

brother, Hyrum. The final two sections tell of the trial of the accused murderers, growing tensions between Saints and non-Mormons for the next two years, the exodus from Nauvoo beginning in January 1846, and the open warfare of that September.

Although Hallwas and Launius mostly stick to traditional subjects and use recent interpretations by other historians, they give a unique interpretation as well which ties Mormon characteristics such as bloc voting, group identity, and intense loyalty to Smith to a larger theme. Their thesis is that the troubles between the Mormons and non-Mormons was one of conflicting "myths." Each side had a "mythic vision" that ordered how they perceived all things. Beyond the accumulation of grating individual events or specific theological beliefs was an "ideological struggle between two cultures. . . . Mormons believed that the good society arose 'through a covenant with God that created a people,' while non-Mormons felt it arose 'through a contract among individuals that created a government'" (4). The Saints, the authors contend, were certain that they were being persecuted by Satan. They "needed" this myth to justify their existence and it was impossible for Smith or his followers to see that they might be in the wrong. Their theocracy was perfect, and outsiders and dissenters who opposed it must be destroyed. A similar myth developed in the minds of the non-Mormons: they were the defenders of the cherished American myth of individualized democracy. While both sides were adamant, perhaps unable to see any other vision, the non-Mormons felt that they were losing out to the expanding Mormon solidarity and so were impelled to act in illegal but, to them, justifiable ways. Both "myths" ensured the tragedy of Nauvoo.

This is an important book in its field. The historical settings are generally clear and informative, and the "myth" interpretation is provocative. Although too many documents on polygamy and more anti-Mormon than pro-Mormon documents are included, the documents are fascinating. The collection will be valuable for research for years to come and should help readers understand the complexity of the Mormon experience.

Pioneer Children on the Journey West, by Emmy E. Werner. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995. xiv, 202 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$21.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ELIZABETH HAMPSTEN, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

Between 1841 and 1865, forty thousand children took part in the overland migration from the Middle West to the western United States. Emmy E. Werner, a developmental psychologist, has found written

accounts by or about 120 of them that she studied for evidence of children's resilience under adversity. *Pioneer Children on the Journey West* tells of children caught in snowstorms, children who crossed Death Valley, traveled the Platte River route through Nebraska, or followed the Gila trail in the Southwest.

Not all children in Werner's western migration sample exhibit resilience in overcoming odds: 20 percent, she says, died along the journey, and even some survivors did not seem to be thriving after their ordeal. Mary Murphy, for example, reported, "William, Simon, Naomi and myself came through, but as for me, I have nothing to live for" (160). Fifteen of the forty-one children of the Donner Party died, yet Werner uses the ones who "came through" to help define characteristics of resilience: "The twenty-six survivors had the support of strong, competent mothers; of caring siblings; of cousins, aunts and uncles; and of friends of their 'travelling community.' Those who perished were mostly young children below age five who lacked the support of an extended family and whose mothers were left to fend for themselves without a husband by their side" (161). The surviving children were competent, they developed self-confidence, and did not give up hope. "Such children," Werner says, "were able to attract affection and encouragement from members of their extended family, from friends and neighbors, and from strangers" (5).

In this study resilience is measured individually, case by case, omitting social, political, or economic factors. These were the years before, during, and just after the Civil War, when many hoped that western migration would alleviate the economic disaster left by the war north and south, and displace Indian populations with non-Indian settlements. A man who helped rescue a group of California gold-seekers reported, "I must take occasion to remark that had the men of the rear emigration thought less of their property and more of the lives of their families, I could have brought them all to the [Sacramento] valley before the storm." These were complicated times that Werner's concentration on individual psychological traits does not consider. For example, in the spring of 1847, when Sarah Winnemucca, a Piut, was three years old, her mother told her that "the whites were killing everybody." One day when people were coming, "our mothers buried me and my cousin, planted sage bushes over our faces to keep the sun from burning them, and there we were left" until after dark. "This whole band of white people perished in the mountains, for it was too late to cross them. We could have saved them, only my people were afraid of them" (22-23). Werner adds that it was the snow that trapped the Donner Party, but makes no other comment about Sarah's resilience or Indian/non-Indian relations. These often arresting and

moving accounts suggest that some children bounced back after hardships; others evidently did not.

A New Life: Danish Emigration to North America as Described by the Emigrants Themselves in Letters, 1842–1946, by Niels Peter Stilling and Anne Lisbeth Olsen, translated by Karen Veien. Danes Worldwide Archives in Emigration History, No. 6. Aalborg, Denmark: Danes Worldwide Archives, 1994. [Available in the U.S. through the Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa.] 215 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$15.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY SUZANNE SINKE, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

A New Life, published originally in Danish in 1985 as *Et Nyt Liv: Den danske udvandring til Nordamerika i billeder og breve* appeared with minor revisions in English in conjunction with the opening of the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa. *A New Life* is actually an odd mixture of a letter collection and a standard history of an immigrant group. Stilling and Olsen highlight nine basic questions or concerns, to each of which they devote a chapter: why people left, the crossing, first impressions of a new world, agriculture, town life, family life, institutional life (including the press), later impressions of America, and assimilation. Out of a group of approximately four thousand letters, the authors chose passages from one thousand, written by fifty individuals. The letters, in contrast to some collections, are primarily personal ones that have not been published previously. The authors made their selections based on how well the letters address their themes, editing down most selections to include only a paragraph or two on that particular topic. In some cases the same writer appears in another chapter on a different topic, but overall there is not much continuity.

Instead, the text takes the form of a standard immigrant history, punctuated often by quotes from the letters, but absent other supporting information in many cases. Nearly all of the chapters cover all five phases of Danish migration outlined at the beginning of the book: 1820–1850, sailors and pathfinders; 1850–1870, family emigration to Wisconsin, Utah (Mormons), and later the plains; 1870–1895, mass migration, especially to Iowa and Nebraska; and finally 1895–1910, migration to cities. This creates some confusion regarding chronology because the authors do not always make the time periods clear within a given selection. When describing work opportunities, for example, the authors describe the period prior to the 1880s as fairly good, and the 1880s and 1890s as generally poor, rather than referring to more

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