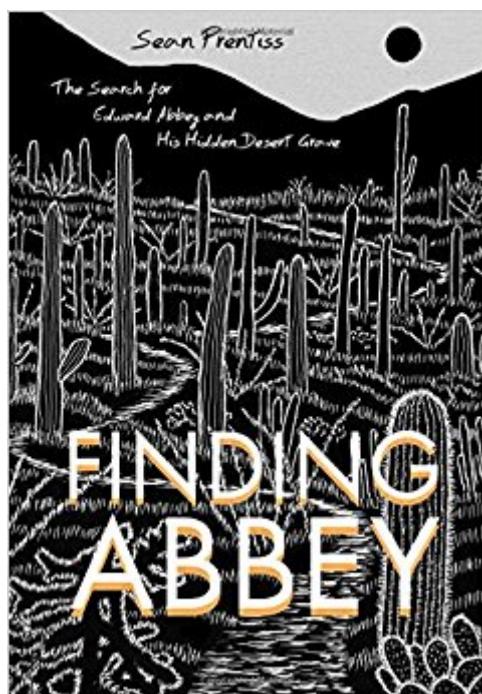


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# Finding Abbey: The Search For Edward Abbey And His Hidden Desert Grave



## Synopsis

When the great environmental writer Edward Abbey died in 1989, four of his friends buried him secretly in a hidden desert spot that no one would ever find. The final resting place of the Thoreau of the American West remains unknown and has become part of American folklore. In this book a young writer who went looking for Abbey's grave combines an account of his quest with a creative biography of Abbey. Sean Prentiss takes readers across the country as he gathers clues from his research, travel, and interviews with some of Abbey's closest friends—including Jack Loeffler, Ken "Seldom Seen" Sleight, David Petersen, and Doug Peacock. Along the way, Prentiss examines his own sense of rootlessness as he attempts to unravel Abbey's complicated legacy, raising larger questions about the meaning of place and home.

## Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: University of New Mexico Press (May 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0826355919

ISBN-13: 978-0826355911

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 37 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #277,102 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Ecosystems > Deserts #86 in Books > Travel > Specialty Travel > Literary & Religious #235 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Environmentalists & Naturalists

## Customer Reviews

"The significance of Abbey in Prentiss's own life is revealed through precise but emotional prose. The effect is both grounding and electrifying." Weekly Alibi  
"Even for readers unfamiliar with Abbey or his writings, *Finding Abbey*'s insights into this problematic man are compelling." Seven Days  
"Captures the true spirit of humans and our ability to mold ourselves into what we sincerely long to become through whatever life gives us on our own personal journeys." Porter Gulch Review  
"Prentiss offers fine, thoughtful readings of Abbey's writing, and he applies

it judiciously to his life and ours.â•“ Kirkus Reviewsâ•“ *Finding Abbey* is philosophical, poetic, a creative biography and a loving, evocative celebration of a controversial life.â•“ Shelf Awarenessâ•“ Prentiss successfully demonstrates his ability to write an intriguing and compelling story that simultaneously informs, inspires, and entertains. His vivid imagery and unique interviewing style adds depth and passion to his search, resulting in an exceptional narrative that flows smoothly and conveys his admiration for Abbey and the American West. *Finding Abbey* is a journey well worth taking.â•“ Foreword Reviewsâ•“ “[Prentiss] locates and interviews Abbeyâ•“’s inner circle of friends, and in these faithfully recorded scenes his book . . . catches fireâ•“ including a conversation with Doug Peacock, the ex-Green Beret model for Abbeyâ•“’s monkey-wrenching Hayduke, who in real life keeps a .357 Magnum by his side. The final chapters of Mr. Prentissâ•“’s quest are suspenseful and winning. . . . *Finding Abbey* is a touching book.â•“ Wall Street Journalâ•“ Readers will find something to envy in Prentissâ•“’s exploration. While having all the makings of an expertly researched piece of narrative journalism, Prentiss also turns the magnifying glass on himself. What is most commendable about *Finding Abbey* is [Prentissâ•“’s] willingness to go the distance and explore, to think deeply about one of modern Americaâ•“’s most outspoken critics, and to inspire others to look for what [Prentiss] rightfully calls “a life worth living.”â•“ Vermont Sports Magazineâ•“ “If you are an Abbey fan, don’t miss this book.”â•“ Wildlife Activistâ•“ “[*Finding Abbey*] brings us on a fascinating journey. Prentiss is especially able to describe in evocative detail the feeling of mountains and deserts and plains. He gives us an essence of the maddening, fiery, outspoken personality of Edward Abbey.”â•“ The Hardwick Gazetteâ•“ “A worthy contribution to the Abbey canon. . . . Highly recommended for all interested in the American Southwest, environmentalism, and modern literature.”â•“ Library Journalâ•“ “This book isn’t a biography; those have already been written. *Finding Abbey* is what you do in grief. Celebrate the life you shared. Analyze the faults. Peer into the darkness. Come out on the other side.”â•“ Santa Fe Reporterâ•“ “What’s best about Sean Prentissâ•“’s [*Finding Abbey*] . . . is that the author loves and understands what made Southwest writer Edward Abbey tick, why Abbeyâ•“’s writing is so resonant and why he wasâ•“ and still isâ•“ so important.”â•“ Durango Heraldâ•“ “Prentiss reveals the power of Ed Abbeyâ•“’s lasting call to action, not just as a Monkey Wrencher, but also as an ethicist who lives by Edâ•“’s own motto, “Follow the truth no matter where it

