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SCHOLARLY STUDIES OF MORMONISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by Leonard J. Arrington

This article introduces a continuing series, "An Assessment of Mormon culture," which will examine the history, present achievements, and potential of various aspects of Mormon life. Professor Arrington is well known for his books and articles on Mormon history, particularly Great Basin Kingdom; he is a member of the presidency of the L.D.S. student stake at Utah State University and was recently elected President of the Mormon History Association.

ALTHOUGH REARED IN A MORMON HOME IN IDAHO AND ALTHOUGH my family were devout members of the Mormon faith, I was first introduced to Mormon studies as a graduate student in economics at the University of North Carolina. In fulfillment of an assignment in a graduate sociology course, I happened to read a book on *The Sociology of Rural Life* by T. Lynn Smith (I did not know at the time that he also had been reared a Mormon) and came to a section which he discussed the land settlement patterns of the Mormons.¹ Until that moment it had not occurred to me that there was more to Mormonism than "the Church," the theology, and the goal of personal righteousness. Fascinated, I immediately canvassed other works on rural sociology and found several additional references to the Mormons. I hunted through monographs concerning American history, politics, and economics and discovered to my surprise and delight that a whole literature on the "secular" aspects of Mormon culture was in the process of creation.²

Actually, the systematic study of Mormon institutions and history is a relatively recent phenomenon. Writings about the Mormons during the first seventy-five years after the Church was organized in 1830 consisted essentially of three kinds of works: (1) pietistic, missionary, and apologetic literature by church authorities, devout writers, and missionaries of the Church;³ (2) scathing attacks on the Church and its leaders by schismatic, disaffected, or excommunicated Mormons, and by wrathful Gentile opponents;⁴ and (3) the "curiosa" literature of writers who were impressed with the peculiar characteristics of the Mormons and their religion and who wrote about the Mormons and their settlements as other journalists and travelers wrote about the Hottentots, the hairy Ainu, and the wild men of Borneo.⁵

While no historian could wish to denigrate or detract from the enormous significance of the histories by Edward Tullidge and Hubert Howe Bancroft,⁶ it may be fairly said that "objective," "scholarly," and "systematic" treatises on the Mormons and their

¹ T. Lynn Smith, *The Sociology of Rural Life* (New York, 1940).

² Among the first works which I stumbled upon were: Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Study in Social Origins* (Provo, Utah, 1930); Juanita Brooks, "A Close-up of Polygamy," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, CLXVIII (1934), 299-307, and "The Water's In!" *Harper's Magazine*, CLXXV (1941), 608-613; and Bernard DeVoto, "The Centennial of Mormonism," in *Forays and Rebuttals* (Boston, 1936), pp. 77-137, and occasional articles in "The Easy Chair" in *Harper's Magazine*.

³ The basic source for early "pro" accounts was Orson Pratt, *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions* (many printings, 1840, *et seq.*). There followed the "History of Joseph Smith" first published in *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Illinois), March 1842; and *Latter-day Saints' Millennium Star*, III-V XIV-XXV (Liverpool, 1842-1844, 1852-1864). This was later edited by B. H. Roberts and published as Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ, Period I* (6 vols.; Salt Lake City, 1902-1912). One of the earliest semi-objective accounts is John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints . . .* (St. Louis, 1839).

⁴ Among the early "anti" works were: E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled [sic] . . .* (Painesville, Ohio, 1834); J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages . . .* (New York, 1942); and John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints . . .* (Boston, 1842). The latter was the first such work to achieve a national audience and set a style followed by many subsequent works of exposé. Other widely read "anti" works in the 19th century were: J. H. Beadle, *Life in Utah: or The Mysteries and Crimes of Mormonism* (Philadelphia, 1870); T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints . . .* (New York, 1873); and Ann Eliza Young, *Wife No. 19 . . .* (Hartford, 1875).

⁵ The better travel accounts include Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City* (2 vols.; London, 1861); Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints . . .* (New York, 1862); Samuel Bowles, *Across the Continent* (Springfield, Mass., 1865); and Phil Robinson, *Sinners and Saints* (Boston, 1883).

⁶ There were at least three reasonably impartial histories of the Mormons in the nineteenth century: [Charles Mackay], *The Mormons, or Latter Day Saints* (London, 1851); Edward W. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City and Its Founders* (Salt Lake City, 1886), the only one of the three by a Mormon — and at this stage he was somewhat disaffected; and H. H. Bancroft, *History of Utah, 1540-1886* (San Francisco, 1889). Despite their excellence, one would hardly have found the first two in a typical library. As for the Bancroft, it left many readers confused by the favorable account of the Mormons in the text and the equally unfavorable account in the footnotes.

culture began in this century as a product of work toward the Ph.D. in history and the social sciences.⁷ The first of more than a hundred doctoral dissertations on the Mormons (see appended list) was presented by Edgar Wilson at the University of Berlin in 1906.⁸ It is no accident that this early study was written and published under the direction of Professor Gustav Schmoller. As the founder and leader of the Younger German Historical School of Economics, Schmoller believed that the best approach to economics and other social phenomena was through history. Taking sharp issue with "classical" and "neo-classical" economics, he contended that economics had gotten off on the wrong foot by emphasis on deductive theorizing. Generalizations of temporal phenomena, he asserted, must be built up from a wealth of detailed, factual, and historical studies and monographs.⁹

Among the hundreds of dissertations on as many subjects which were sponsored by Schmoller and his colleagues was Wilson's "Cooperative Economy and Forms of Enterprise in the Mormon Commonwealth."¹⁰ Based upon "years of residence and study" in Utah, the dissertation discussed the nature and goals of the Mormon Church, the "communistic" phase of its history, the "cooperative company" phase, irrigation companies, business cooperatives, the "capitalistic phase," and had a concluding section on "achievements and expectations." A Midwestern Lutheran, Wilson took as his text a phrase from Seneca: "For I am accustomed also to go over into alien camps, not so much as a fugitive, but as an explorer."

