standard that few may safely risk, as he has, to open themselves so intimately to our gaze. He has enlarged and enriched the community with which his personal essays can "only connect."

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Sister Sense and Hard Facts

Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith by Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery (New York: Doubleday, 1984), xiii+394 pp., $19.95.

Reviewed by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, research historian with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and associate professor of English at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

SAMUEL JOHNSON coined the phrase, and Virginia Woolf gave it its place in the language: the "common reader." That person, Doctor Johnson wrote, by whose common sense, "uncorrupted by literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours" (Woolf 1953, 1). The last word on Linda Newell's and Val Avery's volume must indeed be spoken by the common readers among us, not by the academicians and scholars.

For the community of scholars and historians of Mormonism and those who read faithfully in the academic journals, *Mormon Enigma* holds much satisfaction and some surprises. They have followed its development over the past several years since its authors came among them, relative neophytes, ready to learn their ways and practice their art. They have applauded as Val and Linda worked out, piece by labored piece, the biographical puzzle, presenting their findings along the way in meetings of the Mormon History Association and in issues of the journals. Their papers, and the parallel writings of others, prepared the initiated ones for the final unfolding, which came not as a revelation so much as a canonization.

But the common readers, many of whom have remained to now innocent of the implications of newly researched material and newly interpreted old data, are finding much in the book to try the soul. Our more or less official histories of our foremothers, the sweetness and light "granddaughter biographies" we have had for decades, have not prepared us for the unstinting realities represented in this volume. Here, despite the softer touch with which the authors treated them, we must swallow some hard facts: Joseph Smith and Emma Hale eloped; their marriage was troubled by early jealousies, perhaps infidelity; over the issue of plural marriage Joseph deceived his wife and resorted to doubletalk with his enemies and with the Saints as well. Emma's trusted women friends, ancestors of many of us, betrayed their friend and benefactress; Brigham Young spread malicious lies about Emma after the martyrdom; young Joseph was ordained by his father to be his successor in church leadership. Not an easy dose for us who have been schooled in unquestioning reverence for our leaders and acceptance of the apostolic succession.

The relentless research that led Linda and Val to question these seeming foundations is phenomenal. One "common reader," at first glance, registered total confidence in the book because of the prodigious eighteen-page bibliography, the fifty-six pages of notes. Colleagues, en-

have complied. In our determination to avoid the unsubstantiated hagiography of the past we have required "warts and all" as though they somehow stamped truth on the depiction of goodness.

We are chronologically too close to Emma Smith, too near to our own roots. Time, and the expansion of our shared wisdom, will soften the focus, darken the background, fill in the too-sharp outline with overlapping textures until the portrait will emerge, deep and full. I pull from my shelf Jack Adamson and Hal Folland's *Shepherd of the Ocean*, a masterful renaissance life of Walter Ralegh, and see there the stars towards which Mormon biographers must aim. There is not a footnote in the book; instead there is a control of the material, the man and the milieu, such that one may read with full confidence.

With just such confidence have I listened to Val and Linda *talk* about Emma Smith. They know the woman as though she were their sister-mother-friend, whose faults they understand and forgive, whose strengths they recognize and praise. They do not tell the back-fence gossip when they speak of Emma. They admire her spunk in marrying the man she adored; they grieve with her in the deaths of her babies; they applaud her business acumen; and they feel enmity towards those who cause her pain. Forced into an academic corner, however, they must give us all they know, every line drawn with clarity often untempered by mercy.

Readers of Mormon biography, common readers and academicians alike, will learn someday to ask the right questions. Not relenting in our demand for truth, we will require character, not characteristics; spirit, not enthusiasms; thoughts, not just deeds; essence, not merely substance. And when we read *Mormon Enigma* with the right questions, the book can provide our answers.

In the meantime, while the historians pick their nits, yet grant the book their honors, the common readers continue to vote their choice. They will read the book, and in the reading, force themselves to gaged in similar sleuthing, are impressed with the variety of sources cited, far beyond what is readily available in the "usual" places. Those who know of their involvement with the Bidamon papers and the near-discovery of a collection of Emma Smith diaries respect the authors' diligence. It is my guess that there is extant nary a paper relating to Emma Smith which these two have not considered.

