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Happy Trails: A Dictionary of Western Expressions (Facts on File Dictionary of American Regionalisms)

Robert Hendrickson

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#4492470 in Books Facts on File 1994-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x 6.25 x .75l, #File Name: 0816021120274 pages | File size: 53.Mb

Robert Hendrickson : Happy Trails: A Dictionary of Western Expressions (Facts on File Dictionary of American Regionalisms) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Happy Trails: A Dictionary of Western Expressions (Facts on File Dictionary of American Regionalisms):

A guide to the colourful language of the American West, from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean. This reference is filled with more than 3500 expressions, anecdotes, idioms and catchwords, capturing the language of cowboys, ranchers, loggers, mountain-men and American Indians. Both historical and contemporary words and phrases are cited, from legend and folklore, to songs, novels, newspapers and television. As well as definitions, there is an explanation of pronunciation, usage, historical and literary references, variations, etymology, and locale of use.

From Library JournalWhile failure to include maps and illustrations in the galley proofs of Atlas of Western Expansion prevents discussion of its value as an atlas, this book is a well-researched and -written survey of American territorial expansion from the Colonial period through the closing of the frontier at the end of the 19th century. Nicely complementing the main text are separate essays on topics such as the cotton gin, the six-shot revolver, the reaper, and

the role of women, along with a chronology and a detailed bibliography. The overall presentation is well balanced, contrasting the growing of the nation at the expense of Native Americans, African slaves, and the environment. Wexler (coauthor of *Who Was Who in World Exploration*, LJ 4/15/93) has produced a well-executed examination appropriate as both a reference tool and a readable history. *Happy Trails* documents and identifies over 3500 words and phrases originating in American Western culture. Hendrickson draws his data from histories, biographies, diaries, poems, songs, dictionaries, novels, movies, and interviews. Most entries also include a quotation, usually drawn from fiction, to illustrate usage. The work is extensively cross-referenced, well written, and entertaining to read. As a whole, *Happy Trails* complements rather than replaces similar dictionaries, such as Winfred Belvin's *Dictionary of the American West* (LJ 1/93) and the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (LJ 11/1/85). Both the general reader and the librarian will find it useful and engaging. Recommended for all institutions; larger academic and public libraries should consider a second copy of *Atlas of Westward Expansion* for their circulating collections. Stephen L. Hupp, Capital Univ. Lib., Columbus, Ohio Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist This is the second volume in Facts On File's *Dictionary of American Regionalisms*. The first, also by Hendrickson, was *Whistlin' Dixie* [RBB D 15 92]. The introduction indicates that the work "represents a lone writer's attempt to corral a good representative selection of Western speech." In 1993 Facts On File published a similar work, *Blevins' Dictionary of the American West* [RBB Ap 1 93]. It is not listed among the sources Hendrickson used. He seems to have relied mostly on his own voracious reading of Western novels, biographies, short stories, movies, and television. Even so, since the two works are about the same length (approximately 3,500 entries in each), some comparisons are in order. The letter O was chosen at random for comparison; Hendrickson has 64 entries to Blevins' 42. Comparing them, 27 of Hendrickson's entries are not in Blevins, while 25 of Blevins' are not in Hendrickson. Hendrickson frequently gives quoted examples of the usage of a word, usually with the source of the quote. Neither work places accents on non-English words, though Blevins gives the phonetic pronunciation of many Spanish words. He lists 10 words beginning with gu-, and the pronunciation of each is given. Hendrickson lists only one of these, guayave, and gives no pronunciation. Some of Hendrickson's definitions are rather naive. He defines alkali dust as "dust of the alkaline deserts of the Southwest." His entry gringo, on the other hand, disparages the traditional meaning, "gibberish," derived from the Spanish word griego, as if to say, "it's Greek to me," and suggests a derivation from the name of Major Samuel Ringgold, a great fighter against Mexicans up to 1846. Blevins accepts the traditional derivation, while admitting that "the etymology remains uncertain." There is no bibliography in Hendrickson, while Blevins has four pages of further reading. Should a library with a Western-oriented clientele buy Blevins or Hendrickson, or both? One or the other of these works should suffice for all but the true aficionado of Western words.