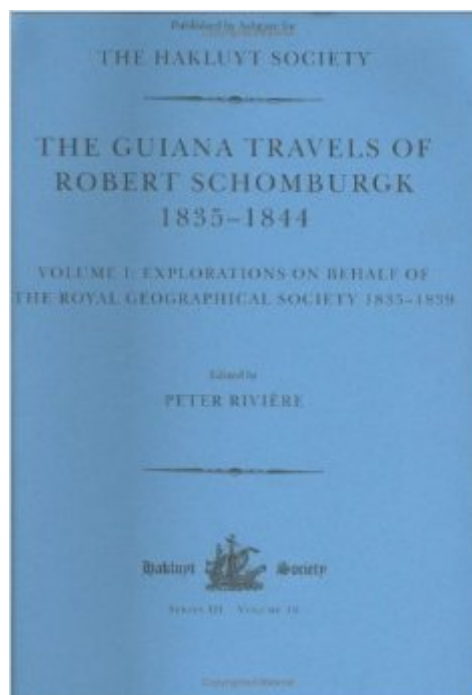


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The Guiana Travels Of Robert Schomburgk 1835-1844: Volume I: Explorations On Behalf Of The Royal Geographical Society 1835-1839 (Hakluyt Society, Third Series)



Synopsis

This is the first of a pair of volumes publishing the full reports of Schomburgk's travels in Guiana between 1835 and 1844, previously available only in greatly abridged and heavily edited versions. Robert Schomburgk left his native Germany for North America in 1828, aged twenty-four. A year later he was in the Caribbean, where, after various business failures, he devoted himself to the investigation of natural history, especially botany. Although he had no previous contact with the Royal Geographical Society in London, the work he submitted to it was of such a quality that he was able to persuade the Society to sponsor explorations in the north-east of South America, an area for which no accurate maps and little reliable information existed. From Schomburgk's arrival in British Guiana in 1835 up to 1839, he explored much of the interior of the colony and completed the arduous overland journey to the Orinoco to connect his survey with that of Alexander von Humboldt. During these expeditions he witnessed maltreatment of Amerindians at the hand of Brazilians, and having ascertained that the boundary between Brazil and British Guiana was undefined he proposed it should be fixed so that those within the British colony would be protected from further harassment. The British Government decided to go ahead with this exercise, and Schomburgk was appointed boundary commissioner with the task of surveying the boundaries of the colony. He did this between 1841 and 1843, returning to London in 1844 to be rewarded with a knighthood for his services. During much of his subsequent career, until his death in 1865, he acted as a British consul, first in Santo Domingo and then in Bangkok.

Book Information

Series: Hakluyt Society, Third Series

Hardcover: 420 pages

Publisher: Routledge; 1st edition (July 28, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0904180867

ISBN-13: 978-0904180862

Product Dimensions: 1.3 x 7.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.5 pounds

Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item

Best Sellers Rank: #4,503,454 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 inÂ Books > History > Americas > South America > Guyana #1705 inÂ Books > Travel > South America > General #9563 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Science & Mathematics > Earth Sciences

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