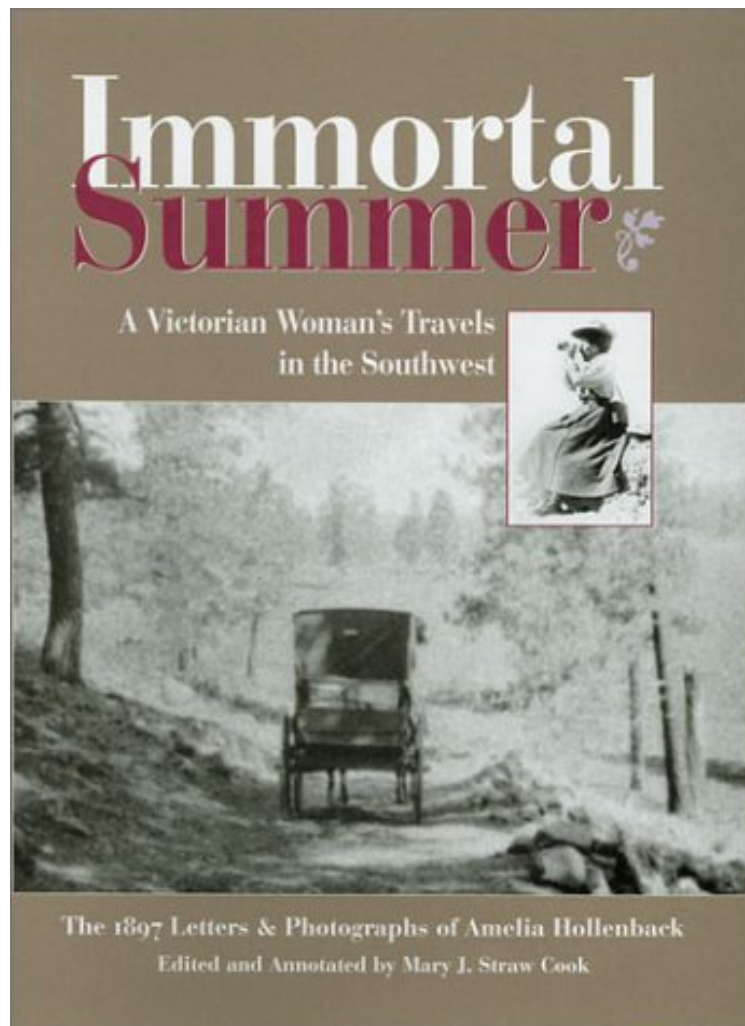


[Free download] Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman's Travels in the Southwest: The 1897 Letters and Photographs of Amelia Hollenback

Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman's Travels in the Southwest: The 1897 Letters and Photographs of Amelia Hollenback

Mary J. Straw Cook, Amelia Hollenback
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Mary J. Straw Cook, Amelia Hollenback : Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman's Travels in the Southwest: The 1897 Letters and Photographs of Amelia Hollenback before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman's Travels in the Southwest: The 1897 Letters and Photographs of Amelia Hollenback:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A valuable reading/viewing experience. Highly recommended.By CharIn 1897, 20-year-old Amelia Hollenback and her sister, Josephine, young women members of the powerful Hollenback industrial family (anthracite coal) of Wilkes-Barre, PA, spent a blissful summer traveling in the American

