

the city and departed from its borders did the Mormons return to the capital they had threatened to burn.

The Heywood journal was edited by Juanita Brooks with the aid of Miriam B. Murphy from the Utah State Historical Society. The style of the footnotes is spare and to the point. One can see some virtue in allowing a document like Martha's journal to stand on its own without too much excess baggage in the form of discursive references. But there are places where we might have preferred greater exposure to Mrs. Brooks' wealth of historical and bibliographic knowledge of the period. Occasional footnotes, descriptive of Martha's feelings, irri-

tate the reader ("Martha must have felt flattered by this," etc.). Such interpretations belong only in an introduction.

The Cumming letter collection is beautifully printed and illustrated. The footnotes compiled by Beverly Beeton and Ray R. Canning are impressive research. The reader feels he/she is reading two accounts at the same time, one by Cumming and one by the editors since the notes are almost as interesting as the letters themselves.

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FISHING FOR EMMA

by Linda King Newell

Joseph and Emma Companions by Roy A. Cheville. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1977. 206 pps. \$8.00.

Judge Me Dear Reader by Erwin E. Wirkus. Idaho Falls: by the author, 1978. 50 pps. \$1.50.

Accounts of Emma Hale Smith and her relationship with her husband Joseph are scattered, sketchy and superficial. In 1973 Irwin E. Wirkus published *Judge Me Dear Reader*, a little twenty-five-page booklet about Emma. This past year he released an expanded fifty-page version, spruced up with a cover picture of Florence Hansen's fine sculpture of Emma and Joseph. A melodramatic attempt to rescue Emma from the depths of hell to which Brigham Young had consigned her, *Judge Me* remains the only work on Emma Smith by an LDS writer. In the meantime, Roy A. Cheville, who holds the title "Presiding Patriarch Emeritus" of the RLDS Church, has written *Joseph and Emma Companions*. Although his book attempts to deal with the relationship between Joseph and Emma, it gives little more than a simple biographical sketch of their lives, padded with empty comparisons such as "Joseph and Emma were not identical." The

two authors have gone fishing in the same river but on opposite banks. Occasionally they hook a "keeper" but, for the most part, what they land is unpalatable.

Both Wirkus and Cheville have tried to explain Emma and her association with Joseph to the members of their respective churches, but their volumes were meant to be inspirational rather than scholarly. In their introductions, they explain why they wrote as they did. "Authentic resources are limited," says Cheville, "and various materials undoubtedly have been altered to uphold some doctrinal or historical position." A few decades ago a statement such as this might have been acceptable. Today, however, too many people have emptied the contents of their attics, basements, boxes and trunks into archives from coast to coast, making voluminous, authentic primary source material available to the serious writer. Had the author taken advantage of the archives—even in his own region—he might have avoided many of the errors in his book.

Wirkus offers this explanation:

It has always seemed to me that there is more said against Emma Smith . . .

than in her favor . . . I know that Emma . . . told many falsehoods and brought much persecution against the church her husband founded under the direction of heaven. As I search the pages of history I find few women who were asked to go through as much hardship, heartache, and tragedy as did Emma Smith . . . I have attempted to tell her story as I believe she would have told it.

And he tells it as though it were Emma speaking. I had difficulty with this approach. As I read the account, I pictured a middle aged man dressed as Emma (shawl, dented gold beads and dangling curls in front of his ears) giving a program in a little ward somewhere in Idaho. I was further distracted as he threw in modern-day chit-chat: "and would you believe" and "well, at any rate."

The two writers have accomplished a synthesis of information already published by a number of other authors. In doing so, however, they have repeated misinformation in many cases, even adding a few of their own erroneous conclusions. Even so, for those readers seeking only a sketch of Emma's life and her companionship with Joseph, these books may spark some interest.

The two authors used quite different approaches in organizing their materials. Cheville started most chapters with a summary, then burdened the body of his text with repetitive, unorganized detail. Wirkus used a strict chronological format with an occasional flashback. It was easy to keep in mind the order in which events happened, but the few dates made it difficult to place a particular incident. Cheville, on the other hand, crammed every page with as many dates as Wirkus used in his entire booklet.

Though both writers have interpreted Emma from their separate religious bases, the two books express their theological backgrounds in completely different ways. Wirkus packs *Judge Me Dear Reader* with an abundance of ward-house lingo: Emma wonders when she lost her "tremendous spirit", she asks the church leaders to "release" her from her "calling" and asks that Joseph rescue her from hell and "take me by the hand again and lead me to his side." In *Emma and Joseph Companions*, Cheville's theology is reflected not only in

the rhetoric but also in the more philosophical sections of his book, particularly in Chapter XI ("Enduring Continuants") where he lists twenty-six "basics" that he feels held Joseph and Emma together spiritually.

