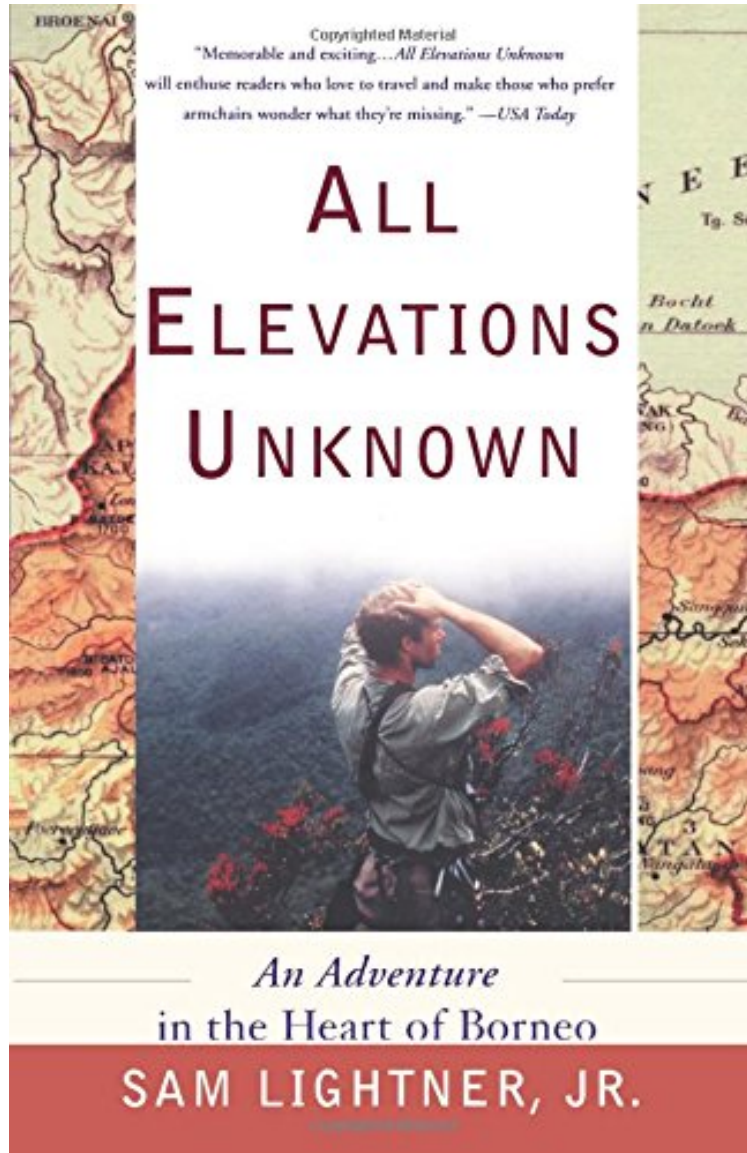


(Mobile book) All Elevations Unknown: An Adventure in the Heart of Borneo

All Elevations Unknown: An Adventure in the Heart of Borneo

Sam Lightner Jr.

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Sam Lightner Jr. : All Elevations Unknown: An Adventure in the Heart of Borneo before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All Elevations Unknown: An Adventure in the Heart of Borneo:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good companion for a trip to IndonesiaBy michael jI ran across a copy of this book at a hotel in Bali. Since I was looking for an outdoor adventure book, the subject really intrigued me. Even though the book is 17 years old I was fascinated by the description of Borneo and the parallel story line about

world war 2. I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading about an exotic land where very few people will ever get to experience firsthand. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. History and Modern adventure unite! By Rick Sam Lightner's tale of his 1999 climb up Borneo's Batu Lawi is a wonderful mix of modern adventure and historical retelling of Major Tom Harrison's 1958 book *World Within*. His story is a classic first-climb adventure in which he and his friends attempt to be the first (as far as they knew) to climb a mystical spire deep in the heart of Borneo. Lightner learned of the peak from an obscure reference in Tom Harrison's *World Within* and uses this text as both his guide to the land and the people. In reading about his adventure, you gain insight into not only the heart of a true adventurer trying to step foot where few have ever been and the hardships involved in such undertakings. You'll certainly think twice about sponsorship of your next adventure, especially any video documentation after hearing of his conflicts with his camera crew. At the same time, you'll gain a love of the people and land of Borneo. This tale is perfect for those who love adventure as well as learning the history of a people and their land. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. If Borneo fascinates you, this is worth the read. By Oksana Although Lightner's account of his climb up a mountain in Borneo is not in the same league as Eric Hansen's *STRANGER IN THE FOREST* (an account of his 3 month trek across Borneo in the 1970s--a great book), this book's historical accounting of WW 2 battles fought in Borneo (based upon the biography of Maj. Harrison) gave me more insight into the tribes and history of this magical land. Like other readers, I found Lightner's writings about Maj. Harrison's battles with the Japanese soldiers far more interesting than the snippy arguments he details between himself and the film crew that documents his climb. It was amusing (as a woman) to see that a group of men can be just as catty to one another, but Lightner goes into far too much detail about these highly personal spats, and many times, leaves me wanting more detail about the flora, the sights, the sounds and smells and to learn more about the indigenous guides that the author is traveling with. This book made me want to read more about Maj. Harrison's amazing and brave liberation of Borneo because Harrison, like author Eric Hansen 30+ years later, fell in love with the tribal people of Borneo; he grew to respect their customs, and in many instances their ecological reverence for the rainforest in which they dwelt. Hopefully, the biography of Maj. Harrison will not remain out of print for too long. If you're interested in climbing, the rainforest or in Borneo, this book is worth your time.

