

# AMONG THE MORMONS

## A Survey of Current Literature

*Edited by Ralph W. Hansen*

*The perversion of the mind is only possible when those who should be heard in its defense are silent.*

Archibald MacLeish

*Robert A. Rees, Assistant Professor of English at the University of California at Los Angeles, has written the following survey of articles and essays in Mormon studies appearing in various periodicals over the past year. Mr. Rees's special interest is American Literature and he is publishing widely in this field; he has had extreme experience with periodical searching and indexing in connection with his books (i.e., A Checklist of Emerson Criticism: 1951-1961) and we are fortunate to have his services.*

A decade ago one might have been hard pressed to compile a sizable bibliography of scholarly articles on Mormonism within a given year. Although there are many aspects of Mormon history and culture yet to receive proper critical attention, the number of first rate articles appearing in the past year is encouraging evidence of a concern for Mormon studies by Mormon and non-Mormon scholars alike.

The purpose of this bibliographic essay is to bring scholarly articles dealing primarily with Mormon history, culture, and theology to the attention of *Dialogue* readers. The major source is the listings in *Mormon Americana*, although a number of articles came from journals and magazines not included in the bibliography (*BYU Studies*, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, etc.). For the most part, articles in popular magazines were omitted, although they are listed in *Mormon Americana*. With one or two exceptions, no attempt was made to include articles from official L.D.S. publications (such as the *Improvement Era* and the *Instructor*) with which it was felt the majority of *Dialogue's* readers would be familiar.

The largest number of articles by category, as one might expect, are on various aspects of Mormon history. Four of these articles deal with pre-Utah history. John and Audrey Cumming, "The Saints Come to Michigan,"

*Michigan History*, XLIX (March 1965), 12-27, discuss early attempts to convert the family and neighbors of Stephen Mack (Lucy Mack Smith's brother) in Oakland County, Michigan. Missionary efforts resulted in a number of converts, some of whom made the westward trek and some of whom found their way into the fold of James J. Strang. Monte B. McLaws, "The Attempted Assassination of Missouri's Ex-Governor, Lilburn W. Boggs," *Missouri Historical Review*, LX (October 1965), 50-62, thoroughly examines the evidence concerning the abortive assassination of Boggs, a crime long laid on the Mormons (Joseph Smith and Orin Porter Rockwell in particular), and finds insufficient evidence to attach the blame to anyone. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the *Nauvoo Expositor*," *University of Utah Law Review*, IX (Winter 1965), 862-903, sheds light on the legal implications of the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. For a review of this article see *Dialogue*, I (Summer, 1966), 123-128. A. R. Mortensen, "Mormons, Nebraska and the Way West," *Nebraska History*, XLVI (December 1965), 259-271, discusses the importance of Omaha, Florence, Winter Quarters, and Summer Quarters in both Mormon and Nebraska history.

Other historians have examined various aspects of Mormon life in the Great Basin. Three of these deal with specific historical locations: Robert W. Olsen, Jr., "Windsor Castle: Mormon Frontier Fort at Pipe Spring," *Utah Historical Quarterly*,<sup>1</sup> XXXIV (Summer 1966), 218-226; Wilhelmina J. Gunn, "The Elsinore House: A Drummer's Home Away from Home," *UHQ*, XXXIV (Winter 1966), 30-37; and L. A. Fleming and A. R. Standing, "The Road to 'Fortune': The Salt Lake Cutoff," *UHQ*, XXXIII (Summer 1965), 248-271.

Leonard J. Arrington has contributed several articles on economic aspects of Mormon history: "Utah's Pioneer Beet Sugar Plant: The Lehi Factory of the Utah Sugar Company," *UHQ*, XXXIV (Spring 1966), 95-120; "Cooperative Community in the North: Brigham City, Utah," *UHQ*, XXXIII (Summer 1965), 199-217; and "Launching Idaho's Sugar Beet Industry," *Idaho Yesterdays*, IX (Fall 1965), 16-27. Each of these well-documented articles provides insight into the relation between the Church and the community in early economic experiments.

Arrington joins Thomas G. Alexander in two articles on Utah military history: "The U. S. Army Overlooks Salt Lake Valley: Fort Douglas, 1862-1965," *UHQ*, XXXIII (Fall 1965), 326-350; and "Camp in the Sagebrush: Camp Floyd, Utah, 1858-1861," *UHQ*, XXXIV (Winter 1966), 3-21. These articles, part of a series, discuss the social, political, and economic impact of these two military installations on early Mormon life in Utah.<sup>2</sup>

Kenneth J. Davies, "Utah Labor Before Statehood," *UHQ*, XXXIV (Summer 1966), 202-217, presents the history of labor unions in Utah from the "Printers Union" in 1852 to statehood in 1896. Davies discusses the relation

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter cited as *UHQ*. Articles on Utah or Western history which were only tangentially related to the Mormons or which were not of particular importance were not included in this review.

