

senter" tradition of migration in American Protestantism. It would have been more convincing for his argument to document American internal migrations where historians have missed latent or overt religious motives.

Even so, this volume provides ample evidence for a closer look at the role of religion, dissenter or otherwise, in more recent migrations as well as in Roman Catholic, Jewish, Islamic, and even so-called secular migrations. Rohrer is correct to imply that religion is not uniformly valued as an independent or even dependent variable of behavior in migration or in other historical phenomena. *Wandering Souls* reminds historians to look at religion with the same critical eye as they do at class, ethnicity, and gender.

A Most Magnificent Machine: America Adopts the Railroad, 1825–1862, by Craig Miner. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010. xvi, 325 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Scott E. Randolph is assistant professor of history at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia. His Ph.D. dissertation (Purdue University, 2009) was "Playing by the Rules: Markets, Manipulation, and the Meaning of Exchange in the American Railway Industry, 1900–1918."

In *A Most Magnificent Machine*, Craig Miner illustrates with vivid detail the shock, wonder, delight, and dismay that attended the early decades of the railroad revolution in antebellum America. That exercise alone is a useful tonic for our jaded, modern eyes. In the twenty-first century, groundbreaking transformation has been normalized and has become routine, almost boring, and certainly expected. Even the internet seems less significant when viewed against the longer history of electronic communication from the telegraph onward. Yet, for those who witnessed them, the railroad and the steam engine seemed to herald an age without limits, freeing humanity from the restrictions and limitations of muscle and sinew. The railroad became the physical and metaphysical incarnation of progress and transformation, and Americans could not stop themselves from talking about it morning, afternoon, and night. Miner takes us into that experience, as Americans struggled to comprehend both the vehicle and the pace of change. The world as they knew it was changing in ways no previous experience had prepared them for.

Miner's story, based on newspaper and booster pamphlets, is that of the literate and politically engaged; it favors the voices of the towns over the countryside, and reflects, as one would expect, a faith in progress. The narrative moves in a loosely chronological fashion, opening

with the story of how eastern cities, such as Baltimore, not blessed with New York's water level route to the west, sought access to the economic promise of their hinterlands. It concludes with the vociferous debates over the route and purposes of the transcontinental railroad. Along the way Miner discusses how the railroad upended traditional banking and credit practices and reinvigorated debates over the proper role of the states in the economy; how Americans reacted to the standardization of time and movement that the railroad wrought; and how they made sense of the human carnage that resulted from fast trains, loose rules, and flimsy construction.

This is a book that the casual reader will enjoy, but it provides little that is new for scholars of transportation, political economy, or the antebellum United States. Readers of this journal will find but one solitary reference to the state of Iowa, and, indeed, the soul of the book lies east of the Mississippi River and, for that matter, within those states whose borders meet the Atlantic Ocean. Yet the hopes and fears of the citizens of those regions regarding the promise and peril of the railroad would be familiar to Iowa's early settlers, especially after the end of the Civil War. Miner does argue that railroad development within the Old Northwest and across the Mississippi River had its own internal, regional developmental logic, of which connection to eastern markets was not always paramount. Readers familiar with John Larson's *Bonds of Enterprise: John Murray Forbes and Western Development in America's Railway Age* (1984, 2001) will find ample eastern precedents for the excitements and discontents he discusses. On a national scale, the book echoes and complements work done more than 30 years ago by Wolfgang Schivelbusch in *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization and Perception of Space and Time* (1979) and 25 years ago by James A. Ward in *Railroads and the Character of America, 1820–1887* (1986). So, by and large, Miner's contribution to the literature is in his methodology.

Miner's research is staggering in its depth, although not its breadth, and therein readers will find the book's significance as a monograph and a cautionary tale about the embarrassment of riches. The volume of Miner's research is almost beyond comprehension. By his own account, he surveyed 185 newspapers and 3,000 pamphlets covering the years in question, reading in the process some 400,000 distinct articles on railroads. This remarkable feat was possible only with the recent completion of several digitization projects, especially those covering nineteenth-century newspapers. Miner's effort makes plain the volume of print material now readily available to researchers. However, at times it reads like a series of note cards, with example after example

provided for each point of argument. In short, the evidence often overwhelms the reader.

This complaint aside, *A Most Magnificent Machine* is a useful addition to the literature on both antebellum American social history and the transportation revolution. Miner does not break new ground, but his book reinforces the scholarship of others who have examined hundreds of subjects running from economic modernization in the Old South to Americans' morbid fascination with and fear of railroad accidents. Teachers and professors will no doubt find it an excellent resource for stories and pithy quotations, and casual readers interested in railroads will enjoy the lush retelling of the early years of the industry's development.

The Nauvoo Legion in Illinois: A History of the Mormon Militia, 1841–1846, by Richard E. Bennett, Susan Easton Black, and Donald Q. Cannon. Norman, OK: Arthur Clark Co., 2010. 436 pp. Illustrations, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer A. R. Blair is professor emeritus of history at Graceland University. He has held various offices in the John Whitmer Historical Association and the Mormon History Association.

One of the most controversial actions by the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith was his establishment of the Nauvoo Legion. By 1844, it was the largest volunteer militia in Illinois and greatly feared by non-Mormons. Some historians have seen it as an example of Smith's megalomania, part of a plan for a "Kingdom of God" on earth, or as an example of a Mormon tendency toward domination. The authors of *The Nauvoo Legion in Illinois* argue that it was a typical militia of the time, legal under the Illinois system, non-aggressive, and established by Smith as a defense.

The Latter-day Saints evolved from being adverse to the use of force, to carrying arms in 1834 for reclaiming "stolen" property, and, for some, in 1838, using force to "despoil" non-Mormons in Far West, Missouri. The authors contend that Smith rejected the violence and secrecy of those "Danite" vigilantes in favor of a legal, strong military force to protect his people.

It is a well-presented thesis but difficult at times to maintain, partly because of Smith's rhetoric, which alternated between admonitions to his followers to forgive their enemies and invectives such as "Damn them as traitors!" directed against government officials who had not aided them. Even more chilling was his vow to exercise his power if need be. The authors do not adequately deal with Smith's wavering stance in Illinois politics, or how Smith's interpretation of