No one would contend that Wilson's study was objective in the modern sense; it reflected the author's personal feelings and opin-

⁷ As will be seen, many of these dissertations and other works by their authors were subsequently influential as published works.

⁸ This was preceded by "Economic Aspects of Mormonism," by Richard T. Ely, who had been trained in the German Historical School, in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, CVI (1903), 667-678. The earliest Ph.D. dissertation on a Mormon subject is Woodbridge Riley's psychological interpretation of Joseph Smith, but it cannot be classed as a dissertation on the Latter-day Saints and their culture.

⁹ This mention of Schmoller and his somewhat marginal connection with Mormon studies at the beginning of the century should not obscure the dominating influence of Leopold von Ranke on general German and American historiography. Another leading European historian, Eduard Meyer, wrote one of the early "scientific" studies of Mormonism, which, however, suffers from the shortcomings of Riley, Linn, and other writers on whom it was based: *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* (Halle, Germany, 1912).

¹⁰ English translation. The original was published under the title "Gemeinwirtschaft und Unternehmungsformen im Mormonenstaat," *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich* (39 vols.; Leipzig, 1877-1915), XXI (1907), 1003-1056. The writer has an unpublished translation into English by Dr. Philip Flammer, of the United States Air Force Academy, which was completed several years ago while Dr. Flammer was a student at Utah State University.

ions, as well as the available literature and prejudices of the time. But it is significant that Wilson sought to study Mormonism as a phenomenon in the same sense that other students of the German historicists had studied the tax system of ancient Greece, the legal contributions of the Romans, and the origins of German statecraft.¹¹

Since this pioneer effort, the hundred or more dissertations on the Mormons and their culture fall into one of three categories: "analytical" social science studies, historical studies of one or more aspects of "the Mormon epic," and what might be called "quasi-official" or "institutional" studies.¹² It is not entirely a coincidence that the earliest *American* doctoral dissertations on the Mormons were completed the same year (1918), that both were written by young Mormons who had taught in the church educational system (Ephraim Ericksen and Andrew Love Neff), and that both exemplify and suggest themes for the first two types of studies suggested above.

The first of the analytical studies, and somewhat resembling the Wilson dissertation, was "The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life" by Ephraim Ericksen.¹³ Although Ericksen does not cite Wilson and does not even list a bibliography (at least in the work's published form), among his professors and ad-

¹¹ In 1904-1905, just prior to Wilson's dissertation, the famous social philosopher and economic historian, Max Weber, had published in a German review *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which contained an interesting footnote reference to the Mormons (London, 1930, p. 264, note 25). This may or may not have excited the interest of Schmoller and Wilson, but it was unquestionably one of the factors which induced Lowell L. Bennion, a (Mormon) sociology student at the Universities of Vienna and Strasbourg in the early 1930's, to write a little-known Weber-type analysis of Mormonism in his doctoral dissertation entitled *Max Weber's Methodology* (Paris, 1933, esp. 128-135). Shortly thereafter (1934), a French student of Vilfredo Pareto, G. H. Bousquet, spent several weeks in Utah and later published a similar analysis under the title "A Theocratic Economy: The Mormon Church," in the *Revue d'économie politique* in 1936. In addition to other works, Bousquet is also author of *Les Mormons: Histoire et Institutions* (Paris, 1949), one of the "Que sais-je?" series of the "Presses Universitaires de France," which has been widely distributed and read in France. An authority on Arab sociology attached to the University of Algiers, Bousquet became interested in Joseph Smith and Mormon history because of supposed similarities to Mohammed and the history of Islam.

¹² Obviously, the three categories are not mutually exclusive. Some of the "quasi-official" studies belong, topically, in the analytical or "Mormon epic" categories. They are classified separately because of the need to distinguish studies which tend to be basically "faith-promoting" from those done in "secular" graduate schools which insist upon naturalistic or humanistic description and analysis.

¹³ A year earlier Hamilton Gardner, a student at Harvard, had published "Cooperation Among the Mormons," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XXXI (1917) 461-499. He later published "Communism Among the Mormons," *ibid.*, XXXVII (1922), 134-174. But his projected work, "Economic Activities Among the Mormons," completed in 1925, was never published. It is available on microfilm at the Utah State University Library.

visors was Dr. J. Laurence Laughlin, a personal friend of Schmoller, who had given a series of lectures at the University of Berlin in 1906–1907.¹⁴ These, it will be remembered, were the same years that Wilson's dissertation was written and published. Ericksen's study, which was highly critical of Mormon leadership, initiated and influenced a rather substantial number of penetrating social and economic studies by persons reared as Mormons. Among these early "analytical" studies were those by Joseph Geddes, Lowry Nelson, and Feramorz Y. Fox. It is significant, and perhaps to be expected, that most of these dissertations have been written by persons who received part or all of their training in a discipline other than history — psychology, sociology, economics, or political science. It is also significant that these studies have centered on the more unusual elements of Mormon culture, giving emphasis to the differences between the Mormons and other groups of Westerners and Americans.