leads. *“In Finding Abbey*, author Sean Prentiss presents us at once with an intriguing shotgun overview of the late southwestern literary cult hero Edward Abbey’s life and work, interspersed with an intriguingly unfolding chronicle of Prentiss’s own search for direction, meaning, and art in life. And best of all what Abbey would like best this book has soul. The somewhat sensational title, by the way, is merely metaphorical. Or is it? *David Petersen, editor of Confessions of a Barbarian: Selections from the Journals of Edward Abbey*

After years of searching for the ghost of Edward Abbey across the American West, Sean Prentiss has settled with his wife, Sarah, on a small lake in northern Vermont. He now teaches creative writing at Norwich University and is the coeditor of *The Far Edges of the Fourth Genre: An Anthology of Explorations in Creative Nonfiction*.

I loved his interviews with Jack Loeffler and Doug Peacock, but instead of telling more about the immense beauty of the southwest, the author spends too much time on his personal journey from the horrors of Michigan. It sounds like Grand Rapids is a rat hole, a place I’ll never go. No wonder he escaped. It makes me glad I live in the wilds of Montana. I enjoyed his discussion of Abbey’s views on immigration however offensive they may be. I don’t know why he needed a research assistant to fly out and stay in a cabin with him when the book is about his personal journey to find himself and the spirit of Edward Abbey.

A complex look into the lives of two men; Abbey the legend, and Sean the seeker. It’s not a biography in a traditional sense but it does paint a good picture of Abbey and his friends. The tails are spun expertly. If you’re going to chase after Abbey’s legend it’s a good sign you’re on the right track when you get into your own adventures. Great work Sean; hope you come out to California on your book tour.

I love Ed Abbey, so I had a hard time finishing this book (but it was good writing and I did finish it within 48 hours). Ed was a public person, and whatever he wanted us to know about him he put down in his writing. First of all, He told us he enjoyed tipping a few, so why rehash this? His friends who loved him risked jail time by hauling his empty body far into the desert, to be buried in peace, within the solitude of obscurity. I admire that, and respect that devotion, even though enough has

been written for the general public to find that grave if they read between the lines of his friends Jack, Doug, and Johns' writing. So I was kind of confused that Mr. Prentiss would write so openly about what should have been his solitary and private experience. I can understand the quest, but I was troubled with the "bragging" of something that should have been an all around private experience of devotion. Maybe it's just me, and my feeling of this "place" as being holy.

To much self evaluating and comparing of himself to Abbey. What, after all this love and time spent on and at Abbey's 4 corners , he moves to Vermont.

Fun adventure for the Abbey enthusiast.

thank you

Outstanding book covering Abbey and his life. The author has a very insightful understanding of the desert and what it meant not only to Abbey but what it means to so many of us. He is an excellent writer and offers much more than just an excellent biography of Abbey. I have read almost all of Abbey's writings and Sean has captured the essence of Edward Abbey.

just finished reading Finding Abbey and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The author's love of nature is admirable I liked his respect for Abbey's virtues but recognized his flaws. Glad that the author found Vermont and Sarah.

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