

society and separated from his own family, to do his duty as the local leader of his Church.

Nightfall at Far West

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Other Drums. By Ruth Louise Partridge. Provo, Utah: Privately Published, 1974 (195 E. 4th North, Provo, Utah 84601). 377 pp., \$7.00.

As first written, this was an "I've got a secret" manuscript, of the type which causes my blood pressure to rise alarmingly. The secret was that while it was a novel about Edward Partridge, first bishop of the Church, the author had changed the family name. Thus, while the author knew that this actually was important regional literature—something so scarce in our literary wasteland—who else could know, and who, not knowing, could care?

I don't know how many manuscripts based on Mormon people I've seen by authors who have destroyed the validity of their work by concealing identities of the characters. When I point out the necessity of using actual names, the authors cry, "But I *couldn't* use the names of *real people!*" And so their manuscripts, and their private secrets, end up in trunks.

Other Drums had sufficient merit to win the first prize of \$1000 awarded by the Utah Institute of Fine Arts for best novel manuscript of 1967, despite the "secret" handicap and the additional drawback of a slow beginning. (Here, incidentally, is another characteristic of too many unpublished manuscripts—the author doesn't really tell, as quickly as possible, what the story is *about*; but until the reader knows this, he has no interest in events.) Then began the discouraging task of trying to find a publisher who would risk offering the book to the public, who wouldn't know the secret.

Now at last the novel, in revised form, is in print. It is clearly about Edward Partridge, and it begins in the first chapter and carries right on to the end. I am personally rather high on *Other Drums*, both for its merits and because regional novels of the Mormon genre are scarce as hen's teeth, and I wish we had a thousand more.

Some of the best parts of the book are in the early chapters, concerning Edward Partridge's conversion and ensuing travail. A prosperous hat manufacturer, he sacrificed business, wealth, and home to be temporal leader of the Saints in Missouri—a position for which he felt entirely inadequate and unprepared, despite Joseph Smith's complete confidence in him. Then there is the story of the wife, Lydia, taking her flock of five small daughters through frontier country hundreds of eventful miles to join her husband. The episode of being marooned in a Negro hovel enroute is unforgettable.

The strain of persecution undermined Edward's health, causing an untimely death. The widowed Lydia and her brood went through the hardships of expulsion from Missouri. Then later, at Nauvoo, Lydia saw two of her daughters become plural wives of the prophet. The book ends with the martyrdom at Carthage Jail.

If *Other Drums* has flaws, they spring from the tendency to accept historical stereotypes: devout Saints are without flaw; apostates have no redeeming qualities,

and never speak the truth; Gentile opponents are pukers and Philistines; Church leaders are infallible paragons. This attitude is reflected in the dialogue. All Mormons speak perfect English, regardless of national origin and limited education. (If this is so, it certainly is a testimony to the miracle of baptism.) On the other hand, the typical Missouri puke talks some of the thickest po'-white-trash dialect ever committed to paper. (I was anxiously awaiting the conversion of just one of them, to see what it did to his language, but the author didn't provide an example.)

But all quibbling aside, I will say that while Ruth Louise Partridge worked thirty years on this book, it is worth the effort.

Recently Received

To Utah with the Dragoons, and Glimpses of Life in Arizona and California, 1858-1859. Edited by Harold D. Langley. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1974. xvi + 230 pp. \$8.50.

"That Young's career in Utah should be arrested, no one will deny: none will attempt to apologize for his crimes and those of his fanatical followers. The cause of morality demands the extermination of this nest of adulterers, and no further time should be wasted in attempts at compromise or windy discussion. It were useless to attempt their reformation—the only missionaries that can make headway with them are such as wield the sabre and the musket." So wrote a young private in the U.S. Army Second Dragoons from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, on May 28, 1858, in the first of twenty-five letters (or perhaps twenty-four, since one seems of doubtful authenticity) which he sent back home to the Philadelphia *Daily Evening Bulletin*. The letters, written on the march from Fort Leavenworth to Camp Floyd, Utah Territory, and later from Los Angeles and Arizona, have been edited by Harold D. Langley, Associate Curator of the National Museum of History and Technology at the Smithsonian Institution, and published in the University of Utah series Publications in the American West.

Although "Utah" (the pen-name used by the unidentified dragoon) began by expressing the standard anti-Mormon view in the standard political rhetoric of the time, his tone soon changed. Even at the outset, his anti-Mormon remarks are balanced by his unflattering comments on the Army and the Buchanan administration. Although he thought the Mormons should be dealt with, he did not believe that either the officers or the men of the Army were "fit champions of order and morality." In support of this judgment, he quoted from what he claimed was a morning report of Company A, Second Dragoons: "Privates in confinement 49; charges—stealing 11; drunkenness and disorderly conduct 23; gambling 7; attempt to rob 4; attempt to desert 3; attempt to murder 1 . . . Total strength of this company 53." It is hardly necessary for the editor to state, as he does, that "The original of this report has not been located . . ." Clearly, we are in the realm of American humor. "Utah" was a printer before he joined the Army, and at times he makes us think of another young printer who came to prominence a few years later under the pen-name "Mark Twain." He has the irreverence, the sharp eye for incongruity, and the flair for outrageous exaggeration of the frontier humorist. He even anticipates Twain's assessment of Mormon women. Out of nearly a hundred and fifty whom he met in an immigrant train, "there was not one among them who would