

Those of us within the Latter-day Saint fold who are both students of American history and committed Latter-day Saints recognize that this has not been the case, and that books like Hansen's help support faith by raising important questions which need to be addressed.

Those who are critical of recent research in the field of Mormon studies usually fail to understand the basic nature of historical methodology. Contrary to what these critics assert, most historians recognize that historical accounts are not "objective," that historians will only find evidence which helps answer questions they first think of asking, and that historians understand that in much of their work they are testing theories. Historians do not usually believe they are working with general laws or received views in the positivist sense. The work of historicists like Wilhelm Dilthey, R. G. Collingwood, and Benedetto Croce — if not progressive historians more familiar to Americans like Carl Becker and Charles Beard — has convinced most otherwise. Most recognize that they are working with what Dale H. Porter has called "normative hypotheses" or generalizations which may have some validity but which are not infallible. A positivist like Karl Popper can suggest that these generalizations are "trivial," but the historian uses them to aid in understand-

ing. Hansen, at least in his most speculative positions, is clear that he is dealing with models or theories (he prefers the terms metaphor or hypothesis) rather than with "truth" or "objective reality."

I find his use of Jaynes's model unsatisfactory since it does not help me conceptualize Joseph Smith's religious experiences. Perhaps Hansen found the model I proposed in the case of Wilford Woodruff unsatisfactory, and that is the reason he ignored it. Both of us would recognize, however, that each approach is simply a model intended to aid understanding rather than the last word.

Contrary to what some of the critics of the New Mormon History have asserted, it is possible — perhaps even necessary — for purposes of analysis to separate the question of authenticity from the question of significance in considering various aspects of the Mormon experience. It may even prove useful to address the latter question and ignore the former. One who does so may, in spite of what critics maintain, remain a faithful believer in Christ. After all, Christ promised that if we continue in the faith and remain his disciples we can know the truth and become free. (John 8:31-32) Unless Christ lied, and I do not believe he did, historical study by his servants can never be a faith-destroying enterprise.

Revised But Unchanged

Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder by Harold Schindler (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), xvi, 417 pp., \$25.00

Reviewed by Eugene E. Campbell, emeritus professor of history, Brigham Young University.

PUBLISHED FIRST IN 1966, Harold Schindler's biography of Porter Rockwell has been widely read and has received well-deserved acclaim for its evidence of careful research,

its objectivity, its literary merit, and its remarkable illustrations. Now, after the passage of seventeen years and five additional printings, the author and the editors of the University of Utah Press have chosen to publish a revised and enlarged edition which includes additional research and more mature perspectives.

According to the author, much of the new material "has been fitted into the footnotes, and while most of it is supplemental, it is there to flesh out the individuals and

events of Orrin Porter Rockwell's world" (p. xiii).

These lengthy footnotes give added evidence of Schindler's meticulous research but often add to the difficulty of following the narrative. In fact, footnotes in fine print occupy from one half to two-thirds of several pages, reminding one of the writings of Herbert Howe Bancroft and other nineteenth-century writers. Readers might be well advised to ignore the footnotes during the initial reading and, after getting the narrative in mind, return for a more careful evaluation of the validity of the account by a careful examination of the footnotes.

The late Gustive O. Larson reviewed the first edition of the Rockwell biography for *DIALOGUE* (Winter 1966) and objected primarily to the "over-abundance of irresponsible testimony and sensationalism represented by such names as William Daniels, Bill Hickman, Joseph H. Jackson, Swartzell, Achilles, Beadle, and . . . Kelly and Birney's 'Holy murder' . . ." I feel that Larson's criticism is still valid and see little effort on the part of the author to rectify this tendency.

True, he has identified the oft-quoted "Achilles, the mysterious tale-teller and self-proclaimed purveyor of Rockwell's confession . . . as Samuel D. Serrine" but admits that he "continues to elude close examination" and "is as much a mystery as his pseudonym" (p. xv).

The extensive use of such sources may

reduce the credibility of some of Schindler's conclusions and leaves the reader wondering about Rockwell's involvement in the Boggs, Aiken, and King Robinson affairs, not to speak of lesser known crimes such as the drowning of an elderly female gossip in Nauvoo (see lengthy footnote on p. 105). Similarly, sources quoted describing Porter's involvement with the wife of Amos Davis (pp. 142-43) are Hall's *Abominations of Mormonism Exposed*; Ford's *History of Illinois*, and the *Warsaw Signal*. Schindler seems to accept the incident as factual but makes no attempt to give Rockwell's side of the story nor to account for why this "plural wife" is not mentioned again.

Perhaps the author's desire to be objective has led him to include questionable sources, but this should not obscure the fact that Hal Schindler has produced a very readable and valuable book. His subject, Orrin Porter Rockwell, emerges from the legendary shadows as a rugged, courageous, warm human being who was involved in many important events in Mormon and Utah history, and Schindler has included enough historic background for these events to give the reader an interesting interpretation of this history to 1878.

An extensive bibliography, a detailed index, and Dale Bryner's miniature pen-and-ink illustrations coupled with Harold Schindler's exhaustive research and journalistic writing style make this handsome volume an attractive "must" for anyone interested in Mormon and Utah history.

Accolades for Good Wives

Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750 by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), xv+276 pp., illus., biblio., index, \$17.50.

Reviewed by Gene A. Sessions, associate professor of history at Weber State College.

I HAVE WRITTEN book reviews on a regular basis for almost a decade. Most of them have been in the field of Mormon/Utah history, although I consistently try to disclaim my expertise in the area due to a lack of training. Whatever the case, in the course of all those reviews, I am afraid that I got a deserved reputation for being rather harsh. The truth is that when rele-