Southwest where the two women observed long-anticipated natural wonders of Arizona, such as the Grand Canyon, and visited Indian pueblos and cliff dwellings in New Mexico Territory. Biographer and Santa Fe historian, Mary L. Straw Cook, editor and annotator of the letters which the women wrote home during that summer, and of Amelias photographs taken during the journey, remarks that the impact of their adventures---and most of all the Pueblo Indian culture---would last the sisters a lifetime! This would be particularly true of Amelia, better known as Minna, who would subsequently make many return visits to the Southwest and, at age 55, would build a large, traditional, pueblo-style home in Sante Fe. Cook notes that immediately following the trip, Amelia, because of what she described as a clouded brain, dropped out of Adelphi Academy in Brooklyn. Her emotional and psychological change, writes Cook, was evident in the following year [also] as she recalled those unforgettable moments and tried, rather inadequately, to record an expanded, annotated record of her trip. Not much more is said by Cook about the odd-sounding change of mentality in youthful Minna following the 1897 travels but she does mention a condition that sounds similar to Alzheimer's disease in her old age, when Minna fails to recognize a longtime acquaintance. (Minna died at 92, in 1969.) A reader might surmise after having read this entire book that Minna experienced a strong kinship with the Southwestern locale and the Indian pueblos which amounted to something like a calling, or, an inner attraction of some kind that she felt extraordinarily compelled to respond to. The books title, Immortal Summer, suggests a somewhat similar explanation for the effect upon Minna of her elevating experiences in the Southwest. Given the fact that camping out and roughing it were necessary in order to reach and visit pueblos, Indian ruins, and the Grand Canyon, its strange enough that these Victorian women became and remained so enthralled with the Southwest, but, as Cook indicates, Minna and Jo were indomitable in their quest for adventure and knowledge. Their father had brought them up to be as independent as if they were his sons. They soon adopted split skirts for comfort in riding mules on treacherous Grand Canon paths, which guide John Hance required them to do anyway...The girls left home on the Black Diamond Express, seemingly departing from New York where the family resided at 460 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn (their large Victorian home at that site demolished as late as 1983). They proceeded to Glen Summit, Wilkes-Barre, Buffalo, Chicago (which places they chatter about a bit in their letters) and continued onward until they reached Kansas City and then Ft. Leavenworth, where they dwelt with a family connected with the officers school. Their letters interestingly describe the parade at Ft. L. as it looked then. They also tell some details about the kitchen and mess hall in the Soldiers Home, and other details. This is just typical of how, all along the way, wherever the sisters wrote from, they included bits of information about the places and people, some of which could conceivably be of interest to readers or writers with historical interests about those particular places and people. And, of course, once they arrive in the Southwestern region, they provide even more information about the towns, the identities of some local people, the primitive roads then extant, the few railroads available for travel, the way of life requiring hiring and traveling by wagon, the experiences involved in camping out, the appearances of the pueblos and certain limited information about methods pertaining to their construction, descriptions of some of the Indians they encounter and facts about some of the Anglo Westerners they associate with (such as the Presbyterian minister). There is passing mention of centuries-old churches, often not in good repair. There is a good deal of information about the biannual Hopi Snake Dance (to obtain rain) at Walpi which they attend and which Minna seems to have been the first woman to photograph. [But as she was an amateur photographer, her photos of the Dance, which are not in the book although a number of others of her photos are, are not on a par with the numerous professional photographers, listed by name, who attended the 1897 Snake Dance.] There is an account of a legendary Indian story that relates to the snake dance. Minna and Jo were able to visit points in the Grand Canyon and pueblo ruins which are no longer open to the public. (One such place in the Canyon was named Hollenbacks Point, after them.) One pueblo no longer open to the public but which they visited was the so-called Montezumas Castle (a misnomer, as the outstanding 5-story pueblo had nothing to do with that Chieftain). The sisters Southwestern tours took place at a time when numerous of the ancient, unprotected, deserted Indian pueblos had been sifted and despoiled by careless relic seekers and even by mischievous children who delighted in the sight and sound of ramshackle ruins deliberately toppled over a precipice and caused to crash down a rocky cliff face to utter destruction. Efforts, as yet not very successful, were just beginning for the establishment of authoritative protective agencies to preserve and protect such historical sites. Trails to support a growing tourist interest in the Grand Canyon had been developed largely by one John Hance, a colorful pioneer-type fellow, originally from the city, however, whom the girls spent a good deal of time with. Hes mentioned several times in their letters, there is a photo of him, and he is also described by editor Cook, who is absolutely wonderful in providing many footnotes filled with explanatory information of great incidental historical interest and from which readers can learn much unexpected new information, not least interesting of which is the Hollenback family background. Also, almost as interesting as the story of the trip itself, is the Introductory story in which Mary L. Straw Cook, who became the owner after Minnas death of Minnas former house in Sante Fe, happened to get ahold of a forgotten old family trunk filled with Minnas letters and over 400 photographs pertaining to the Southwest trip of 1897 and how she took charge of them for the creation of a book. Her plans were to make this special Immortal Summer book the first of several biographies about Amelia Hollenback, but, as far as I can discover, she has never gotten around to another. Not yet, anyway. (She is the author of two other books about Santa Fe history, one about the Sisters

