

hierarchy and doctrine. Readers unfamiliar with the history and doctrines of the LDS church will have no trouble following the narrative.

In the wake of the sesquicentennial of the Mormon Trek across southern Iowa, Iowans may want to learn more about the complexly interwoven elements of material culture and religious belief that dominated the lives and thoughts of the thousands of Mormons who crossed Iowa during the years from 1846 to 1869. The trail from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City is being marked by the National Park Service as a National Historic Trail, there are Mormon meeting houses in several Iowa communities, and Mormon temples are under construction in several cities throughout the world. Hamilton's book allows us to understand the origins of LDS architecture and town planning, two significant manifestations of LDS history and part of the story of the Saints' migrations on the American frontier.

*Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas*, by James R. Shortridge. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995. xvii, 254 pp. Maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY NICOLE ETCHESON, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

*Peopling the Plains* is neither an atlas nor a history of the settlement of Kansas but something of both. What emerges from the mixture is a rich cultural geography that explores the changing frontiers of Kansas by drawing on and mapping the state censuses of 1865, 1885, 1905, and 1925. Although the excellent maps dominate the book, James R. Shortridge has done a fine job of synthesizing a vast amount of historical material. The book is clearly written; the bibliography and notes reveal careful research and expert command of the literature.

The text provides a rich discussion of the influence of mining, cattle raising, railroads, religion, commerce, and especially land hunger and prices on settlement patterns in Kansas. Shortridge nicely balances the tension between collective action and individual agency in his discussion of the settlers' motives. They came as groups to Nicodemus, the free black settlement; to Catherine and Schoenchen, Russian German towns; or to the New England Emigrant Aid Society settlements such as Lawrence. By the later period, however, the migrants came more as individuals and families than as communal or religious settlements. Almost all of Shortridge's settlers are concerned about getting the best deals from railroad and land companies.

Shortridge's emphasis on economic factors, especially land, tends to downplay other factors that affected the peopling of frontier Kansas. Shortridge gives much greater weight to land hunger and speculation

than to politics in determining the patterns of settlement in "Bleeding Kansas." This view, in my opinion, dismisses too quickly the effects of guerrilla warfare. Even the occasional burning out of settlers by opposing political factions did much to empty parts of eastern Kansas and to delay their permanent settlement.

Shortridge concentrates on such regional groups as the upland and lower southerners, migrants from other midwestern states (especially Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois but also Iowa and Nebraska), northerners, blacks, various European groups, and Union veterans. He does an excellent job of detailing the shifting patterns of in-migration. Yankees, so important in the early days, ceased coming in later censuses. Southerners, temporarily blocked by the Civil War, were resurgent in the postwar period. Other midwestern states, such as Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, became increasingly important over time. The exodusters are thoroughly discussed. The Germans, important in the earlier period, are increasingly superseded by other European and, by the twentieth century, Mexican migrants. Shortridge challenges the conclusion that the race for Kansas was won, culturally, by New Englanders. Instead of finding a Puritan city on a hill in frontier Kansas, the numbers indicate that other settlement groups were just as important, if not more so, in forging Kansas's cultural identity.

Iowa, so recently a frontier itself, did not contribute greatly to Kansas's settlement. Although Iowa's population was sparse, Shortridge does detail its presence (40, 128-31) and asserts that Iowans were drawn by the promise of cheap land.

Shortridge's figures on cultural groups exclude the Kansas-born. This tends to disguise the continuing presence of certain regional groups, as the descendants of Hungarians or upland southerners are lost in future censuses. The result is that the reader has a snapshot of a Kansas frontier in a particular census year: northeastern Kansas in 1865, southeastern and central Kansas in 1885, and western Kansas in 1905 and 1925. Gradually, readers lose sight of the broadening and deepening of regional culture in Kansas. In his conclusion, Shortridge seeks to bridge that gap. He acknowledges that cultural geography is an "ongoing process" with "a significant legacy from the old settlers" (201). His own conclusions are speculative, and he calls for further work on the meaning of the regional formation he has observed.

Although Shortridge's work is specific to frontier Kansas, he outlines trends that are important for all of the midwestern and Great Plains states. These regional settlement patterns demonstrate a pattern of cultural formation that was replicated again and again on the western frontier.

Shortridge's "population geography" will be useful to those interested in tracing the settlement of many different groups as well as to those concerned with the specific history of Kansas or certain Kansas communities. *Peopling the Plains* is a valuable addition to a growing body of literature that emphasizes the cultural richness and diversity of the Midwest.

*Rural Democracy: Family Farmers and Politics in Western Washington, 1890-1925*, by Marilyn P. Watkins. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. xii, 239 pages. Illustrations, maps, tables, graphs, notes, index. \$42.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY KIM NIELSEN, MACALESTER COLLEGE

In *Rural Democracy*, Marilyn Watkins traces rural political activism in Lewis County, Washington, from 1890 to 1925. Watkins effectively uses census records, tax receipts, local newspapers, and the records of local voluntary organizations, such as the Farmers' Alliance, the Populist Party, the Grange, the Socialist Party, purchasing cooperatives, and the National Nonpartisan League, to illustrate political activism among farm families. Aided by a relatively homogeneous and debt-free farming base, farming families of the region upheld a tradition of rural activism over several decades. They relied on a community-based vision of participatory democracy, with a populist sense of economic justice, independence, and rural prosperity. Using the strength of their grass-roots connections, Lewis County farmers resisted the directions of outside Farm Bureau and county agent "experts." Instead, they relied on their own organizations for expertise and market knowledge. Only in the aftermath of World War I, when class divisions between town and rural areas in Lewis County increased and influential townspeople embraced the antiradicalism of the wider political culture, did the unity of Lewis County political culture crumble.

Most historians of rural activism focus on one political movement in one historical moment. Watkins's analysis, on the other hand, asks how a series of struggles for rural justice was sustained amidst changing political and economic contexts. This adds breadth and a unique character to *Rural Democracy*. Farm families were able to continuously explore the meaning of democracy, she argues, because of the rich rural culture in which they participated. The relationships of neighbors, the shared interests of rural and town folk, and the social spaces for fun that were established within Lewis County political movements created a rural culture that enabled the repeated exploration of democracy. The vitality of the Lewis County farm activists depended

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