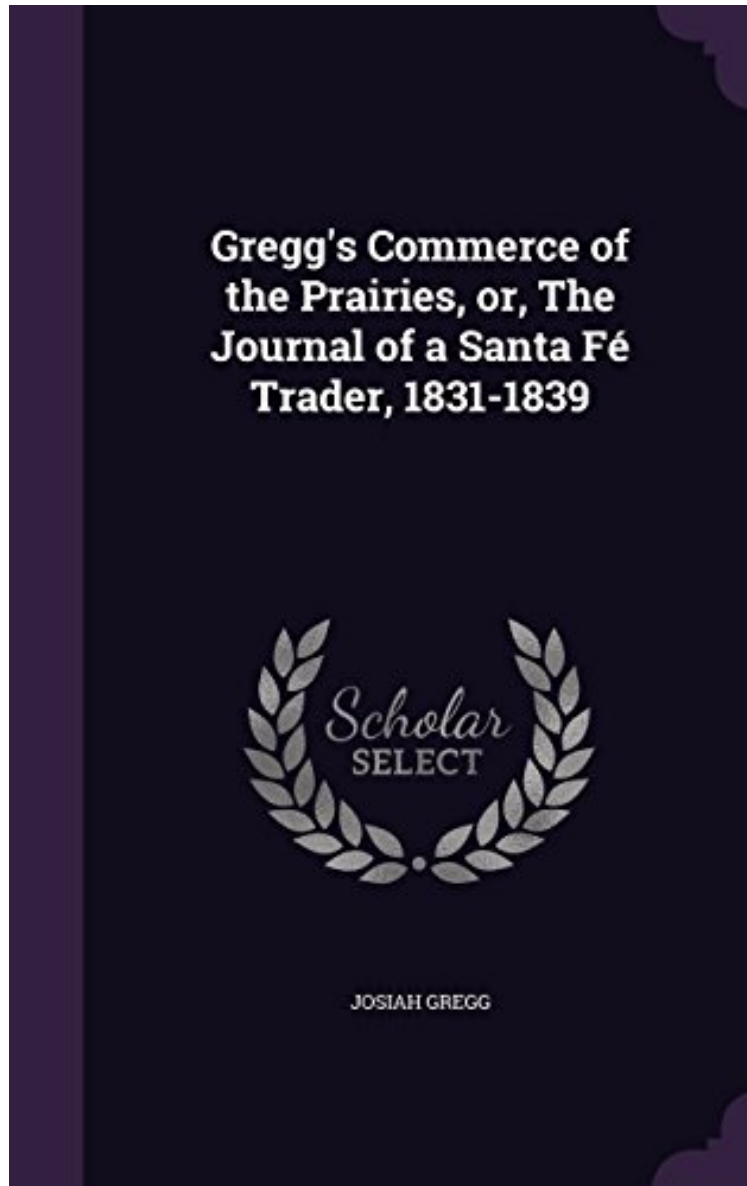


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Gregg's Commerce of the Prairies, Or, the Journal of a Santa Fe Trader, 1831-1839

Josiah Gregg

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About the Author--Josiah Gregg-- is best known to American history and literature for his now classic work on the West, *Commerce of the Prairies*. A Santa Fe trader, a keen observer, a man of intellectual curiosity? Gregg, with his knowledge of the pathways across the central plains, of the Mexicans and their settlements, and of the Plains Indians, brought to American literature what is generally considered to be the first important, and even now the definitive, work on the plains as they were during the eighteen thirties. Reared in the sheer democracy of the early nineteenth century border settlements in Missouri? myself cradled and educated upon the Indian border? ? Josiah Gregg, as a young man, spent almost a decade in the Santa Fe trade and made eight trips across the plains with his goods. This story in its scrupulous detail appears in *Commerce of the Prairies*, but of his subsequent life very little has been known. In this book, and in a companion volume to follow, compiled from the hitherto unknown diary, and from letters, many of them little known, which Maurice Garland Fulton most fortunately procured from Gregg's own descendants, is published for the first time an account of Gregg's career until his death in 1850. This first book chronicles the period from Gregg's retirement from the Santa Fe trade in 1840 through his experiences in the East, on the plains, in Texas, and with the army in the Mexican War to the very eve of the Battle of Buena Vista, in 1847. Maurice Garland Fulton's enthusiastic and enlightened editing of the diary and letters, and the cogent biographical essay provided as a historical introduction to the books by Paul Horgan, bring into print what may well prove to be one of the paramount discoveries in Western Americana in this decade. This book, and its second part to follow, appear as volumes in *The American Exploration and Travel Series*, a series devoted to accounts of explorers, traders, and travelers, who have provided some of the most romantic and fascinating chapters in the history of the American domain.