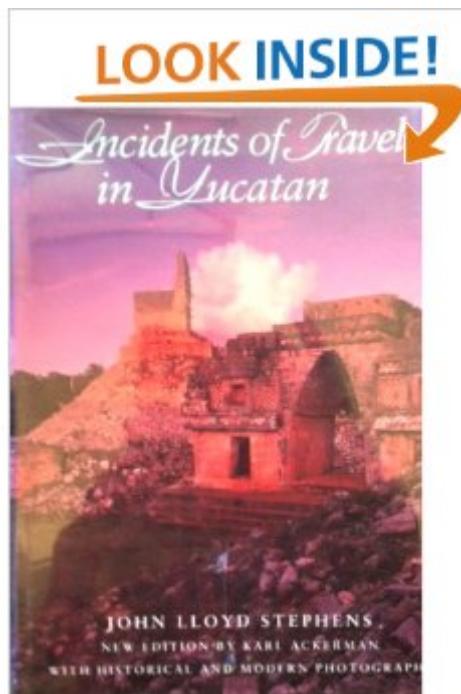


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Incidents Of Travel In Yucatan



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Customer Reviews

Now here's a publishing phenomenon. Stephens publishes his first book on the Maya and it is hailed by Edgar Allan Poe, among others, as "perhaps the most interesting book of travel ever published". His second book on the Maya, the one for sale on this page, was called "better than its brother" by William Hickling Prescott. 153 years slip by, and a new edition of "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan" is published by none other than Smithsonian Books. I made the mistake of assuming the new edition, coming from Smithsonian Books, would be of high quality. How wrong I was. Mr. Ackerman, in his own words, has reduced the text of this classic "by two thirds, but aims to preserve

the spirit and essence of the original work". That's right, this "editor" cuts out 67% of one of the greatest works of literature in history, and has the impudence and effrontery to say he aims to preserve the book's spirit and essence. Then, taking the concept of hubris to a new level, he puts his name on the cover under that of the author--as though he had actually added something. He has added nothing, only subtracted. Besides the 67% of the text, he also removed the name of Frederick Catherwood, who did the marvelous drawings, from the cover. In the introduction, there is not the slightest hint of shame for the gut job, which he describes: "I have eliminated Stephens' description of the journeys to and from the region...I have tightened Stephens' prose, eliminated the detailed measurements of buildings and mounds, and excised long historical digressions and anecdotes...I have not used ellipses to indicate compression..." With all the eliminations and excisions and hackings, Ackerman elects to leave in place misspellings because they "reveal Stephens' character and time".

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