

Hendricks's account of her family's struggle to keep food on the table. Nearly all present vital details that make the writers live as individuals, like the story of Bathsheba Smith, who carefully cleaned her Nauvoo house before leaving it forever for the west. Some particularly interesting letters reflect the writers' efforts to convert non-LDS relatives using a variety of tactics: "How long do you think we might have stayed in Eng. before we could have a cow?" (117) writes Ellen Douglas, shortly before insisting to her parents that "the day will come when you will know that I have told you the truth" (118).

Professor Madsen's focus on the Nauvoo years is a particularly good one, for it not only allows for a greater depth of information about the social and spiritual life of women in one particular time and place, but also

builds a chorus of voices speaking of a shared experience. And that shared experience was, as Professor Madsen argues, central in these lives, "a time when events seemed larger than life" (159). As this cohort of women writes of conversions and new lives in Nauvoo, it becomes clear how crucial their shared community of faith was to their self-definition.

Whether the reader is LDS and interested in "reaffirming the reality of our spiritual heritage" (xii) or simply interested in the way that spiritual life informs women's psychology, this is an interesting, valuable work. It may not give the whole truth about the lives of all women in Nauvoo, but the truth that it gives is resonant and moving, and the reader is left, indeed, feeling that he or she has been touched by the voices of vivid human beings at a pivotal point in their lives.

Mormons and Land Conversion

Rocky Mountain Divide: Selling and Saving the West. By John B. Wright (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

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JOHN B. WRIGHT'S *ROCKY MOUNTAIN Divide: Selling and Saving the West* contains a unique examination of Mormon attitudes toward land conservation. In spite of some inaccurate statements about Mormon history, doctrine, and practice, the book is a valuable resource on land conserva-

tion in the West and a careful examination of the present status of conservation efforts in Utah and Colorado.

Wright's book is intended to be a call to arms for voluntary land conservation through "land trusts." Wright points out that governmentally-imposed land conservation "makes gun control appear uncontroversial." He suggests negotiated conservation is preferred: "If we want to do more than tidy up the infrastructure around a continuously developing landscape we must meet with owners of key parcels and find ways to compensate them for *not* developing their land" (14).

Land trusts are private, non-profit citizen groups which engage in land protection activities. Their mission is to conserve private lands of significant natural, scenic, and historic value: "Most trusts receive tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service of the U.S. Treasury Department. This legal standing renders the value of gifts of land and conservation easements (development rights) made to the trust eligible as income and estate tax deductions for the donor" (*ibid.*).

Wright recounts the rise of land trusts since 1891 to 1992 when nearly 900 land trusts existed in the United States. Of these, forty-three are in the Rocky Mountain states. At the time Wright's book was written, Utah had only one land trust while Colorado had twenty-seven.

Wright seizes upon the dramatic contrast in land trusting in Colorado and Utah and recounts, as a historical geographer, the evolution of land use and land conservation in the two states. The broad-brush historical perspective based on the geographical distinctions between the states is general but surprisingly useful.

As one would expect, Wright finds Utah's Mormon heritage its most significant distinction. The book recounts the initial settlement efforts of Utah after unsuccessful Mormon efforts to settle in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. Wright notes the reverential attitude of the early pioneers toward their new territory: "Over and over in their diaries, pioneers noted streams, flood plains, excellent soils, tall grass, and a dry climate tempered by cooling canyon winds" (163).

Centralization of Mormon authority lent itself to orderly settlement and land distribution, including designation of common resource ar-

reas. Wright quotes Brigham Young's 1847 mandate that some resources were a common heritage: "There shall be no private ownership of streams that come out of the canyons, nor [of] the timber that grows on the hills. These belong to the people—all the people" (164-65). Wright finds that early Mormon statements on land use were very high-minded:

Early Mormon writings presented a group which, in at least a portion of their rhetoric and land policies, embraced some land conservation concepts. In 1847, Mormons appeared to be poised as enlightened caretakers of a divine gift. They clearly intended to use the Earth to generate monetary gain. However, while capital accumulation was seen as a defense against Gentile intrusions, the Mormons also seemed to develop a unique, theologically based conservation ethic. Brigham Young urged people to behave righteously to appease God and thereby assure plentiful crops, good weather, fertile soils, and healthy livestock. Drought and insect infestations were seen as trials. In Mormon landscape ecology "living right" was crucial in order to earn both God's favor and worldly gain (165).