And their reading into the background materials, too, has been prodigious; they have set their Emma in the context, not of our time, but hers, as far as current understanding has clarified it. And despite the pruning required to suit the book to its publisher, the background is still very fully drawn.

And so they give us Emma Smith, meticulously documenting every assertion, as though their historian colleagues, with their demands for "proof," were scowling over their shoulders as they wrote. For all their care, the Newell-Avery book will not escape criticism from their colleagues — no book worth the printing ever does — for their interpretations of the sources, their almost indiscriminate trust in their informants, even (though historians must acknowledge the unavoidability of it) for their pro-Emma biases.

For many common readers, the book, however wonderful its revelations, is flawed for that very insistance on the trees to the obscuring of the forest. We tend to see the main characters too sharply, the details drawn according to the plentitude of materials available. Only in retrospect, in distancing ourselves from the immediacy of the scenes so completely drawn, do we find the woman Emma Smith. In the startling moment we tend to see only the difficulties and, in our minds, line Emma and Joseph up as pro- and antagonist, heroine and villain, rising saint and fallen angel. The book's, and our own, insistance on the minutiae of plural marriage forces that issue into the foreground to the near-exclusion of other equally significant facets of the woman. We readers have demanded every shred of evidence, and the authors

deal with the hard facts it presents, to the heightening of their own awareness of the mixture of human and divine in all of us — even prophets. As my favorite common reader wrote of her response to the book's Joseph, "I went on to put myself in his place, between Emma and a drawn sword. . . . But he loved the Lord and was committed to restoring a principle that was almost unbearably hard." This reader's sensitive reading justifies Samuel Johnson's faith in common readers of all ages: "Our authors, after nearly destroying our faith [in Joseph] let Emma restore it. [The] strong, quiet, intelligent, compassionate and loving woman [they show her to be] could not lay aside her moral training, yet she loved him so deeply that she couldn't surrrender him to his own God, but loved him to the end" (Ursenbach 1984). Without sacrificing Joseph we have an Emma Smith we can own, understand, and love.

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Genealogical Blockbuster

The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy, edited by Arlene H. Eakle and Johni Cerny (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing Co., 1984), 748 pp., $39.95.

Reviewed by Gary Topping, Curator of Manuscripts, Utah State Historical Society.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE consumed with genealogical passion to profit from this new work of far-reaching and fundamental importance, though those who are will buy it as a matter of course and use it extensively. Furthermore, raw beginners and salty old pros alike will find it easy to use and inexhaustible in its benefits. Micheneresque in both title and scope, *The Source* is an indispensible adjunct to any genealogical project that values thoroughness and efficiency.

This is not a manual of research procedure; that function is to be filled by a companion volume, *Ancestry's Guide to Research*, scheduled for later publication (though referred to in *The Source* as already having appeared). An introductory section deals with basic research procedures and common pitfalls; but the book's main emphasis is on locating and using the various sources, published and unpublished, available to genealogists. A concluding section, "Special Resources," deals primarily with records on immigration and ethnic minorities, and seven appendices give current addresses of repositories and publishers useful to genealogists.

In spite of its formidable size, *The Source* is remarkably easy to use. The researcher can quickly locate a needed chapter by using an "information guide" at the beginning of each chapter, which gives, in graph form, the type of information contained in the records being considered, a table called "Could You Use This Chapter?" giving the chronological period in which such records were kept, and "Clues That You Should Consult These Records." Because some of the chapters are very lengthy and all are very detailed, these pages will save the researcher a great deal of time.

Copious illustrations appear, it seems, on almost every page. Facsimile examples of every significant record type are given. The researcher who has never seen a manuscript census schedule, for example, can practice using one, illustrated in this book, before entering a library. The techniques for using some sources, such as the handy Sanborn fire insurance maps, are even less well-known, and the illustrations in such cases are especially welcome. (Note that the Sanborn map illustrated on p. 524 is