Sam Lightner, Jr., combines two tales of adventure, one historic and the other modern-day in his page-turner . . . With its rich sense of place and history, *All Elevations Unknown* offers a surprisingly fresh twist to an adventure-climbing tale. Climbing Magazine In the spring of 1999, armed with little more than a description from a book and a map labeled all elevations unknown, Sam Lightner and his German rock-climbing buddy, Volker, found themselves deep in the jungles of Borneo on a mission to climb a mountain that was only rumored to exist. What little they knew about the mountain they had learned from the memoirs of Major Tom Harrison, a British World War II soldier who in 1945 had been assigned the near-impossible mission of parachuting blindly into the thick Borneo rainforest where the natives had a grisly habit of cutting off heads to try to reclaim the island for the Allies. A captivating, utterly original combination of travel adventure memoir and historical re-creation, *All Elevations Unknown* charts Lightner's exhilarating and at times harrowing quest to ascend the mountain Batu Lawi in the face of leeches, vipers, and sweat bees, and to keep his team together in one of the earth's most treacherous uncharted pockets. Along the way, he reconstructs a fascinating historical narrative that chronicles Tom Harrison's adventures there during the war and illuminates an astonishing piece of forgotten World War II history. Rife with suspense and vivid detail, the two intertwining tales open up the island of Borneo, its people, and its history in a powerful, unforgettable way, taking adventure writing to new heights.

.com In March 1945, a smart but rowdy British officer named Tom Harrison parachuted into the Borneo Highlands and set about organizing an army of headhunters to battle the Japanese invaders. He knew the difficult country a little, having been there on a scientific expedition before the war, but now, "shepherded to the island by the world's most lucrative sponsor, the Dogs of War," he had to learn its secrets, and quickly. In 1958, Harrison wrote a memoir, *World Within*, chronicling his time on the island. Looking for new places to explore, Wyoming rock-scrambler Sam Lightner and his German climbing partner happened on Harrison's book, studied it closely, and, with four other "dirt-bag" climbers, went off to Borneo to find the peak of their dreams in the cloud forests, in country that maps "tinted gray and labeled 'All Elevations Unknown'." Battling unusual elements--including having to "cough up the larvae of *Echinococcus*" and dodge giant snakes, to say nothing of the area's still-active headhunting bands--they found it, scaled the spire called Batu Lawi, and lived to tell the tale. Their exploits form the heart of Lightner's good-natured narrative, which draws on Harrison's own account of jungle warfare to become a work of history as much as outdoors travel. Climbers, students of World War II, and armchair adventurers alike will enjoy his report. --Gregory McNamee From Publishers Weekly First-time author Lightner, a well-known rock climber, presents a memorable if somewhat problematic travel-adventure memoir of his 1999 climb up Borneo's Batu Lawi, an all-but-unknown peak in a rough jungle. He approaches the peak armed only with regional maps, none of which show the mountain, and a book called *World Within*, a travel memoir published in 1958 by Tom Harrison, a British officer who parachuted onto the

mountain during WWII to establish an Allied base. Drawn to Harrison's book, Lightner intersperses chapters about his climb with chapters retelling Harrison's story, building dramatic tension to the climaxes of both tales. He occasionally refers to his funding from a hiking supply company, and one sometimes wonders how sponsorship affected the story, though to Lightner's credit, the narrative seems free of commercial agenda. More problematic are the imagined dialogues between Harrison and his colleagues; Lightner admits they are based on second- and third-hand accounts, and the conceit feels strained. "Although it is not pure history, it comes very close," Lightner claims. Harrison settled on Borneo with a Kelabit (a local ethnicity) wife and helped the island improve its educational and political structures. But Lightner's own story, his natural flair for writing and the inspiration he derives from Harrison's life would have been sufficiently interesting to support a more traditional approach to Harrison's tale. As it is, though, this remains a wonderful introduction to an island and culture known to few people. 3 maps. (On-sale date: June 12) Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This dynamic narrative combines two journeys to the Kelabit Highlands on the island of Borneo. Veteran rock climber Lightner skillfully alternates the experiences of Tom Harrison, a British World War II soldier who parachuted into the jungle in 1944 and recruited the Dayak headhunters to wage guerrilla warfare against the Japanese army, with his own account of a nine-day climbing expedition to the limestone spire of Batu Lawi, an isolated mountain located in the most dangerous jungles of Borneo. Lightner, who first learned about the mountain from Harrison's 1958 account of the seven months he spent on the island (*World Within*), set out on a courageous mission to ascend Batu Lawi in 1999 only to discover that he too would have to endure similar challenges (e.g., leeches, fire ants, and sweat bees of the rain forest). The main difference is that the headhunters encountered by Harrison are now devout Christians who begin every morning with prayer. Whether it is the historical re-creation of the headhunters' ambush of Japanese soldiers or Lightner's ascent up Batu Lawi, the narrative teems with vivid descriptions and enough suspense to hold every reader's interest. Those interested in this book may also consider Judith M. Heimann's acclaimed *The Most Offending Soul Alive: Tom Harrison and His Remarkable Life*. - Ravi Shenoy, Naperville P.L., IL Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.