

BOOK REVIEWS

Franciscan Frontiersmen: How Three Adventurers Charted the West. By Robert A. Kittle. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. Notes and index. vii + 288 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

Review by Robert Senkewicz, Professor, Department of History, Santa Clara University.

The most important eighteenth-century Spanish expeditions into Alta California were those led by Gaspar Portolá in 1769 and Juan Bautista de Anza in 1774 and 1775. Also, the most significant Spanish military defeat in the region was the Quechán destruction of two missions and a settlement along the Colorado River in 1781. In this well constructed and nicely written volume, Robert A. Kittle, longtime editorial page editor of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, brings these significant incidents to life in a fresh and invigorating fashion.

Much of what we know about early California comes through the writings of the Franciscan missionaries. Although this group was never the dominant force in the province and was always dramatically outnumbered by indigenous people and *mestizo* soldiers, it consistently included the most literate and well-educated men in California. In this book Kittle focuses on the writings of three missionaries. One was Juan Crespí, who accompanied Portolá. Another was Francisco Garcés, who participated in both Anza expeditions, explored – often with the Cochimi man known by his baptismal name of Sebastián Taraval – many regions of the Southwest, including the southern Central Valley of California, and was killed in the Colorado River attack. The third was Pedro Font, who accompanied the second Anza expedition. In vigorous and trenchant prose, Kittle engages the reader more fully than many previous writers with the lived experience of the Spanish exploration of Alta California.

The unique strength of this book is the engaging narrative Kittle constructs. Through the diaries and correspondence of Crespí, Garcés, and Font, readers feel deeply involved with the exploration parties. We share the travelers' excitement when the Portolá expedition realized that they had reached Monterey Bay in May 1770. We experience the expedition's relief when Kumeyaay guides led Anza's men to water in the midst of a desert in southeastern California in March 1774. And we wonder, as we read the respectful way in which Garcés interacted with the indigenous peoples with whom he came into contact on his wide-ranging treks, if the relationships between Spaniards and Alta California native peoples might have turned out very differently from the tragedies that too often ensued.

In addition to presenting the experiences of these three Franciscan explorers, Kittle offers excellent vignettes of important episodes that set much of the context for their writings and travels. The Kumeyaay revolt in San Diego in 1775 is fully described and the author makes every effort to present the indigenous perspective. Kittle uses the writings of the French explorer La Perouse to sketch, often in damning terms, the indigenous experience in the missions. And he employs the writings of a little-known missionary, Tomás Eixarch, to provide a concise picture of native life along the Colorado River. These vignettes serve to deepen the vivid narrative Kittle constructs.

The book would have benefited from a deeper discussion of eighteenth century Franciscan theology, especially the theology of conversion. And the epilogue, which correctly points out that the complicated truth of Spanish California is found neither in the mythology of heroic missionaries and contented neophytes nor in simplistic accusations of torture and genocide, would have benefited from a more explicit acknowledgment of the consequences, even if they were unintended, of the effects of large-scale Spanish incursion on indigenous lives and traditions.

The pens of Franciscan missionaries recorded and constructed a good part of early California history. In foregrounding these missionaries and in presenting their writings in such a colorful fashion, Kittle's book affords an excellent entry into our state's complicated and still crucially important past.

Ellen Browning Scripps: New Money & American Philanthropy. By Molly McClain. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. xxvii + 301 pp. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Rick Kennedy, Professor of History, Point Loma Nazarene University.

Most readers of this journal know the basic facts about Ellen Scripps – one of the richest women in America, leading philanthropist of San Diego, and patron of La Jolla, educational institutions, and architect Irving Gill – but such basics barely begin to illuminate the mind and character of one of the most interesting women in California's history. Molly McClain, Professor of History at the University of San Diego, takes us far beyond the basic facts. Writing with sensitivity and grace, often with wit and an eye for the quirky, McClain focuses on the clarity of purpose in an unmarried, highly educated woman of wealth and authority. By page thirty Scripps is pushing sixty years old. For most of the book, McClain

takes us deep into the thoughts and labors of a retired woman who has come to settle in California with a commitment to the politics of equal rights, an uneasy relationship with religion and spiritualism, an interest in gardening, literature, biology, Egyptology, and natural history, and a willingness to embed herself in women's clubs and networks of women, including the "indestructables," the name of a group of women "buzzing around town as busily as if they were in their teens" (p. 115).

