

# Reviews

*Edited by Richard L. Bushman*

*Mormons have appeared in the writing of Wallace Stegner for many years now. His experiences in Salt Lake City as a boy and his research into western history have provided materials for stories, novels and book-length studies. In a review essay on Stegner's work, James Clayton, an admirer of Stegner, assesses his work and his attitudes toward Mormonism.*

## FROM PIONEERS TO PROVINCIALS: MORMONISM AS SEEN BY WALLACE STEGNER

*James L. Clayton*

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Utah and her cultural environs of southern Idaho and northern Arizona have produced three significant literary historians: Bernard DeVoto, Vardis Fisher, and Wallace Stegner. DeVoto, perhaps best remembered as a crusader for public causes rather than as an historian, wrote so voluminously that simply to list his works requires eighty-nine printed pages.<sup>1</sup> Among these works are several fair novels and three outstanding works of history, one a Pulitzer Prize winner.<sup>2</sup> Vardis Fisher, known best for his historical novels, has written more than forty books and essays, the most famous being *Children of God*, a novel on the Genesis and Exodus periods of Mormonism, which won the Harper Prize for fiction in 1939.<sup>3</sup> Wallace Stegner, although known primarily for his short stories and a dozen or so novels, has written five works of history or historical fiction, two of which have won national prizes.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Wallace Stegner, *et al.*, *Four Portraits and One Subject: Bernard DeVoto* (Boston, 1963), for an excellent analysis of DeVoto as a writer and as a person.

<sup>2</sup> DeVoto won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Year of Decision: 1846* (New York, 1943). His other two major historical works are *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston, 1947) and *Course of Empire* (Boston, 1951).

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of Vardis Fisher's works see Joseph M. Flora, *Vardis Fisher* (New York, 1965).

<sup>4</sup> Some of Stegner's more important novels are: *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (New York, 1943), *Second Growth* (Boston, 1947), and *A Shooting Star* (New York, 1961). His major works on history are: *Mormon Country* (New York, 1942), discussed below; *The Preacher and the Slave* (Boston, 1950), an historically incisive but fictionalized account of the IWW martyr Joe Hill; *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* (Boston, 1954), a biography of Major John Wesley Powell and a competent account of some of the western surveys which received the Geographic Society of Chicago Publication Award in 1955; *Wolf Willow* (New

I claim DeVoto for Utah because he was born and reared there, although he never thought very highly of the culture of the Beehive State (at least in his early years) nor of its Mormon residents. Vardis Fisher, born in Hagerman, Idaho, has remained a resident of his home state. Despite the fact that Stegner has lived most of his adult life in California, he spent his teens and college years in Utah; he has said, "If I have a home town, a place where my heart is, it is Salt Lake City."<sup>5</sup>

Each of these eminent authors has written his best history, at least in part, on the exodus of the Mormon pioneers. DeVoto treated the Mormon migration extensively in his Pulitzer Prize winning *The Year of Decision: 1846*. Fisher's *Children of God* is widely considered to be his best work. Stegner's most recent book, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*, is probably his best history, although some may feel that *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* made a greater contribution to knowledge. All three of these men have contributed greatly to our understanding of the exodus period, but of the three Stegner is the most objective and the only one who attempts to answer the question, Exodus to what?



# I

Wallace Earle Stegner was born in 1909 at Lake Mills, Iowa. Shortly thereafter he moved to North Dakota, then to Washington, and finally to the southwestern corner of Saskatchewan, Canada, where he spent his early boyhood years. His parents were midwestern farmers of Norwegian extraction. His father was an ambitious, footloose, and enormously self-willed man who was ever searching for some Eldorado, or as Stegner himself has put it — the Big Rock Candy Mountain. His mother was a gentle, long-suffering, and sensitive person, constantly wishing for a permanent home. Neither parent realized the object of his desires, but both imbued Stegner with a tremendous will to succeed where they had failed.<sup>6</sup>

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York, 1962), "a history, a story, and a memory of the Last Plains Frontier"; and *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (New York, 1964), discussed below, which was given an award of merit in 1965 from the American Association for State and Local History.

