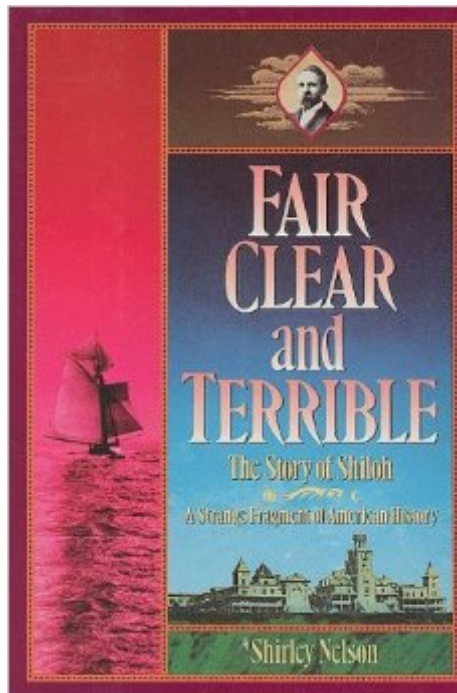


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Fair Clear And Terrible: The Story Of Shiloh, Maine



Synopsis

This bizarre, true story of a dynamic religious leader and his perfectionist followers gives insight into countless extremist movements today. At the turn of the century, a young man named Frank Weston Sandford, proclaiming himself the fulfillment of certain Biblical prophecies, founded a movement called Shiloh, its central location on a hill in the town of Durham, Maine. The movement's purpose was sweeping and ultimate - to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ and the cataclysmic events which would usher it in. The enactment of this mission spanned twenty-five years, involving many hundreds of people. Sandford, an appealing and volatile leader, erected an extraordinary complex of buildings in Durham, opened stations in major American cities, then set sail on the high seas in a racing schooner with a select group of followers. Their intention was to circle the globe for Christ. Instead, they headed for doom. As the movement expanded, so did its aspirations - and its dangers. The concept of itself as an apocalyptic force in the world exacted relentless personal demands. Rigorous fasts and purges kept members in a constant state of anxiety regarding their spiritual condition. While Sandford diverted funds to expand the effort to an international scale - England, Africa, Jerusalem - food and necessities became scarce on the Durham hilltop. Professional medical care was repudiated. Deaths began to multiply. In the court trials that structure the story, Sandford was finally convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to prison. Shirley Nelson, whose parents grew up in this unusual society, tells Shiloh's powerful story with passion, understanding, and grace. She captures the inner dimensions of an intense religious culture and deals poignantly with themes that remain current and haunting: authority, heroism, martyrdom - and the frightening phenomenon of one personality in control of many others. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Shirley Nelson did a great deal of research for this wonderful book! She not only took her own family history, but dug into other sources to put together a complete and fair minded look into a fascinating piece of Americana. The pure faith that took believers to Shiloh comes through as well as the hardships and abuse they endured as they tried to please their leader, Frank Sanford. She did a great service to many who were still in the movement of their forefathers at the time the book was published. Many of the facts of the history of The Kingdom movement were hidden or glossed over so that present members did not understand what the true story was. This book started a lot of questioning of the leaders of the church and helped in bringing to light lies and half truths. I would highly recommend this book, not only to those interested in history, but also to those who are or have been in a cult. So many common threads run through cults. So many innocent people trying to live their faith while the doctrines they are taught to love more than their own families carries consequences down through many generations. Highly recommended reading! For more information on the history of Shiloh and The Kingdom movement see the website fwselijah.com.

I read this book when it was first published, and recently purchased a copy for a friend. If you, like I, are interested in the Religious history of the United States I can highly recommend Fair, Clear, and Terrible: The Story of Shiloh Maine by Shirley Nelson. This is the kind of non-fiction work that would make a great movie. The author sets the tone right in the beginning of the book, with that whispered about "thing" in a family's past. The author shows how when the focus of one's faith is not God, but the preacher, something terrible usually will happen, and at Shiloh it did. This book is a good study in the cult of personality. I don't want to give too much away but will end in saying that Fair, Clear, and Terrible: The Story of Shiloh Maine by Shirley Nelson should be republished in paperback, it is that important of a book to those interested in the Religious history of the United States.

Shirley Nelson's Fair, Clear, and Terrible: The Story of Shiloh is one of those rare history books that's plotted and executed more like a mystery novel than a documentary. Nelson, whose parents met at Shiloh, took an interest in the site at a young age, and thus grew up always in its shadow. Through the years she gathered as much information as she could, and reports on it all here. However, this isn't just a regurgitation of the facts. Nelson's family ties to the place give her, it would seem, a reason to write about it with more heart than most historians, coupled with a sardonic,

not-quite-suppressed sarcasm that leaves the reader laughing on occasion. And when was the last time you laughed at a HISTORY book? A wonderful piece of work. Highly recommended.

Review of Shirley Nelson's Fair, Clear and Terrible Shirley Nelson's true story Fair, Clear and Terrible captures the insidious mind control by a tyrannical zealot named Frank Sandford. His ability to hoodwink an unwitting congregation into giving up all their money in order to find "the Kingdom" is a tale of tragedy and suspense. This book is one of the most researched and beautifully written nonfiction works I have read in a long time. I would highly recommend this work to anyone who tries to understand the power of a Jim Jones or a David Karesh. Frank was 100 years ahead of their time. By James Spradlin

I borrowed this book from my aunt, who had already related the story of our family history involving this cult. My aunt's aunt and uncle ran away and escaped from this cult as young teenagers. How awful to read the horrors of what they lived through, but what an awesome telling of a small part of my family history.

This book, difficult to categorize, is in essence the story of both Frank Sandford (1862-1948), the founder of a minor apocalyptic religious cult, and the communitarian society he headquartered at the turn of the twentieth century on the Androscoggin River near the hamlet of Durham, Maine. Nelson blends with novelistic grace the genres of history, biography, and memoir (her parents were members of the sect) and thoughtfully portrays Sandford's slide from earnest Bible student to a self-proclaimed prophet eventually convicted of manslaughter, an "Elijah" who squandered countless thousands while his followers starved. Because the sect was so small and remains comparatively obscure today (though it maintains both a website and some hundreds of followers into the twenty-first century), Nelson's story serves as a comprehensible illustration of the steps whereby individuals surrender their minds, wills, and even lives for the chimera of heroic religious certainty. Nelson skillfully presents a bittersweet portrait of Shiloh--"the aroma of gingerbread" in the mist of hunger, illness, and disillusion. But succeeding generations can be grateful that Sandford was an extremely erratic leader who was neither martyred nor had a Brigham Young waiting in the wings. A lack of citations in such a book can be excused, but no work of non-fiction as nicely written as Fair, Clear, and Terrible should go to press without an index. A word to the prospective reader: pay attention to characters when they are first introduced. They will eventually return, and it is then difficult to rediscover their identity by checking the first mention.

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