<sup>2</sup> An article on the impact of more recent military installations is "Brief Histories of Three Federal Military Installations in Utah: Kearns Army Air Base, Hurricane Mesa, and Green River Test Complex," *UHQ*, XXXIV (Spring 1966), 121-137 by Thomas G. Alexander. See also James L. Clayton, "An Unhallowed Gathering: The Impact of Defense Spending on Utah's Population Growth, 1940-1964," *UHQ*, XXXIV (Summer 1966), 227-242.

between the unions and the Church before and after the great influx of non-Mormon labor with the railroad and mining industries.

James B. Allen, "Ecclesiastical Influence on Local Government in the Territory of Utah," *Arizona and the West*, VIII (Spring 1966), 35-48, gives excellent documentation of the inter-relationship of ecclesiastical and secular governments in early Utah history. Allen points out that under the conditions which existed this inter-relationship was only natural. This article should perhaps be read in conjunction with J. D. Williams, "The Separation of Church and State in Mormon Theory and Practice," *Dialogue*, I (Summer 1966), 30-54.

Two recent articles on polygamy attest to the continuing popularity of this subject. M. Cable, "She Who Shall be Nameless," *American Heritage*, XVI (February 1965), 50-55, gives an historical biography of Augusta Adams Cobb Young, one of Brigham Young's wives. Her conversion to Mormonism and her polygamous marriage were considered such grave sins that the mention of her name was forbidden among the members of her family. Orma Linford, "The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases," *University of Utah Law Review*, IX (Winter 1964), 308-370; (Summer 1965), 543-591, presents a thorough history of the anti-polygamy legislation and challenges the legality of much of that legislation and its enforcement. Miss Linford conjectures that the injustices of the anti-polygamy laws prolonged rather than hastened the end of polygamy. This article was reviewed in *Dialogue*, I (Summer 1966), 123-128.

Rue C. Johnson, "Theatre in Zion: The Brigham City Dramatic Association," *UHQ*, XXXIII (Summer 1965), 187-197, gives an excellent picture of cultural interest in early Mormon communities by focusing on the history of the Brigham City theater.

In addition to the Arrington article on Idaho's sugar industry, several articles deal with Mormon history in states outside Utah: Evelyn Brack Measeles, "Lyman Dam [Arizona]: Monument to Mormon Pioneer Courage and Industry," *Arizona Highways*, XLI (September 1965), 43-47; Juanita Brooks, "The Mormons in Carson County, Utah Territory," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*,<sup>3</sup> VIII (Spring 1965), 1-23; Elbert B. Edwards, "Early Mormon Settlements in Southern Nevada," *NHSQ*, VIII (Spring 1965), 25-43; and Victor O. Goodwin, "Development of the Emigrant Routes of Northern Nevada," *NHSQ*, VIII (Fall-Winter 1965), 35-41.

Two studies are concerned with Mormon life outside the United States. K. West, "Cardston: The Temple City of Canada," *Canadian Geographical Journal*, LXXI (November 1965), 162-169, discusses the roles of Charles Ora Card and Edward J. Wood in the settlement of Cardston. B. Carmon Hardy, "Cultural 'Encystment' as a Cause of the Mormon Exodus from Mexico in 1912," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXIV (November 1965), 439-454, challenges traditional views concerning the cause of the Mormons' abandonment of their colonies in Mexico. Hardy's thesis is that while the Mexicans were jealous of the Mormons' commercial success, this was not the major cause for the conflicts between the two groups. Of greater significance was the fact that the Mormons isolated themselves and remained strongly nationalistic in the face of the impending revolution.

---

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter cited as *NHSQ*.

