

and Omaha) or those who became Iowans (Sauk and Mesquakie). He does refer to the plan of Indian agents at the Great Nemaha subagency to reintroduce extensive agriculture to the Iowa; the resulting crop in 1842, he notes, was produced almost totally by the white farmers who were supposed to provide only technical assistance. This account, coupled with references to periodic drought damage to crops, leaves the reader with the impression that the Iowa failed to master Euro-American farming techniques.

Hurt does note that the Sauk and Mesquakie of Kansas "had farmed for a long time . . . yet they were 'positively retrograding'" (148). And although he characterizes the Sioux as a hunting tribe, as opposed to a farming tribe, he also states that the "harsh environment of the Great Plains did not prevent at least some tribes from developing important agricultural economies" (62). He is unclear about his reference dates for either assessment, but his allusion to the period of initial white contact contradicts Carl Waldman's contention that "at the time of Contact, . . . the only noncultivators on the Great Plains were the Algonquian-speaking Blackfeet in the North and the Uto-Aztec Comanches in the South" (*Atlas of the North American Indian*, 1985). This point could be a catalyst for further research.

Agriculture in native North America deserves such a definitive study. Hurt's book is a readable synthesis of the diverse aspects of Indian agriculture. Its positive points far outweigh its few shortcomings. It is well worth perusal by all mavens of native American culture.

The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri, by Stephen C. LeSueur. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987. ix, 286 pp. Notes, illustrations, maps, bibliography, appendix, index. \$24.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD MAXWELL BROWN, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

One of the most dynamic and exciting fields of scholarship in American history today is Mormon history. Termed the New Mormon History by Thomas G. Alexander, it distinguishes itself by its objectivity and conceptual character as well as by copious publication of books and articles. Much of this scholarship revises traditional or long-held views. A sterling example of the New Mormon History is *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* by Stephen C. LeSueur. A revisionist account of the war, this book is the first on the conflict between Mormons and gentiles in northwest Missouri in the summer and fall of 1838. The conventional wisdom holds that the war represented a brutal case of the oppression of inoffensive Mormons by bigoted Missourians whose anti-Mormon outrages were highlighted by the Haun's Mill

massacre of Mormon settlers and by Governor Lilburn Boggs's order to exterminate the Mormons if necessary.

LeSueur does not minimize the horror of the Haun's Mill episode, nor does he excuse Boggs's strong anti-Mormonism. Yet LeSueur's main accomplishment—aside from the significant one of providing a scrupulous, nearly definitive account of the war—is to reveal that the conflict was far from one-sided. Mormon prejudice and hostility against the local Missourians were every bit as rancorous as that of the Missourians against the Mormons. A key Mormon leader, Sidney Rigdon, in a July 4, 1838, oration, was the first to announce the doctrine of extermination. He defiantly warned the Missourians against anti-Mormon actions: "that mob that comes on us to disturb us; *it shall be between us and them a war of extermination*, for we will follow them, till the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to *exterminate* us; for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed" (50, emphasis added). Rigdon's speech accurately reflected the Mormon mood in 1838, and was a prediction as well as a promise, for Mormons did carry the war to the houses and families of their opponents. In addition, the Mormons organized the Danites, who functioned first as a vigilante band to stamp out dissent among the saints and, later, as an aggressive Mormon militia against the Missourians.

Balanced against the hostility of Governor Boggs was the friendship for the Mormons of three eminent western Missourians: David R. Atchison, Alexander W. Doniphan, and Hiram G. Parks. Yet Atchison, Doniphan, and Parks were unable to save the Mormons from their own faults of extremism and belligerence or from the vengeance of their enemies. Although the Mormons and their antagonists were divided by virulent prejudice and blind misunderstanding on each side, they were united, says LeSueur in one of the most important interpretations in the book, by something that pervaded America in the 1830s and 1840s: a common allegiance to the vigilante spirit and to extralegal violence in behalf of community values, whether they were the religious values of the Mormons or the secular values of the Missourians. Thus, both sides resorted to extremist, self-righteous violence—the Mormons through Danite activities (Joseph Smith, according to LeSueur, was ultimately responsible for the Mormon zealotry and violence in which he ardently believed) and the Missourians through vigilante organizations and excessive militia actions.

This sad and complicated chain of events, resulting in the forced exit of the Mormons from Missouri in 1839, is exhaustively researched, acutely analyzed, persuasively interpreted, and very well

told in a book that is an outstanding contribution to both Mormon history and the history of antebellum Missouri and the Midwest. While LeSueur makes clear that Mormon actions—especially their cruel raids in Daviess County and their attack at the Battle of Crooked River—provoked the overwhelming, remorseless reaction of their gentile enemies, the conclusion remains, as LeSueur shows, that the Mormon War in Missouri in 1838 was a deep stain on the fabric of American democracy. He is to be commended for his unbiased, judicious account of this tragic event in American frontier history.

Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments, by William L. Burton. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988. x, 282 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$26.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ALVIN R. SUNSERI, EMERITUS, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

One of the more informative ways to explore a society is to study the military organization that forms an extension of that society. In times of both peace and war the personnel who constitute the armed forces carry with them the strengths and weaknesses, biases and prejudices, and values and traditions of the people they serve. They reflect in microcosm the sociological structure of their society. Thus, studying the ever-changing composition of the military sheds light on American history, especially American ethnic history. Since the Revolution, the polyglot makeup of the army has mirrored America's multiethnic cultures and conflicts.

At no time was this truth more evident than during the Civil War, as William L. Burton, professor of history at Western Illinois University, shows in this well-researched and equally well-written study of ethnic regiments that served in this most tragic of conflicts. He describes the formations of the various German, Irish, Scandinavian, French, and other multiethnic regiments from Missouri to New England, and tracks their histories through the battles and campaigns that followed. Ironically, Iowa, which even today is rich in ethnic groups retaining their collective identities, did not produce an ethnic regiment during the war. One effort to recruit an Irish regiment ended in failure because of political animosities; other efforts proved fruitless because the population base was inadequate when many Iowa Irishmen, along with Germans and Scandinavians, joined ethnic regiments recruited in neighboring states.

Burton analyzes the political and social situation in the North that produced and supported the organization of these colorful and often controversial forces. He also examines the changes in the regi-

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