The second of these early dissertations, and the earliest of the "Mormon epic" studies, was "The Mormon Migration to Utah" by Andrew Love Neff. While not completed until 1918, this study was actually conceived by Neff as early as 1903 while he was a student at Stanford. Perhaps unconsciously, it reflected the influence of Frederick Jackson Turner. "To my mind," wrote Neff in 1906, "the greatest fact in American history is the spread of settlement from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific Ocean. And I hope to ascertain the relative part of Mormons in blazing the trail and opening up of the continent to settlement."¹⁵ Neff's goal of a three-volume "epic" history was never fully realized because of an untimely death, but we can be grateful to L. H. Creer and others for the posthumous publication in 1940 of his intended first volume, which covers the history of Utah and the Mormons to 1869.¹⁶ Early works built upon this "frontier" tradition include the dissertations by L. H. Creer, Dean McBrien, Joel Ricks, and Milton Hunter. These and the "Turnerian" works which followed have emphasized the "American" character of the Mormon movement and have sought to demonstrate the elements in common between the Mormons and other Westerners and Americans.

There is a third kind of monograph which has flowered in recent years with the establishment and growth of graduate studies

¹⁴ See Laughlin, *Industrial America Berlin Lectures of 1906* (New York, 1906).

¹⁵ A. L. Neff to G. H. Brimhall, April 1, 1906, MS., Brimhall Papers, Brigham Young University Archives, Provo, Utah.

¹⁶ Andrew Love Neff, *History of Utah, 1847 to 1869*, Leland Hargrave Creer, ed. (Salt Lake City, 1940).

in the College of Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University. These theses and dissertations might be regarded as "quasi-official" because, in a broad sense, they are encouraged by, or sponsored by, the Church. Directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, they adduce evidence in support of the Church, its history and program. Written under the influence of what Samuel W. Taylor recently called the "positive thinking" philosophy, they serve to "build testimonies" (*i.e.*, increase conviction) by showing the wisdom of past and present church policies and programs.¹⁷ Many of them consist of Ed.D. theses written by instructors in the Church's seminaries, institutes of religion, and colleges.¹⁸

It was the prediction of Ephraim Ericksen that these "quasi-official" monographs would increasingly characterize Mormon studies in the years after his dissertation was completed. The Church, he asserted, had gone through three stages: an early stage of conflict with neighbors in New York State, Missouri, Ohio, and Illinois — a conflict produced by the Mormons' peculiar religious ceremonies, peculiar marriage institution, distinct economic order, and the unique lay priesthood hagiography; a second stage of conflict with nature, as the pioneers in the Mountain West sought to make the desert blossom as the rose in a region hostile to human settlement; and a third stage of accommodation and adjustment to the dominant scientific and democratic culture of the nation.

It was the third stage which, Ericksen contended, would present the most difficult problems for the Church. In the earlier stages, he said, there was very slight distinction between the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church:

They [the Mormons] all belonged to the Kingdom of God and the church claimed the right to exercise its authority in any direction. But when sufficient private capital had accumulated and the individuals began to feel their own strength and could undertake business enterprises without the aid of the church its influence in economic matters began to decline. The state began to assume greater responsibility and was becoming stronger in all lines of general community interest. The individuals were beginning to assert themselves through the institu-

¹⁷ Taylor decried the baneful influence of the "positive thinkers" in a recent address to the Conference on Utah and The West at the University of Utah, June 22, 1965. It should be emphasized that religious history is not synonymous with non-objective history, and "secular" history is not always honest and impartial. Theistic history is quite capable of becoming "great" history.

¹⁸ Since only the dissertations written under Ph.D. programs are included on the appended list, many of these studies are omitted. Examples of fine Ed.D. dissertations by Mormon educators on Mormon subjects are: Wendell O. Rich, "Certain Basic Concepts in the Educational Philosophy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1930," Utah State University, 1954; and James R. Clark, "Church and State Relations in Education in Utah, 1847-1957," Utah State University, 1958.

tions of the state. The church was forced to confine its activities to that sphere in which the older group sentiments still hold sway. Its sphere was becoming less temporal and more spiritual. Its attention was being turned to its traditions, and its function was becoming more and more that of conserving its institutions and group sentiments.¹⁹

As secularization set in, said Ericksen, church history would become more defensive, doctrinaire, and theological.²⁰ As the last refuge of their early faith, a "Mormon scholasticism" would develop which would have as its purpose the "justifying" of Mormon dogmas. "The old institutions and traditions are thus fortified on the one hand by sentiment and on the other by a well-developed system of theology."²¹ But this would lead to a form of group introspection which would prove to be essentially sterile.

... with a social group as with an individual, it [a group] tends to lose its vigor as soon as it becomes self-conscious. Its spirit weakens as soon as it begins to think about itself. When Mormonism finds more glory in working out new social ideals than in the contemplating of past achievements or the beauty of its own theological system, it will begin to feel its old-time strength.²²

Nevertheless, while Ericksen predicted the emergence of a substantial body of quasi-official studies, he failed to foresee the outpouring of scholarly secular studies by Mormon Ph.D. candidates in non-church universities and in departments outside the College of Religious Instruction at Brigham Young University itself.

The English historian R. G. Collingwood once wrote that the historian investigating any historical event or phenomenon must make a distinction between the "outside" and the "inside" of the event.²³ In an analogous way some writers have looked at Mormon

¹⁹ E. E. Ericksen, *The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life* (Chicago, 1922), p. 91.

