region during the same period" (2). Too often, Schneider provides little insight into how he arrived at his conclusions. In addition, Schneider's selected use of ethnohistorical evidence leads him to see a "myriad [of] mysterious inconsistencies" (248) in the behavior of Native Americans. For example, Schneider sees a contradiction in the Mariame Indians' plucking of the facial hair of their Spanish captives before befriending them. A quick glance at the literature on captives and adoption rituals in the American Southeast and Southwest would clear up any uncertainty about whether this was designed to be "torture."

Schneider is the first writer to bring this tumultuous story to the general public. Academics have long explored the topic, with contentious debates over the precise paths taken by the conquistadors-turned-refugees, the nature of the Indian societies they confronted, and the validity of the sparse written sources that retell the tale. This volume is largely free of these squabbles, and instead offers a rather consensual view of these issues. The result is a remarkably engaging, well-written, evenhanded, and often sophisticated narrative.

Despite its academic shortcomings, *Brutal Journey* deserves a wide readership. It successfully augments the historical record with materials from a variety of disciplines, most notably from archaeology, in a rather seamless and engaging manner. The result is a work of nonfiction that proves the truism that sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

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*Ybor City: The Making of a Landmark Town.* By Frank Trebín Lastra. (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2006. xix, 466 pp. Acknowledgments, editor's preface, foreword, introduction, photographs, illustrations, afterword, tables and exhibits, notes, bibliography, index, about the author. \$39.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper).