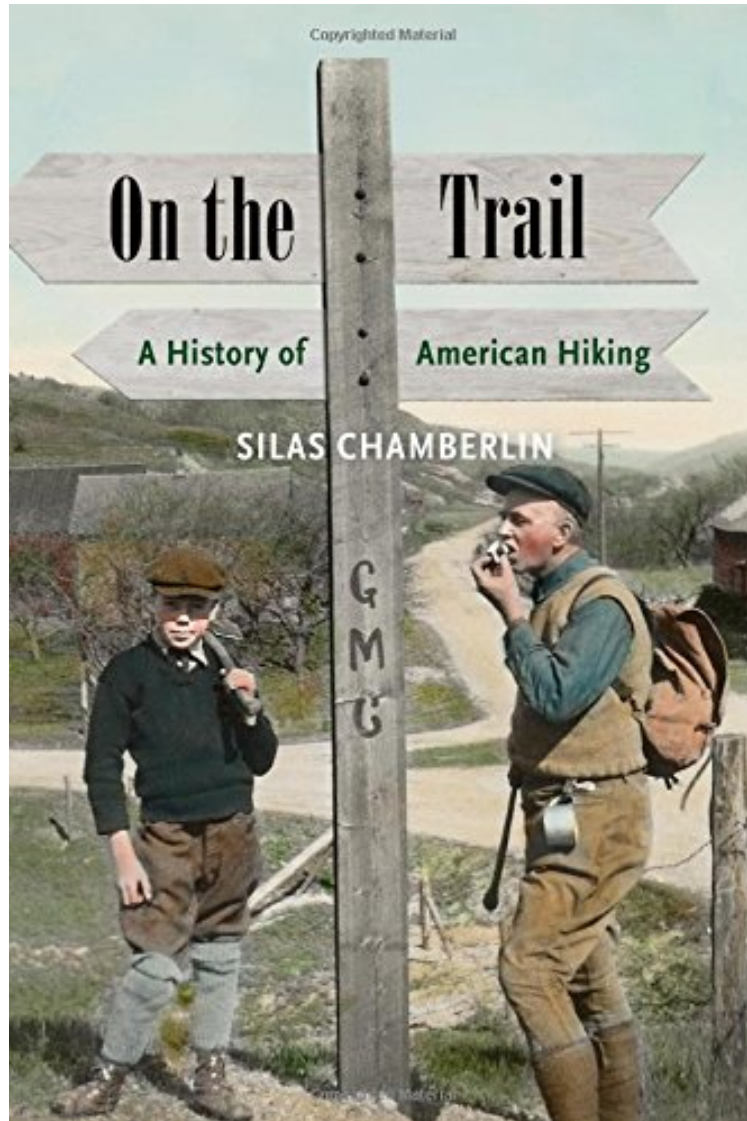


(Ebook free) On the Trail: A History of American Hiking

On the Trail: A History of American Hiking

Silas Chamberlin

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Silas Chamberlin : On the Trail: A History of American Hiking before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On the Trail: A History of American Hiking:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Good, and Maybe the Only, Book About the History of American Hiking By BackpackerBill Even though it's a "history," the guy writes very entertaining stories of hikers pioneering the way. And it is factually correct! How do I know? Simple. While many have written about my founding Backpacker magazine, this is the first that tells it like it was. Another story he tells that was a lot of fun to read, was of the first end-to-end hike on the Appalachian Trail. Earl Shaffer took his 124-day through-hike in 1948 just after World War II. His

story is not just about his experiences on the trail in the backcountry, but of interesting folks he met in the villages and towns the trail passed through back then. Then there are Shaffer's observations about the differences he found in the AT on his second, and particularly his third, through-hike in 1998, fifty years later. He was highly critical about the "new" wilderness view of hiking that he changed the AT's route. We love the trail to stay away from towns. But nice to hear Shaffer loved it going through them. Then there is the story of Colin Fletcher taking the first end-to-end hike of the Grand Canyon. There are some beautiful quotes of Fletcher's experiences on that long hike. It shouldn't be a surprise that On the Trail author Chamberlin would write a patiently detailed and interesting history of American hiking, for he is an avid hiker himself. He did his own through-hike on the AT. And he spent summers working with a trail maintenance crew on both the Adirondack and Catskill mountain trails of New York. Any active hiker will want to own this book and read bits and pieces of it at leisure. It makes good evening reading after a weary day of work when you are dreaming about being out there on your favorite trail. Now, having said nice, I'll be a little critical. There is a lot of important details he's missed and hasn't even hinted of their importance. While Chamberlin gives Jim Kern plaudits, for instance, of founding the Florida Trail, he doesn't mention one of the most colorful and tireless trail builders, Gudy Gaskill, who almost single-handedly built the Colorado Trail, a significant section of the Continental Divide Trail, a five hundred-mile section of trail from the mouth of Waterton Canyon southwest of Denver to Durango. And he also praises me for founding Backpacker magazine and what we did to set new standards of clean trail practices, it is difficult to see why he skipped over some very important things that happened for trails in the twentieth century. He does not mention, for example, the only national lobbying organization that was formed to advocate for trails, the American Hiking Society. Nor does he mention the Hikanation hikers taking the fifteen-month hike across America advocating for the creation of the only cross continental trail, the American Discovery Trail. These were a bundle of efforts that probably have done as much for hiking trails on the national level as anything else in the history of American hiking. And when talking about racial minorities in the hiking community as well as efforts to bring more inner city African-Americans and Hispanics into the woods, he fails to mention Jim Kern's extraordinary accomplishment of putting together Big City Mountaineers, which is making a significant difference in that direction. Despite my criticism, I'm giving the book a five star rating. It deserves that. And if there is ever a revised edition I would hope that Chamberlin will take a few minutes to consider at least acknowledging these leaved-behinds.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Gerald Zahavi
Timely delivery. Item as advertised.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good read for those involved in modern trail activities and volunteerism in general.
By Marc A. Mantelli
Good information. A little repetitive at times.

The first history of the American hiking community and its contributions to the nation's vast network of trails. In the mid-nineteenth century urban walking clubs emerged in the United States. A little more than a century later, tens of millions of Americans were hiking on trails blazed in every region of the country. This groundbreaking book is the first full account of the unique history of the American hiking community and its rich, nationwide culture. Delving into unexplored archives, including those of the Appalachian Mountain Club, Sierra Club, Green Mountain Club, and many others, Silas Chamberlin recounts the activities of hikers who over many decades formed clubs, built trails, and advocated for environmental protection. He also discusses the shifting attitudes of the late 1960s and early 1970s when ideas about traditional volunteerism shifted and new hikers came to see trail blazing and maintenance as government responsibilities. Chamberlin explores the implications for hiking groups, future club leaders, and the millions of others who find happiness, inspiration, and better health on America's trails.

Chamberlin has demonstrated that what at first looks simple walking on our own two feet has a complex history of changing cultural associations, social infrastructure, and national significance. James Longhurst, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse