

A Classic Reprinted

West from Fort Bridger: The Pioneering of Immigrant Trails across Utah, 1846-1850. Edited and with an introduction by J. Roderic Kornis and Dale L. Morgan; revised and updated by Will Bagley and Harold Schindler (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1994).

Reviewed by Melvin T. Smith, Ph.D., Mt. Pleasant, Utah.

WHEN PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY IN 1951 as volume 19 of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, this book made a major contribution to understanding the history of overland routes traveled west from Fort Bridger to California. No other work since has superseded it. One primary option for emigrants had been to continue north and west along the Oregon Trail route to the vicinity of Fort Hall, and then take the California branch to the southwest, catch the Humboldt River, and find passage across the Sierra Nevada Mountains to their California destinations. Routes across the Salt Lake Valley and the salt desert sought to eliminate the extra miles of this northern route "dog leg."

The original book resulted from the "field work" of Roderic Kornis, Dale Morgan, and Charles Kelley. They shared freely their interests for locating routes through the Wasatch Mountains, as well as their knowledge of historical documents and sources that could be recovered. It was a remarkably competent team effort: however, Kornis died before the work was completed, and the task of committing it to paper fell to Dale Morgan who was anxious to ensure that Kornis's work would be appreci-

ated and available to students.

Because the original edition printed fewer than 1,000 copies, the book has long been out of print. Finally, and fortunately, two very able historians, with the support of the Crossroads Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association and Utah State University Press, were enlisted to revise and update the original work. Bagley and Schindler acknowledge their debt to Morgan for his own beginning revision efforts. They obtained the actual copy that Morgan had "worked" on.

The book discusses, briefly, the Bartelson-Bidwell wagon route of 1841, and John C. Fremont's expeditions of 1843 and 1845. He made the first crossing of the Salt Lake Desert route in the fall of 1845 on his trip to California. However, Lansford W. Hastings promoted it as an emigrant route. The editors see him as both dishonest and downright irresponsible.

Included in this work are excerpts from various journals, letters, and reports of several travelers over these routes between 1846 and 1850.

The "Journal of James Clyman" (21 May-June 1846) reports on the Hastings-Hudspeth trek from Sutter's Fort to Fort Bridger. This party traveled with horses and mules, as Fremont's expedition had the previous fall, and arrived in good time and condition.

The "Journal of Edwin Bryant" records the Bryant-Russell trip from Fort Bridger (17 July 1846), south of the Great Salt Lake to Mary's River in Nevada (8 August 1846), also on horses and mules. They were the first to "choose" the Hastings Cutoff.

The Harlan-Young company was the first to take wagons over the "cut-off." The "Journal of Heinrich Lienhard" reports on the struggles and heroics of their trip through the mountains and across the salt flats between 26 July and 8 September 1846. This "Journal" also provides new insights into the information contained on the T. H. Jefferson map. The editors have included a copy of that map in a pocket inside the back cover, along with an updated trails map correlated to current road maps.

The next materials are "excerpts" from the "Journal of James Frazier Reed," of the tragic Donner-Reed party, which left the Fort Bridger area 31 July. His account ends 4 October 1846. A brief epilogue contains a report of their trials by his daughter Virginia Reed to her cousin.

While these "journals" provide important information about these routes, the history is complete only because of the excellent introductions both to the book itself and to each of the documents used. Of equal significance are the extensive and careful footnoting and correlating of data from these sources with other historical documents. Bagley and Schindler have provided the latest scholarship in their update. For some readers the task of reading all of these footnotes may

become tedious, but history students will find the effort well rewarded.

Korns and Morgan believed that Hastings's map, drawn for the Mormons, as well as his "way bill," might be held in the LDS church archives; however, they were not able to locate them. After 1976 the LDS archives "catalogued" the Hastings's materials, and their existence came to the attention of the current editors in 1991. Copies of these documents have been included in this edition, as well as another "map," drawn also by Thomas Bullock, of Miles Goodyear's suggested route into Salt Lake Valley.

"The Golden Pass Road," which came down Parley's Canyon into the valley, was promoted by Parley P. Pratt in 1850 but with limited success. The final chapter introduces new information about the "Salt Lake Cut-off," the route around the north end of the lake, reflecting recent scholarship in that area.

West from Fort Bridger is the major work dealing with these routes into Salt Lake Valley and on west into Nevada and California. It has an excellent index, extensive illustrations and pictures, and a wealth of information for anyone interested in this aspect of the westering of Americans a century and a half ago.

A Collective Yearning

Tending the Garden: Essays on Mormon Literature. Edited by Eugene England and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996).

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