Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Southern Iowa

Alma R. Blair
The diary as presented here is heavily edited. Contemporary photographs have been added, and the work is divided into sections with explanatory introductions, endnotes, and an epilogue. The editor has also introduced other stylistic changes for "the John Rath story to be told in the clearest way possible" (6).

Rath's diary is valuable as a record of the regiment. In fact, it may be the only published account of the 31st Iowa Infantry. At least no other account is mentioned in either Dornbusch's Military Bibliography of the Civil War, or my Civil War Eyewitness. In addition to being a chronicle of events in which the regiment was involved, Rath often mentions the presence (and often fate) of other soldiers from northeastern Iowa. Iowans will also be interested to know that John Rath later helped his son John W. found Rath Packing Company of Waterloo in 1891.


REVIEWED BY ALMA R. BLAIR, GRACELAND COLLEGE

Pearl Wilcox's Roots of the Reorganized Latter Day Saints in Southern Iowa is a study of the largest of the several groups of Latter Day Saints who made permanent settlements in Iowa beginning in the 1850s. Many Reorganized Latter Day Saints concentrated in Mills, Fremont, Shelby, Crawford, and Decatur counties after they had either left the westering "Mormon trek" or returned from Utah disillusioned with polygamy. Others rejected leaders such as Alpheus Cutler and Charles B. Thompson to follow Joseph Smith III, son of the denomination's founder. Wilcox has not written a consistent thematic or sequential history of the denomination and its beliefs, but has constructed a litany of thirty-six specific congregations with brief biographical information on almost two thousand early (1855–1910) members.

The Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church's roots in Iowa have been deep and persistent. The Saints provided the initial impetus for the founding of Lamoni, Iowa, and were important segments of other small communities. Although articles have appeared over the years in the Palimpsest and elsewhere, this is the only book on the subject. It has various flaws: it lacks a unifying theme needed to control its encyclopedic facts and eliminate peripheral anecdotal material; there are some factual errors; the narrative is often disjointed; and there are
no maps to help the reader identify the locations discussed. However, many of the anecdotes illustrate the people’s fervor, and the index is valuable. Members of the church will relish the book’s details, and, despite its faults, it will be useful to local historians, genealogists, and others interested in Iowa’s religious history. It also provides information for a more adequate future history of the denomination’s relationship to Iowa.


REVIEWED BY DAVID A. WALKER, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Mining history, historical preservation, and tourism remain important ingredients in enhancing the public’s understanding of the American West. Bisbee, located in the isolated canyons of the Mule Mountains in southeastern Arizona, a few miles from the Mexican border, is unique in that the atmosphere of turn-of-the-century architecture remains, ranging from the buildings along the main streets to mine dumps. The town’s history reflects the frontier West’s colonial dependence on national and international financiers.

This book is a marvelous collection of 129 often dramatic contemporary late nineteenth and early twentieth-century photographs. Beginning as a typical exhibition catalog, the publication expanded to include a series of seven essays by recognized scholars who tell the history of Bisbee and western base metal mining. Each of the historical essays depicts a major feature of western metal mining. Charles Sargent places the growth of Arizona’s urban areas within the context of copper mining. Richard Graeme describes industrial development in Bisbee. Don Hofsommer demonstrates the importance of integrating Bisbee into the growing national railroad network. Clark Spence, the dean of western mining historians, offers an excellent overview of western mining promotion and investment, proving the necessity of outlays of substantial capital, with only indirect references to Bisbee.

The book’s editors wrote two superb essays. Carlos Schwantes, a widely published authority on western laborers, summarizes the history of Bisbee’s diverse work force, with particular emphasis on the development of organized labor, including the infamous deportation of suspected Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies) strikers