

her friend, is not necessary to make it a meaningful story. Although it brings the story to a rewarding conclusion, it not only limits the market to an LDS audience, but it reads like an appendix.

The book is divided into three sections: Cocoon, Metamorphosis and Flight. The symbolism is obvious. In the "Cocoon" the reader is intimately drawn into the lives of two women who are so wrapped up in personal needs that they are unable to break out of their protective shells without the warmth of each other's love. Mrs. Baxter describes their relationship skillfully and engagingly. The "Metamorphosis" gives a glimpse of the changes that self-confidence has brought to their lives: marriage for Carrie and a pleasure-filled excursion for Mme. Thorpe. The "Flight" records that final step which most of us fail to take. Carrie puts forth the effort required to free her friend (taken by unexpected death) for an eternal journey.

The subject matter of the last two sections is as lofty as that of the first; the presentation is not. The reader is suddenly removed from the intimacy that was so entrancing throughout the first sixty pages and is simply told the next eleven years of history in seven letters and twenty-one journal entries. One entry is a clear thesis statement of the entire book:

"I have gained a personal testimony that relationships are eternal and are meant to be so, that we form friendships in the pre-existence that may continue during our second estate. I believe that those friendships will continue and endure through eternities. This is why it is so hard for us to part with someone we love . . . Instinctively we know that loneliness is not natural . . ."

I had, earlier in the book, *felt* the pain of loneliness and the healing power of love. I was deeply moved by it. It seemed unnecessary to be told the conclusions I had already reached.

I understand the difficulty of trying to communicate the intense spiritual feelings associated with doing temple work for someone you love. Experiences that are uniquely Mormon are seldom communicated convincingly in writing, even to an LDS audience. Perhaps Mrs. Baxter felt that a simple understatement would be preferable to a didactic novel on the joys of temple work. If so, she was right. However, the first section of the book shows that she does have the skill to handle emotional subject matter with sensitivity and control. I wish that she had attempted to treat the "Flight" in the same way.

Clay County for Young Readers

As Wide As the River, by Dean Hughes, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Company, 1980. Grade 5 Up. \$6.95.

Reviewed by KATHRYN GARDNER, who completed a master's degree in library science and instructional media at Indiana University and presently resides in Davis, California.

Twelve-year-old Joseph Williams and his family have settled in Clay County, Missouri, following their expulsion by mobs in Jackson County. Robbed of his strength by a brutal beating, Joseph's father, Mat-

thew Williams, fights an unrelenting fever which saps his body and an unforgiving heart which numbs his spirit. Joseph, younger than sixteen-year-old Matthew, finds it difficult to bend to the authority of his weakened father or his more obedient older brother and longs to free himself from the drudgery of the never-ending farm work and poverty. He sees the more romantic life of the river men as an answer to the frustrations and helplessness he feels. He cannot accept the events and trials of the Saints in Jackson and Clay Counties without at least trying to change things.

The personalities of this believable family react in such a way that the reader is able to feel the terror of the times for Mormons seeking at first mere survival and then an opportunity to grow stronger physically and spiritually in a hostile land at a time when even the Prophet Joseph Smith seems dismayed at the chastisement of the Saints.

As *Wide As the River* deals with a family's attempt at coping with and adjusting to violence, terror, loss and a subsequent search for identity as individuals and as a family. As the body of Saints has to deal with its expulsion from Jackson County and eventually from Clay County with an absence of immediate leadership from the prophet, so does the Williams family have to draw upon its own inner resources without its patriarch. Mother Elizabeth, Father Matthew and Joseph, all in their own ways, have to learn various aspects of obedience and deal with the loss of something especially dear. Father's loss of physical strength, his own paralyzing hatred toward the Jackson County mob and fear for the welfare of his family require almost more than he can give. Mother's loss of security and anger that her husband would leave her to cope

alone almost destroy her ability to nurture her family. Young, impetuous Joseph, so determined to do things in his own way, has to give up his illusions of going back to Jackson County, his desire for God to strike back at their enemies and his dream of the grandeur of becoming a river pilot. Obedience comes hard for Joseph, and alienation from his family requires him to grow in ways that run against his grain. Even steady, reliable Matthew, who is so determined to carry out the promises made to his father, learns the strength found in forgiving and understanding.

Ollie, the young boy who plays the interesting role of Joseph's protector, has an important part in Joseph's search for himself and will undoubtedly play an even larger role in the story of this family's saga in subsequent books.

As this family picks up the pieces and gathers strength to meet the exodus from Clay County, so the body of Saints nears readiness to meet the purifying forces to be unleashed in the near future.

As *Wide As the River* follows *Under the Same Sky*, but can be enjoyed on its own merits. I hope the author will carry this family through several more volumes.