Wright contrasts the Saints' early idealism with the reality of their monopolization, deforestation, and overgrazing. He recounts the land and water exploitation that has now filled the Salt Lake Valley with development. He notes many laudable conservation efforts in Utah but concludes that Utahns only conserve incidentally, not as a matter of focus. He claims Utah's land planners and government regulators are more interested in processing applications than in developing plans for the future. His underlying

thesis is that Utah needs the mechanism of land trusts to carry out voluntary conservation efforts, including compensation to owners who dedicate open lands for public purposes. Without land trusts Utah is missing a key element of the mix required to preserve Utah's unique landscape. Wright concludes his analysis of Utah by laying the blame for the lack of land conservation at the feet of Mormons:

Because of their shared dependence on destructive exploitation of the natural environment, Mormon Millennialism and American Manifest Destiny have been essentially similar in effect. . . . Although Joseph Smith spoke of stewardship, Brigham Young was in charge of actual settlement. And Young, the Great Colonizer, more than anything else was a stem, hands-on CEO who ran the Church as a real estate development corporation. This tradition still guides Utah life.

Joseph Smith's Plat of the City of Zion was a design for small, distinct farming-based cities of no more than 20,000 people. However, the man in charge of settlement, Brigham Young, saw no such limits. The Wasatch Front is today a solid congestion of roads, houses, refineries, stores and warehouses with over 1.3 million people (243-45).

Wright blames the Mormon belief in millennialism for Utahns' attitude toward their lands. If "earth will become as the Garden of Eden" and "renewed in its paradisiacal glory," there is little reason to pay attention to the state of the land.

Wright is also disturbed that little has been done by the church in land conservation leadership. He points to

the joint Nature Conservancy-Brigham Young University effort to save the Lytle Ranch near St. George as the only LDS church-related land conservation project. He suggests, as an outsider, that the LDS church sponsor a Mormon Trail land trust and a Sanpete County cultural park to simultaneously exemplify Mormon values and land conservation (242, 246, 255). According to Wright, "an understanding of Mormons' spiritual and secular attitudes about the highest and best use of the land" exemplified by these projects "would be the logical first steps in tailoring the land trust concept to fit a unique set of cultural contours" (255-56).

Wright characterizes himself as a gentile outsider mystified by the "grand enigma" of Utah, "a foreign nation" (139). His book makes several indisputable factual errors: that Bob Bennett is governor of Utah (139, 51); that Mormons believe that at the Millennium "all Gentiles will be struck naked by the Lord" (149); that Nephi and his family on arrival in the New World "split into three groups—the Nephites, the Jaredites, and the Lamanites" (155); that the Lamanites were turned dark-skinned by God after they destroyed the Nephites (*ibid.*); that the highest rung of Mormon heaven is "Exultation" (*ibid.*); and mislabels George A. Smith as "Prophet George A. Young" (161).

These inaccuracies jump out from the page. Wright also relies heavily on Brodie's *No Man Knows My History*; on Shupe and Heinerman's *Mormon Corporate Empire*; and on Smith and Naifeh's *The Mormon Murders* as his primary sources on LDS history and belief. These unfortunate errors and controversial sources will impair Wright's ability to reach the

general Mormon audience it needs to convert. If Wright's manuscript had been reviewed by a knowledgeable member of the church or a Mormon scholar, it could have been more authoritative and reliable.

Fortunately, these detracting inaccuracies do not invalidate the book's essential function or conclusion. The Mormon millennial belief probably does minimize Utah's concern for land conservation. In addition, Wright could have pointed out that the Mormon belief that three prior civilizations have been swept off the continent with bare traces left of their existence also contributes to an attitude of transience and disinterest. He could also have emphasized the Mormon belief in an after life and the Mormon dichotomy between spiritual and temporal things that tends to subjugate or even eliminate temporal concerns. A comparison of Utah's eco-

nomic environment, including large families and low incomes, to that in Colorado might also be a reason for Utah's comparative lack of concern. Other factors might include Utah's geography with an over abundance of beauty and open land and the absence of significant change in rural Utah while the Wasatch Front burgeons. It would have been interesting to see a demographic contrast of Boulder, Colorado, and Provo, Utah, two university towns that might be as dissimilar as any in the nation.

Wright's book represents an important opportunity for self-examination as Utah finds itself with one of the highest growth rates of any state in the nation. While it could have been refined to remove "bumps" for the Mormon reader, its overview of conservation efforts in Utah and Colorado makes it a valuable resource.