

Book Reviews

FAY BOTHAM AND SARA M. PATTERSON, eds. *Race, Religion, Region: Landscapes of Encounter in the American West*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006, 216 pp., \$40.00 hardback.)

Reviewed by Richard V. Francaviglia, Professor of History and Geography at the University of Texas at Arlington.

According to the editors, race, religion, and region are the “3R’s” needed to comprehend the complex settlement of the modern American West. Arguing against simplistic dichotomies, the editors observe that the “western cultural landscape yields a new world populated by multis, mixes, and mestizos,”—a result of racial, ethnic, and religious identities that converge and fracture “along numerous fault lines” (3). The West is, after all, a place where Mexican-American Mormons, Japanese-American Catholics, and Navajo Baptists are now common and where Native American spirituality and Asian religions increasingly rub shoulders with Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Consisting of eight separately authored essays, this lively anthology resulted from a 2004 interfaith seminar held at the Claremont Graduate University. Titled “The Most Segregated Hour: Race and Religion in the American West,” that seminar and this book cover(ed) a wide range of subjects. The varied chapters include “Going Against the Grain: Multiracialism and the Fate of the Social Gospel in 1920s Los Angeles” by William Deverell and Mark Wild; “Religion, Immigrants, and Americanizers in Los Angeles, 1900–1925” by Michael E. Engh, S.J.; “Bringing in the Sheets: Robert Shuler, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Southernization of Southern California” by Daniel Cady; “Engaging Habits and Besotted Idolatry: Viewing Chinese Religions in the American West” by Laurie Maffly-Kipp; “Bodies on Borders: African Americans, Penitentes, and Social Order in the Southwest” by Pablo Mitchell; “Modernists, Pueblo Indians, and the Politics of Primitivism” by Tisa Wenger; and “E Pluribus Unum: The Islamic Center of Southern California and the Making of an American Muslim Identity” by Mary Jane O’Donnell.

These essays are well written, but one in particular—“Children of Ham and Children of Abraham: The Construction and Deconstruction of Ethnic Identities in the Mormon Heartland” by Armand L. Mauss—will be of special interest to readers of *Mormon Historical Studies*. Mormon identity epitomizes

the editor's claim that a religion needs to be understood in both historical and geographical contexts. The Mormons' views toward race in particular evolved with the Latter-day Saints' various migrations from East to West. Mauss first identifies eight major factors that influenced Mormons' concern about lineage. This cogent synopsis is insightful, for it confirms that Mormon identity is complex and is closely related to cultural encounters through time and spaces. Mauss discusses the Latter-day Saints' early (ca. 1825–30) conceptualization of the New Jerusalem and their self-characterization as Israelites. He notes that the significance of American Indians as Lamanites in Mormon doctrine also emerges at this time, and he also addresses the Mormons' evolving perceptions of African-Americans. The latter likewise took on new dimensions as the Saints moved farther into the West. African-Americans were initially welcomed into the priesthood, but things changed with the Saints' move to Utah [Territory], where slavery was accepted and Brigham Young famously voiced anti-Black sentiments that would take a century to overcome. In the mid-to-later twentieth century, the Mormons' successful proselytizing in South America and their relative failure to attract Blacks led the Church to issue an official proclamation that re-opened the priesthood to Blacks. This, according to Mauss, signifies that the Church "has been transformed from a parochial sect in the western desert glorying in its own peculiarity and persecution, into a universal religion with a presence on every continent" (124). This story of Mormon interaction with peoples of varied races has been told many times by sociologists, geographers, and historians, but Mauss does a fine job of condensing and synthesizing a vast body of literature.

Overall, *Race, Religion, Region* is an important addition to the literature. However, the "landscapes of encounter" in its subtitle is figurative rather than literal. Very little of this book addresses religion's impact on the visible cultural landscape. Rather, the term landscape is used much as "political landscape" is used by pundits and political scientists to refer to what is happening socially or culturally rather than to how the land looks or has been transformed. Moreover, although these religious encounters that concern the editors and authors are common in the West, they are also common elsewhere. In fact, the West happens to be just one of many regions where this interaction occurs, but one suspects that the supposed exceptionalism of the West was too enticing a myth to resist. These caveats aside, *Race, Religion, Region* offers some very exciting new material about what happens when diverse peoples with diverse religious beliefs come in contact.

W. PAUL REEVE, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners, and Southern Paiutes*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006, x + 231 pp., maps, notes, bibliography, index, \$35.00 cloth.)

Reviewed by Todd M. Kerstetter, Associate Professor of History at Texas Christian University.

In this book which embraces the term *frontier*, W. Paul Reeve, assistant professor of history at the University of Utah, weaves a fascinating tale about neighbors, values, religion, and how in the course of conquest they mixed to create a dynamic legacy. Students of the American West will have spotted the preceding sentence's thinly veiled reference to Patricia Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest* and, this reviewer hopes, some tension with the core principal of traditional western history. Reeve skillfully mixes the two schools and leaves his readers with a new understanding of the complexities of history with respect to the West and Mormons.