<sup>5</sup> Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion*, p. 314.

<sup>6</sup> Much autobiographical material can be found for Stegner's early childhood years in *Wolf Willow*. *Big Rock Candy Mountain*, a semi-autobiographical novel of Stegner's youth, is also suggestive of ideas, but one must always keep in mind that it is essentially fiction.

Stegner spent his earliest and therefore most formative years on the harsh, wind-swept Canadian prairies, learning to love the rigorous outdoor life that was later to become central to much of his writing. After failing to make a homestead in a lonely corner of Saskatchewan where nature had determined no homesteads should be, the Stegners moved into town — a “dungheeled sagebrush town on the disappearing edge of nowhere.” Here Stegner grew to young manhood — precocious, sensitive, physically undersized — and sank his deepest emotional tap root.

Growing up in such an environment and later being required to leave it for richer opportunities elsewhere has given Stegner a disturbingly ambivalent attitude about the West. On the one hand he loves the West, especially the land, with intense conviction. His whole moral system, he says, was formed by this “womb-village” of his childhood — the school of the stiff upper lip — with its emphasis on fortitude, resolution, and magnanimity. On the other hand he believes with equal fervor that the West has an inadequate artistic and intellectual tradition and that it stands for mores that are foreign to the dominant attitudes of our contemporary culture generally. Since any writer must write from what he knows, Stegner feels he is faced with a double dilemma. Because the Western intellectual tradition is inadequate, it is hard for him to discover something to say, and because un-Western attitudes of despair, hyper-sexuality, and disgust dominate the publishing media it is difficult to get a hearing once an idea is discovered. This ambivalence has made Stegner feel he was “born a square,” and, as we shall see, affects the tone of what he writes about contemporary Mormonism.<sup>7</sup>

While Stegner was still a young boy, the family moved to Salt Lake City and remained there for the next several years, constantly moving from one location to another in the southeastern part of town. Stegner liked living in the city, especially playing tennis, hiking in the nearby Wasatch Mountains, and playing basketball in Mormon recreation halls.<sup>8</sup> He also liked school and eventually was graduated from the University of Utah with honors in English.

Following graduation, Stegner left the state to do graduate work at the State University of Iowa, possibly because of the emphasis on creative writing there. After receiving an M.A. from that institution in 1932, he studied briefly at the University of California, took a job as instructor at a small college in Illinois, and in 1934 was back at the University of Utah as an instructor of English. The following year Iowa awarded him the Ph.D.

In 1937 Stegner left the University of Utah, shortly after winning the Little-Brown prize for *Remembering Laughter*.<sup>9</sup> From Utah he went to the University of Wisconsin to teach creative writing and in 1939 accepted a similar position at Harvard. Although Stegner stayed at Cambridge for the