²⁰ Ericksen did not use the term secularization — a term which is common among sociologists of religion and others, particularly Catholics. Secularization "has usually referred to the developments of the past century or so during which what might be termed a kind of naturalistic humanism has gradually displaced life orientations of a theistic character with those focusing on the rational empirical mastery of the human condition in the here and now." John T. Flint, "The Secularization of Norwegian Society," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, VI (April 1964), 325. The term is not ordinarily used by Latter-day Saints because of the unique association in Mormon theology of earthly life with eternal salvation. However, there is increasing justification for the use of some such term to refer to the gradual replacement of the church as the central focus of all aspects of life — and the church leader as the authority on all aspects of life — with a more naturalistic or "secular" humanism which accords to religion, the church, and the church leader a more limited role.

²¹ Ericksen, p. 98.

²² Ericksen, p. 99.

²³ Cited in Frederic C. Lane and Jelle C. Riemersma, *Enterprise and Secular Change: Readings in Economic History* (Homewood, Illinois, 1953), p. 438.

culture from the “outside” and others from the “inside.” For example, one of the finest studies of Mormonism in recent years is the dissertation by Thomas F. O’Dea for Harvard entitled “Mormon Values: The Significance of a Religious Outlook for Social Action.” Reared in an Irish Catholic household in Boston, O’Dea, after discharge from the Armed Forces at the end of World War II, did an honors thesis on a “fundamentalist” Catholic sect led by Father Feeney called the “Benedictines.” Because of the brilliance of his work, O’Dea was invited to participate in the Comparative Study of Values in Five Cultures Project of the Laboratory of Social Relations at Harvard, under the direction of Professor Clyde Kluckhohn. It was the Laboratory’s plan to study the impact of religion on five different cultures located in one geographic area of northern New Mexico: Zuñi, Navajo, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Mormon. Since scholars had already been assigned to work on the first four groups, O’Dea, who knew virtually nothing about Mormonism prior to that time, was assigned the Mormon community. He devoured the literature, wrote an insightful preliminary analysis, conducted interviews with scholars and church authorities, and reached a sympathetic understanding by residing for six months in a “frontier” New Mexico Mormon agricultural settlement. He concluded with a summer teaching assignment at a predominantly Mormon state university (Utah State University). His resulting dissertation, and the articles and books published from his research, offer unquestionably the best “outside” view of Mormon thought and practice now available.²⁴

The prime example of a scholar and writer beginning from the “inside” is Juanita Brooks. Reared in a polygamous family in a Mormon settlement in southern Nevada, her brilliant, sensitive, and imaginative mind was saturated from childhood in Mormon lore — the Mountain Meadows Massacre, John D. Lee, stories of the Three Nephites, the inspirations and foibles of pioneer leaders, and the emotional and practical impact of Mormon doctrine. Her writings have illustrated the remarkable insights into Mormonism that can be obtained by a study of the lives of individual adherents, particularly in emotionally-charged episodes.²⁵

²⁴ See O’Dea’s *The Mormons* (Chicago, 1957). His “Mormon” essays in sociological journals are as profound as they are influential; e.g.: “Mormonism and the Avoidance of Sectarian Stagnation: A Study of Church, Sect, and Incipient Nationality,” *American Journal of Sociology*, LX (November, 1954), 285–293; and “A Comparative Study of the Role of Values in Social Action in Two Southwestern Communities,” *American Sociological Review*, XVIII (December, 1953), 645–654 (with Evon C. Vogt).

²⁵ Strictly speaking, Mrs. Brooks’ parents were both reared in plural households. In addition to many articles, her books include: *Dudley Leavitt: Pioneer to Southern Utah* (St. George, Utah, 1942); *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford, 1950); and *John Doyle Lee: Zealot — Pioneer Builder — Scapegoat* (Glendale, Calif., 1962).

It is not possible to say whether Mormon studies are best done by practicing members, by "Jack Mormons" (*i.e.*, lapsed or non-practicing members or excommunicants), or by complete "outsiders."²⁶ A. L. Neff felt that those reared as Mormons had an advantage. Born of pioneer parentage, Neff had been educated at the Brigham Young Academy, and later served as a principal of three "Mormon" high schools. Sensitive to the beliefs and feelings of his own people, Neff refused to accept either adverse or favorable generalizations until all the evidence was in. "I don't pretend to be very religious," he wrote, "but I have a passion for the truth in this field of American history." "In my projected historical labors," he wrote, "I intend to make allowance for inspiration. . . . I realize that if I were guided by the canons of historical criticism alone, I would make no real contribution to the already many works on the subject. But by combining the two I feel that I shall have an advantage over previous writers."²⁷ By adhering to this goal and by resourcefulness and circumspection in the use of sources, Neff set a high standard of integrity for others to follow.

Despite the substantial number of scholarly studies of Mormonism undertaken since the turn of the century, and of course there are significant works in addition to the dissertations listed,²⁸ much still remains for present and future researchers. The struggle of scholars not specializing in Mormon studies to find accounts and interpretations which would be useful and reliable for reference purposes points to serious deficiencies. At the same time, recent studies suggest new interpretations and opportunities.

²⁶ The curious may want to know how the writer classes himself. My family were Latter-day Saint converts from the South — not an established or pioneer family with "a heritage." I grew up in a town (Twin Falls, Idaho) which was at the time almost completely non-Mormon; I went to non-Mormon universities (University of Idaho and University of North Carolina); I married a non-Mormon girl (now a converted Mormon) and went off to war in North Africa and Europe, where I had no Mormon associates. I did not settle down in a Mormon environment until I came to Utah State University in 1946 at the age of 29. Whatever their worth, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958) and other essays and monographs thus represent attempts to see the Mormon economy and culture from the perspective of a sympathetic "outsider."

