

onstrated how widely the policies and activities of the Mormon Church still influenced all aspects of society." The last chapter offers an interpretive synthesis mentioning Mormonism and stressing Utah's relationship to the other states as major themes, but while the analysis is good for the survey offered in the chapter

itself, it does not take into account the contents of the entire volume.

A still needed one volume history should be prepared by a single author who will retain the information contained in *Utah's History* but will reshape it into a more coherent and useable whole.

Tanning Fundamentalism

The Polygamy Story: Fiction and Fact. by J. Max Anderson. Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1979, x+157 pp., index. \$4.95.

Reviewed by FRED C. COLLIER, a freelance writer and publisher currently working on a book-length study of Mormon fundamentalism.

During the early part of the twentieth century, Lorin C. Woolley of Centerville, Utah, produced affidavits in which he maintained that on 26 and 27 September 1886, Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith appeared to President John Taylor while he resided in the home of John W. Woolley (his father) and there revealed to Taylor that the Mormon Church would some day abandon the practice of plural marriage. Joseph Smith at that time directed Taylor to appoint and ordain five men to perpetuate plural marriage after the Church had relinquished the practice. Subsequently told and retold, the Lorin Woolley story came to form the foundation of priesthood authority for most Mormon polygamist offshoots, who now number in the tens of thousands.

Working for more than a decade, Max Anderson has undertaken a monumental labor in behalf of mainstream Mormonism in an attempt to discredit Woolley's story. This volume represents the first of a projected three-volume attack. Placing the Woolley account under the microscope, Anderson critically analyzes every minute detail—names, dates, places and events—and quite successfully does to the foundation of modern fundamentalism what the Tanners (Mod-

ern Microfilms) have done to Mormonism. Undoubtedly, Anderson has dealt a heavy blow to the growth of modern-day polygamy. In its effectiveness, the book is long strides ahead of all its predecessors, including *The Way of the Master* by Mark E. Peterson, *Plural Marriage Unlimited* by Paul E. Reimann, and . . . *Some That Trouble You* by Clair L. Wyatt.

Anderson attempts to force fundamentalists to view the records of their beginnings from the same perspective that Jews must view the complete historical void of Israel's four-hundred-year sojourn in Egypt—"Reference to them was stricken from the records." In religious matters, whenever facts and evidence are lacking, faith will always fill the void. Anderson's hope is that in the case of Mormon fundamentalism the lack of corroborating evidence will make the faith much more difficult to muster. But the fundamentalists are not altogether without justification in their feeling that there *is* much powerful evidence to support their position. The suppression of Church records in the past, coupled with present Church policy that denies known fundamentalists access even to the general archives, has created great mistrust for the Church in the minds of thousands of fundamentalist-believing people who feel that the problem is not in a genuine lack of extant evidence but in its inaccessibility.

Following his historical analysis of Woolley's story and dredging up in the process every conceivable inconsistency and difficulty, Anderson simply labels its author a consummate liar. Then, turning

abruptly from historian to psychoanalyst, the architect-author proceeds to probe into Woolley's personality "to get at the cause of the whole matter." Looking for Woolley's motivation for telling "such lies," Anderson analyzes several of his subject's dreams and draws the conclusion that Woolley was merely seeking for attention and grasping for honor and power. In coming to this conclusion, the author also debunks the testimonies of two eyewitnesses to the Woolley story, Patriarch John W. Woolley and Daniel R. Bateman, both of whom lived and died affirming its validity. The reader thus gradually begins to notice that Anderson hopes to destroy fundamentalist faith with the same weapons the anti-Mormons have used since 1820.

However effective the Anderson work might be, it is not without its shortcomings. Unfortunately, the author does not choose to view it as a fair-minded judge or an honest historian, willing to look at all sides of the story. Instead, he plays the role of a prosecuting attorney, anxious to win the case for his client, the Church, and carefully sifts his source materials while selecting for use only those that are to the credit of his client. In short, his zealotry to defend the faith has obscured his objectivity. Critical of Lorin Woolley, Anderson either neglects to mention or downplays the significance of any information that tends to support the Woolley story, even though such information is often vital to the very issues he addresses.

A more impartial examination of the Lorin Woolley story might reveal at the outset that it comes from what historians would call a secondary source, because it was recorded more than twenty-six years after the events it describes had transpired. This does not mean that it is therefore untrue, which is what Anderson implies without ever mentioning that the only accounts Mormons have of the First Vision come from such sources. Labeling a document does not necessarily determine its accuracy or inaccuracy, but without question it is relevant information. One small slip of memory, such as a wrong date or place, or a small detail in an incident, can lead to all kinds of historical problems in an otherwise sound ac-

count of a secondary nature. Such is certainly the case with the First Vision and numerous other events sacred to the Mormon faith.

Anderson's primary attack on the Woolley story thus zeroes in on details. He creates an iron bedstead based on dates and details in Woolley's story and then uses them to their own discredit by comparing them to contemporary records. For example, in his first account (1912), Woolley says that the 1886 vision occurred "in the latter part of September," and that he does not know the exact date. In later accounts, he sets the date at September 26 and 27. He also changes his list of names of those who were present. These kinds of apparent inconsistencies furnish Anderson with all the ammunition he needs to discredit Woolley's testimony. Yet it is important to note that Anderson *does not produce a single fact* to dispute the first account of the Lorin Woolley story.

In examining the Woolley story more fairly, realization of the extent to which the Woolleys were involved with John Taylor during the period in question becomes crucial. For this information we are indebted almost entirely to the diaries of Samuel Bateman, not that these diaries are the only ones extant pertaining to the subject. At least four others are more complete. There is, for example, the personal diary of President Taylor, as well as the personal diary of George Q. Cannon, the First Presidency's Office Journal, and the personal diary of L. John Nuttall, who kept extensive diaries while serving as secretary to Presidents Young, Taylor and Woodruff. Nuttall habitually recorded many details of each day's activities in these diaries which are now at Brigham Young University. Strange as it may seem, all the Nuttall diaries are present and accounted for except those for the years 1885 through 1887. The Taylor diaries are presently located in the First Presidency's Office Vault and are not available for research. No one is allowed to see them, not even Taylor's descendants, although the Church normally allows children and grandchildren open access to the diaries of their parents and grandparents. In the case of the Taylor materials, it has made a curious excep-