of Loretto and their Santa Fe chapel, and one about Donya Tules, Santa Fes Courtesan and Gambler. The Museum of Santa Fe is her publisher.) Some former dwellings that Minna and Jo visited within the cliff-caves and upon bare rock mesas were old and rotten and the women's treading there was quite risky. Access to the rising stories of the pueblos was by ladder, which the original dwellers could draw up when danger approached from below stairs. The Indians, their children, and even their dogs became as adept at scampering up and down the ladders as if the ladders were actual stair-steps. I never saw any mention of how the old people were able to go up and down the ladders. (Or, I wondered, did the decrepit elders remain in one room perpetually? Or, did their family members perhaps lower them up and down between stories by means of some kind of lift?) Minna (or maybe Jo) comments in one of her letters about how dangerous it must have been to raise children on some home sites where nothing but small, high rock tables gave onto steep, deep precipices all around. I never thought of that... One interesting incident that the sisters and their editor Cook refer to in several scattered comments and footnotes is the exploration carried out by two leading ethnologists of Katzimo, which was also known as the Mesa Encantada. (The Hollenback sisters wrote home that they had hopes of ascending Katzimo with Professor Libbey on July 23, 1897, but apparently did not go along with him after all.) The surface of the huge table rock was believed to have been the ancient site of an Acoma Indian village. This was according to Acoma legends. After conquering the difficulty of ascending to the top of the mesa, world explorer Wm. Libbey Jr., according to Mary Cook, reported after a brief analysis finding no evidence of even a former visit by human beings. Also according to Cook, in September, 1897, Prof. Frederick Hodge of the Smithsonian ascended Katzimo and reported finding a pile of stones that was evidently placed as an indication that humans had ascended to the top of the mesa. Another ethnologist who climbed Katzimo, Charles F. Lummis, was supposedly scandalized by Libbey's apparent iconoclasm regarding the Acomas belief about the mesa and he mercilessly lampooned Libbey in newspaper articles. Possibly, reasoned Mary Cook, Libbey was so embarrassed that he destroyed all evidence of ever having explored the top of Katzimo because when Mary wrote to Princetons Museum of Natural History about Libbey's archived material, they replied that they had none of Professor Libbey's papers or photos pertaining to such an exploration and that they didnt even know that his Southwestern trip had ever taken place. If you research "Katzimo mesa" on-line, you will find some sources that report facts which do not jibe with the facts given by Mary Cook about Libbey, Hodge, and Lummis with regard to what they said they found on Katzimo, and other details... So, I dont know exactly how to discern at this point how to sort out the real truth about the Katzimo explorations circa 1897... Obviously, the Enchanted Mesa is a likely candidate for a landing field in the minds of those who believe that UFOs favor the Southwest area. In this book, although the Hollenback sisters loved to take their lunch with friends whilst seated atop high rocky points and mesas, and they often enjoyed observing the broad vistas of beautiful sunsets in Southwestern places, theres no hint (at least not that I picked up on) of anything like an appearance of UFO mysteries in the places visited by the Hollenback sisters in 1897. Possibly, mystery-hunters fixated on serpent symbols may find one or two very small tidbits of not-very-significant information in the womens letters or in Mary Cooks copious notes. But, Im not an expert on the UFO and serpent subjects and my attestation about there being small evidence in the book may be incorrect. Both Minna and Jo were excellent letter-writers compared with most folks. Clearly, their personalities were high-hearted and mildly witty, and so their letters, while not exactly exhilarating, are fairly enjoyable to read, especially if you happen to be interested in raking out the miscellaneous bits of obscure ordinary and occasionally extraordinary information about places and people that come along. The photographs in the book are not very impressive as to apparent quality, but they do contain worthwhile visual information about the times, places, and people. There are a good many pictures of Indians whom Minna got to know during her lifetime. She collected Indian pottery and she apparently had a great interest in other aspects of the Indian culture. When she was not residing in her Santa Fe house, an Indian man lived there as caretaker. There is a photo, not very revealing, of Minna's Santa Fe house, the building of which she took a strong part in. In her desire to make the house like the traditional pueblos she had examined, she made no less than 99 changes to the architects plans for her house! Ive found the book mildly compelling and definitely memorable and worthwhile. I feel Id be much the poorer if I'd never read it. The copy I have is signed by the editor/author. I happened to come into possession of this book and a big picture-book about the Southwest just recently by coincidence when, in a library near me, I went through a stack of Free-for-the-Taking Discard books. Am thankful for my good providence in coming upon this book and glad to have my newly expanded knowledge of some things about the Southwest and about Minna (and Josephine) Hollenback. This book has specialized information that I guess would not be of interest to a wide audience, but for those who might be interested in it for one reason or another, I do highly recommend the book as a valuable reading-and-viewing experience. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A vivid, superbly organized and presented primary source By Midwest Book Review Compiled, edited and Annotated by Mary J. Straw Cook, *Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman's Travels In The Southwest* is a collection of letters and black-and-white photographs by Amelia Hollenback, a Victorian woman who had the opportunity to see 1897 America with her own eyes. With extensive contextual annotation, *Immortal Summer* is a vivid, superbly organized and presented primary source which takes in what American life, land and people were really like more than a century ago. One curious note: Author and historian Mary Cook lives in Santa Fe in the very house that Amelia Hollenback commissioned John Gaw Meem to build in