²⁷ Neff to Brimhall, *op. cit.* I am grateful to Dr. Klaus Hansen, of Utah State University, who called the Neff correspondence to my attention and furnished me a copy of the letter cited here.

²⁸ Perhaps the most significant works on Mormonism which did not originate as doctoral dissertations are: B. H. Roberts, "History of the Mormon Church," *Americana*, June 1909 to July 1915, later revised, brought up-to-date, and published as *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Century I* (6 vols.: Salt Lake City, 1930); Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1941); Nels Anderson, *Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah* (Chicago, 1942); and Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York, 1945).

With regard to the deficiencies, there is, first of all, not even a satisfactory general history of the Mormons. This appalling fact is evident from the large number of national and regional historians who still base their accounts on such "anti" works as Linn's *Story of the Mormons*, which is not only out of date but was not a reliable treatise to begin with.²⁹ On the other hand, the most widely-used "official" history is theologically oriented, its focus is primarily on the recurring conflict between the Church and its "enemies," and it makes no attempt to relate Mormon history to contemporary national developments.³⁰ We continue to await the multivolume history by Dale Morgan,³¹ but many monographic studies would be helpful to a future synthesizer.³² Particularly neglected are the "churches of the dispersion"—the dissident sects and groups which split off from the "mainstream" group headquartered in Salt Lake City.

Second, there are only a few Mormon biographies, and not all of those few are historically sound. The biography most often referred to by most scholars is Fawn Brodie's life of Joseph Smith, but earnest critics have found many inaccuracies in both fact and interpretation.³³ Despite the evidence of prodigious research, despite the charming imagery of its style and its stirring chronicle of an enigmatic career, the book has two methodological weaknesses. First, it is evident that Mrs. Brodie, who is a lapsed Mormon, not only has little patience with the pretensions of Mormonism, but

²⁹ William Alexander Linn, *The Story of the Mormons . . .* (New York, 1902; New York, 1963). An example of the use of Linn as the basic reference by a scholar who ought to know better is Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History to 1860* (Minneapolis, 1944; New York, 1964).

³⁰ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials of Church History* (Salt Lake City, 1922). This book is now in its 18th edition.

³¹ Reared as a Mormon, and a University of Utah graduate of 1937, Dale L. Morgan did extensive research on Mormon history while associated with the Historical Records Survey and Federal Writers' Project in Utah and the Office of Price Administration in Washington, D.C. and in connection with the books under his own name which began to appear in 1943. The quality of his work is evidenced in *Utah: A Guide to the State* (New York, 1941), and *The Great Salt Lake* (Indianapolis, 1947). A specialist in the Bancroft Library since 1954, he has become heavily involved in other historical projects and his Mormon history has been in a state of suspension.

³² At this date, the most satisfactory short narrative history of the Mormons for a non-Mormon, despite many inaccuracies and omissions, is Ray B. West, Jr., *Kingdom of the Saints: The Story of Brigham Young and the Mormons* (New York, 1957). The best "analytic" study is O'Dea's *The Mormons*. Roberts' *Comprehensive History*, which is almost never used by non-Mormons, is surprisingly complete and objective; it is the best single reference.

³³ Examples of errors in the book are given in a lengthy review in *The Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), May 11, 1946, and in Hugh Nibley, *No Ma'am, That's Not History* (Salt Lake City, 1946). Many of the factual errors in *No Man Knows My History* have been eliminated in recent printings.

little appreciation of religious phenomena generally. She refuses to accord integrity to the many men of undoubted intellect and character who associated with the Mormon prophet and believed him to be an inspired leader. Second, Mrs. Brodie was concerned, or at least it would seem, with painting a pen portrait rather than with writing a work of history. The work reads as though she began by studying the historical background sufficiently to formulate what she regarded as a reasonable and believable approach to Joseph Smith and then proceeded to mobilize the evidence to illustrate and support her interpretation. To be sure, these indictments may be overdrawn, but Mrs. Brodie's colorful adjectives and sometimes damning inferences imply a finality of judgment that is not warranted by the contradictory character of the evidence she examined.⁸⁴

The need for a good biography of Joseph Smith must be emphasized because he was unquestionably a theological and social innovator of major significance. There are those who have deprecated Joseph Smith as a bumbling knave, far inferior to that great practical statesman, Brigham Young.⁸⁵ But, as Robert Flanders and Jan Shipps have shown in two recent doctoral dissertations, Joseph Smith was neither a charlatan nor a lunatic, but a personality of undoubted stature—a leader of imagination and energy and the person most responsible for the formulation of Mormon doctrine and practice. One can hardly obtain an understanding of Mormonism without coming to grips with his life, intellect, and character.

Just as Mrs. Brodie's biography, and certain others, are usually regarded (by the Mormons, at least) as "anti,"⁸⁶ most of the "pro" biographies are undeviating pictures of sweetness and light. These err even more on the side of incredibility than the blacker portraits of the anti's.⁸⁷ Indeed, the only Mormon biography which appears to have withstood historical criticism in either direction is Juanita

⁸⁴ One reader of this paper writes that it ill behoves Latter-day Saints to complain so frenetically about Mrs. Brodie when they have thus far failed to produce a scholarly study which could even hope to compete with hers as a life of Joseph Smith.

⁸⁵ "Mormons," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th ed.; New York, 1910); DeVoto, "The Centennial of Mormonism"; and elsewhere.

⁸⁶ The "anti" biographies include: Harry M. Beardsley, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire* (New York, 1931); and Hoffman Birney, *Zealots of Zion* (Philadelphia, 1931).

