

Book Reviews

We'll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846-1848, by Richard E. Bennett. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1997. xix, 428 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 cloth.

Trail of Hope: The Story of the Mormon Trail, by William W. Slaughter and Michael Landon. Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain Press, 1997. 204 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY STANLEY B. KIMBALL, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, EDWARDSVILLE

We have two new and superior books on the Mormon Trail and migrations. Richard Bennett's is clearly the most in-depth study to date of a three-year period, 1846-1848; the other by William Slaughter and Michael Landon is a splendid survey of the whole twenty-two-year migration. The two complement each other. Although both books treat the entire Mormon Trail from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City, readers of the *Annals of Iowa* will especially appreciate the sections devoted to Iowa.

Bennett's comprehensive book is well written, well researched, well organized, and definitive, and is a must read for all students of Mormonism—not just for those interested in the pioneering trail experience, but for those concerned with any dimension of Mormon history during those three critical years. Bennett thoroughly discusses why Mormons act as they do, explaining why Mormons are Mormons first and all else second.

Most studies of the Mormon migration treat the whole period to the coming of the railroad in 1869. Because Bennett concentrates on a period of less than three years, he can go into greater depth, enabling him to open up, as no one before him has done, many windows on the Great Exodus. He fills in the blanks in our understanding of that part of Mormon history.

Most treatments of the Mormon trek west also concentrate almost exclusively on trekking or pioneering. Bennett provides many details about that aspect of the experience, but the real value of his work is his attention to what was going on elsewhere, the story behind the story, the little-known episodes between 1846 and 1848 that took place in

Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, and Utah—not on the trail. Another strength of the book is that it is more social than political, cultural, or economic history. That is a particularly difficult sort of history to write.

Furthermore, although this study is published by an in-house Mormon press, the jacket blurbs are all by Mormons, and the author is a Mormon who teaches at Brigham Young University, it is surprising, refreshing, candid, and objective. The story rings true, nothing is prettied up, there is no agenda other than the unvarnished truth of the pioneering experience. This is definitely not parochial or “faith promoting history”—a compliment to the publisher as much as to the author.

The author has read extensively and uses many obscure sources—as a 34-page bibliography indicates. A sprinkling of Oregon and California trail accounts add perspective and breadth to the story. The book is also massively documented with hundreds of endnotes—suggesting to future historians how to tell the Mormon story differently and better during the next millennium.

This is great history, but there is room for improvement. The author could have better conveyed the trail experience if he had personally experienced more of the physical trail, and a trail map is an absolute necessity. The affectionate use of Brigham for Young and the constant, annoying use of Joseph Smith for Smith is really quite parochial. There are scattered transition problems, a few inevitable typographical errors, and a few small errors of fact, but none of real consequence.

While Bennett provides a comprehensive account of a critical three-year period of Mormon migration, *Trail of Hope: The Story of the Mormon Trail*, the companion volume to a 1997 PBS documentary, is a splendid introduction to the whole period of Mormon migration. The book itself is handsomely designed, illustrated, and printed on slick paper. Its width of 11 inches makes it possible to print many large, full-page illustrations—like a small coffee table book. There are 120 black-and-white illustrations (many new to me), 45 full-color plates, full-color end papers, 10 documents, and 8 supplementary readings. Also included is a list “for further reading,” illustration credits, and an index. The book is thoroughly documented with 397 endnotes citing excellent secondary sources and many carefully selected primary sources. These are just some of the reasons it won a 1998 Small Publishers Award. One might expect such qualities in a book crafted by two superb archivists—both employed by the Historical Department of the Mormon Church. Their skills are everywhere visible. But the book is also an excellent read, well organized, and studded with quotations—many of them little known—from pioneer accounts.

I was especially impressed with the objectivity of the writing. The authors are, after all, employees of the LDS church, and the book is printed by a subsidiary of the church-owned Deseret Book Company. It is a compliment to the publisher as well as to the authors that the publication is so objective. For example, the authors pointedly state (113) that many early English converts were mainly interested in a chance to emigrate to the United States—a fact not usually mentioned.

Like Bennett's book, this one would have been even better if the authors had a more detailed personal knowledge of the trail, had been more out in the dirt and experienced the power of place and the spirit of locale. Otherwise, the book deserves a rave review.

In conclusion buy, read, and enjoy both books!

Calvinists Incorporated: Welsh Immigrants on Ohio's Industrial Frontier, by Anne Kelly Knowles. University of Chicago Research Paper No. 240. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. xxiii, 330 pp. Illustrations, maps, graphs, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY CHERILYN A. WALLEY, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Anne Kelly Knowles's *Calvinists Incorporated* is a detailed and insightful study of Welsh immigration to Jackson and Gallia Counties, Ohio, in the nineteenth century. Using a wide variety of sources, from Welsh-language periodicals to local histories to personal correspondence and business records, Knowles fleshes out the often sketchy story of immigration for an oft-overlooked ethnic group in America. She is concerned not only with the usual questions of how and when people immigrated, but also digs deep into the reasons people immigrated. Borrowing heavily from the field of geography, Knowles examines migration patterns within Wales, links those patterns to eventual emigration from Wales, and then ties the migration and emigration to eventual immigration to southeastern Ohio.

Calvinists Incorporated begins with a general introduction to the topic of Welsh immigration to the United States, concentrating on the second wave, from 1795 and 1850. In that section, Knowles also educates readers about various patterns of Welsh immigration, including chain migration. Knowles argues that local circumstances combined with national economic trends to determine the timing of migration and emigration. After examining in depth the factors influencing internal migration patterns, especially in Cardiganshire, Knowles moves on to describe factors prompting emigration from Wales. Religion,

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