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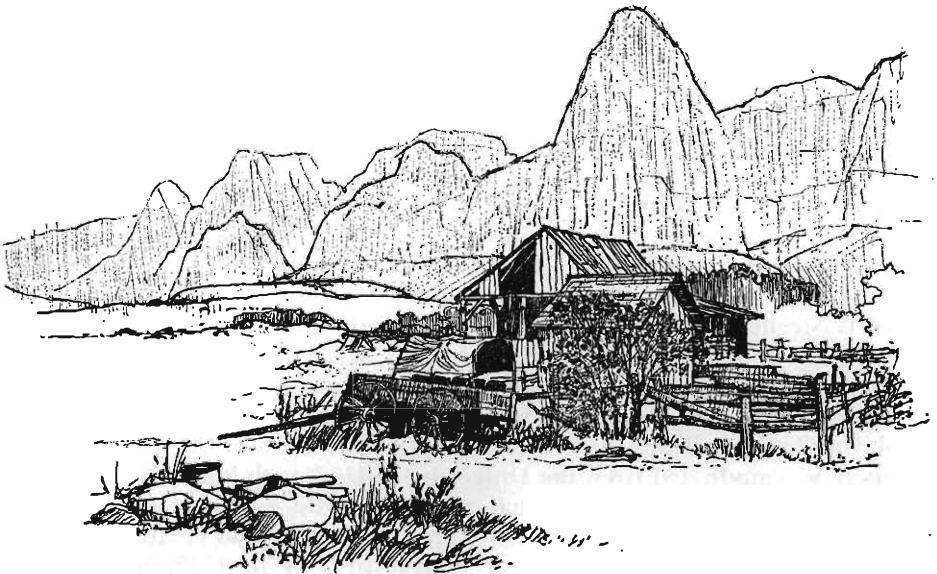
<sup>7</sup> Stegner explains this problem fully and brilliantly in “Born a Square — The Westerners’ Dilemma,” *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1964, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> See Stegner’s “Hometown Revisited” in William Mulder and A. R. Mortensen, *Among the Mormons* (New York, 1958), p. 474.

<sup>9</sup> Since *Remembering Laughter* Stegner has won a number of other literary prizes. In 1942 and again in 1948 he was awarded second prize in the O. Henry competition for the best short story of the year. In 1950 he received the first prize for “The Blue Winged Teal.” He also shared an award with the editors of *Look for One Nation*, judged the best book on race relations in the field of creative literature in 1945.

next half-dozen years, he was not happy.<sup>10</sup> He was a Westerner in an Eastern house, a man without family where family means almost more than anything else in the world, an out-going person in the most reserved of sections. Consequently, he returned to the West in 1945 to accept a position as Professor of English at Stanford University. At last Stegner found root, for he has remained there ever since, teaching and writing and directing Stanford's Creative Writing Center.

Today Wallace Stegner is one of the most distinguished writers in western America. He has written eighteen books (five of which may be considered as basically historical works) and may be ranked with such notable authors as Willa Cather, Mari Sandoz, Bernard DeVoto, H. L. Davis, Vardis Fisher, A. B. Guthrie, Paul Horgan, and Walter van Tilburg Clark. What he has to say about Mormonism therefore might well be worth listening to.



## II

Wallace Stegner's first major historical work and first work on the Mormons was *Mormon Country*, published in 1942.<sup>11</sup> "Mormon Country," i.e., Utah and its cultural extensions into southern Idaho, western Colorado, northern Arizona, and eastern Nevada, contains, of course, both Mormons and "Gentiles," but the predominant cultural influence of Mormonism has made the name appropriate.

<sup>10</sup> See Stegner, "Hometown Revisited," p. 481.

<sup>11</sup> Some of Stegner's more important articles of particular interest to students of western and especially Mormon history are: "Ordeal by Handcart," *Colliers*, July 6, 1956, p. 78; "On the Writing of History," *The American West*, Fall, 1965, p. 6; "Born a Square . . .," *loc. cit.*; "To A Young Writer," *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1958, p. 88; and "The Personality [of Bernard DeVoto]," in *Four Portraits and One Subject . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Also interesting are "A Love Affair with Heber Valley USA," *Vogue*, February 1, 1958, p. 132; and "The West Coast: Region with a View," *Saturday Review*, May 2, 1959, p. 15.

Stegner has much to praise about the results of Mormonism. He finds more human kindness, neighborliness, and fellowship among the Mormons than elsewhere in the United States. They are, he feels, certainly more admirable than many former Gentile residents, such as the Mountain Men, railroad hands, and miners. The Mormons as a people have closely-knit families, are not reckless, and generally speaking are well behaved, healthy, and moral.