They tiptoe around such controversial issues as Emma's marriage to Major Lewis C. Bidamon. (By coincidence, the two books have the date of that marriage as December 27, 1847; the correct date is December 23.) Bidamon is an embarrassment to both writers. Cheville passes the union off as one of convenience, then ignores any other role Bidamon may have played in Emma's life. Wirkus treats the marriage as a tragic mistake and Lewis as a bad influence on Emma and her children. He says young Joseph "would talk about the many happy hours he had spent . . . [with] Major, our beautiful and intelligent dog. It was quite a different Major he had come to know as his step-father." Neither Cheville nor Wirkus ever consider that Emma and Lewis could have loved each other. However, their letters to each other clearly suggest otherwise.

Each author handles polygamy with the traditional kid gloves of both churches. Wirkus pours Emma into the customary Mormon wife mold of obedience to her husband's priesthood authority, reluctantly accepting plural marriage by giving Joseph other wives. Cheville hints that the practice of plural marriage might have crossed Joseph's mind but maintains that Emma would never have agreed. "If Joseph had made such a proposal," he argues, "Emma would have replied as negatively as she spoke up about the bar in the Mansion House. She would have told Joseph that if he brought home another woman, she, Emma, would leave . . . Joseph and Emma continued in their monogamous marriage." In reality, Emma struggled desperately with polygamy. She did make an attempt to accept the principle but finally could not. Backed into a corner, she fought with every tool she possessed. Until her death she denied its painful existence in her life.

Both books contain sections on the children of Joseph and Emma. They both make the mistake of calling Joseph and Emma's first child Alva instead of Alvin. Wirkus provides a brief sketch of Joseph's brothers and sisters but, ironically, in a work about Emma does not include similar information about her siblings. He has her say "I had six

brothers and two sisters," and then on the next page she names five brothers and three sisters.

Other errors are sprinkled throughout. Cheville has Joseph III moving into the Mansion House with his wife and child in the spring of 1850 when he did not even marry until 1856. The author also states that Emma died before her son David H. Smith suffered his mental breakdown. The commitment papers from the Illinois Asylum for the Insane state that David was committed on January 17, 1877. According to these records, he had been mentally unstable for two years or four years before Emma's death. She described her own reaction to his breakdown as a "living trouble," expressing "deep sorrow at his condition."

Wirkus completely misses the 1835 edition of Emma's hymnal. He indicates that the 1841 collection was the first. He states that all four of Emma's sons were "very active in the Re-organized [sic] movement." Fredrick died at age 26, never having joined the church his brother headed. At one point the writer claims Emma was forty-four when she married Bidamon. A few pages later he says she "must have been forty-one." (She was actually forty-three.)

The Relief Society is mentioned in both books. *Companions* has a brief but accurate account; *Judge Me* completely botches the subject. Wirkus erroneously indicates that

the idea for a women's organization originated with Joseph. Then, after Joseph's death he has Emma say, "[The Quorum of the Twelve] kept after me to do my work as president of the Relief Society. I asked them to release me, and though they didn't, I still refused to go. How could I direct the women who looked at me as though I had gone out of my mind?" The Relief Society organization was dissolved by the time Joseph was killed; the last official minutes had been recorded three months earlier on March 16, 1844.

The award for the most serious shortcoming I believe should go to Erwin E. Wirkus in his *Judge Me Dear Reader* for his conclusion that Emma Smith lost her mind when Joseph was killed. He uses this idea to excuse her of actions he does not understand and, in doing so, robs her of the dignity and strength that were hers.

Had either Cheville or Wirkus consulted the journals, manuscripts, statements and papers, easily accessible in both the RLDS and LDS Church libraries—as are scores of additional archival sources—they would surely have written with clearer insights and fewer errors.

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GENERALIZED HATRED

by Elinore Hughes Partridge

The Women's Room by Marilyn French. 471 pages. New York: Summit Books, 1977. \$10.95. Paper: 687 pages. New York: Jove (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 1978. \$2.50.

Mira, the protagonist of Marilyn French's best-selling novel, did not usually buy women's magazines, but she pored over them at the dentist's office: "Rate yourself: are you a good wife? Are you still attractive? Are you understanding, compassionate, nu-

tritive? Do you keep your eye-shadow fresh?" Mira had been perfect: she was careful of her husband's fragile ego, she never struck her children, her house was immaculate. "She had done it all, everything the magazines, the television, the newspapers, the novels, everything they told her she was expected to do." It wasn't enough.

Few of us aspire to perfection, but we have an idealized image, even if we resist it, of what we are expected to be as woman,