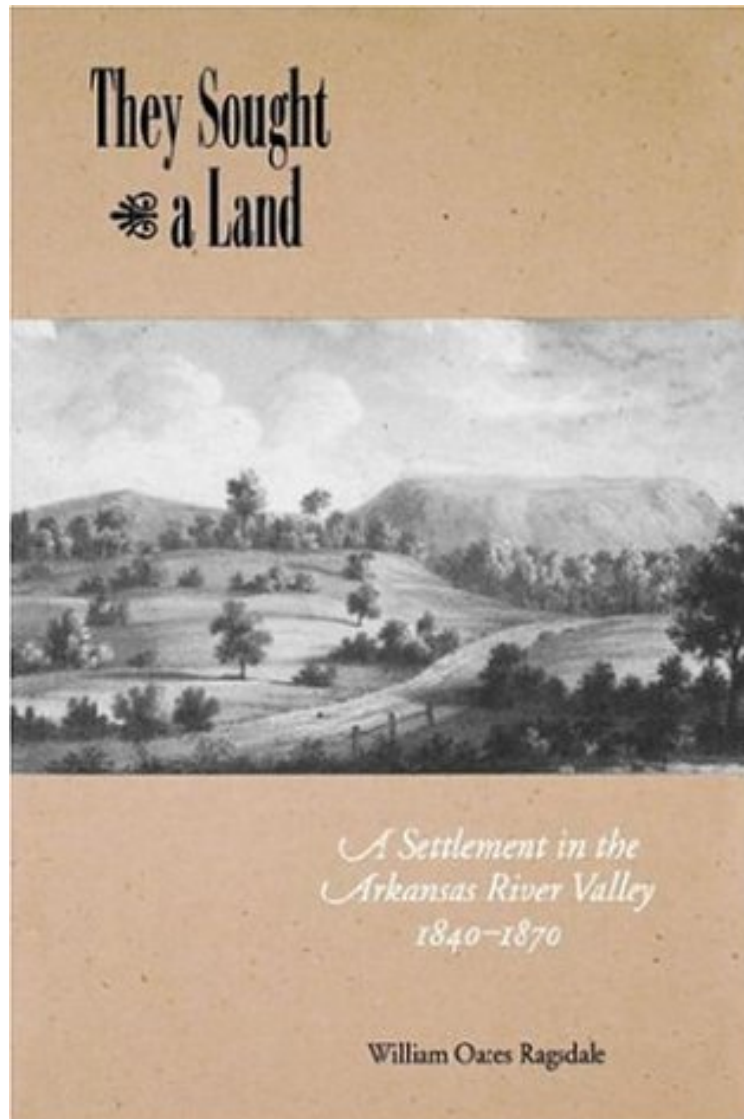


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They Sought a Land: A Settlement in the Arkansas River Valley, 18401870

William Oates Ragsdale

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William Oates Ragsdale : They Sought a Land: A Settlement in the Arkansas River Valley, 18401870 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised They Sought a Land: A Settlement in the Arkansas River Valley, 18401870:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Family MigrationBy Terrie L. WilliamsAn excellent overview of the migration of several families from North Carolina to the area of the Arkansas River Valley around what is now

Russellville, Arkansas. It was written, by the way, by a descendant of my Great Great Grandfather's younger brother. It is a story, based on historical facts, of a large extended family, how they lived, what they believed, the challenges they faced and how they overcame them. I found it very interesting.. but then, it's my family!

In 1840, prosperous farming families left North and South Carolina to trek in covered wagons to the unsettled Arkansas River Valley. Absorbing to read and rich with colorful detail, this is a story of the peopling of the western frontier and the ways in which hardship, religion, and a shared past bound settlers together into a lasting community.

From the Inside Flap
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From the Back Cover
This well-researched study of one group of pioneers taking part in the westward expansion of the United States during the nineteenth century tells an illuminating story. The prosperous farming families who left established comforts in North Carolina and South Carolina to trek in covered wagons to the unsettled Arkansas River Valley did not do so for their own gain or adventure, but for the expected opportunities their children and subsequent generations would have in this "new frontier." Availability of cheap, arable land in central Arkansas and desire for religious freedom drew five hundred settlers and their slaves, over a thirty-year period, to the area once called "Pisgah," six miles east of modern-day Russellville. Family histories reveal the emigrants were bound together by blood, friendship, and, most notably, a strong Calvinist heritage, the tradition of an educated ministry received from the Church of Scotland, and a desire to have the gospel privileges of an Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church. The firm religious leadership of two well-educated, dynamic ministers, first John Patrick and later Monroe Oates, was central to this community's formation, development, and survival to the end of the century. Ragsdale's primary research into county land purchases and sales shows that the community experienced a climax of economic prosperity in 1860, just before the Civil War took men from their homes to serve in the Confederate and Union armies. Letters and oral histories tell how the deprivations of rural life were met; how bushwhackers terrorized defenseless women and children, stole grain stores, and drove off stock; how bitterness lingered between the returning blues and grays; and how the community eventually dispersed into Arkansas's larger developing society. Absorbing to read and rich with colorful detail, this community history is an important story of the settling of the American South.