Stegner's strongest praise, however, is reserved for the pioneers. Brigham Young was a colonizer "without equal in the history of America."<sup>12</sup> Stegner's narration of the migration to Zion (especially of the handcart companies), the Utah War, and the territorial period as a whole is warm, understanding, and friendly. His account of the United Order is more favorable than most present-day Mormons would have written. Whenever Stegner touches on the attempted conquest of nature by the first settlers, whether successful or not, he is positively disposed toward the actors and eloquent about their courage and suffering.

Stegner's account of the handcart companies in *Mormon Country* is considerably improved in his brilliantly written and evocative "Ordeal by Handcart," which appeared in the July 6th, 1956, issue of *Colliers*. Here is Stegner at his best in treating a pioneer subject, not merely recounting events but branding images in the mind:

In all its history, the American West never saw a more unlikely band of pioneers than the 499 who were camped on the banks of the Iowa river at Iowa City in late May, 1856. They were not colorful — only improbable. Looking for the bronzed and resolute and weather-seasoned among them, you would have seen instead starved cheeks, pale skins, bad teeth, thin chests, all the stigmata of unhealthy work and bad diet. Spindle-legged children loud with new-found freedom picked around the camp goggling at strangenesses. There were many grey heads and white heads, many women. They looked more like the population of the poor farm on a picnic than like pioneers about to cross the plains.

. . . They had none of the skills that make frontiersmen. But they had some of the stuff that makes heroes.

Mainly Welshmen and Englishmen from the depressed collieries and mill towns, mainly the unsuccessful and poor, they were life's discards. But their intention was so impudent it was almost sublime. Propertyless, ill equipped, untried and untrained, they were going to chance the Mormon Trail across 1,400 miles of Indian country to the Mormon Zion in Great Salt Lake City. And they were going to chance it on foot, hauling their belongings in handcarts.

After describing how the handcart companies finally reached the Valley, the last two companies, caught by snow in the mountains, having endured "one of the worst disasters in all the history of Western settlement," Stegner ends with this memorable passage:

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<sup>12</sup> Stegner, *Mormon Country*, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Stegner, "Ordeal by Handcart," p. 78.

. . . Fremont lost 11 men, the Donner party about 40. The Willie and Martin handcart companies, never able to count their casualties with accuracy, lost well over 200 people. If the nerve and endurance and faith necessary to break the Western wilderness had a single climactic illustration, it was here.

Perhaps their suffering seems less dramatic because the handcart pioneers bore it meekly, praising God, instead of fighting for life with the ferocity of animals and eating their dead to keep their own life beating, as both the Fremont and Donner parties did. . . . But if courage and endurance make a story, if human kindness and brotherly love in the midst of raw horror are worth recording, this half-forgotten episode of the Mormon migration is one of the great tales of the West and of America.<sup>14</sup>

When Stegner moves away from descriptions of the original pioneers and their hardships, as he soon does in *Mormon Country*, he becomes much more critical. Once settlement is established, Stegner views Mormonism as a drab, smug, and colorless society slumbering in its mountain fastness, unaware that it is the "last of the sticks."<sup>15</sup> Conservative to the core, Mormons are "indomitable only in the pack and adventurous only on orders." If there are compensations to living in Mormon Country they lie mainly in the excellent scenery and splendid view of the Wasatch Mountains, but Stegner suspects that, being unimaginative, Mormons seldom notice this splendor.<sup>16</sup>

Stegner's shift of emphasis is particularly evident when discussing the authoritarian aspects of Mormonism. He praises authoritarian characteristics in Brigham Young and the unquestioning obedience of the pioneers as necessary to the success of a pioneer enterprise. But once the wilderness has been conquered, what was once an asset becomes a liability:

The Mormons were never, in their Church organization or in their social patterns, what we think of as democratic. . . . Within the Church the members have never had even the right of nomination, and even yet, at April or October Conference, it is possible to go into the tabernacle in Salt Lake when a [Church] election is in progress and get a shock from seeing the forest of hands, ten thousand in one motion, go up on every name. It takes courage for a Mormon to dissent. . . . Call it a benevolent despotism. It is not a democracy . . . , and its essentially fundamentalist hostility to free thought has driven a good many of its sons and daughters into something like exile.<sup>17</sup>

