

## Sweet Freedom's Plains: African Americans on the Overland Trails, 1841-1869

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is entirely appropriate. Anyone wishing further detail on the Icarians is advised to read Robert Sutton's study, *Les Icaris: The Utopian Dream in Europe and America* (1994).

Jennings's work culminates in an interesting, complete, and largely error-free chapter on the Oneida Community, which flourished in upstate New York under the leadership of the enigmatic John Humphrey Noyes from the 1840s to the 1880s. This episode of utopian history is of interest to social historians but has limited relationship to the history of Iowa other than as a unique, if not spectacular, flowering of nineteenth-century utopianism and millennial anticipation.

Errors and omissions aside, *Paradise Now* is enjoyable, fresh, and a worthy introduction to American utopianism. It is not a complete history of utopianism in the United States, but it springs to the forefront of the books that I would recommend to anyone with even a passing interest in these movements or in the history of the early nineteenth century.

*Sweet Freedom's Plains: African Americans on the Overland Trails, 1841–1869*, by Shirley Ann Wilson Moore. Race and Culture in the American West Series. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. xv, 368 pp. Map, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 hardcover.

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

On Christmas Day, 1849, Jacob Y. Stover and 26 other gold seekers from Iowa City stumbled into Rancho Cucamonga, a 13,000-acre cattle ranch and vineyard east of Los Angeles. They had traveled the overland trail to Salt Lake City, then taken the Old Spanish Trail over the desert into California. The ranch manager, an African American named Jackson, welcomed the visitors, fed them, and let them fill their tin cups with wine, which Stover remembered drinking "as fast as the Indians could tramp it," even though their host suggested moderation. "Gentlemen, you have had a hard time of it," he recalled Jackson saying, "but de first ting you know[,] you will know noting" (83). Despite his hospitality and apparent skill in managing a large ranching operation, Jackson had only a minor place in Stover's memory; he was simply part of a humorous interlude. This is one of many stories related by Shirley Ann Wilson Moore in her informative study of African American participation in the westward migrations. She wants us to recognize their presence and understand their significance; otherwise they will remain hidden from our collective memory.

In telling the history of the trail years, Moore gives herself a running start with brief narratives about earlier people of African ancestry who ventured into the West. These include Esteban, a Moroccan slave and survivor of a failed sixteenth-century Spanish expedition along the Gulf Coast, and York, William Clark's slave and a member of the Corps of Discovery. Esteban became an "interpreter, ambassador, and negotiator with the Native population" (20), yet was still a slave when he died serving the Spanish king. Moore credits York with being a "full member of the Corps and engaged in all decision making, voting, and hunting activities with the group" (23). Placing him within a Corps of Democracy, a common trope since the Lewis and Clark bicentennial, is wishful thinking, though Moore understands that slavery and obscurity defined his story afterward. Moore believes that the West allowed "ability and fortitude" to "prevail over racial pedigree" (31), and the journey westward meant "independence, dignity, and personhood for African Americans" (160). Yet she understands slavery's power. It shaped American law and culture, so African Americans had much to overcome in seeking freedom and opportunity.

In 1844, when George W. Bush traveled to Oregon with his wife and five sons, he sought the same chance as his fellow migrants, but, as John Minto remembered, "It was not in the nature of things that he should be permitted to forget his color" (206). Oregon as a territory, then as a state, forbade blacks and mulattos to settle there. Bush went north to Puget Sound, and in 1855 Congress authorized his right to a land claim, although he still could not vote. Despite being a free state, California tolerated slavery. In 1852 three hundred African Americans toiled in the gold fields for their owners. Alvin Coffey, a Kentucky-born slave and well-known California pioneer, first went west in 1849 as an ox driver. At the diggings, he saved \$616, hoping to acquire his freedom, but was cheated by his master and sold. After a second trip over the trail and three years in the mines, he earned enough to purchase his liberty and that of his family. Together, they returned to California. Moore rightfully celebrates these successes, but she is mindful of the costs. Freed at age 56, Clara Brown proved a savvy and successful businessperson during Colorado's gold boom; with her increasing wealth, she helped others gain their freedom, travel west, and obtain educations. But her husband and four children had been sold and separated years before. At age 82, after three decades of searching, Brown found a daughter living in Council Bluffs.

For anyone interested in African American history or the American West, this is a sound and thorough study. Moore's prose can be stiff, but it is always instructive as she covers a lot of ground, relating stories

of better-known figures and including people barely identified in history except by skin color. Her strength is in laying out slavery's strict parameters and reminding us of its constrictive power, yet she seems inspired by the people in this book, and so should her readers.

*Abolitionizing Missouri: German Immigrants and Racial Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America*, by Kristen Layne Anderson. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016. viii, 278 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$48.00 hardcover and e-book.

Reviewer Darrel E. Bigham is professor of history and director of Historic Southern Indiana emeritus, University of Southern Indiana. He is the author of *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (2005) and *Reflections on a Heritage: The German Americans in Southwestern Indiana* (1980).

The title of this work is a bit unfortunate. Besides the awkward first word, the study is much narrower than it suggests. It is not about *all* Germans but about "German radicals" in St. Louis between 1848 and about 1868. It does not, moreover, offer much by way of context—that is, how these people and this place compared to or with their counterparts in other places, especially in river border cities such as Cincinnati, Evansville, Louisville, and upriver communities in Iowa.

Kristen Anderson asserts, without much evidence, that her book is the *first* analysis of such Germans' opposition to slavery and how the Civil War and emancipation affected their views on race. She acknowledges that the "radicals" represented a fraction of the larger German-speaking communities of St. Louis, which, like other midwestern cities, gained a large number of German immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s. St. Louis had a large Roman Catholic population, as well as "Old Lutherans" who built the Missouri Synod. It was also a center for the ecumenical Evangelical Synod of North America. There were also the "Forty-Eighters," free-thinking liberals like Carl Schurz. The "Grays" or "church Germans" thought quite differently from "Greens" like Schurz about the Union, emancipation, and race, and their leaders were prominent opponents of the Irish bishops in the East who urged Catholics to become acculturated. The dynamics of intra-German American St. Louis, in short, need a fuller discussion.

Having offered this cautionary note about the author's claims, I should acknowledge that her extensive use of German-language primary sources is impressive. She relies heavily on the *Anzeiger des Westens* and the *Westliche Post*, two prominent German-language newspapers. The former, originally Democratic, became Republican after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and was a prominent supporter of German