

It was a complex time. As Miller and Nowak argue, "The decade began with terror and affluence uniting a people under a national faith. The mid-fifties, desperately tired of crises, continued that faith in a more casual and relaxed manner. Yet by 1960, that mask of faith was drawn aside to reveal a changing face: regretful, doubting, yet also looking in hope to a rebirth." (p. 18) As indicated, the authors develop a useful periodization: 1948-1953—"The Age of Fear"—characterized by the Korean War, McCarthyism, and the spread of atomic weaponry; 1954-1957—"The Era of Conservative Consensus" when Dwight David Eisenhower became the national symbol of hope and confidence and Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* enjoyed "best-seller" status; and lastly, 1958-1960—"The Time of National Reassessment"—prompted in part by the Soviet Union's Sputnik, the world's first earth-orbiting satellite.

Whenever one reads a book devoted to a single decade of American history, there is the tendency to compare it with Frederick Lewis Allen's study of the twenties, *Only Yesterday*. Fortunately, the Miller and Nowak work has all the strengths of Allen's 1931 book, but none of its weaknesses. Both *Only Yesterday* and *The Fifties* are highly readable—they are a fun experience. But unlike Allen, Miller and Nowak do not focus on the colorful and episodic. Their book is "meaty"—one that future interpreters of the 1950s will have to consider.

The research for *The Fifties* is impressive. The authors immersed themselves in the historic sources of the decade—old movies, popular magazines and newspapers, and the best scholarly secondary works. Moreover, Doubleday published a marvelous collection of fifties photographs and included the authors' useful chronology of the decade. While Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak cogently challenge *Life* magazine's contention of "The Nifty Fifties," this is without question a "nifty" book.

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Nauvoo: City of Joseph, by David E. Miller and Della S. Miller. Santa Barbara, California, and Salt Lake City, Utah: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974. pp. ix, 264, Illustrations. \$10.00.

Nauvoo, Illinois today is a wonderful ghost town, alive with the departed spirits of Mormon pioneers and French communitarians (Cabet's Icarians). In 1844, it was the largest city in the state with a prosperous, growing population of 12,000. It possessed its own army (the Nauvoo Legion), university (the state chartered University of the City of Nauvoo), and a city charter which made it an independent theocratic state within a state. The Nauvoo Temple, the most elaborate and splendid building in "the west" was a tourist attraction. All this came to a dramatically abrupt and violent end in less than seven years.

This brief seven-year period is a definitive point in Latter-day Saint history. This time of splendor on the Mississippi saw the Mormon church crystallize such distinctive theological formulations as the concept of the "plurality of Gods," polygamy and vicarious baptism of the dead. Nauvoo was a watershed time for the Saints in their flight from the "extermination orders" of Missouri Governor Lilburn, to the settlement of the Great Salt Lake basin.

The authors of this work know Nauvoo intimately, having been related to *Nauvoo Restoration*, a church-sponsored project designed to turn the still largely deserted town into a subdued religious Disneyland (the eventual fate of most defunct religious communities, i.e. the Shakers; Zoar, Ohio; Ephrata, Penn., etc.). It is not so much the intent of the restorers as the overwhelming press of American commercialism which transforms everything into a commodity. The process is observable at Nauvoo.

The Millers have made extensive use of illustration which alone is well worth the book. They have added an interesting Appendix which includes the Nauvoo City Charter and a facsimile of "The Nauvoo Surrender Terms,"—both prime documents.

Their partiality to the Utah Latter-day Saints tradition is reflected in a number of places but is not strident. One wonders who this work is intended for. It is not a narrow in-house history intended solely for the faithful, but neither is it a history which can be of service to the professional historian. It is too fragmentary and slender to really present Nauvoo in its fullness. It is too detailed for the casual reader and too limited for the specialist. The references do not reveal any new primary sources and some older works (academic theses) are omitted. The few pages devoted to Icarians are gratuitous for it has neither relationship to the story nor does it really explain the Icarians. That would take another book. It might best have been omitted. The story of *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph* properly ends with the exodus of the Mormon people after the murder of Joseph Smith.

The Millers wisely tie in the fall of Nauvoo with its success and raise the central question of the elasticity of American accommodation to religious and social deviance. They acknowledge the spirit of "Manifest Destiny" which the Mormon ideology thoroughly ingested; but fail to examine the implications of the identification of the LDS Church with American nationalism and imperialism. The Millers do raise by omission a significant question for religious and social historians alike. It is only quite recently that we have been able to be candid about people's feelings and relationships—licit and illicit.

We do not yet have a study of Nauvoo which is complete . . . and we may never . . . but it should be attempted.

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