This complacent atmosphere, according to Stegner, is a product of Mormon doctrine. Mormonism has "created its share of bigots, parochial intolerants, and authoritarians." Its doctrine has "fostered rigidity of belief, kept women in their place as cooks, housekeepers, and breeding machines, and has subjugated the individual small-fry Mormon to the authority of the Priesthood."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, although throughout the book runs a very evident

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>15</sup> Stegner, *Mormon Country*, pp. 344ff.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-99.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

strand of warm-hearted and often humorous understanding of Mormons (even to the point of misleading some readers into thinking this is all there is to the book), this understanding is never accompanied by a sustained chord of respect for the Mormon religion in the present age. I do not mean to imply that Stegner is anti-Mormon in any sense. What I mean is that to Stegner Mormonism is simply not very relevant to modern society. This fact is central to understanding whatever Stegner writes about the Mormons.

Once the pioneer era is past Stegner looks at the Mormons in essentially the same way he remembers the other persons of his early childhood and youth. They are a people who are basically anachronistic but who still evoke a certain pleasant nostalgia — an uncomfortable reminder of the unpleasant memories of life in the sticks, which one casts off if one wants to become worldly-wise. Mormonism is something sophisticated people read and perhaps write about, but not something sophisticated people practice. Stegner's Mormons are the Mormons he knew in his youth or came to know in his extensive travels throughout rural, Western America — unsophisticated, smug, unruffled. His contemporary Mormons are really only second generation Mormons without the fire and the drive of the pioneers and not yet honed fine by modern society. Essentially they are evocations of the Older Brethren, the clodhoppers of the outlying areas, those who have never heard of Allen Ginsberg and Saul Bellow.

If this analysis is true, Mormonism is only partially relevant to Stegner's first work. He could be describing *any* group of smug, provincial, and naive residents of any part of "the sticks." "Mormon Country" Mormons are indeed generally provincial by contemporary standards, but the environment as well as the doctrine has made this particular segment of the people act in this "peculiar" manner. For example, one finds essentially the same descriptions of smugness and provincialism in accounts of non-Mormons in Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street*, and even more pungently in H. L. Mencken's obituary of William Jennings Bryan. If contemporary Mormons are "peculiar" at all it is certainly not because they are hicks.

Stegner is correct, of course, when he maintains that Mormon doctrine requires that the Church be authoritarian and that the doctrine as interpreted has made the Church hierarchic, conservative, and rigid toward change. He is also on firm ground when he raises the question whether a religion that was exceptionally successful in a simple frontier situation can be relevant to an exceedingly complex urban society. It is a question well worth pondering.

But it seems to me that it is Stegner's own peculiar point of view, his non-religious humanism, that makes it possible for him to accept the authoritarianism and respect the hierarchy of the early pioneers because it had beneficial, practical results in conquering a wilderness and at the same time to reject it out of hand when the frontier is gone, completely ignoring the continuing significance of the hierarchy to intelligent, believing Mormons as a deeply motivating source of divine revelation and authority.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The methodological problem resulting from the difference in point of view between the believer in supernaturalism as a way to truth and the non-believer is an old one. For a thorough discussion of this problem see John Dewey, "What I Believe," *Forum*, March, 1930, pp. 176-182; Clifton Fadiman, *Living Philosophies, Revisited* (New York, 1938); Lewis

## III

Wallace Stegner's most recent work, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*, is better written but less provocative, better organized but less original and incisive, than *Mormon Country*. The *leitmotif* of the new work is that the Mormon migration from Nauvoo to Salt Lake Valley has been blown up by the descendants of the pioneers from merely a journey into a "rite of passage, the final, devoted, enduring act that brought one into the Kingdom."<sup>20</sup> In short, the memory of the pioneers, that is strong everywhere in the West, has been developed into a dehumanized legend, a myth, and a cult in Utah. Stegner's purpose is to breathe life back into these mythical, dehumanized pioneers. This he does with perceptiveness, and astringent lucidity.

