

pointees or those non-Mormons content to apply Mormon standards in their courtrooms. Furthermore, the legislature during this period expanded the jurisdiction of the probate courts, allowing Church members to have their cases heard in civil courts presided over by Mormon judges.

Thus, the Latter-day Saints believed in the separation of church and state, as long as they controlled both. When in control, they mingled religious influence with civil government; when they lost control, they discouraged, even under the pain of excommunication, participation in civil government and devised ways to resolve disputes outside the government, using their religious values instead of commonly recognized civil principles.

Firmage and Mangrum conclude that their study demonstrates that, contrary to traditional Mormon historiography, Latter-day Saints continued to seek the "kingdom of God" after the Manifesto of 1890 and into the twentieth century (see pp. xvii, 263, 311, 379–80 n. 1). This conclusion is not new. In his *Great Basin Kingdom*, the pre-eminent economic history of the Church in the nineteenth century, Leonard Arrington wrote: "Despite interferences, both natural and human, the Church and its members adhered stubbornly to 'revealed' policy until to continue to do so would have brought consequences worse than leaving the Kingdom" (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958, pp. 410–11). Arrington pointed out how changes occurred after the 1890 Manifesto (pp. 380–409), and that Latter-day Saints continue to believe in the eventual realization

of Zion through Church participation in the world of business and government.

In another important work, *Quest for Empire*, Klaus J. Hansen wrote that having to abolish polygamy convinced "Church leaders to postpone attempts to establish [the kingdom of God] to an undetermined future." Subsequent changes, including Church leaders' abandonment of the need for paramount ecclesiastical authority in temporal affairs, assured Mormonism's transition into the twentieth century as an acceptable, even respected, American religion (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967, pp. 149–51). According to Hansen, political control over Church members did not pass from the hierarchy to civil authorities with the Manifesto, and Church leaders actively pursued the kingdom of God even into the twentieth century (pp. 178–79).

The records of the ecclesiastical courts, now brought to light by Firmage and Mangrum for the first time, support these and other historians who have concluded, without the benefit of these records, that the fight for the kingdom continued into the twentieth century.

*Zion in the Courts* begins a meaningful discussion of the role of the ecclesiastical courts in Church history. The authors are to be commended for their analysis of historical documents unavailable to historians. Readers interested in the Latter-day Saints' participation in the legal process and the precarious relationship between Saints and the so-called "gentiles" during the territorial period will find this book enlightening and worth the price.

## A Double Dose of Revisionism

*The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* by Stephen C. LeSueur (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 286 pp., \$24.00, and *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: "And Should We Die . . ."* by Richard E. Bennett (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 347 pp., \$24.95.

Reviewed by Stanley B. Kimball, professor of history, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

EACH YEAR FIRST-CLASS PASSES add to the growing number of excellent Mormon monographs. Twenty-nine major studies

appeared in 1988 alone. These two volumes from the University of Missouri Press and the University of Oklahoma Press are worthy companions to the best of recent years.

LeSueur's revisionist study challenges many traditional ideas about the persecutions of the Saints in Missouri during the 1830s. He argues the Saints' own militancy, Zionist aspirations, prejudice, and poor judgment led to the "Mormon War" of the summer and fall of 1838 and the subsequent expulsion of the Mormons from Missouri into Illinois.

The author has not only used recently discovered sources, including journals, letters, petitions, and official documents but has elected to present a much-needed, detailed description of the Missourians' attitudes and activities. Many readers will disagree with LeSueur's sometimes negative and sharp criticism of Church leaders during this Missouri period, but these new interpretations deserve study and consideration. Although he refutes many LDS claims, he does so objectively, giving the verse and chapter of his evidence. (For a very recent and more traditional interpretation of the Missouri persecutions see Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts . . .*, [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988], pp. 59-79; and Jesse and Whittaker, "The Last Months of Mormonism in Missouri . . .," *BYU Studies* 28 [Winter 1988]: 5-41.)

LeSueur's definitive study of one of the most difficult and important periods in early Mormon history fills a major lacuna. His book is thoroughly researched and massively documented with 664 footnotes. (He did, however, miss some important documents in the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis.) The book includes fifteen illustrations, two maps, and a bibliographic essay.

Although the Saints had been in Missouri since 1831, three developments in the spring and summer of 1838 led to their final denouement. First they began to gather in Missouri in greater numbers; sec-

ond, a number of their members banded together in a secret, militant (Danite) society; and, finally, they adopted a belligerent stance against their perceived enemies outside the Church.

