the persistence of a pattern of culture every bit as reformist and deviant from American norms as was Mormonism in the 1890s. Peterson's view, I hasten to add, is that of most scholars on the subject, but in failing to describe the Mormon belief system, he has closed for his readers the possibility of such an alternative interpretation.

Peterson has taken great pains to produce a balanced history. His chapter on the economics of nationalism offers the best short description available of economic developments in Utah toward the end of the nineteenth century. He gives deserved attention to the role of working men in the mining and smelting industries, describing the contract labor system used to bring immigrants to Utah from Eastern Europe and incidentally to enrich a few labor "czars" such as Leonidas Skliris. The chapter on "Other Utahs" offers a brief review of the development of various ethnic communities. A full twenty percent of the book deals with the twentieth century, perhaps much too little, but still far more than one is accustomed to seeing.

The volume contains a brief bibliography and sixteen-page "photographer's essay" by Joe Munroe, with several fine photographs. The continuing dominance of the landscape in the face of human incursion is suggested in several of the frames. Taken as a group, however, the photographs seem to say little more than the traditional travel film cliché that Utah (or any region in the universe) is a land of contrasts.

In 1978, what enduring purpose is there in a bicentennial history? Many of the States and the Nation Series will probably have little lasting value, the more personal and introspective insights of the authors quickly dating them out of use. Professor Peterson, in this volume, however, has offered a history of Utah which, because it is less personal and is scholarly and concise, will serve to introduce the general reader to the colorful story of Utah's past and to provide the more serious student of history a balanced review of the essential material.

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ROBERT LEROY PARKER ON FAMILY HISTORY

WILLIAM G. HARTLEY

Butch Cassidy, My Brother. By Lulu Parker Betenson. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975. xiii + 257 pp., index, maps, biblio., illus. $7.95

In Search of Butch Cassidy By Larry Pointer. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977. xvii + 258 pp., index, maps, biblio., illus. $9.95.

What interest can two books about an outlaw have for *Dialogue* readers? An obvious answer is that Robert Leroy Parker, alias Butch Cassidy, was a Mormon boy who went bad, but another is that these books have something to teach us about how to do and how not to do biographies when putting together our own family histories.

Butch grew up near Circleville, Utah, with a Mormon mother and a Jack Mormon father. By age eighteen he left the family and began a life of crime. He became a legend in the West, not quite of the stature of Jesse James, and the likeable subject of a smash-hit movie thanks to Newman and Redford. Controversies still swirl around him, especially over whether or not he was killed in South America. Both of these books challenge much fact and fiction surrounding Cassidy and, for very different

reasons, argue persuasively that Butch died not in Bolivia in 1911 but in the Pacific Northwest in the 1930s.

Pointer's book, a superb job of sleuthing, packages what he thinks is a Cassidy autobiography. In 1934 William T. Phillips of Spokane wrote "The Bandit Invincible, the Story of Butch Cassidy." Only a faint handwritten copy survives. Pointer painstakingly compared it with known facts and records and concluded that only Butch himself could have authored the account. Phillips, he argues, was in fact Butch Cassidy. To those barely schooled in bandit history, the case is convincing. Others, however, wait to see if there cannot be another equally plausible explanation of Phillips and his manuscript.

Betenson shakes the historian's earth, too. She shares with readers a family secret, breaking a family oath to do it, about Butch's visit with them long after his supposed South American demise. In 1925, ending a forty-one year absence, Butch dropped in on his family, a visit she describes in Chapter Fifteen. She heard first hand the shame he felt for his life and the sorrow it brought to his family. He told about his crimes reluctantly and only to answer their questions. Because he had started a new life, having gone straight for sixteen years, he made them swear not to tell anyone of his visit.

Pointer asks us to judge the authenticity of a possible autobiography. Betenson asks us to judge the accuracy of her memory. By historical standards these are tough requests. And yet, compared with the personal and family histories Latter-day Saints generate, the books have much to teach. Good family histories should meet certain basic criteria. If these two books are judged by those same criteria, how well do they measure up?

Readability. One general failing of many LDS biographical efforts in behalf of our relatives is that they chronicle rather than tell a story. A story arouses interest and flows smoothly. By this standard both of our review books score well. Dora Flack is credited by the publisher with writing Betenson's story for her.

