

Foster also adds new material regarding women. In an essay titled "From Activism to Domesticity: The Changing Role of Mormon Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," he vividly demonstrates the switch from early Mormon women's "real power, influence, and independence" to the current "gush and cloying sentimentality" emphasizing domesticity "as the only important role for women" (pp. 202, 209). In a fascinating analysis of the Sonia Johnson case, Foster compares it to heretic Anne Hutchinson's trial of 1637, also a "travesty of justice." He concludes that the Church "seriously miscalculated" its handling of the case which in turn led to tensions and "something of a siege mentality" within the Church (p. 215).

Foster's comments concerning Mormon women, however, would have been more meaningful had he not viewed them as a largely homogeneous group. Throughout the early essays concerning the Church, for example, Foster focuses primarily on polygamy. Although he notes that "at most only 15 to 20 percent were polygamous," he ignores women in nonpolygamous situations. In the later essays, he generalizes his observations to all Mormon women, regardless of social class, race, ethnicity, or age. Certainly, discriminat-

ing among Mormon women's experiences according to such characteristics as monogamy, rural or urban, and educational level would add depth and complexity to our understanding of those women.

In addition, it is important to remember that children are an integral part of families. Foster has little to say about babies and children, either in the nineteenth century or the twentieth. Yet, children who lived in communal families differed in numerous crucial ways from other children. And surely such a practice as denying a child's paternity to protect a polygamous father, or telling a child in later life that his or her father was someone else, had a profound effect on family dynamics.

These comments are not meant to suggest that Foster's book is ineffective. On the contrary, Foster has provided an overview of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons; has raised a multitude of intriguing questions; and has opened the way for further significant discussion. He set himself a nigh impossible task here; discussing women, family, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints could fill a thick volume in itself. Perhaps he will continue his work by elaborating on the complexity of Mormon women and their families.

Is There a New Mormon History?

The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past edited by D. Michael Quinn (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 310 pp., \$18.95, paper.

Reviewed by Roger D. Launius, NASA Chief Historian.

D. MICHAEL QUINN, one of the foremost practitioners of the type of work distinguished as the "New Mormon History," certainly thinks so. He has assembled in this volume a set of fifteen previously published essays and a short epilogue by B. H. Roberts, all demonstrating most ably the basic trends identified as "New Mormon History" (to Quinn a broadly

descriptive rather than polemical label). He notes that this type of historical analysis seeks to attain a "functional objectivity" and avoid the "seven deadly sins of traditional Mormon history" (viii). Quinn's prototype was Juanita Brooks's *Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford University Press, 1950), to whose memory, incidentally, he dedicated the book. In characterizing that book, Quinn wrote in the introduction:

She did not shrink from analyzing a controversial topic. She did not hesitate to follow the evidence to "revisionist" interpretations that ran counter to "traditional" assumptions. She did not use her evidence

to insult the religious beliefs of Mormons. She did not disappoint the scholarly expectations of academics. She did not cater to public relations preferences. Finally she did not use an "academic" work to proselytize for religious conversion or defection. (p. viii)

"New Mormon historians" have adopted these as cardinal points against which all historical writing must be measured.

The fifteen essays in this volume certainly rise to Brooks's standards. One can quibble over the propriety of labels, but there is no question that something important has happened in Mormon historical writing since *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*. Indeed, perhaps what has been taking place has been not so much a "new" approach toward Mormon history as the rapid and sustained professionalization of the field. The distinguishing features of the "New Mormon History" had been present to some degree long before Brooks published *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*—most assuredly in the work of such early Mormon historians as E. E. Erickson, Joseph A. Geddes, or Nels Anderson—but emphasis on adhering to the "Brooks Rule" became dominant during the latter 1950s. Both the quality and the quantity of the publications taking this approach skyrocketed during the next three decades. This book puts between two covers some of the best of that work.

Quinn's introduction briefly sketches these general trends in the text, and endnotes exhaustively reference historiographical trends. While a serviceable preamble to the articles that follow, the introduction could have presented a more substantial and philosophical discussion of the "New Mormon History" and its role in furthering an understanding of the Mormon past. Quinn is especially well suited to analyze the New Mormon History's importance and the response to it both within and without the Mormon movement. The essays follow in roughly chronological order, making the book a useful text for classroom use. Taken altogether, the fifteen essays, each written by

a different specialist and originally appearing between 1966 and 1983—perhaps the golden age of the New Mormon History—represent a powerful explanation of the larger aspects of Mormon history from its origins.

Some narrow and others broadly interpretive, these essays include the first major reassessments of unique topics in the history of the Church. Many of these pathbreaking studies, however, have since been revised by other historians. With the exception of a couple of instances where the authors have inserted some historiographical discussion into their endnotes, the essays do not comment on specific debates over interpretations. This lack of historiographical context is unfortunate, leaving readers with little understanding of the historians' differing perspectives.

Although each of these essays has stood the test of time and can be considered a benchmark study, like most collected works, this book suffers from uneven quality. Some essays are more challenging than others; I found particularly rewarding Thomas G. Alexander's " 'To Maintain Harmony': Adjusting to External and Internal Harmony," first published in *DIALOGUE* in 1982; Ronald W. Walker's provocative analysis of Mormon militarism, "Sheaves, Bucklers, and the State: Mormon Leaders Respond to the Dilemmas of War," which first appeared in *Sunstone* that same year; and "A Demographic Portrait of the Mormons, 1830–1980" by Dean L. May, first published in 1983, which significantly revised early membership numbers and Utah migration figures.

In addition, the volume's first essay, Leonard J. Arrington's eloquent plea for serious, professional historical inquiry—"The Search for Truth and Meaning in Mormon History"—is an important declaration of intellectual independence that present-day historians of Mormonism should embrace just as fully as did those who first read it in *DIALOGUE* in 1968. His assertion that "historians ought to be free to suggest interpretations without