1932!0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Hollenback name lives on...By Mark TrushkowskyI have not yet read this book, I have only just ordered it, but I am so excited to read it because currently I am the coordinator of the Hollenback Community Garden in Brooklyn New York. Our garden is on the former site of the Hollenback Mansion where Amelia grew up, which burned down in 1979.

Victorian women loosed upon the world is a subject that has fascinated armchair travelers and women's history buffs for decades. *Immortal Summer* is a seven-course meal to satisfy such appetites. Two sisters embark from Pennsylvania in search of soul-broadening experiences in the Indian Southwest, newly opened to intrepid travelers. Amelia Hollenback and her sister Josephine are no ordinary unfettered Victorians, however, for in addition to being courageous, well-educated, and serious students of life, they are also lucky. No less a guide than Charles Lummis, the inveterate traveler and great popularizer of the Southwest, advises them in their travels, and at Hopi they meet the day's most famous photographers and bring back rare images of this and other Indian lands that stand today as priceless pages from the travelogue of an America coming to terms with itself through its female adventurers. The Hollenback letters and photographs form the heart of this brilliantly reassembled grand tour from Ft. Leavenworth to the Grand Canyon, Hopiland, the pueblos of Zuni, Acoma, and Laguna, and assorted colorful spots along the way.

From Library JournalIn the summer of 1897, two well-bred and -educated East Coast sisters, Amelia and Josephine Hollenback, embark on a three-month journey to the then-relatively unknown American Southwest. Traveling unaccompanied by train from New York to Chicago and points west, they carried letters of reference to family friends along the way and relied on advice from the most prominent American Indian scholar of the time, Charles Lummis. The sisters visited the Grand Canyon; Hopiland; the pueblos of Zuni, Acoma, and Lagnuna; as well as Flagstaff, AZ, and the Indian ruins in that area. After their travels, Amelia became so enamored of the West, that she built a home in Santa Fe and spent many years in northern New Mexico. Here, Cook provides the reader with ample annotations and notes to make the letters and black-and-white photographs come alive over 100 years later. Readers will be charmed by the enthusiasm, independence, and energy of these young women. This beautifully designed volume is recommended not only for general travel collections but also for those specializing in women's history and the history of the American Southwest.Olga B. Wise, Hewlett Packard, Inc. Lib., Austin, TX Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.About the AuthorMary J. Straw Cook is a classical concert musician and historian living in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is a founder of the Friends of the Palace of the Governors.