

The Great Medicine Road, Part 2, Narratives of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, 1849

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to see it in that light. It surely wasn't his fault that in 1835 he had been appointed a member of the Twelve, that he had led a most successful apostolic mission to Great Britain from 1838 to 1841, and that he was by 1847 in the most senior position to succeed Joseph Smith as president. Running the church by committee or by quorum when their own revelations made clear that the Twelve were to go into all the world was hardly a defensible proposition. And Orson Pratt knew it. While Mason is correct in showing that Young and Pratt were often at odds theologically and in terms of personality, it is significant that it was Pratt who presented Young's name for a sustaining vote as the next president. Pratt's action was not a capitulation to Brigham's right to succeed but a recognition of it.

While Mason's book is a good read—lively, informative, and entertaining—it lacks substance and the authority and credibility of in-depth scholarly research.

The Great Medicine Road, Part 2, Narratives of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, 1849, edited by Michael L. Tate, with Will Bagley and Richard Rieck. American Trails Series 24. Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. 328 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer J. T. Murphy is professor of history at Indiana University South Bend. His research and writing have focused on the military history of the nineteenth-century U.S. West, the Oregon Trail, and frontier settlement, among other topics.

Writing in 1917, Henry Ferguson recalled his family's move in 1849 from their farm in Jasper County, Iowa, to the gold fields of California. He was 11 years old when his parents and six siblings crossed the Missouri River at Kaneshville (today's Council Bluffs), where they joined the "Iowa Company" of 42 wagons and "about three hundred souls." They were "all determined in purpose," Ferguson remembered, "yet seemingly almost making a leap in the dark—none having any personal knowledge of what lay before them" (120).

When the Argonauts of 1849 left for the West, there were guidebooks aplenty on how and where to travel, trails and cutoffs were well marked, ferries awaited at many river crossings, and the American army maintained a presence along the way. Each day's routine, however, might be altered by injury or disease, a real or imagined fear of Indians waiting to steal oxen, or the inability to find grass and water. Decisions had to be made, resolve maintained. "There is no back out now," Sherman Hawley reported to the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. "The gold diggings are ahead, and we are bound to be there" (185).

The letters, journals, and memoirs of trail migrants demonstrate both the commonalities and uniqueness of their experiences. Amid the sameness of miles gained and landmarks noted, they left a fascinating and informative record of what they saw and the choices they faced. In this second of a proposed four-volume series about going west along the Overland Trail, editor Michael L. Tate (assisted by Will Bagley and Richard Rieck) focuses on '49ers bound for California. This volume continues to satisfy the project's initial goal of finding documents "truly representative of the great migrations" (15). In *A Treatise, Showing the Best Way to California*, Sidney Roberts, a Mormon from Iowa City and early promoter of Kaneshville as a jumping-off point, argued against sea travel in favor of the land route passing through Salt Lake City, and he assured his readers that Mormons could provide assistance anywhere along the way. The remaining narratives, like those by Ferguson and Hawley, describe trail life and provide insights into their authors' attitudes and character. Benjamin Robert Biddle, for example, paid east-bound travelers to carry his mail to Springfield, Illinois, where his journal entries appeared in the *Daily Illinois State Journal*. He lamented being far from home and family, but, he said, "As the world is, there is a necessity for gold" (101). Because of this, many on the trail had "adopted a coarseness of manners and language," yet he hoped that "all may learn lessons of wisdom by the study of themselves" (102).

This volume, like its predecessor (and presumably those to follow), will prove helpful for researchers and excite readers interested in the lives of gold-seeking pioneers. The editors provide four maps reprinted from studies such as Merrill Mattes's *Platte River Road Narratives*, photographs and illustrations, a lengthy bibliography, and explanatory introductions and footnotes. It is an impressive effort and an important addition to trail studies.

An Agrarian Republic: Farming, Antislavery Politics, and Nature Parks in the Civil War Era, by Adam Wesley Dean. Civil War America Series. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. x, 230 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer Tim Lehman is professor of history at Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Montana. He is the author of *Public Values, Private Lands: Farmland Preservation Policy, 1933–1985* (1995).

An Agrarian Republic reminds us that most mid-nineteenth-century Americans lived in a world of small, self-sufficient farms, not yet dominated by the industrial juggernaut looming on the horizon by century's end. That agrarian world generated a system of values, beliefs, and fears