⁸⁷ Among the better Mormon biographies are John Henry Evans, *Charles Coulson Rich: Pioneer Builder of the West* (New York, 1936); Clair Noall, *Intimate Disciple: The Life of Willard Richards* (Salt Lake City, 1959). Several biographies by Bryant S. Hinckley are of the "sugary" kind; e.g., Bryant S. Hinckley, *Daniel Hanmer Wells and Events of His Time* (Salt Lake City, 1942); *ibid.*, *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard* (Salt Lake City, 1949).

Brooks' *John Doyle Lee*. This is indeed embarrassing, considering that there have been, by now, several million Mormons. It is unfortunate for the cause of Mormon history that the Church Historian's Library, which is in the possession of virtually all of the diaries of leading Mormons, has not seen fit to publish these diaries or to permit qualified historians to use them without restriction. One result has been that "Mormons" have become known essentially through the lives and characters of some of their most notorious adherents — *i.e.*, Porter Rockwell, John D. Lee, and Hosea Stout³⁸ — rather than through such "mainstream" leaders as Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, and David O. McKay. Even Brigham Young, recognized universally as one of America's great colonizers, has no satisfactory biography.³⁹

There is also a need for studies of those who have contributed to the literature on Mormonism: Linn, Roberts, Ericksen, Neff, Werner, Beardsley, Anderson, Brodie, and others. How did they become interested in writing as they did about the Mormons? What familial, intellectual, and other influences colored their opinions and analyses? Here are topics for many master's theses and journal articles.⁴⁰

The third great deficiency is the lack of studies of the period since 1877. It was right and proper that the first studies should reconstruct the great migration and the settlement of the Mormon West and analyze the social and cultural setting. Inasmuch as the great principle of history is continuity, increasing emphasis should be given to the period after Brigham Young's death — and, even more, to Mormon history in this century.⁴¹ Of the one hundred

³⁸ Charles Kelly and Hoffman Birney, *Holy Murder: The Story of Porter Rockwell* (New York: 1934); John D. Lee, *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848-1876*, Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, eds. (2 vols.; San Marino, Calif., 1955); Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout*, Juanita Brooks, ed. (2 vols.; Salt Lake City, 1964).

³⁹ An excellent and sprightly-written assessment of Young is a fifty-page chapter in Jonathan Hughes, *The Vital Few: American Economic Progress and Its Protagonists* (Boston, 1966). Biographies include: M. R. Werner, *Brigham Young* (New York, 1925), a researched account which is good but essentially pokes fun; and Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* (Salt Lake City, 1936), which manages to present a life of Young without once mentioning polygamy.

⁴⁰ Pieces which show what can be done are: George Ellsworth, "Hubert Howe Bancroft and the History of Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXII (April 1954), 99-124; and William F. Lye, "Edward Wheelock Tullidge, 'The Mormons' Rebel Historian,'" *ibid.*, XXVIII (January 1960), 56-75.

⁴¹ The only historical study that treats exclusively the last 65 years is the rather brief and topical text by James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan, *Mormonism in the Twentieth Century* (Provo, Utah, 1964). An excellent sociological study of Mormons in the 20th century is John L. Sorenson, "Industrialization and Social Change: A Controlled Comparison of Two Utah Communities" (Ph.D. Dissertation, U.C.L.A., 1962).

thirty-six years which have elapsed since The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded in 1830, seventy, or more than half, have occurred since Utah became a state in 1896. Yet virtually none of the studies of Mormondom has paid more than token attention to the "modern" half of Mormon history.

In this connection, the gradual but sure transition of Mormon Country⁴² from the exclusively Mormon commonwealth to a region in the American (in the broader sense) commonwealth deserves particular attention. Since completing my own study of nineteenth-century Mormon economics several years ago, I have done some research, in association with Professor Thomas Alexander and others, on the economic history of Utah and the Mountain West since 1900; the conclusion is inescapable that the economic and social history of Mormon Country in this century is fully as significant, fully as regional, as that of the nineteenth century.⁴³ The unifying theme of the nineteenth century Mormon economy was the Church, which promoted economic growth, regulated economic activity, and was the focus of community action. In a desert oasis like Utah and surrounding regions, strong organizational backing was required for economic success, and the Mormons were uniquely prepared to meet this challenge by virtue of their ideology and institutions. The cohesion of the Mormon settlers, their willingness to sacrifice for a great cause, and the concentration of capital in the hands of a church interested in promoting economic growth all contributed toward successful colonization.

When the activities of the Church were seriously curtailed by Federal action during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, the only remaining source of organizational strength to overcome the problems connected with the development of the region was the Federal Government. Happily, the nation was in the course of developing governmental organizational facilities which made that feasible. By means of reclamation, road construction, conservation and recreation activities, the construction of defense plants and installations, and other forms of Federal assistance, the region has demonstrated healthy growth. The unifying theme and key to the Mormon economy in

⁴² An excellent definition and description of Mormon Country is found in D. W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of The American West, 1847-1964," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, LV (June 1965), 191-220. A delightful introduction to the folkways is found in Wallace Stegner, *Mormon Country* (New York, 1942).

⁴³ Two brief essays are: *From Wilderness to Empire: The Role of Utah in Western Economic History* (Salt Lake City, 1961); and *The Changing Economic Structure of the Mountain West, 1850-1950* (Logan, 1963).

the twentieth century is the role of the Federal Government — its programs, aids, and consequences. That the Mountain West (*i.e.*, the setting of “Mormon Country”) was unique in its heavy dependence upon Federal programs for its development can be attributed to the fact that much of the region was settled and developed during years when the Federal Government was able and willing to assist. Without the many Federal programs, the growth would unquestionably have been far less. And yet there are few who would question that the Federal investment has paid off handsomely. The economic and social contributions of Mormon Country to the nation have been numerous and substantial.

