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## Review of *Indians and Emigrants: Encounters on the Overland Trail* By Michael L. Tate

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*Indians and Emigrants: Encounters on the Overland Trail.* By Michael L. Tate. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006. xxiv + 328 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

Relations between emigrants and the Indians they encountered along the central route of trails to Oregon, California, and the Salt Lake Valley were a significant aspect of overland travel, particularly on the segment crossing the Great Plains. *Emigrants and Indians* is a comprehensive study of the complex history of these intercultural relations from 1840 to 1870. In contrast to popular stereotypical images of "savage" Indians and a focus on conflict, Michael Tate shows that cooperation, aid, and mutual benefit dominated Indian-white relations throughout the period. In topical chapters, he examines the evolving nature of relations between two fundamentally different peoples who viewed each other from radically differing perspectives. While Indian-white interpersonal relations generally demonstrated cooperation and friendship based on curiosity, hospitality, and social interaction through the first half of the 1850s, changing circumstances caused heightened tensions and increased conflict along the trails in the later years of the period.

Tate explores the confusion, misinformation, and preconceived ideas about Indians that conditioned emigrants to expect violence from western Indians. Chapters examine trade, the ways Indians assisted overlanders for compensation, a wide range of social interactions without tangible reward, and examples of cooperation and friendship by Indians and emigrants that illustrate the many kinds of interactions for mutual benefit that occurred throughout the period. An excellent chapter surveys the reality and fears associated with Plains Indians taking men, women, and children captive. But as the magnitude of overland migration increased in the 1850s, negative environmental effects and cultural misunderstandings on both sides intensified. Harsh treaties, punitive military campaigns, and increasing attacks on civilians culminated in full-scale warfare on the Great Plains in 1864–68. Yet even as relations deteriorated in the later trail years, Tate stresses that cordial acts and cooperation often occurred.

This long-overdue study of relations between Indians and emigrants on the overland trails is well written and readable. Tate's interpretive narrative is substantiated by voluminous excerpts from emigrant accounts. Drawing upon a vast array of diaries, journals, letters, and government documents,

he presents a balanced and discerning analysis of two culturally dissimilar peoples who sometimes clashed but often cooperated. This book, written for a broad audience, should be of immense interest to both the general reader and the scholar. It is a valuable addition to western trails literature.

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