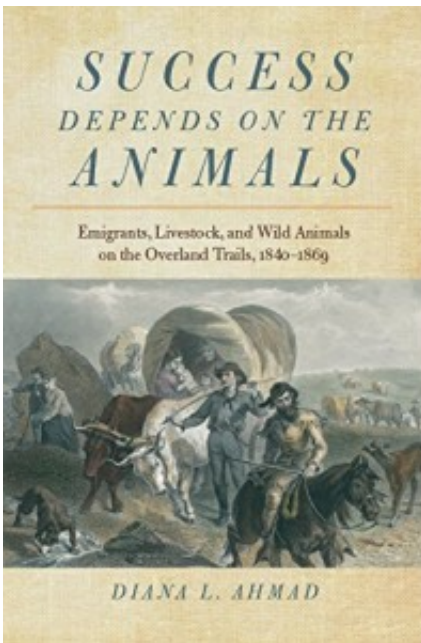


New book looks at the role of animals during westward expansion

February 9 2016



The relationship between animal companions and humans changed during the period of westward expansion in America, says Missouri University of Science and Technology historian Dr. Diana Ahmad. Ahmad's new book, "Success Depends on the Animals," examines the changing role of animals between 1840 and 1869.

The book, which will be released Tuesday, Feb. 16, discusses the [relationship](#) between [animals](#), both wild and domestic, and their human

companions on the overland trails to the Pacific during the period of westward expansion in the mid-19th century. It is published by the University of Nevada Press.

"Animals were a reminder of home for travelers," says Ahmad, Curators' Teaching Professor of [history](#) and [political science](#) at Missouri S&T. "The chances of ever going back to where you came from were low, so if your domestic working animals – like horses or oxen – died, it was like losing a part of your immediate family and 'former life.'"

Ahmad says the book includes direct content from travel logs. "Of the approximately 300,000 people who went west, several thousand kept journals or diaries," says Ahmad. "People projected their thoughts and emotions onto the animals in diaries, allowing historians to delve into the true feelings and psychology of travelers on the overland trail."

This is Ahmad's second book. Her first, titled "The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the 19th Century American West," focused on the opium-smoking epidemic of the 1800s and links the demands for Chinese exclusion to their opium-smoking.

Ahmad earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1997. She earned master of arts and bachelor of arts degrees in history from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1979 and 1974, respectively.

Ahmad joined the Missouri S&T faculty in 2000 as an assistant professor of history and political science. She was named associate professor in 2006 and professor in 2014. Missouri S&T's archivist since 2003, Ahmad has received over 30 awards for faculty excellence and outstanding teaching and advising.

Provided by Missouri University of Science and Technology

Citation: New book looks at the role of animals during westward expansion (2016, February 9)
retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2016-02-role-animals-westward-expansion.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.