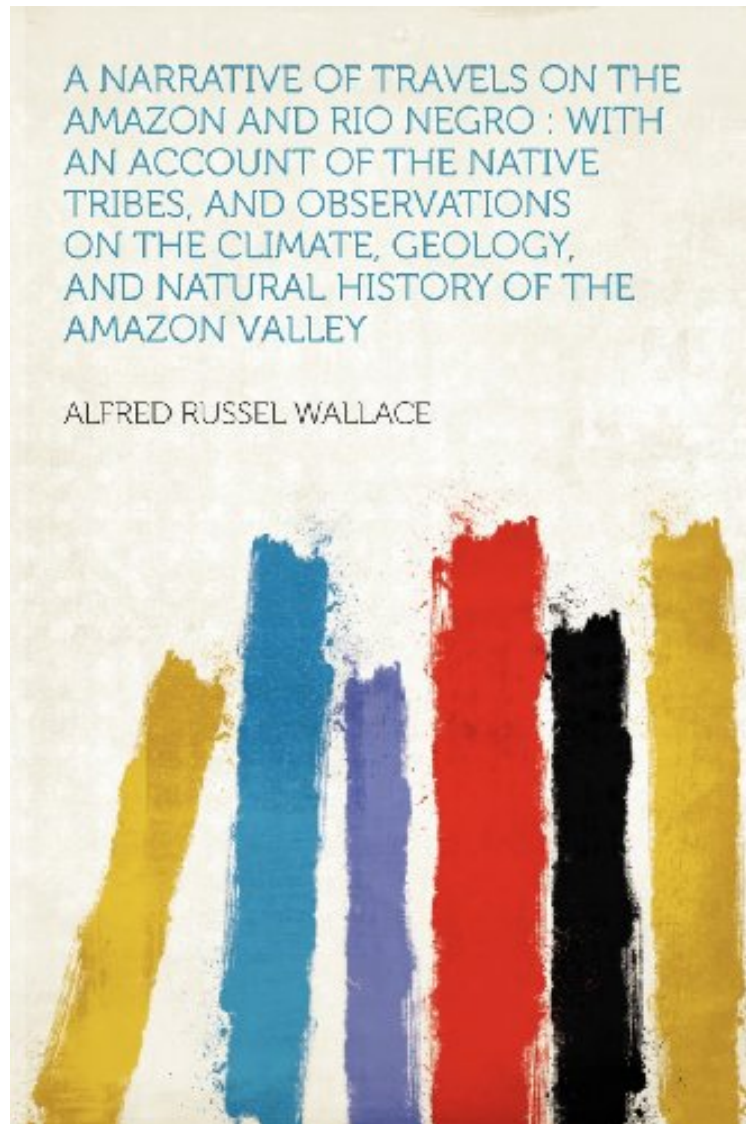


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A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro: With an Account of the Native Tribes, and Observations on the Climate, Geology, and Natural History of the Amazon Valley

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Amazon and Rio Negro: With an Account of the Native Tribes, and Observations on the Climate, Geology, and Natural History of the Amazon Valley:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. writtten like a journal but much too detailed for meBy Ralph C. Jung,MDI read this because I am going there this Summer. It was informative, writtten like a journal but much too detailed for me.10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Great travel writing.By Tony WatsonA young naturalist sets out to single-handedly explore the basin in the mid-19th century, his only help being Indian guides and interpreters.This book is so refreshing after reading other travelogues that are either too introspective or full of overblown hyperbole. Mr.Wallace is, I admit, a favourite author of mine, but there is nothing partisan in my praise for his writing ability; in another, later, book he says he is no writer, but his minute descriptions of people, places and environs conjures up mental pictures almost as good as a video. He doesn't over-elaborate points, but describes them so well that any more words would be superfluous. Having read Humboldt's descriptions of the same areas, I know whose I prefer - one can almost smell the soil and foliage.Reading the book today, there is something a little disturbing in the casual way he shoots everything that crosses his path to add to his collection, but when we consider the alternative of drawing and measuring each item on the spot (no cameras then) and the hyper-abundance of animal life in the forest at that time, it is no wonder he takes the easy option. There was no environmental crisis nor any need for species protection in those days - an area the size of Europe was governed from a town of 15.000 people!He poses some questions that underpin the theory of evolution by natural selection, and it is interesting to observe first-hand the mental process of trying to understand why and how different species became adapted to a particular shape and lifestyle. Wallace and Darwin corresponded and independently arrived at the same result, which culminated in 'The Origin of Species' (also recommended); although Wallace had doubts about the completeness of the theory, believing in a higher authority which lent a helping hand now and again - reminding us a little of the modern-day clash between Gould Dawkins.A great example of good travel writing *****This review refers to the original 1889 copy.5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Travel Narratives.By Bob FitzsimmonsAs a fanatic of travel narratives, I loved this book, and would recommend it highly. For those who felt the same way - I urge you to read A Tent Life in Siberia: An Incredible Account of Siberian Adventure, Travel, and Survival by George Kennan, which follows an expedition through Siberia in the 1860s. A similar concept, but moved to the unforgiving land of Siberia.

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About the AuthorJane R. Camerini is a faculty associate in the department of the History of Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.