Three recent articles appearing in scholarly journals introduce original documents written by non-Mormons who lived among the Mormons. David B. Gracy, II, and Helen J. H. Rugeley, "From the Mississippi to the Pacific: An Englishman in the Mormon Battalion," *Arizona and the West*, VII (Summer 1965), 127-160, discuss Robert W. Whitworth's account of the march from Ft. Leavenworth to Los Angeles. Whitworth's account is particularly valuable because he was a non-Mormon and because he kept a daily record. Russell E. Bidlack and Everett L. Cooley, "The Kintner Letters: An Astronomer's Account of the Wheeler Survey in Utah and Idaho," *UHQ*, XXXIV (Winter 1966), 62-80, and (Spring 1966), 169-182, present the letters of Charles Jacob Kintner to the *Ann Arbor Register*. Kintner's impressions of the Mormons were generally favorable. A less favorable view is found in "Lt. Sylvester Mowry's Report on His March in 1855 from Salt Lake City to Fort Tejon," *Arizona and the West*, VII (Winter 1965), 329-346, edited by Lynn R. Bailey.<sup>4</sup> Dale L. Morgan, "Western Diary: A Review Essay," *The American West*, II (Spring 1965), 46-47, 93 discusses the contents of another primary document, the Hosea Stout diaries (*On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout*, ed. Juanita Brooks), and its importance to Mormon history.

Of particular interest to psychologists and anthropologists is Ray R. Canning, "Mormon Return-from-the-Dead Stories, Fact or Folklore?" *Proceedings of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, XLII, Part 1 (1965), 29-37. Canning's article, based on "reports from seven apparently normal and reliable Mormons who 'died and lived to tell about it,'" is part of a larger comparative study of return-from-the-dead stories from six different cultures or sub-cultures. Canning makes no attempt to interpret or explain the various accounts: "This is essentially an anthropological study of cultural data — whether fact or folklore."

One of the more valuable articles to appear recently is D. W. Meinig, "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. Meinig not only gives a detailed geographical history of Mormon settlement of the West, but he discusses the importance of cultural patterns which have emerged in this century.

The only article of significance on other Mormon groups to come to our attention is "Lorenzo Dow Hickey: Last of the Twelve," *Michigan History*, L (March 1966), 50-75, by John Cumming. Cumming traces the history of Hickey from his conversion to Mormonism in 1842 to his association with and rise to authority in the Strangite church, his attempts to bring the Strangites and the Reorganites together, his membership in and excommunication from the Reorganized Church, and his missionary efforts among the Utah Mormons. More than just a biography of Hickey, this article gives a great deal of insight into the origins and organizations of both the Strangite and Reorganized Churches.

Two articles of interest on the Book of Mormon are Hyde M. Merrill, "Christopher Columbus and the *Book of Mormon*," *Improvement Era*, LXIX (February 1966), 97-98, 135-136, and Robert A. Rees, "Melville's Alma and

---

<sup>4</sup>For an account of Mowry's more racy experiences in Utah, see his letters in *Among the Mormons*, ed. William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen (New York, 1958), 272-278.

the *Book of Mormon*," *Emerson Society Quarterly*, No. 43 (II Quarter 1966), 41-46. The first compares Book of Mormon prophecies concerning the discovery of the "Promised land" (I Nephi 13:12) with letters written by Christopher Columbus which tell of his religious convictions and a vision he had concerning his voyage; the second attempts to show that Melville was acquainted with the Book of Mormon by pointing up parallels between the character Alma in Melville's novel, *Mardi*, and the Book of Mormon figures named Alma.

A larger and more significant study of the Book of Mormon is Hugh Nibley's "Since Cumorah: New Voices from the Dust," which began in the October, 1964, issue of the *Improvement Era* and which is still continuing in each issue. This work is important not only because it is the first to examine the Book of Mormon in the light of the Dead Sea Scrolls, apocryphal writings, and Near-Eastern cultural history, but because it is a text-centered study of the Book of Mormon.

Another Nibley article which draws on the same materials to show that the Council in Heaven motif is found throughout the ancient world is "The Expanding Gospel," *BYU Studies*, VII (Autumn 1965), 3-27. In this article Nibley attempts to demonstrate that "what the outside texts prove is the antiquity and universality of the Gospel and its central position in the whole history of civilization."

Sterling McMurrin's criticism of this kind of scholarship as "the strangest aberration that has yet appeared in the implausible history of Mormonism, a kind of philologizing of religion," *Dialogue*, I (Summer 1966), 140, ignores Nibley's thesis that the records he is examining are those spoken of in I Nephi 13:39. Rather than being a "studied irrationalism and a sophistical effort to square the doctrines with ancient and esoteric lore . . . rather than with the facts of life," these studies are an attempt to do exactly what Nephi said the "last records" would do — make known "the plain and precious things which have been taken away from" the Bible. And since, as Nephi says, the ultimate purpose of these records is to convince the world of the divinity of Christ, an examination of these records is concerned with what for Mormons is the central fact of life and the primary mission of the Church.