

Education of a Wandering Man
A Memoir by Louis L'Amour
An interpretation by Chad Heinzl

From the library of D.O. Schwenker

- An hour with a book can bring to mind,
Facts that took many years to find.

- Things that were learned at enormous expense are all on the library shelves to
commence.

Chapter One (What is an education & Where may one be found?)

p. 2 - "Often I hear people say they do not have time to read. That's absolute nonsense. In the one year during which I kept that kind of record, I read twenty-five books while waiting for people. In offices, applying for jobs, waiting to see a dentist, waiting in a restaurant for friends, many such places. I read on buses, trains, and planes. If one really wants to learn, one has to decide what is important."

- A great book begins with an idea; a great life, with a determination.

p. 3 - Education should provide the tools for a widening and deepening of life, for increased appreciation of all one sees or experiences. It should equip a person to live life well one must live with awareness.

- No one can 'get' an education, for of necessity education is a continuing process. If it does nothing else, it should provide students with the tools for learning, acquaint them with the methods of study and research, methods of pressuring an idea. We can only hope they come upon an idea they wish to pursue.

p.4 - Education depends on the quality of the teacher, not the site or beauty of the buildings – nor, I might add, does it depend on the winning record of the football team, and I like football.

- I came into the world with two priceless advantages: good health and a love for learning.

Chapter Two (The Hobo Way of Life)

Chapter Three (The life of a Boxer)

Chapter Four (The life of a hitch hiker)

Chapter Five (Campfire stories and Folklore)

Chapter Six & Seven (Taking care Isolated mines)

Chapter Eight (A Desert Walkabout)

Chapter Nine (Los Angeles and Looking for work)

Chapter Ten (Education)

p. 74 - Acquiring an education has many aspects, of which school is only one, and the present approach is, I believe the wrong one. Without claiming to have all of the answers, I can only express my feeling that our methods of instruction do much to hamper learning. Our approach is pedestrian. We teach a child to creep when he should be running; education becomes a task rather than excitement (*a means to an end when there should never be an end*). Yet each of us can remember one or two teachers who made learning an adventure, which it surely is.

p. 74 - Personally, I believe children should be taught to see, to observe, and to subject what they have seen to analysis, and this in the earliest grades.

p. 74 - Very young children will often learn a difficult subject easily unless someone tells them that is 'hard'. (*I fear this is contagious and also spreads through peer relationships*)

p. 75 - I studied purely for the love of learning, wanting to know and understand. For a writer, of course, everything is grist for the mill, and a writer cannot know too much. Sooner or later everything he knows will find its uses.

p. 75 - A writer's brain is like a magician's hat. If you're going to get anything out of it, you have to put something in it first.

p. 75 - I have read because I loved reading, and I have learned because I love learning, yet all one needs cannot come from books (*or the internet*). It can come from sounds, from music, from the play of light and shadow, from the people one meets or those one does not meet.

Chapter Eleven (Looking for work in the northwest & Becoming a writer)

p. 82 - Only one who has learned much can fully appreciate ignorance.

p. 83 - One book always led to another and occasionally my discoveries led to a whole succession of books, but there was no intent in my reading except to learn and to know. Later when I actually began to do research on various areas of history, from curiosity or something I wished to write, all of that changed.

p. 86 - Because I have traveled widely it is often suspected I traveled for the purpose of gathering material. That was not the reason. Material is wherever you find it, or can see it.

p. 86 - It is not necessary to travel in order to write good stories; it is only necessary to see, to understand, to reveal.

Chapter Twelve (Reading and Writing)

p. 89 - For a while during this period I lived on one sandwich a day so that I could save the money to buy three books of which I had read the reviews.

p. 89 - Bookstores were fewer than today, when paperback books were everywhere. There were many wonderful old bookstores operated by people who both knew and loved books, and to browse their shelves was and is pure delight. It is not uncommon today to find no one working in a bookstore who reads anything but the current best sellers, if that much.

p. 91 - Writing, however, is a learning process. One never knows enough, and one is never good enough.

Chapter Thirteen

p. 100 - I hoped that by understanding the books these men and women read I might grasp at the basic sources of some of their ideas.

p. 101 - Start writing, no matter about what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on. You can sit and look at a page for a long time and nothing will happen. Start writing and it will.

Chapter Fourteen

p. 104 - Books as books must be preserved. There is an effort now to preserve everything by mechanical means, but of what use will they be to a man who has no power? No means of reproducing the sounds or words? A book can be carried away and read at leisure. It needs nothing but an eye, a brain, and the ability to read.

p. 104 - Of the value of books I am myself the best example. If it were not for books, I should never have been more than a laborer perhaps killed in a mine disaster, as some of my friends were.

p. 108 - There was a steady flow of rejection slips. Once in a while, a handwritten word, Sorry, appeared on the slip. I was grateful for even that bit of attention. My secret was that no sooner did I put something in the mail than I wrote something else and sent it off. Each rejection was cushioned by my expectations for the other manuscripts. Too many writers put all into one script, and when it was rejected they are devastated.

Chapter Fifteen (reading and writing reflections)

Chapter Sixteen

p. 119 - There is a tendency, I believe, sometimes to judge the life-style of a whole people by what we know of a group. Writers and artists are inclined to life-styles different from those of artisans or farmers, merchants, or soldiers.

p. 121 - People are always interested in how a writer works, as if that made a difference. Some imagine a writer must have complete quiet, or some special atmosphere. The fact is that a professional writer can write anywhere, although some environments are undoubtedly more favorable than others. Some excellent writing is done these days by newspaper people working in a bustling, busy room.

Chapter Seventeen

p. 129 - Nations are born, they mature, grow old, and almost die, but after some years they rise again, and we in this country, as in all nations, need leaders with vision. Too few can see further than the next election and will agree to spend any amount of money as long as some of it is spent in the area they represent. H.G. Wells wisely said that "Men who think in lifetimes are of no use to statesmanship."

Chapter Eighteen

p. 138 - Someone has said that culture is what remains with you after you have forgotten all you have read, and I believe there is much truth in that.

Chapter Nineteen

p. 145 - Success often means security, safety in your home, safety in your possessions. To me success has meant just two things; a good life for my family, and the money to buy books and continue the education of this wondering man, who has ceased to wander except in his memory, his thoughts, and the books he writes.

p. 146 - Books are precious things, but more than that, they are the strong backbone of civilization. They are the thread upon which it all hangs, and they can save us when all else is lost.

p. 147 - It is not enough to have learned, for living is sharing and I must offer what I have for whatever it is worth.

A parting recommendation on an author and one of her books;

Practicing History by Barbara Tuchman