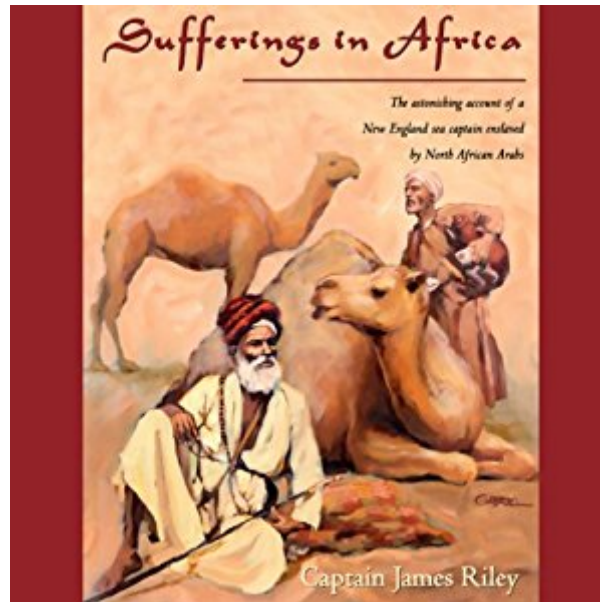




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Sufferings In Africa



Synopsis

Listed by Abraham Lincoln, alongside the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress, as one of the books that most influenced his life, few true tales of adventure and survival are as astonishing as this one. Shipwrecked off the western coast of North Africa in August of 1815, James Riley and his crew had no idea of the trials awaiting them as they gathered their beached belongings. They would be captured by a band of nomadic Arabs, herded across the Sahara Desert, beaten, forced to witness astounding brutalities, sold into slavery, and starved. Riley watched most of his crew die one by one, killed off by cruelty or caprice, as his own weight dropped from 240 pounds to a mere 90 at his rescue. First published in 1817, this dramatic saga soon became a national bestseller with over a million copies sold. Even today, it is rare to find a narrative that illuminates the degradations of slave existence with such brutal honesty. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was surprised I'd never heard of this book, supposedly one of the books Abraham Lincoln considered influential. It is the true story of an American sea captain who is shipwrecked and taken prisoner, then enslaved, by Arabs. Through his ingenious bargaining and a leap of faith, he convinces an Arab trader to trade all of his goods for the captain and some companions from his ship. He convinces the trader to take them across the Sahara, which means not only braving heat, hunger and thirst, but fighting off would be thieves as well. The captain promises that there is a reward, that there is someone willing to pay a ransom when they get across the Sahara. The problem is, this isn't true - the Captain knows no one in the city they are headed to. The Captain and trader have made a deal that if the ransom isn't paid, the crewman will be sold as slaves and the

Captain will be killed. The Captain is a linguist and learns enough Arabic to converse and to learn. He relates the tale of what happened, which is a true page turner, and the stories he hears from the Arabs. While this is an old book with a few old expressions and some racial terms no longer in use, I think it's clear that the Captain is not at heart a racist; he saw people of all colors as people. While he didn't like slavery, it was the way things were, and he accepted his fate as a slave without railing against the institution itself. Rather, he documents what happens, and makes some observations. Overall, it's a very interesting read.

Captain Riley's captivity, enslavement, starvation, and what he had to do to survive make an incredible tale that is enjoyable to read. Since this was written in colonial times and this book was widely read in England, it is easy to see how the British and French colonial masters regarded the Arabian peoples/tribes as intractable barbarians unworthy of consideration as the British and French governments just drew lines on maps in Paris and carved up the Middle East countries to suit themselves with no regard for the natives--and thus laid the foundation for many of the problems that continue today in the Middle East/Arabian countries. A great read!!

Difficult but fascinating reading. Difficult because of so much terrible things that happen to the author and his surviving crew but it was very interesting. Gives a person a new respect for anyone able to survive in the Sahara desert.

I found out about Captain James Riley's story one night when I was watching the history channel. I was so moved by the documentary about Captain Riley's story that I wanted actually read it for myself. I chose this book since it is simply Captain James Riley's words of what happened. He uses extremely descriptive language in laying out the situations he and his crew experienced throughout their ordeal of being stranding and later sold into slavery in West and North Africa. He spares no detail in the account, and it is truly a blessing that he and some of his crew survived. I found myself hoping for his success as I read, even though I knew how the story would end. I found myself wondering if I would have survived such an ordeal. This was possible by simply reading Cpt. Riley's account without additional things thrown in. After reading this I gave it to my mother I was so moved. It would have been nice if there were some maps included to give the reader an idea of where exactly the events took place, but never the less an awe inspiring book.

Superb adventure book. Probably the single best book when it came to preparing for treks in the

Moroccan desert and foothills. The tale itself is hard to put down, which is not something you can say about many books written in that era where prose can be a bit florid and embellished. Also interesting that Riley could have been as observant as he was under the stressful conditions he endured. I was sure to make a visit to an argan orchard as part of my Moroccan visit. And I will never look at a camel in the same way again.

I love reading adventure books and stories about people being at the brink of collapse who don't give up, and I am amazed to read/see what kinds of situations these people endure and eventually triumph. After having read lots of books with theme on human suffering (and final triumph), *Sufferings in Africa* is by far one of the most heartbreaking stories, and one of outstanding heroism and leadership. Reading this book, I was at the edge of my seat at all times; when you are almost positive that something good will happen to the crew, you are soon disappointed with another, yet more brutal, situation. The episodes described in the book seem surreal, impossible, implausible to common people like ourselves. After reading the book, I also ordered the DVD from History Channel's *History - Special : Skeletons On The Sahara* and also the book written by another crewman, Archibald Robbins ('Robbin's Journal'; very rarely found in print, although you can download it from a certain website), who was enslaved whole 19 months and eventually returned home to the US. My only disappointment with the book was the fact that it ends somewhat abruptly, without mention of the 6 crewmen remaining on African soil, or if attempts were ever made to save them. I did some research myself, and found that after the first 5 crewmen made it to the US, only 2 more made it afterwards (Archibald Robbins being one); 4 others were never again heard from.

very pleased with purchase would buy from you again

Loved this book, full of interesting real life twists and turns.

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