The chapter on Ellen's relationship to her whisky-drinking and foul-mouthed sister Virginia is worth the price of the whole book. Ellen and Virginia lived together for many years, and McClain writes that "Ellen drew strength from her outgoing and opinionated sister" (p. 111). The two having given the land and financed the construction of St. James-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Virginia thought of it as her private chapel and was known on occasion to interrupt the priest's sermon: "You'd better stop talking now, don't you see everybody is going to sleep?" (p. 114). The two having given the funds for a girls' school in La Jolla – what became The Bishop's School – it was Virginia who took daily interest in it, was beloved by its students, and was known, at times, to rearrange the school's drawing room furniture.

The most important take-away from the book is that Ellen Scripps did not just give money randomly to whomever, nor did she want her gifts to be superficial or self-aggrandizing. She was very thoughtful and her philanthropy was purposeful. McClain writes that she was especially keen "to create the kinds of institutions that would encourage democratic principles, promote social progress, and contribute to what she described as 'the evolution and uplift of the human race'" (p. 121). McClain quotes her saying, "My instincts and interests are educational" (p. 123). Her patronage of the architect Irving Gill was not fired principally by aesthetics; rather, she shared in his hope that architecture could solve social problems. Funding of Scripps Institution of Oceanography was not simply to support research for knowledge's sake. The philanthropist shared in the founder William E. Ritter's idealism that "the study of the ocean promised to mediate the truths found in both science and religion" (p. 72). McClain writes beautifully of Ellen and Virginia's appreciation of kelp, having been introduced to the varieties of "sea mosses" by Mary Snyder, the botanist living in Pacific Beach (p. 64). Ellen Scripps had transcribed a popular poem about "high yearnings ...welling and surging in...from the mystic ocean" (p. 73). When Ritter came looking for patronage, promoting holistic research so as to understand *Life* in its interconnected fullness, he met a kindred spirit in Ellen Scripps.

McClain's subtitle, *New Money and American Philanthropy*, might make some readers think that her book is mired in talk of money. This biography is much

more than a study of gaining and giving away money. McClain presents Ellen Scripps as an interesting woman in her own right, a “woman who had perfected the ‘art of living,’” who also, by the way, was richer than most people can imagine (p. 218). Because of that wealth she had earned and invested for herself in the first part of her life she could then “shed the trappings of class and the boundaries of race, extending her philanthropy to institutions that promised to transform both culture and society” (p. 218).

Interestingly, for all the grandeur of her ideas, Scripps was primarily a regional philanthropist. Just as La Jolla was envisioned as “A New Town Where High Thinking and Modest Living is to Be the Rule,” Ellen Scripps chose to live modestly and focus her high-thinking locally (p. 77). Her money was mostly derived from investments in a far-flung network of newspapers, but through her, money from all over America was funneled into San Diego, and most specifically into La Jolla. She wrote “I am, heart and hand, in sympathy with the oppressed; that my life and money are in their service”; however, McClain shows how she was not an Andrew Carnegie, willing to send money to build libraries throughout America. Impressed by the nation-wide movement in support of offering the poor of diverse ethnicities places to gather and play, Scripps funded a community house and playground in La Jolla – not even funding such places throughout San Diego. (One significant exception to her localist tendencies was her funding of Scripps College in Claremont.)

Molly McClain’s book is excellent. Every chapter is full of interesting people, insightful comments, and thought-provoking situations. The picture of eccentric Virginia, standing on a rock, arms akimbo, huge hat on the back of her head, some sort of vine hanging down from her neck and shoulders, squinting at the reader, illustrates just one of the many fun parts of the book. Sadly, perhaps we who live after World War II are not near as interesting as the creators of modern California who lived in the Progressive Era. Ellen Scripps, McClain makes very clear, was one of the creators of modern San Diego. Optimistic about people and the power of education, she was an amazing woman.

The Students of Sherman Indian School: Education and Native Identity since 1892. By Diana Bahr. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 2014. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and notes. x + 181 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Robert D. Miller, Lecturer, Department of History, California State University San Marcos.

Diana Bahr's *The Students of Sherman Indian School* provides an institutional history of Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, from its inception as Perris Indian School in 1892 through the early months of President Barack Obama's second term. Sherman, the last of twenty-five off-reservation boarding schools constructed by the federal government, originally adhered to Richard Henry Pratt's desire to "kill the Indian and save the man." Known as Sherman Indian High School since 1971, the school remains one of a handful of off-reservation boarding schools still in operation, though it now celebrates and promotes Native cultures. Bahr's book is not the first study of a specific boarding school, or even of Sherman itself, as existing monographs examine student health, the outing system, and students from specific Native groups at Sherman in detail. (Jean Keller, Matthew Gilbert, and Kevin Whalen have explored these issues in works published in the past fifteen years.) Bahr, however, is the first to present a comprehensive history of the school through the present day.

