

Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi. By Robert Bruce Flanders. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965. Pp. vii, 364. End maps, notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$6.50.)

This book is a history of the Mormon settlement in Illinois as it flourished at Nauvoo from 1839 to 1846. To this site on the Mississippi River north of Quincy, Joseph Smith led his people after they had failed to build a kingdom on earth either at Kirtland, Ohio, or in western Missouri near Independence. In both of these places the Mormons had had trouble with their "gentile" neighbors because the Mormons dominated the local economy, got control of political offices, and outraged non-Mormons by their heterodox religious practices.

Smith hoped to make Nauvoo a spiritual center for his followers and at the same time develop the area into an agricultural and industrial empire. But he failed to achieve his ambitious goals. The Prophet was killed while in jail awaiting a hearing on a charge that he had broken the laws of Illinois. In the general uprising that followed the Mormons were forced to leave their homes and businesses. The leadership of the Nauvoo community fell to Brigham Young who eventually formed a Mormon state in the Far West.

Flanders provides a detailed history of the founding and progress of the Mormons at Nauvoo. He discusses the complicated and sometimes irregular land purchases and sales of the Mormons, and the economic difficulties they experienced; he describes the methods of recruiting new Saints in England; and he tells about the tight hold Smith had on the Nauvoo city government due to a favorable charter given by the Illinois legislature. Full treatment is also given to the maneuvering of Illinois politicians to get the Mormon vote and the consequent resentment of members of the party which did not get Smith's support. Finally, Flanders describes the disputes and antagonisms that arose among the Mormons themselves. He deals with the matter of plural marriage and notes how this and other matters of theology caused deep divisions among the Mormons and aroused distrust and fear of them by non-Mormons.

Better than most historians of Joseph Smith and the Mormons, Flanders preserves an objective position. He notes the mistakes made by Smith in temporal matters; but he also points out that it was Smith's charismatic nature that enabled him to be such a vigorous, persuasive, and successful spiritual leader. The book rests upon very complete examination of Mormon and non-Mormon sources, and it brings together the results of modern research in Mormon studies. It does not, however, offer any new explanation for the rise and fall of Nauvoo.

This work should be a best seller among books of its kind, not only because of its content, but also because the University of Illinois Press has provided a handsome binding, an end-cover map of old Nauvoo, and a well-selected album of prints and photographs of Nauvoo scenes and leaders.

MacMurray College

Walter B. Hendrickson