This obviously incomplete review should not conclude without mention of two exciting responses, quite independent of the Church itself, by young Mormon intellectuals to the need for competent professional history and commentary. The first is the founding of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*; the second is the formation in San Francisco, on December 28, 1965, of the Mormon History Association. Most of those who have promoted both the Association and *Dialogue* are practicing Latter-day Saints; they share basic agreement that the Mormon religion and its history are subject to discussion, if not to argument and that any particular feature of Mormon life is fair game for detached examination and clarification. They believe that the details of Mormon history and culture can be studied in human or naturalistic terms — indeed, must be so studied — and without thus rejecting the divinity of the Church’s origin and work.⁴⁴

Thus, while Mormon history has been “secularized” as the result of its study in secular graduate schools, a positive attempt is being made to promote research and writing which will give the Mormon heritage a fuller and more sympathetic hearing. Perhaps eventually a Mormon Yearbook can be published that will contribute to the elevation of Mormon studies, much as Schmoller’s *Jahrbuch* contributed toward the edification and cultural advancement of central Europe.

⁴⁴ The above also expresses my own conviction; it is a subject which warrants a full essay. As one reader of this paper has asked, is it really possible to humanize all phases of Mormon history without destroying church doctrines regarding historical events? Can doctrine be examined and explained without losing its very qualities of “doctrine?” Doesn’t such understanding preclude “doctrine” by definition? Aren’t these the considerations that motivate church authorities to hesitate making public the documents relating to doctrinal phases of church history? Finally, is it a valid historical approach to begin with the assumption that the Church itself is not subject to argument?

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*A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF Ph.D. DISSERTATIONS
ON MORMON HISTORY AND CULTURE*

Leonard J. Arrington

1. I. WOODBRIDGE RILEY, "A Psychological History of Joseph Smith, Jr., The Founder of Mormonism" (Yale, 1902).
2. EDGAR B. WILSON, "Gemeinwirtschaft und Unternehmungsformen in Mormonenstaat" (Berlin, 1906).
3. E. E. ERICKSEN, "The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life" (Columbia, 1918).
4. ANDREW LOVE NEFF, "The Mormon Migration to Utah, 1830-1847" (California: Berkeley, 1918).
5. JOSEPH A. GEDDES, "The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)" (Columbia, 1924).
6. LELAND H. CREER, "Utah and the Nation, 1846-1861" (California: Berkeley, 1926).
7. DEAN D. MCBRIEN, "The Influence of the Frontier on Joseph Smith" (George Washington, 1929).
8. WILLIAM J. MCNIFF, "The Part Played by the Mormon Church in the Cultural Development of Early Utah (1847-1879)" (Ohio State, 1929).
9. LOWRY NELSON, "The Mormon Village: A Study in Social Origins" (Wisconsin, 1929).
10. JOEL E. RICKS, "Forms and Methods of Early Settlement in Utah and the Surrounding Region, 1847-77" (Chicago, 1930).
11. THOMAS C. ROMNEY, "The State of Deseret" (California: Berkeley, 1930).
12. GEORGE B. ARBAUGH, "Revelation in Mormonism: Its Character and Changing Forms" (Iowa, 1931).
13. FERAMORZ Y. FOX, "The Mormon Land System: A Study of the Settlement and Utilization of Land Under the Direction of the Mormon Church" (Northwestern, 1932).
14. M. LYNN BENNION, "The Origin, Growth, and Extension of the Educational Program of the Mormon Church in Utah" (California: Berkeley, 1935).
15. ARDEN B. OLSEN, "The History of Mormon Mercantile Cooperation in Utah" (California: Berkeley, 1935).
16. EDWARD J. ALLEN, "The Second United Order Among the Mormons" (Columbia, 1936).
17. MILTON R. HUNTER, "Brigham Young the Colonizer" (California: Berkeley, 1936).
18. JOSEPH EARLE SPENCER, "The Middle Virgin River Valley Utah: A Study in Culture Growth and Change" (California: Los Angeles, 1936).
19. CARL J. FURR, "The Religious Philosophy of Brigham Young" (Chicago, 1937).
20. THERALD N. JENSEN, "Mormon Theory of Church and State" (Chicago, 1938).