As in *Mormon Country*, Stegner has a profound respect for the Mormon pioneers as people; it is the people, not the doctrine or the geography, that receive the major emphasis. "They were the most systematic, organized, disciplined, and successful pioneers in our history," he says.<sup>21</sup> But Stegner has little patience with anyone who attempts to envelop the first settlers in a nimbus. The pioneers *did not* break a new road west except for a few hundred miles across western Iowa; Jim Bridger *did not* scorn the Great Salt Lake Valley; the leaders *did not* know precisely where they were going before they left Nauvoo or even Winter Quarters; Brigham *probably did not* say "This is the place," although he should have; and the pioneers *were not* all righteous but included some thieves, trouble-makers, bogus-money passers, and some who were just plain hard to get along with. All of these myths have been debunked before by others, and in this Stegner is reinforcing a structure already made, not building a new one.

Where Stegner does the most original work is in his abundant use of individual cases to draw a new composite. Some, like Lorenzo Young, the brother of Brigham, were not particularly bright; others, like Hosea Stout, were understandably vindictive; still others, like William Clayton, less understandably waspish; and a few, like Ursulia Hascall, had total equanimity. What emerges is a group of all kinds of *people* — believable ones — and of all varieties of petty insignificance and lasting greatness.

Stegner paints the leadership of his *hegira* with the same brush. Wilford Woodruff was "pious, methodical, superstitious, and accident prone." Heber C. Kimball, on occasion, was capable of using vulgarity. Franklin D. Richards sometimes "prophesied" more for tactical than for spiritual reasons. Only Brigham Young escapes virtually unscathed. Stegner, like Vardis Fisher and Bernard DeVoto before him, has a tremendous admiration for Young because he was practical.

There are, however, some weaknesses in *The Gathering of Zion*. A very minor one is that by emphasizing individual cases based on diaries Stegner gives the impression that all Mormons fitted somehow into the categories he

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Mumford, *The Golden Day* (New York, 1926); and especially Mortimer J. Adler, "God and the Professors," in *Science, Philosophy and Religion: A Symposium* (New York, 1941), including a rebuttal to this article by Sidney Hook entitled "The New Medievalism," *New Republic*, October 28, 1940, p. 602.

<sup>20</sup> Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion*, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.



gives. This method lends drama, color, and authenticity, but it is accurate only insofar as the diaries themselves are representative. One suspects that even among inveterate diarists like the Mormons, certain groups were probably better represented than others. Certainly the diaries of the John D. Lees and Hosea Stouts are more readily available than those of the First Presidencies. In addition, the colorful excerpts are the most often quoted. Still, diaries are the best single source for Stegner's purpose; he has used more of them than any other writer who has written an account of the Mormon migration;<sup>22</sup> and he has used them brilliantly.

Another minor weakness of Stegner's account is its lack of footnotes. This makes it almost impossible to trace his thinking and renders many of his arguments less forceful for the critical reader.

A more serious criticism is that Stegner relies too heavily on secondary accounts of earlier writers who share his basic assumptions about religion. This is only natural. But in the cases of Bernard DeVoto and Fawn M. Brodie, whom Stegner deems worthy of "complete trust,"<sup>23</sup> his major sources are, to say the least, controversial. For the Mormon reader this presents a problem, particularly in the case of Mrs. Brodie. This is less because the results are not scholarly than because these writers ask the reader to agree tacitly and without argument to their assumptions concerning philosophical problems of infinite complexity. Difficult metaphysical labyrinths concerning the workings of Providence, the nature of man, motivation, and historical causation are more often assumed solved from the non-believer's point of view than explained or proved. For example, Stegner writes as if polygamy was primarily a product of "eroticism" and "Caesarism."<sup>24</sup> He assumes that William Law, also a critic of polygamy, is correct in his claim that the faithful Saint had a right to "ten virgins."<sup>25</sup> A writer less sure of the evils of polygamy and more open to its possible origins other than lust might wish further evidence, particularly in light of the fact that Law was excommunicated from the faith. The same thing is true of charges that Joseph Smith asked women already married to become his plural, "spiritual" wives, and that these married women had sexual relations with the Prophet. A neutral observer would want incontrovertible evidence from several sources to support so serious a charge.