For more than a generation, Native histories have employed the concept of a middle ground (drawn from Richard White's work) in which diverse historical actors reached accommodations to bridge cultural barriers and misunderstandings. This approach has proven critical in emphasizing Native peoples as historical actors, not helpless victims of colonial regimes. Bahr modifies this approach by stressing what she refers to as a "middle course" in which students charted a path between the eradication of their cultures and the total rejection of United States society. Bahr notes a similarity with Cliff Trafzer's concept of "turning the power," as many students utilized the knowledge they acquired to defend their people and societies even though the students seldom planned to become cultural intermediaries (p. 7).

Bahr ably synthesizes existing scholarship on Sherman's history while making several valuable contributions of her own. For example, she examines a group known affectionately as the BIA Brats, the children of Bureau of Indian Affairs employees who grew up on campus during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Even though many of these children were themselves Native, federal regulations prohibited them from attending Sherman, necessitating their enrollment in local public schools. Officials limited contact between the BIA Brats

and Sherman students and prohibited dating. These restrictions are unsurprising as Sherman retains an emphasis on discipline, even after several decades of expanding Native control over education. In her chapter analyzing twenty-first century developments, for example, Bahr notes the *Sherman Indian High School Guide to Success* devotes twenty-two of its fifty pages to discipline and student conduct. The continued paternalistic oversight found at Sherman, including references to AWOL students, is a reminder of the origins of the boarding school system and merits further analysis.

The discussion of Sherman's recent history is a strength of Bahr's work but also highlights the need for further research. Bahr's examination of the school's post-1971 history is laudable considering the relative paucity afforded the subject within existing scholarship. However, the closing chapters of the book place a heavy emphasis on United States senators, government reports, and documents from the school's administrators, resulting in a reduced focus on Native voices. Though Bahr includes interviews with former Sherman graduates and analysis of student opinions within the *Sherman Bulletin*, a school paper, the focus on governmental and institutional leaders is prevalent. In addition, the broad scope of this text results in an over-simplification of complex subjects. For example, Bahr provides a largely positive evaluation of the Indian New Deal, minimizing Native criticism of the policy, even though the Mission Indian Federation from southern California strongly condemned the federal government's efforts. Future scholars might determine whether the Mission Indian Federation's activities attracted the attention or support of Sherman's students. Such perspectives might provide new avenues to include Native voices within histories of institutions that often sought to silence divergent opinions. Nevertheless, Bahr's work is a readable introduction to Sherman and Indian boarding schools in general while serving as an important reminder that the legacies of assimilationist federal policies continue to impact Native students in the twenty-first century.

San Diego City Father William Augustus Begole: Story of a Workhorse Pioneer. By Lael Montgomery. Valley Center, CA: Lael Montgomery, 2017. Photographs, illustrations, bibliography, endnotes, index. 122 pages.

Reviewed by Iris Engstrand, Professor of History Emeritus, University of San Diego.

It is often said that history is written by the winners. Sometimes, however, it can be written by coincidence and in this case, by a first cousin four times removed. The author, who grew up in Boston, explains, she read about her distant relative William Augustus Begole in Richard Pourade's *History of San Diego* and became interested in how Begole (1826-1901) fit into her family history and into the history of San Diego.

Despite the fact that Begole served as a city trustee for five years, a city alderman for two, a city library trustee, a vice president of the Chamber of Commerce, a secretary of the San Diego Society of Natural History (forerunner of the Museum of Natural History), and was a Pacific Railroad investor, he failed to be included in the early histories of San Diego. Begole served on several key city committees including those supervising taxes, water and fire, public buildings and lighting, and the ever-important health and morals. He was a tinsmith by trade, putting tin roofs on several important buildings, and became a capitalist in the Julian Gold Mines. His colorful career touched many well-known San Diego residents.

Begole was probably a survivor of the ill-fated Donner Party that crossed the plains in 1846 and after reaching California settled in the San Francisco area. He arrived in San Diego from that city by steamer at age 43 on the *SS Senator* on September 24, 1869. The year before he had purchased a double lot on Fifth Street in Horton's addition. From there Begole traveled back and forth to Julian where gold had been discovered in the Wynola Hills. He became a successful miner.