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21. G. BYRON DONE, "The Participation of the Latter-day Saints in the Community Life of Los Angeles" (Southern California, 1939).
22. JAMES E. HULETT, JR., "The Sociological and Social Psychological Aspects of the Mormon Polygamous Family" (Wisconsin, 1939).
23. PAUL W. TAPPAN, "Mormon-Gentile Conflict: A Study of the Influence of Public Opinion on In-group versus Out-group Interaction, With Special Reference to Polygamy (Wisconsin, 1939).
24. REV. ROBERT J. DWYER, "The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict (1862-1890)" (Catholic University of America, 1941).
25. REX SKIDMORE, "Mormon Recreation in Theory and Practice" (Pennsylvania, 1941).
26. JULIUS B. BEARNSON, "Private and Public Relief in Utah, with Special Reference to the Mormon Church Welfare Plan" (Virginia, 1948).
27. RICHARD D. POLL, "The Mormon Question, 1850-1865: A Study in Politics and Public Opinion" (California: Berkeley, 1948).
28. A. R. MORTENSEN, "The *Deseret News* and Utah, 1850-1867" (California: Los Angeles, 1949).
29. M. HAMLIN CANNON, "The 'Gathering' of British Mormons to Western America: A Study in Religious Migration" (American University, 1950).
30. S. GEORGE ELLSWORTH, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830-1860" (California: Berkeley, 1950).
31. M. R. MERRILL, "Reed Smoot: Apostle in Politics" (Columbia, 1950).
32. PHILIP A. M. TAYLOR, "Mormon Emigration from Great Britain to the United States, 1840-70" (Cambridge, 1950).
33. GABRIEL E. JANOSIK, "The Political Theory of the Mormon Church" (Pennsylvania, 1951).
34. MERLE E. WELLS, "The Idaho Anti-Mormon Movement, 1872-1908" (California: Berkeley, 1951).
35. LEONARD J. ARRINGTON, "Mormon Economic Policies and Their Implementation on the Western Frontier, 1847-1900" (North Carolina, 1952).
36. GAYLON L. CALDWELL, "Mormon Concepts of Individual Rights and Political Obligation" (Stanford, 1952).
37. EUGENE E. CAMPBELL, "A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in California, 1846-1946" (Southern California, 1952).
38. DON W. McBRIDE, "The Development of Higher Education in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Michigan State, 1952).
39. WILFRED E. SMITH, "A Comparative Study of Indulgence of Mormon and non-Mormon Students in Certain Social Practices which are Authoritatively Condemned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" (Washington, 1952).
40. THOMAS F. O'DEA, "Mormon Values: The Significance of a Religious Outlook for Social Action" (Harvard, 1953).
41. ELLSWORTH E. WEAVER, "The Evolution of Political Institutions in Utah" (New York University, 1953).

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42. WILLIAM N. DEAN, "The Mormons of the El Dorado Stake and the Valley City Ward: A Study in Social Norms and Their Effectiveness (Washington University, St. Louis, 1954).
43. STEWART L. GROW, "A Study of the Utah Commission, 1882-1896" (Utah, 1954).
44. HERBERT R. LARSEN, "'Familism' in Mormon Social Structure" (Utah, 1954).
45. HYRUM L. ANDRUS, "Joseph Smith: Social Philosopher, Theorist, and Prophet" (Syracuse, 1955).
46. WILFRID C. BAILEY, "The Social Organization of the Mormon Village" (Chicago, 1955).
47. WILLIAM MULDER, "Mormons from Scandinavia, 1850-1905: The Story of a Religious Migration" (Harvard, 1955).
48. RAY R. CANNING, "Changing Patterns and Problems of Family Life in Provo, Utah, 1905 to 1955" (Utah, 1956).
49. J. KEITH MELVILLE, "The Political Ideas of Brigham Young" (Utah, 1956).
50. R. KENT FIELDING, "Growth of the Mormon Church in Kirtland, Ohio" (Indiana, 1957).
51. MARK W. CANNON, "The Mormon Issue in Congress, 1872-1883, Drawing on the Experience of Territorial Delegate George Q. Cannon" (Harvard, 1960).
52. J. KENNETH DAVIES, "A Study of the Labor Philosophy Developed Within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Southern California, 1960).
53. RICHARD O. COWAN, "Mormonism in National Periodicals" (Stanford, 1961).
54. MARIO DE PILLIS, "The Development of Mormon Communitarianism, 1826-1846" (Yale, 1961).
55. BARBARA J. M. HIGDON, "The Role of Preaching in the Latter Day Saint Church, 1830-1846" (Missouri, 1961).
56. HAZEL A. LOWENSTEIN, "Comparative Study of Selected Leadership Training Criteria and the Leadership Training Programs of the Church-of-Jesus-Christ-of-Latter-Day-Saints" (Indiana, 1961).
57. HELEN H. MACARE, "The Singing Saints: A Study of the Mormon Hymnal, 1835-1950" (California: Los Angeles, 1961).
58. RUTH ANDRUS, "A History of the Recreation Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (State University of Iowa, 1962).
59. WARREN A. JENKINS, "Zion is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (Florida, 1962).
60. T. EDGAR LYON, "Evangelical Protestant Missionary Activities in Mormon Dominated Areas, 1865-1900" (Utah, 1962).
61. JOHN L. SORENSON, "Industrialization and Social Change: A Controlled Comparison of Two Utah Communities" (California: Los Angeles, 1962).
62. W. C. CARR, "Utah Statehood: Its Background and Development to 1865" (California: Berkeley, 1963).

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63. KLAUS J. HANSEN, "The Kingdom of God in Mormon Thought and Practice, 1830-1896" (Wayne State, 1963).
64. B. CARMON HARDY, "The Mormon Colonies of Northern Mexico: A History, 1885-1912" (Wayne State, 1963).
65. MELVIN S. TAGG, "A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Canada, 1830-1963" (Brigham Young University, 1963).
66. R. D. ZINSER, "Sectarian Commitment and Withdrawal" (Chicago, 1963).
67. JULIA CARVER, "A Study of the Influence of the Philosophy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Physical Education in Church Schools" (Oregon, 1964).
68. ROBERT FLANDERS, "Nauvoo: Kingdom of the Mississippi" (Wisconsin, 1964).
69. ORMA LINFORD, "The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases" (Wisconsin, 1964).
70. WILLIAM R. PERSONS, "An Analysis of Changes in the Interpretation and Utilization of Revelation in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" (Iliff School of Theology, 1964).
71. JAN SHIPPS, "The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years" (Colorado, 1965).

NOTE: It must be emphasized that this list does not include Ed.D. dissertations, many of which represent significant scholarship on Mormon history and culture.

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