Heaven, stresses that humankind has always sought for a loving, nurturing presence. Wilcox traces this desire to the teachings of such early Church leaders as Erastus Snow, who taught that "God" was actually the combination of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother, that our Heavenly Parents were God. She reports that certain early Church authorities believed Heavenly Mother was actually the third member of the godhead, or the Holy Spirit. However, because of paucity of official Church pronouncements on her existence and characteristics, a grassroots "Mother in Heaven" movement has mushroomed among Latter-day Saint women. Perhaps this widening folk theology will prompt Mormon theologians to more closely examine and more clearly define her.

In a second essay, Wilcox examines the roots of the Mormon emphasis on the mothering role. She identifies many of the ill-defined and too well-defined roles and expectations of Mormon mothers, as well as their joys and blessings. She documents Church dicta against working women, which blame them for such misfortunes as neglected, delinquent, uncared-for children (ignoring the fact that most of these children are being tended by their fathers, babysitters, or in daycare centers). The Church equates motherhood with godhood, emphasizing that mothers perform the same holy calling as our Heavenly Father does — without realizing that by making motherhood sacred they are simultaneously excusing fathers from any real participation in or responsibility for parenting. Wilcox points out that fortunately the absentee-father role is changing, that fathers today are taking a much more active, hands-on role in parenting; but she also notes that this is happening not because our theology has changed, but because men are discovering that fatherhood is fulfilling.

While I am enthusiastic about most of this book, I am surprised that some things were left unsaid. The authors have successfully articulated questions and issues, but I was sometimes left wondering what women really want. Priesthood? And what do I want, after reading about the way things used to be and speculating on how they could or should be? What purpose does sisterhood serve, how does it better our lot? Is it just a way to comfort and support each other until the next life when everything will be made right? I found no answers — only mild frustration and hope for amelioration. I would have liked to see some contemporary sisterhood networks examined; perhaps the relationships/bonds formed with full-time sister missionaries, or a study of university students or of student wives, who often form particularly strong, emotional ties.

In the past, I have avoided speaking or thinking about Mormon women's issues, not wanting to be out of harmony with the Church or fearing that once I started voicing my problems I'd never shut up. This book has demonstrated that there are others in the Church — my sisters — who have not only felt many of the same frustrations and problems about being a woman in the Church but have quietly and intelligently examined these questions. Not only do I feel a sisterhood with them because of our common questions and feelings, but I have renewed hope that the condition of women in the Church can and indeed will improve. *Sisters in Spirit* invigorated and challenged me. It should appeal not only to students of women's issues, but to all Church members and authorities as well.

History of Historians

Mormons and Their Historians by Davis Bitton and Leonard Arrington (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 213 pp., $20.00.

Reviewed by Gary Topping, curator of manuscripts at the Utah State Historical Society.

THAT SUCH A VOLUME AS THIS could be written at all is happy testimony to the development of a Mormon historiographical tradition. Its appearance at this late date, however — over a century and a half after the Church's foundation — is less happy evidence of just how slowly that tradition has matured. The rise of a scientific, objective Mormon historiography began, according to the authors, barely thirty years ago, and there are still fewer outstanding practitioners of that craft than one would like to see, though clearly the field is thriving both numerically and intellectually.

It is thriving so well, in fact, that few readers are going to be satisfied with this brief and shallow sketch of the bold contours of the Mormon historiographical tradition, welcome as it is. These two senior scholars simply present too few historians and works, too little sustained analysis, too little comparison with intellectual currents outside of Mormondom, and too few recommendations for fruitful new directions for this study to stand as anything but the barest of introductions.

The book has its undeniable strengths. Those of us who daily ply the trade routes of Mormon literature generally know something of Edward Tullidge through the articles of Ronald W. Walker on the Godbe circle and B. H. Roberts through Davis Bitton's studies. But what do most of us know of Orson Whitney, to whose fat volumes we keep turning, or Andrew Love Neff, or even that awe-inspiring engine of compilation Andrew Jenson, unless we have taken the time to trudge through his lengthy autobiography? The thumbnail sketches of the lives and works of these men, as well as of Willard Richards and George A. Smith, are most welcome and will enable us to use those older histories with enhanced understanding and enjoyment.

In a sense, though, the biographical chapters through the one on B. H. Roberts, which comprise roughly the first half of the volume, are the least satisfying ones. Bitton and Arrington chide some of the early historians, in their concern to promote the theological and historical uniqueness of the Church, for their inability to recognize that anything other than the golden plates and Joseph Smith's revelations could have fashioned Mormonism. But the authors themselves have failed generally to examine intellectual currents outside of Mormonism that may have influenced its historiography.

Those early historians were clearly working within a Victorian aesthetic tradition heavily seasoned with Byronic romanticism, nationalism, and extravagant oratorical rhetoric, none of which were by any means unique to Mormonism. Yet Bitton and Arrington give us only the barest passing mention of such ideas with the exception of their discussion of Tullidge's Mormon nationalism. Many early Saints, including some of the historians, lacked extensive formal education. Newly appointed Church historians could not be expected to begin their tenures with remedial reading in George (or even Hubert Howe) Bancroft, Parkman, Prescott, or other prominent historians of their day. There was, nevertheless, an intellectual climate which they shared with those historians, and the authors of this study owe us an account of that climate.

If, as it seems clear, Mormon historiography turned an important corner in the 1940s, then surely Bitton and Arrington slight the agents of that reorientation, Bernard DeVoto, Fawn Brodie, Dale Morgan, and Juanita Brooks. In the perfunctory paragraphs on each in an omnibus chapter they are lumped together under the accurate but superficial principle that none possessed academic degrees in history. (Those four, in fact, succeeded so embarrassingly well at the historian's craft that we Ph.D.s might well pass over, rather than emphasize, their lack of credentials.)

The authors' hasty sketches of Brodie and Morgan are particularly inadequate. They damn Brodie with faint praise as a good storyteller but a faulty researcher, while failing to discuss extensively Morgan's history of the Latter-day Saints because it was left unfinished at his death.