Thoroughness. Are all the essential bases touched? Or are there unforgivable gaps in the story? Here we judge what is not said, as much as what is said too thinly. These two books both cover Butch's life chronologically, Pointer going into greater detail and adding episodes missed by Butch's sister. While many LDS biographies may not merit 250 pages, few suffer from being too long; instead we have too many sketches. Governor Jerry Brown to the contrary, more is better when writing family histories. Pointer's epilog points out one way to improve our histories: provide follow-up information about characters mentioned in our story (old boyfriend, missionary companion, divorced aunt, etc.)

Accuracy. So many family stories are good, and get better with each new generation, but are they true? How much is hearsay? How much verifiable? "Through the years Mother repeated the details many, many times in almost the same words," Betenson says regarding the story of when Butch left the family hearth for good. Constant retelling of family stories may cement the truth; but it also can cement an erroneous memory. Such stories need corroboration whenever possible. But corroborated or not, information used in a history or biography needs to be documented, the source identified. Mrs. Flack lets us down here. A good story is told, the readers ask "how can she know that?" and no source is even hinted at. Pointer is much more careful to document his statements. Family histories generally have no problem with overfootnoting; instead they too often stand on undocumented information, and their credibility declines accordingly.

One technique, fashionable among journalists but damaging to truth, is to create dialogue. This is fiction, or at best "faction." Pointer does not make up dialogue but he does occasionally borrow some manufactured by others. Betenson and Flack, by carelessly (but interestingly) inserting made-up conversations, make the discerning reader wonder how much of the rest of their book is spun from someone's imagination.

Accuracy increases in ratio to research done. The Flack-Betenson book's lean bibliography shows they did not do hard detective work. To be fair, their purpose was to create not a definitive Butch Cassidy study but a simple, first-person memoir of some aspects of Butch's life. That's fine, as long as other books give the more definitive treatment. Too often in our family histories

we get this barely-researched type of recollection as the only version, which makes no effort to double-check facts found in church and government records, newspapers, diaries, letters, or other published histories.

Context. Too many family histories seem oblivious to local and national settings. They depict individuals living in vacuums. What land laws, weather cycles, economic trends, technological breakthroughs, health practices, and social customs affected them? Credit Pointer and Betenson with doing a good job with context; Pointer giving good backgrounds about banditry while putting Cassidy in foreground, and Betenson describing Circleville situations, including problems caused by large cattle operations squeezing small homesteaders.

Is the forest treated or just the tree? In family histories are other people treated adequately? What about parents, close friends, the spouse, the children, the brothers and sisters. Butch's sister, after saying that family background is important in understanding Butch, then fails to discuss the life course of any of the children other than Butch and herself. Can more be told about the bishop who did the family harm? Pointer, more concerned about bandit activities than Parker family matters, wisely discusses Butch's associates in good detail.

Analysis. Much family history quits in exhaustion after pulling together the "whats" and the "whens." But the "whys" and the "hows" are the frosting for the descriptive cake. Why did Grandpa not finish school? What did he learn from his mission? Why did the family move to Malad? How did Grandpa like being ward clerk for twenty years? Why did his son leave the Church? Betenson's basic purpose is to answer why Butch went bad (father absent and not strict, Butch's stubborness, the poverty of the area, a bishop's unfair decision, wrong kinds of friends, false accusers, and so on.) and why so many people respected him (he loved children, always kept his word, used his bad money to do good to the poor, and so on). Pointer's book wrestles well with a big why—why the Phillips manuscript was written by Butch Cassidy.

Packaging. While book-of-remembrance typescripts do the job, they seem anemic when compared to better-packaged histories with careful chapters, appropriate headings, photographs and maps, tables of contents, indexes, at least minimal footnoting, genealogy charts and letters placed in an appendix, and a durable binding. Both the Pointer and Betenson books are well-designed, illustrated, and bound, although the browntones used in the Pointer book diminish the clarity of the photographs.

In addition to the above standards for good family histories, the importance of interviewing the older generation is underscored by these two books. Mrs. Betenson waited until her ninetieth year to write her memoirs; what if she had died earlier? Pointer interviewed fifty people, many of whom claim they knew Butch after his South America years. Despite the tricks that memories play on people, it is better to collect wheat and chaff from their memories than not to try to get the facts at all. Families need to turn on tape recorders and interview older members, especially those who know the most about present and past family matters.

Both of these are good books, well-written, well-packaged and good reading. Both exhibit characteristics of scholarship and story-telling that more LDS family histories and biographies need to adopt.

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