

## REVIEWS

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### In Silence, She Speaks

*Not in Vain* by Susan Evans McCloud  
(Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1984),  
xi, 209 pages, \$8.95.

Reviewed by Carolynne Cecil Berrett,  
registered nurse currently staff nurse for  
Upjohn, mother of six children, Young  
Adult Gospel Doctrine teacher, and lec-  
turer on early Mormon medicine, includ-  
ing Ellis Shipp.

DR. ELLIS REYNOLDS SHIPP closed her un-  
published autobiography with the words,  
"Great minds are they who suffered not in  
vain. . . . I do not feel my spirit great, but  
oh, I have suffered — and I pray it has not  
been in vain." From this statement by the  
second woman physician in Utah, Mc-  
Cloud chose her title. A study of Ellis's  
life, including the deaths of five of her ten  
children, reveals no hyperbole in her  
statement.

I am impressed with the way McCloud  
unravels the events of Ellis's life up to her  
years in medical school. From then on I  
am continually aware that she leaves more  
unsaid. It is apparent that McCloud's re-  
search is superficial and incomplete,  
sometimes causing her to make false  
assumptions.

For example, Ellis returns to medical  
school in Pennsylvania, pregnant. Her pro-  
fessors urge her to have an abortion. Mc-  
Cloud writes, "Ellis endured her Gethsema-  
ne. She prayed all through the night for  
strength and guidance, on her knees in her  
little attic room. As dawn broke through  
the window her answer broke through the  
veil of darkness. She knew what she had to  
do. She could answer them now, 'I came to  
learn how to save life, not to take it!'"

(p. 126). This narrative is misleading.  
Her own story makes it plain that she did  
not even consider abortion and instead im-  
mediately responded to her professors: "I  
came to save life, not to destroy it." She  
did indeed spend the night in prayer, but  
not as a result of indecision.

McCloud also neglects another sig-  
nificant incident that occurred during this  
tumultuous time. According to Nellie  
Shipp McKinney, Ellis's daughter, Ellis  
dreamed that her baby would be a girl  
born with one arm. This dream was dis-  
turbng as well as prophetic. Even though  
the baby, a girl, was not handicapped,  
years later Ellis would take into her home  
a young orphan girl named Augusta who  
had only one arm. Ellis wrote of her,

A little bird flew to my nest . . .  
I clasped her fondly to my breast . . .  
Each day she grew more dear . . .  
She was a wounded, gentle dove . . .  
[that] Now nestles 'neath my sheltered wing.

Ellis's story is not complete without Au-  
gusta, but McCloud does not mention her.

McCloud's meticulous precision in re-  
cording dates and putting the events of  
Ellis's life in chronological order is ad-  
mirable, yet she treats those events without  
regard to their relative importance. On  
the one hand, she devotes considerable  
space to telling us about Ellis's trip to the  
Salt Lake Theatre to see *Camille*, describ-  
ing the building itself in lavish detail (pp.  
54-56) while covering some of the most  
significant experiences in Ellis's life in two  
or three short paragraphs, if at all.

An example is McCloud's treatment of  
the death of Ellis's child, Burt. Probably

no other single event in Ellis's life so challenged her role as a physician, a mother, and a wife, but McCloud writes only that "According to family records . . . Burt Reynolds Shipp died. There is no mention of this in Ellis's notes or journals" (p. 139). Further research would have disclosed an incredible set of circumstances surrounding this son's death and the reason Ellis did not write of it.

An unpublished manuscript by Nellie Shipp McKinney tells this story, which Ellis's granddaughter, Lenore McKinney Hoskins, repeated in an interview to me. When Ellis left for medical school in Pennsylvania she had given birth to five children; only three survived. Leaving her ten-month-baby, Burt, devastated her, and she worried constantly over him. She would miss half of his life by the time she returned home. Soon after her return, Ellis was living with her children in her apartment-office when she received a despairing call from her husband. Thirteen of his children by his other wives had diphtheria. "Please come," he pleaded, "there is no one else." This cruel reality was true as so few doctors were available during this merciless epidemic, and many families were in quarantine. Ellis was willing to go but there was no one to leave her own children with, and somehow they had, so far, escaped the disease. Ellis prayed, pleaded, and agonized over reaching the only decision she could. She would put her children "in God's care" and go. She successfully nursed Milford's thirteen children back to health but her own son, Burt, was taken. Her grief went beyond her written

word. It was one of the few times, her family recalls, when she went to her knees asking, "Why, oh why, oh why?" Ultimately she was blessed with acceptance and was able to continue her life without bitterness.

McCloud merely skims the surface of the last half of Ellis's life, indicating that she must be unaware of the wealth of information available. Though no journals exist, numerous other sources in letters and in living descendants are available.

Nothing is said, for instance, of eighty-six-year-old Ellis hitchhiking around the West to organize nursing classes, preaching the gospel as she went. In a poem titled "The Wanderer," now in the possession of a granddaughter, Lucille Musser Jackson, Ellis gives us insight into these lonely years.

No home — No place on earth  
to call my own . . .  
Oh God in love, in mercy  
from above  
Send solace to thy  
wandering child.

*Not in Vain* may leave the reader feeling that Ellis was an unhappy person. She was not. Her daughter Nellie remembered that her mother was not above a good practical joke. McCloud obviously has deep feeling for Dr. Shipp and transmits that feeling to the reader, but I felt as though I was reading a historical novel. *Not in Vain* is inspiring, well-written, and worth reading. However, because it is incomplete and sometimes inaccurate, its value as a historical document is limited, and the book cannot be considered an accurate or complete biography.

## Faithful History

*The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1839* by Milton V. Backman, Jr. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1983), 479 pp., \$13.95.

Reviewed by William D. Russell, chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences at Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa.

MILTON BACKMAN, a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, has written a history of Mormonism in Ohio in the 1830s. He appears to have consulted virtually all of the primary sources pertinent to his subject. What emerges is a portrait of a people of great faith who experienced some very powerful