

mons continued to practice their peculiar faith and hold themselves apart in Hancock County, but also because anti-Mormons now knew they could wrest authority from the legitimate but ineffective agents of the government (notably Governor Ford) and bestow it on themselves. Extralegal violence continued, now directed at the new Gentile residents of Nauvoo in addition to the few remaining Mormons, to further legitimate the earlier use of such tactics.

Despite her novel sociological approach, Hampshire's ultimate interpretation of the Mormon-Gentile conflict differs little from Robert Flanders' in his classic narrative history, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (University of Illinois Press, 1965). Both hold that the conflict between Illinois Mormons and Gentiles was a political, social, and economic dispute about different visions of the region's future. While Hampshire's approach has value, the sociology she used to improve the writing of history has produced an interpretation indistinct from that of a narrative historian. She bakes the cake with a new recipe, but it tastes much the same nonetheless.

Indeed, if *Mormonism in Conflict* illustrates anything, it is the value of history for improving sociological theory. Hampshire herself admits about the riots of 1844:

One can see that they aptly illustrate the limits of generalized explanation and the importance of immediate situational factors. One can, in sociological fashion, identify factors predisposing the situation towards a violent outcome. . . . But these are not sufficient conditions for violence—opportunity was also necessary and the circumstances constituting “opportunity” in this case are not generalizable beyond the particular event. (pp. 214–15)

In short, Hampshire recognizes that social science generalizations are limited and depend on historical considerations inherent in any time and place. Her realization reaffirms the value of history in Mormon studies.

I must also mention two minor criticisms. First, *Mormonism in Conflict* does not take the pains, particularly in the introduction, to adequately explain the sociological theories for a lay reader. Second, although Hampshire commendably uses numerous non-Hancock County Illinois newspapers, she could also have profited from using more manuscript sources.

However, despite her inability to wrest a distinctive interpretation of Mormon-Gentile conflict in Illinois from her novel sociological perspective, her work could be valuable to social scientists and to those interested in violence in Mormon history—if, for no other reason, than to remind them of the value of the historical perspective.

## A Modern Prophet and His Times

*Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet* by Thomas G. Alexander (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1991), 484 pp., \$28.95.

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THOMAS G. ALEXANDER, professor of history at Brigham Young University and prominent scholar of Mormon studies, has

completed his long-awaited biography of Wilford Woodruff. An important nineteenth-century Mormon leader, Woodruff served as fourth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1889 until his death in 1898 at age ninety-one.

In leadership style and personality, Woodruff contrasted sharply with his three predecessors. According to Alexander, Woodruff lacked “the creative brilliance of Joseph Smith, [shied away] from the public confrontation and ridicule used at

times by Brigham Young, and [eschewed] the stern and uncompromising public pronouncements of John Taylor; Woodruff [by contrast] more frequently sought private compromise and conciliation" (p. 304). Woodruff was, Alexander asserts, "arguably the third most important figure in all of LDS church history after Joseph Smith . . . and Brigham Young" (p. 331).

Alexander effectively presents Woodruff as a devout follower of a nineteenth-century Mormon religion which promoted "a world view that unified the temporal and spiritual realms in God's kingdom and in the lives of church members" (p. xiii). Indeed, the central theme of Alexander's biography is Woodruff asserting a "holistic conception of the temporal and spiritual arena" within a world which he believed on the brink of imminent apocalypse—or mass destruction of all wicked peoples (that is, non-Mormons).

Woodruff anxiously promoted the cause of Mormon millennialism as he rose through the ranks, becoming a member of the Quorum of the Twelve by 1838 and president of that body in 1880. Relentless in his missionary efforts to gather the faithful to Mormonism's Zion to build "a new heaven and new earth," Woodruff sought to prepare for what he saw to be the imminent millennium and Second Coming. He fervently believed that he and his fellow Latter-day Saints were literally living in "the latter-days."

However, by the time Woodruff became Church president in 1889, Mormon millennialistic expectations were in decline. The new president, along with other Church leaders, desired a more peaceful relationship with the secular, non-Mormon world, seeking cooperation rather than confrontation in political and economic arenas. Underscoring this changing position, the Church under Woodruff's leadership moved to abandon its controversial practice of plural marriage by issuing the so-called "Woodruff Manifesto of 1890." By these actions, Woodruff, according to Alexander,

"turned a psychic corner, completing a process begun some years before of dividing the previous holistic kingdom and separating the temporal and spiritual" (p. xiv).

Alexander's account of the life and times of Wilford Woodruff utilizes abundant information from Woodruff's own voluminous journals—a rich primary source dating from the mid-1830s to the late 1890s. Here Woodruff carefully chronicled his activities and impressions of what was happening around him. In addition to the journals, Alexander has effectively utilized throughout his narrative the most recent scholarship in Mormon history, American religious studies, and social history. With some admiration, Alexander presents Wilford Woodruff as a multifaceted man who, with general success, balanced his role as Church leader, businessman, civic leader, and scholar with his primary responsibility as the head of a large polygamous family of nine wives and thirty-three children.

Alexander's portrait of Woodruff is balanced and even-handed. This is no hagiography, as biographies of prominent Latter-day Saints are sometimes prone to be. Woodruff is presented here as a devout Latter-day Saint whose "sense of personal piety [was] unsurpassed by any nineteenth-century Mormon leader" (p. 332). Yet Alexander also discusses his faults and shortcomings. Though Woodruff was aware of "the necessity of compromise and discussion in achieving aims," Alexander notes that the Mormon leader was "critical—perhaps even intolerant—of those who refused to enter into such dialogues" (p. 332).

Woodruff was also so "conservative and orthodox in his views" that "he had no sympathy for friends" who wanted the church to move "more rapidly toward a pluralistic society than [he] . . . thought advisable" (p. 331). His complex family life is forthrightly presented as less than idyllic. Alexander notes that "he did not treat his wives and children equally" (p. 332). Four of his nine wives left him,