

BOOK REVIEWS

Margaret Casterline Bowen and Gwendolyn Joslin Hiles. *Jersey Gold: The Newark Overland Company's Trek to California, 1849*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. xv + 368 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover \$34.95.

Bowen and Hiles's *Jersey Gold* is a good example of the debt scholars owe to historians working in the public sector. Although much of the scholarly conversation around public history couches it as the responsibility of scholars to reach out or to "educate" those outside the academy, scholars themselves have as much, and in some cases more, to learn from the public.

In this case, Bowen and Hiles have managed to compose a detailed narrative of a company of overlanders whose lives might never have otherwise come to light. All too often, overland journals and letters are cataloged and housed in archives without any additional materials to shed light on the life stories of their authors. Isolated journals that begin in Independence, Missouri, and end with the descent from the Sierra Nevada to Sacramento are all too common. These accounts tell us much about the five to six months their authors spent "crossing the Plains," but they leave the personal context to be desired. Bowen and Hiles, after finding each other online, have been able to do what many have not. Their investigative acumen and ability to tap into a network of genealogists and trail buffs has produced a rich backstory for the men who traveled in the Newark Overland Company. Indeed, this research is a case study for how the genealogically-minded might pool their efforts and resources to advance their own family research. Bowen and Hiles, who dedicate the book to their fathers, William Hale Casterline and Reuben Graves "R.G." Joslin, respectively, have succeeded in transforming genealogical research into an accessible narrative.

The book is organized chronologically, in three parts: Before 1849; 1849; and After 1849. A narrative prologue hooks the reader with the drama of the story, and the appendices that follow the main text provide biographical and archival detail on the people and sources who form the basis of the narrative. There is much here for the trail buffs and history-minded folks who no doubt compose *Jersey Gold's* primary readers. We learn that one of Davy Crockett's sons joined the company (p. 37). We also learn about the far-reaching influence of some of the relatively ordinary members of the Newark company. For instance, Pennsylvanian Charles D. Gillespie, who moved to New Jersey shortly before journeying overland, produced sketches as he traveled. In the late nineteenth century, artist Frederic D. Remington used those sketches to create numerous iconic images, including a woodcut of Fort Laramie.

Beyond the individual stories, however, *Jersey Gold* does little to enhance our understanding of the trail experience and the California gold rush. The extended descriptions, for instance, of debates over using mules versus oxen, the company disagreement that eventually

led to a company split, and the challenges of trail travel are well-worn ground. In other cases, the absence of analysis leads to statements that reinforce old stereotypes. For instance, the authors declare that “the first days on the road introduced the emigrants to two obstacles that would become both routine and troublesome for the duration of their journey—river crossings and Indians” (p. 92). A similar failing occurs when a quote from Caroline Meeker describing the inhabitants of Panama is presented in the following sentence: “The Meekers remained for a week in Panama’s western port, where Caroline found ‘the most hated, jaded, specimens of humanity we could well imagine’ ” (p. 235). In grouping Indians with river crossings and in reproducing Meeker’s racist assessment of Panamanians, the authors fail to properly contextualize their subjects. These instances make it clear that the authors have not engaged with recent scholarship—including Michael Tate’s *Indians and Emigrants: Encounters on the Overland Trails* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2006) and Aims McGuinness’s *Path of Empire: Panama and the California Gold Rush* (Cornell University Press, 2016)—that addresses emigrants’ perceptions of Indians and of Panamanians. Indeed, while Bowen and Hiles’s primary research on their individual subjects is deep, the secondary research is selective.

Ultimately, the most interesting problem this book reveals is the ongoing bifurcation of public and scholarly interest in the Overland Trail. Bowen and Hiles have helped fill in previously undiscovered details of a select group of people who traveled the trail. But it is clear that recent historians who have analyzed this experience in more general terms have not reached them. Western historians’ stated aim of bridging the divide between scholars and the public (a goal described eloquently in Steven Aron’s 2017 presidential address to the Western History Association, “The We in West”) remains a work in progress. If Bowen and Hiles were able to find each other, historians should be able to find them.

Sarah Keyes

Jimmy Patiño. *Raza Sí, Migra No: Chicano Movement Struggles for Immigrant Rights in San Diego*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 356 pp., 13 halftones, bibliography, index. Paperback \$32.95.

Raza Sí, Migra No will establish Jimmy Patiño as a significant contributor to what I refer to as “third-generation” literature in Chicana/o studies and Mexican American historiography. In 2013, I wrote an essay for a special issue of the *Pacific Historical Review* (“Looking Back on Chicano History: A Generational Perspective,” 82(4), November 2013) that assessed the formation and maturation of the field of Mexican American history, and within that context I place Patiño’s work squarely in the third phase of historiographic development of the field. The first generation, during the 1970s and ’80s, included the monographic and periodic literature that established the foundations (the key initial questions, historical themes, conceptual frameworks, periodization, etc.) of the study of Mexican American history. The second generation of scholarship, published mostly during the 1990s and the early years of this century, both expanded and elaborated on many of the themes developed in the first phase. Noteworthy was the work on issues related to gender, women, and labor, as well as topics that