The role of the Danites is one of LeSueur's main topics, his black beast. He argues persuasively that despite belief and tradition, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders not only knew of the Danites, but approved of their organization and activities. Indeed, LeSueur goes so far as to write, "The Danites represented main stream Mormonism" (p. 46). Here LeSueur and I part company; I feel this view is an exaggeration.

Perhaps the author's most startling revisionism is Chapter 7, "The Mormons Retaliate," in which LeSueur's Mormons "loot," "confiscate," "set fire," "plunder," "threaten," commit "desperate crimes," and "gut Daviess County" — activities seldom mentioned in official Church histories and manuals.

Bennett's book is also a definitive, massively documented (978 notes) treatment of an important but little known and understood period in Mormon history — Winter Quarters. (It is much superior to the recent account of the same subject by Conrey Bryson.) The author's thesis is that much of what became peculiarly Mormon evolved at Winter Quarters. He terms it "Mormonism in the raw on the way to what it would be later in the century" (p. 169).

Most readers view the Winter Quarters period as a hiatus between the Nauvoo and the Salt Lake Valley experiences, a mere way station to be endured, a period when little of real import happened. Bennett carefully and compellingly shows the error of this assumption. He maintains that important economic, political, and theological developments crowded upon each other during this period: the Saints learned how better to deal with the U.S. government and the Indians; apostolic supremacy and succession were made firm; revelations were received, new patterns of worship imple-

mented, and a battalion raised; and of course, plans for the great trek west were formulated.

Readers will find some surprises in Bennett's account of just what Joseph Smith said and did not say about the Saints going west and just how much, or how little, Brigham Young knew about where the Church was to resettle there; furthermore, tables clarify some of the vexing demographic questions about the Winter Quarters era.

The first four of Bennett's fifteen chapters track the Saints to Winter Quarters and see them settled. The remaining chapters

systematically and thoroughly treat different aspects of the Winter Quarters experience—Indians and Indian agents, economics, sickness and death, Mormon society on the frontier, social and religious life, re-establishment of the First Presidency, and the abandonment of Winter Quarters.

I wish the author had made more of the trek across Iowa and of the main 1848 departure from Winter Quarters, but these are hardly serious reservations. I thoroughly recommend both these monographs to all serious students of the Mormon scene, the exodus, American frontier communities, and Missouri trials.

## On the Edge of Solipsism

*The Edge of the Reservoir* by Larry E. Morris (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 233 pp., \$7.95.

Reviewed by Helen Beach Cannon, freelance writer, teacher of English composition at Utah State University, and an editorial associate of DIALOGUE.

COMPARISONS, THEY SAY, are odious, yet I find it difficult to comment on Larry E. Morris's new novel, *The Edge of the Reservoir*, without referring to Anne Tyler's latest novel, *Breathing Lessons* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988). That I happened to read the two books at roughly the same time may provide an unfair context for this review but may also fortuitously shed light on respective strengths and weaknesses.

First, consider a few striking similarities. Both *Breathing Lessons* and *The Edge of the Reservoir* are clearly domestic novels focused on middle-aged central characters given to fantasizing, probing memories of adolescent flames, and dwelling on mid-life losses and blunted passions. Both forge minimalist plots through funerals, child rearing, and the doldrums of daily life, both expose the silliness of marital quarrels, and, uncannily, both even conjure up the lyrics of fifties' and sixties' pop songs to hang their woes upon. Maggie Moran, the forty-eight-year-old protagonist of *Breath-*

*ing Lessons*, has learned to read her taciturn husband's moods by the tunes he whistles. Early in their marriage, for example, after a quarrel, he had turned silent and left, whistling a tune whose words she later recalled: "I wonder if I care as much as I did before. . . ." When the marriage becomes less romantic, the words to his whistled tunes even relate to the task at hand; he whistles "This Old House" whenever he tackles a household repair job and "The Wichita Lineman" when he hangs out the clothes (p. 13).

Similarly, thirty-eight-year-old Ryan Masterson in *The Edge of the Reservoir* recalls how his high school love, Rose Richards, had loved Gene Pitney songs—"It Hurts to Be in Love," "I'm Gonna Be Strong," "Half-Heaven, Half-Heartache." From these sentimental songs, he divines in Rose, for all her LDS optimism, a sense of the sad and the tragic.

Love lyrics from the fifties even play a part in a zany funeral scene in Tyler's book, and she has Maggie observe: "Why did popular songs always focus on romantic love? Why this preoccupation with first meetings, sad partings, honeyed kisses, heartbreak, when life was also full of children's births and trips to the shore and longtime jokes with friends? . . . It struck Maggie as disproportionate" (p. 64).