The book, which is fully illustrated, covers the local history of San Diego in depth during the late 1800s up to Begole's death in 1901 at the age of 74. Begole was a leader in Masonic circles and master of San Diego Lodge no. 35 for six terms. His death "was felt by all the city" and he was buried in the Masonic cemetery at Mt. Hope. (p.69.) This book is an enjoyable read and demonstrates that there are people missing from recorded history who should be remembered.

BOOK NOTES

Cattle Colonialism: An Environmental History of the Conquest of California and Hawai'i. By John Ryan Fischer. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Illustrations, table, notes, bibliography, and index. xii + 280 pp. \$39.95 cloth. \$27.95 paper. \$29.99 e-book. John Ryan Fischer's *Cattle Colonialism* provides an environmental history of the role of domestic cattle in transforming not only the flora and fauna of California and Hawai'i but their native populations as well. In both places, native people attempted to incorporate cattle into their own economies but were ultimately denied the chance to do so by Euro-American laws that left California Indians and Hawai'ians increasingly marginalized.

Golden Rules: The Origins of California Water Law in the Gold Rush. By Mark Kanazawa. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. Illustrations, tables, appendices, notes, references, and index. xvii + 351 pp. \$55.00 cloth. Mark Kanazawa, a professor of economics, explores how miners, politicians, and jurists crafted laws that attempted to enable individual enterprise while protecting property rights and promoting the public good. The book builds up to the emergence of the doctrine of prior appropriation, a legal development that drew on common law tradition as well as miners' need for access to flowing water.

Power and Control in the Imperial Valley: Nature, Agribusiness, and Workers on the California Borderland, 1900-1940. By Benny J. Andrés, Jr. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2015. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. xviii + 229 pp. \$43 cloth. \$24.95 paper. This volume explores how the "subjugation" of the Colorado River made possible the development of agribusiness in the Imperial Valley over the first four decades of the twentieth century. Andrés reveals how the construction of the All-American Canal laid the foundation for growers' ability to enlist the power of the state to control not only the environment but the immigrant laborers who toiled in the fields.

Right Out of California: The 1930s and the Big Business Roots of Modern Conservatism. By Kathryn S. Olmsted. New York: The New Press, 2015. Notes and index. 336 pp. \$27.95 cloth. \$18.99 paper. Kathryn Olmsted of the University of California, Davis contends in this book that the struggle between agribusiness and farm laborers in Depression-era California played a key role in the modern American conservative movement. While some scholars have explored the influence of intellectuals such as Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman and pointed to post-World War II grassroots movements in areas like Orange County, Olmsted

suggests the roots of postwar conservatism run deeper in time and can be traced to big business interests.

Strangers on Familiar Soil: Rediscovering the Chile-California Connection. By Edward Dallam Melillo. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. xiv + 325 pp. \$40.00 cloth. \$25.00 paper. Students of California history are likely aware that Chileans arrived in significant numbers in the first stages of the gold rush. *Strangers on Familiar Soil* traces the Chilean influence on California to the late 18th century and investigates the trans-national exchange between the two places. Just as Chileans brought mining expertise and technology to California, California exported crops, labor systems, and railroad technology to Chile.

A Way Across the Mountain: Joseph Walker's 1833 Trans-Sierran Passage and the Myth of Yosemite's Discovery. By Scott Stine. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. Illustrations, maps, chart, notes, references, and index. 317 pp. \$39.95 cloth. \$29.95 paper. Joseph Walker has long been credited with "discovering" the Yosemite Valley during his 1833 journey from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. This book retraces that voyage, draws on primary sources (most importantly a narrative account from one of Walker's party) as well as Stine's own expertise, and questions the veracity of the popular myth of Walker being the first non-Native to set eyes on Yosemite.

Discovering Cabrillo: By Harry Kelsey. Saratoga, CA: Liber Apertus Press, 2017, revised edition. Maps, illustrations, and bibliography. 64 pp. \$12.95 paper. This compact book traces Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's historic voyage north from Mexico in 1542, becoming the first European explorer to reach present-day California. Historian Harry Kelsey cuts through the myths that have shrouded Cabrillo and his voyage, and presents the truth of his discoveries based on primary sources. The maps and formatting have been enhanced and the book has been updated to reflect evidence that Cabrillo was born in Palma del Rio, Province of Córdoba, Spain.