

Book Reviews and Notices

Scenes of Visionary Enchantment: Reflections on Lewis and Clark, by Dayton Duncan. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. x, 198 pp. Note on sources. \$22.00 cloth.

Reviewer Vernon L. Volpe is professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. In graduate school he briefly assisted Gary Moulton's publication of the Lewis and Clark journals. His current project focuses on the career of western explorer John C. Frémont.

Dayton Duncan's name should be familiar to many readers due to his work with noted filmmaker Ken Burns. Lewis and Clark enthusiasts certainly must recognize his name; indeed, some trail followers may have heard Duncan present one of the many public addresses he reprints in this enjoyable volume. Each essay or address presented here typically first appeared in another setting, yet this collection can nonetheless "enchant" both veteran readers and those not yet ensnared in the Lewis and Clark web. Iowans share a natural interest in the expedition that traveled along the Missouri River's banks and through neighboring states. Of course, an emotional landmark both in the journey and in Duncan's retelling is the untimely death of Sergeant Charles Floyd and his interment along the river in a grave now marked by a monument in Sioux City.

Although this work is not documented in the traditional scholarly form, it still presents authoritative views on the famous mission, thanks to the obvious expertise of the author. An authority on the expedition in his own right, Duncan is certainly familiar with the works of Gary Moulton, James Ronda, Stephen Ambrose, and other such Lewis and Clark experts. (In many cases he has worked closely with these leading scholars.) Like them, he fields many invitations from Lewis and Clark associations to present original impressions to interested audiences on the continuing appeal of the famous Corps of Discovery. True, this collection contains much that is familiar, and a rigorous thesis is generally lacking, beyond expressing excitement about the expedition. Yet the work offers many valuable insights and colorful anecdotes that will leave few disappointed for following in Lewis and Clark's footsteps once again.

Each essay stands alone in concentrating on a particular episode or theme, usually cleverly related to the original place of presentation.

Together, they comprise a remarkably complete vision of the Lewis and Clark adventure, considering the volume's slender and informal nature. Besides crafting charming vignettes and adding helpful advice on the Lewis and Clark trail, Duncan includes more substantial essays on Lewis and Clark's leadership style and the expedition's relations with the native inhabitants. Generally upbeat and inspirational about the mission's meaning for modern America, Duncan adds melancholy digressions on the modern-day fortunes of those Native Americans and the sad costs of environmental damage. More enjoyable reading is provided by his recreation of captivating scenes around campfires from Fort Mandan to Fort Clatsop.

Duncan is certainly careful in his appraisals, and he echoes much Lewis and Clark scholarship in praising the captains, their leadership, and the qualities of their men. He is also acutely aware of the ambivalence many Native Americans feel about the celebration of America's western explorations. Occasionally the expedition and its leaders earn mild criticism—such as for the decision to divide into multiple small detachments during part of the return journey. Mostly, however, Duncan praises the mission and its determination to “proceed on.” Obviously, the Lewis and Clark story contains much to be celebrated, and Duncan is an inspired storyteller adept at enthraling audiences already conversant with the details and successes of the mission. Passionately presented, this volume is excellent evidence of that remarkable ability.

Wilderness Journey: The Life of William Clark, by William E. Foley. Missouri Biography Series. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004. xiv, 326 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

William Clark and the Shaping of the West, by Landon Y. Jones. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004. xiii, 394 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00 cloth.

Reviewer David A. Walker is professor of history and associate dean for faculty scholarship/director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Northern Iowa. He regularly teaches courses on the American West and Indians in American history.

The bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition has had a bandwagon impact, generating everything from organized historical tours to stuffed dolls and replica keelboats to important historical work. The two biographies under review add valuable perspectives not only on the expedition, but also on the remarkable life of William Clark. The foundation of the current burst of interest is the highly readable *Undaunted Courage*, by Stephen Ambrose, which focuses almost exclu-

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.