The book covers about forty years, beginning in the 1860s, and the action unfolds where Utah, Nevada, and Arizona meet. In addition to state boundaries, indigenous Paiutes met with invading Mormons, and those groups likewise met miners who invaded after the discovery of precious metals. The ensuing contests to control space, resources, and power featured wildly conflicting worldviews and provide a nuanced interpretation of nineteenth century U.S. history, namely what it meant to be American.

The first two groups on the scene, Paiutes and Mormons, lived according to a worldview that placed spiritual matters ahead of material ones. Unfortunately for them, that placed them outside prevailing standards and put them at a disadvantage relative to miners. The miners who flooded the territory from the East, arrived with the advantage of pursuing their livelihoods in a way that placed them at the top of a hierarchy of Americanness. According to Reeve, mainstream U.S. society favored miners because they valued progress, industry, individualism, and the quest for wealth. Those values provided the foundation for a type of secular religion practiced by mainstream America. Those outside it, here Paiutes and Mormons, faced not only an uphill battle, but also a fight for survival as mainstream America tried to eradicate such opposition.

In the second chapter, "Making Space," Reeve reviews the stories each of the book's three groups told about this place, how they came to be in it, and what it meant to them. Mormons incorporated significant spiritual language and placed their experience in the context of their religious experiences. Their trek to the Great Basin went hand-in-hand with their belief in their chosenness and their quest to establish Zion. Emphasizing spirituality set Paiutes and Mormons apart in the region's history. Spirituality also had links to social

and economic peculiarities that distinguished these groups. They emphasized hunting and gathering or agriculture to a much greater degree than did the other major group, miners, involved in this story. Miners brought with them a culture that emphasized competition, risk taking, individualism, and industry, which, according to Reeve, made them especially American in the tradition of the market revolution and values cherished by mainstream society in the Gilded Age. One might argue that Mormons, and to an extent Paiutes, also embraced these characteristics, but Reeve's miners lacked a spiritual framework, and they and their culture pushed the region from the sacred to the profane.

Reeve focuses his interpretation in the next chapter, "Power, Place, and Prejudice," which covers in detail developments from 1866 through 1869. In this period word of the region's mineral wealth reached Washington D.C., where eastern politicians worked with Nevada's politicians to ensure that miners settling in the area received power and privileges above those afforded to Mormons and Paiutes, both of whom were deemed un-American. Here Reeve covers the U.S. crusade against polygamy and offers an enlightening comparative discussion of Utah and Nevada Territories and the quest of each for statehood. Reeve uses Nevada's quick attainment of statehood as evidence that the United States valued miners and their work and society over those of Mormons. His discussion of a visit to Utah by James Ashley, chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Territories and a member of the House Mining Committee, during which Ashley claimed that "[t]he religious element now ruled the country" and suggested their influence would lead to the nation treating Mormonism in Utah the way Sherman treated the South on his march to the sea, shows nicely how religion influenced the relationship between the U.S. government and its territories (43). In particular, it shows how the power to make space in the Southwest shifted from the hands of Mormons and Paiutes to Congress and clergy in the East. Here Reeve makes an important contribution to discussions of the Mormon and Indian problems by taking the analysis beyond religion and culture to argue that more than anything else, those groups' conflicts with Gilded Age America centered in gold seeking, materialism, capitalism, individualism, progress, and development.

Despite power imbalances inherent in the three-way interaction on the frontier, Reeve makes an excellent case for complexity on the ground that each group contributed to shaping a new society and culture in the region. He focuses on five Mormon settlements which he describes as a defensive frontier to protect Zion against threats, perceived or real, posed by Paiutes and miners. Interestingly, and appropriately, Reeve emphasizes that from the Mormon perspective the frontier contest amounted to a spiritual matter—pitting good against evil. Within the Mormon community, this played in some cases as a

battle for Saints' souls as those on the mining frontier battled temptation from the pursuit of wealth and the corruption of mining communities. Mormon-Paiute interactions also reflected complexity on the frontier as Church leaders struggled to reconcile the place of American Indians in Mormonism and the reality that Zion encroached on Paiute (and other) lands. Reeve calls Church policy complicated, although one might also label it convenient or inconsistent. On the one hand the Church sent a mission to the Paiutes consistent with its ideal of Indian perfectibility; on the other hand, Brigham Young linked Paiutes to the Gadianton robbers described in the Book of Mormon as part of a justification for taking Paiute land.

Reeve tells the miners' story with a provocative twist that rings true. These non-Mormons and non-Paiutes who came to the region to extract its mineral wealth viewed their settlement as the vanguard of civilization and progress. For them, "nationalism was religion" (114). They viewed Paiutes and Mormons as dangerous others, un-American and uncivilized, to be guarded against. Changes such as Brigham Young's death, a warming in Mormon attitudes toward and participation in mining, the LDS embrace of the national two-party system, and the demise of plural marriage made the miners, local Gentiles, and the nation at large view Mormons in a new, more accepting light. As the miners and mainstream America saw it, the Saints had abandoned their most threatening characteristics and embraced values that provided, for those who did practice nationalism as religion, for them to be considered coreligionists.

Reeve serves his readers and his topic well. He writes clearly and engagingly and with balance, he researched thoroughly, and the book's excellent maps enhance the text. His creative comparisons lend depth and complexity to understanding social and cultural elements that contributed to conquest and community building in the borderlands.