Stegner's lack of respect for Mormon doctrine sometimes causes him to misplace his emphasis. Again, polygamy is a good case in point. Too often he uses snickering phrases such as the "pleasures of the multiple marriage bed" when discussing the idea itself and "the full-blooded prophet" when discussing Joseph Smith. Such phrases are obviously replete with innuendo and imprecise; they smack of the lurid accounts of the late nineteenth century. Although there are several documented cases where both men and women entered into polygamy only with the greatest reluctance, I know of no documented case of a person practicing polygamy solely for pleasure. Certainly

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<sup>22</sup> Stegner undoubtedly would have used more diaries if he had been given access to the Church archives. In this respect it is the Church Historian and not Stegner who is responsible for any limitations of data.

<sup>23</sup> Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion*, p. 314.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

the doctrine did not justify such an attitude. Aside from works of doctrine, a close reading of either of Samuel Taylor's excellent fictionalized accounts of polygamy would have suggested a different emphasis.<sup>26</sup> It seems only natural that Stegner would be inclined as an outsider to view polygamy in much the same way it was viewed by the nation; but as an historian he had an obligation to understand beyond what is expected of the public.

Stegner's *Gathering of Zion* is an excellent example both of the best "literary" history we have on the Mormons and of the special pitfalls to which such history is especially susceptible. That it is clearly literary in style, novelistic in emphasis, and visceral in purpose is admitted.<sup>27</sup> That the author has seized every opportunity to dramatize his story is also admitted. And that Stegner has pulled all this off brilliantly is attested to by every reviewer of his book to date. But his strengths are also his weaknesses. Sometimes his drama becomes distortion; sometimes he creates rather than re-creates history. For instance, he goes well beyond the available historical evidence relating to the Danites. They are introduced obliquely and on several occasions as a sinister force to keep recalcitrants in line. They did, of course, exist, but did not have the power Stegner attributes to them nor were they ever in any way an official arm of the General Authorities so far as we know.<sup>28</sup> But these are minor shortcomings, and perhaps it is impossible for one long habituated to dramatizing not to overdramatize on occasion. In any case the faults of Stegner's imaginative mind are more venial than mortal and far easier to excuse than absolutely accurate but pedestrian drivel.

Any overall evaluation of Wallace Stegner's works relating to Mormonism will, of course, be influenced by each individual's personal assumptions about religion in general and Mormonism in particular. Most Mormon readers will undoubtedly have difficulty accepting Stegner's view that the doctrine is not very relevant to modern society. Most Mormons, however, will also find Stegner exceedingly profitable, particularly those who are seeking a balanced and sophisticated appreciation of their faith and those who are weary of 24th of July orations.

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<sup>26</sup> These are: *The Family Kingdom* (New York, 1951), a novel of Apostle John W. Taylor's family; and *I Have Six Wives* (New York, 1956), an extraordinarily incisive but fictionalized analysis of fundamentalistic polygamy today.

<sup>27</sup> See Stegner, "On the Writing of History," *loc cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> For a blatantly apologetic but nevertheless interesting analysis of the tendency of writers to build a case against the Danites on skimpy evidence see Hugh Nibley, *Sounding Brass* (Salt Lake City, 1963). For a typical *expose* of alleged Danite activity see Achilles [sic], *The Destroying Angels of Mormonism . . .* (San Francisco, 1898).