

New Mexico Historical Review

Volume 1 | Number 4

Article 8

10-1-1926

Book Reviews

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

Recommended Citation

. "Book Reviews." *New Mexico Historical Review* 1, 4 (1926). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol1/iss4/8>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Historical Review* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

REVIEWS AND NOTES

DOWN THE SANTA FE TRAIL AND INTO MEXICO, 1846-1847. Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin. Edited by Stella M. Drumm. (Yale University Press, 1926. Pp. xxv, 294; ill; \$4.00)

To a reviewer whose office is in the old "Palace of the Governors" at the western end of the old Santa Fe Trail, the title of this book is instantly arresting; nor are his anticipations disappointed as he turns the pages. The diary is that of a young gentlewoman, the eighteen year old bride of Samuel Magoffin, whose brother James was the efficient advance emissary of the American Army of Occupation. The reader's interest is instantly caught and held thruout by the intimate details of camp life, by the descriptions of the road, the prairies, the buffalo, antelope and other forms of life, terrific storms, toilsome mountain-passes, and "slippy" river-crossings. He is constantly being given enlightening glimpses of traders, teamsters, soldiers, officers, Indians of plain and pueblo, the native people both of the humble and well-to-do classes; and such glimpses are often charmingly enhanced by a naive word or phrase. Says the author, for example, "It is disagreeable to hear so much swearing; the animals are unruly 'tis true and worries the patience of their drivers, but I scarcely think they need be so profane." (p. 3) And while travelling on the lower Rio Grande where the mesquite growth was thick, she decides to be "rather careful in walking out. The Indian is a wily man, and one cannot be too precausious when in his territory." (p. 202)

The editor, as librarian of the Missouri Historical Society, has had the use of valuable sources, as shown by the bibliography. As a result she has given the book an excellent introduction and very informative annotations.

Thru the text and notes, men like the Magoffins, Connelly, Waldo, Kearny, Taylor, and many of their officers pass before us as in no previous book on the Southwest.

Occasionally a Spanish phrase or word might have been more happily translated. *Mui cerquita de los carros* means "very near the wagons" (p. 200); *tata* is a familiar word for "father." (p. 212) "San Juan" (p. 260) might have had in brackets *zaguan* (entrance hall). And the latter part of note 36 (pp. 99-100) is based entirely on the vagaries of early writers. Pecos is today a chief point of interest on the National Old Trails Highway and the facts about it may be found in various books and monographs.

The date "1842" in note 71 (p. 170) is an error, possibly in proofreading. Also exception might be taken to the spelling of various Spanish names, as "Arrillaga" (p. 127). But these are mere peccadillos when considering the book as a whole. Simply as a book of travel, Miss Drumm has done a delightful service; as a book on the Southwest this diary will rank with Gregg's classic, "The Commerce of the Prairies."

L. B. B.

HISTORICAL PAGEANTRY AT SANTA FE FIESTA

The Santa Fe Fiesta was again made notable by its pageantry, which passed in review most graphically the leading episodes from the earliest times to those of the American Occupation. Mr. F. S. Curtis, Jr., a member of the Historical Society, gave his talent not only to writing the scenarios for the historic episodes, but in personally supervising their production. In addition to the episodes, of the year before, there was added an act presenting the coming of man to the southwest. This was one of the most spectacular features of the pageantry. Very fine also was the act in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the coming of Kit Carson to Santa Fe, and of the advent of Jedediah Smith in California.

MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW

The latest issue of the *Missouri Historical Review* features a contribution by Edgar A. Holt, superintendent of schools in Iowa City, Iowa. Mr. Holt's theme is "Missouri River Transportation in the Expansion of the Southwest." Missouri River steamboat navigation reached its height in 1858, and was closely connected with traffic over the Santa Fe Trail. Mrs. W. R. Painter reviews some of the achievements of the Missouri Daughters of the American Revolution, who now have a membership of more than 5,000 in that state. Among the achievements described are those of locating and marking the old Santa Fe Trail, including El Camino Real, the oldest public road in Missouri. "Western Missouri in 1837," includes correspondence that goes back to 1837, and throws an interesting sidelight on conditions in the west in those days. Speaking of the fertility of the soil, it is reported in the letter: "A man and one horse can easily tend twenty acres of corn, for which he receives in the fall 1000 bushels, or if he sow the field to wheat, it would be but a common crop to receive in return 600 bushels. . . . We have 1000 bearing fruit trees. It is likely there will not be less than 3000 bushels of apples realized from them this year. Fruit trees do remarkably well. Stock does well without feeding, even in the coldest winters we have had." "The Personal Recollections of Distinguished Missourians" in this issue deal with Frank P. Blair, while "The Little Visits with Literary Missourians," include a sketch of Augustus Thomas. "The Liberal Republican Movement in Missouri," in which Carl Schurz figured so prominently, is probably the most important contribution in this number.

THE COLORADO MAGAZINE

Of special interest in the *Colorado Magazine*, published by the State Museum at Denver, Colorado, is a historical

sketch of the San Luis Valley from 1850 to 1861. Former Governor Oliver H. Shoup reviews "Fifty years of Colorado's Development." Albert B. Sanford has a sketch of John L. Routt, First State Governor of the neighboring commonwealth. Steps to Statehood in Colorado, Views on the Admission of Colorado in 1876, and the Statehood Celebration of 1876, recall that the centennial state is this year celebrating the semi-centennial of its admission into the Union.

CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

"Some Legends of Oklahoma" are retold by Walter R. Smith in a late issue of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, the quarterly of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Thrilling is the story of a raid by the Comanches and their pursuit by the Chickasaws in 1865. The story of this expedition has never before been told in print, according to the author, and the facts that are told are therefore an important contribution to western history. "Gleanings from the By-Ways of Oklahoma Folk-Lore" and "A Choctaw Indian's Diary" are other interesting contributions.