

Finding the West: Explorations with Lewis and Clark, by James P. Ronda. Histories of the American Frontier Series. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001. xxii, 138 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$22.95 cloth.

Reviewer Roger L. Nichols is professor of history at the University of Arizona. His latest book is *Indians in the United States and Canada: A Comparative History*.

After working on and off with Lewis and Clark materials for much of the past twenty years, James P. Ronda has plenty of ideas about that famous pair. He presents some of them in this short book of seven brief essays related to the explorers. Readers looking for narrative aspects of the expedition or adventurous biographical narrative need to seek those things elsewhere. Rather, here the author offers a range of ideas about exploration in early American history. He sees the people, events, and ideas surrounding Lewis and Clark through a wide-angle lens placing the explorers' ideas and actions within a context that includes those of Europeans since the days of Christopher Columbus. The central focus here is on the ideas and hopes the two men and their sponsor Thomas Jefferson brought to the West.

For those interested in the motivations for western exploration and its results for American society, Ronda's essays offer plenty of food for thought, but few stories. Yet he depicts the explorers as storytellers—as men who left home to find something, and whose travels had a direct impact on what they found. Ronda states that the "home told stories" or the explorers' cultural baggage often contrasted with what they encountered in the West. Nevertheless, their previous experiences and ideas about what constituted wilderness, civilization, and savagery, as well as the ideas, desires, and instructions of President Jefferson clearly shaped how they recorded and reported what they saw.

Ronda notes that the expedition journals included stories from Lewis and Clark, several of the enlisted men on the expedition, western traders, and the Indians who encountered the Corps of Discovery. The seven essays he presents all focus on some of those characters. Each chapter stands alone, but several deserve notice. In "A Promise of Rivers," Ronda analyzes Thomas Jefferson's ideas about eastern waterways as central for transportation, and his assumption that an all-water route across the United States existed. For the president, that route would ensure continuing American expansion and economic well being. It would serve to unite the nation. His instructions to the explorers state those ideas in no uncertain terms.

The last essay, "A Lewis and Clark Homecoming," picks up this thread as the explorers are forced to tell Jefferson that his dreamed of

water route to Asia existed only in his imagination. Learning of that, the president shifted the focus on the expedition's findings from transportation and trade issues to scientific discoveries. Not only had Lewis and Clark not found what he had ordered them to locate, but when they returned home they failed to compile and publish their results. To make matters worse, when Nicholas Biddle edited his two volumes on the expedition, he omitted their scientific findings, offering only a narrative of their travel.

For readers seeking some exploration narrative, the chapter titled "Moment in Time" offers the most interest. It examines the kaleidoscopic events of 1806, as politics, intrigue, international competition, and confrontation occurred repeatedly. The year saw a plot by Aaron Burr and James Wilkinson to create a western empire independent of the United States, as well as expeditions by Zebulon Pike on the central plains and the Freeman-Custis Party along the Red River in east Texas. That same year the Spanish sent a force of 600 men under Lt. Facundo Melgares north to the Pawnee villages in Nebraska, hoping to intercept Lewis and Clark. In Texas a second Spanish force under Francisco Viana blocked the Freeman-Custis Expedition on the Red River. In the Northwest, traders from Montreal, led by David Thompson and Simon Fraser put the British-Canadians into the race for empire. That same year the Rezanov Expedition to northern California for the Russian-American Company completed the picture. With these characters in motion, the American West was anything but empty.

Mostly the essays in this book allow its author to play with ideas. Western European and American leaders often shared visions about the West. While easterners, Lewis and Clark in particular, saw the region as empty, Ronda shows that was not the case. His essays offer modern readers a glimpse into the thinking behind the expedition and how it developed and changed American ideas about the early West.

The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock, edited by Will Bagley. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2001. 393 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer Bettie McKenzie is chair of the Montgomery County (Iowa) Historical Society. Her current research and writing are on rural life in Iowa: *Good Times in Montgomery County and Country Life*.

Thomas Bullock was the official journal writer of the pioneer company of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) that reached the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Bullock starts his account in Sep-

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