

surance that just the opposite would occur. Within the territory, dissident Mormons were the first to publicly support female suffrage. Mormon leaders did not initiate the measure and Mormon woman had little to say until after its passage, when Eliza R. Snow sent a letter of appreciation to Governor Stephen Mann, who had signed the bill into law. Beeton also presents evidence to counter the popular notion that female suffrage was part of Brigham Young's plan to dilute the growing power of non-Mormons in Utah. Dilution was unnecessary. Between 1870 and 1896 "the Mormon men alone outnumbered the non-Mormon men four to one" (129).

As did most nineteenth-century middle-class men and women, Mormons embraced the Anglo-American ideology of female moral authority. Women were the natural agents of social improvement; therefore, their access to the ballot would facilitate a middle-class political agenda that included restrictions on liquor consumption, child labor laws, mandatory education, and immigration reform. This ideology is evident in Jean Bickmore White's essays "Gentle Persuaders: Utah's First Women Legislators" and "Woman's Place Is in the Constitution: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Utah in 1895." In the latter essay, White examines the debates on female suf-

frage that occurred during the constitutional convention. Although suffrage supporters used moral arguments, the opposition did not. In spite of the strong support for the issue among the delegates, Brigham H. Roberts forcefully opposed female suffrage because he believed it would undermine congressional approval of the state's proposed constitution.

Rather than see female suffrage as the result of Mormons' enlightened view of gender equality and morality, or that Utah women were ardent and persuasive suffragettes, we should recognize that women in Utah voted because the political forces that prevented female suffrage nationwide did not exist in the West. Utah had no powerful liquor lobby that feared voting women would enact severe restrictions on the distribution and consumption of liquor. Prohibition and female suffrage came into the federal constitution virtually hand in hand. This is not an historical coincidence. When the liquor lobby died, so too did the opposition to female suffrage. In this respect, the history of female suffrage in Utah has a great deal to offer the analysis of why women fought fiercely for the vote in eastern states. Historians of Utah women will contribute little to the national history, however, if they continue to see Utah's experience as just a battle for the ballot.

Quilts as Women's History

Quilts and Women of the Mormon Migrations: Treasures of Transition. By Mary Bywater Cross (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1996).

Gathered in Time: Utah Quilts and Their Makers, Settlement to 1950. Edited by Kate Covington (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997).

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WOMEN'S HISTORY GOT SHORT SHRIFT when the telling of the past focused entirely on wars and laws, but increasingly, as attention is being paid to the domestic history of day-to-day lives, historians are recovering women's stories. *Quilts and Women of the Mormon Migrations* and *Gathered in Time* contribute to this new wealth of information by telling amazing stories of some of the first white women to settle Utah. Those stories are told through the quilts they made.

Although they were produced independently, these two books complement each other as a way to tell the history of Utah women. Both books focus primarily on the Mormon immigration to the state, telling the story from the women's point of view through extant quilts and the stories of their makers.

Each quilt and maker is given two facing pages in both books, with a full-size color photo of the quilt on the right page and a description of the quilt, its maker, and her story on the left. Both books thus recognize that the story of a particular quilt cannot be separated from the story of the maker's life, for often the most eloquent text of a woman's life was her quilts and what they said for and about her. The woman who did not pick up a pen might well ply a needle, so historians must look to textiles as much as to texts when they search for women's history.

The full color illustrations display a stunning range and variety of quilts, from whole cloth to appliqué, pieced blocks to crazy quilts in cottons, silks, and wool fabrics. The range and art-

istry of the quilts speak visually to the creative energy of these impressive women, with the quilts shown off to their best advantage through the richly colored illustrations of these two large format books. Just leafing through the books without ever reading the text is a treat.

Wherever possible, both books show photographs of the makers. While the black-and-white photo of the quiltmaker often displays a serious face, the hair pulled back, and the mark of hard work and sorrow on her face, the woman's quilt frequently dances with color, movement, and joy. Making these wonderful quilts was perhaps an antidote to the often difficult and sorrowful lives the women lived as they moved to new territory, lost husbands and children, and created homes out of nothing. The reader comes away from both books deeply impressed by the strength, courage, hard work, and fortitude of women who lived difficult lives in hard times.

The differences between these two books are as interesting as the similarities. While Covington's *Gathered in Time* is concerned entirely with the personal history of the quilts and their makers, Bywater Cross, in *Quilts and Women of the Mormon Migrations*, sets the quilts and their makers in the larger historical context of the Mormon migration, giving a lot of background information as well as statistics and tables supporting the history.

Bywater Cross's primary source of information was the International Society of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, the owner of most of the quilts she selected. Her close work with this organization of women who trace their heritage back to the first Mormon pio-

neers is reflected in a full-page letter of validation at the beginning of the book from the president and museum director of the Salt Lake City branch of the organization.

The quilts selected for *Gathered in Time* resulted from a series of Documentation Days, held in twenty-six locations across Utah over a period of six years from 1988 to 1994. On each Documentation Day, the Utah Quilt Heritage Corporation invited local people to bring their quilts to a community center where they were photographed and documented. Volunteers followed up by interviewing the owners of quilts that had particular artistic or historic interest, and this book represents a selection of those quilts and interviews. The Utah Quilt Heritage Corporation is following the precedent set by a number of states which have documented local quilts and quiltmakers in this valuable grass roots way. A statewide exhibition and book usually come out of such a project, and *Gathered in Time* is the Utah book.

As a result of these diverse approaches to gathering material, the stories in the two books take differing forms. Bywater Cross's biographies tell primarily the external history of birth, marriage, children born, moving from one place to another, and death. Because the story tellers in Covington's *Gathered in Time* are often descendants of the quiltmaker, the biographies are more personal. We are told, for example, that Eunice Reeser Brown's family spent their first winter in Manti, Utah, in 1849 "in a cave dug into the hillside, a home they quickly abandoned in the spring when hundreds of rattlesnakes began crawling from their nests in the warming earth" (2). The story may be apocryphal, but it gives a vivid picture of what life

must have been like for this pioneer woman. While Bywater Cross provides few such personal stories, her book is carefully supported by documentation of the various Mormon migrations.

The difference between the anecdotal style of Covington's book and the less personal style of Bywater Cross's book can be seen most clearly when the same maker and quilt appear in both books. For example, while Bywater Cross describes Elizabeth Terry Heward as overcoming "an unfortunate marriage in Canada" (39), the *Gathered in Time* author tells us more candidly that she "lived two very different lives in the course of her sixty-four years on earth: the first as the lonely wife of an often drunk and abusive innkeeper, the other as the valued companion of an honest, hardworking farmer ..." (6). Together, the two books provide both the individual and larger context of these particular women's lives.

Do these two books tell a full history of women in Utah? Like any history, there are gaps and silences. Both books, for example, focus almost entirely on white, Mormon women. Historians increasingly include such minorities as Chinese, Native American, African American, and Hispanic settlers in the history of Utah, groups whose stories have been overshadowed by the dominance of the Mormon immigration. Although it does not fall within the purview of either book, it would be interesting to know more about the non-Mormon, non-Caucasian women settlers who undoubtedly also made quilts.

We must also remember that most preserved quilts were "best" quilts, many of which were never used but made as show-pieces. Utility quilts,

unlike the show piece quilts, were made to be used, and as a result were used up. Neither the photographs of the women in their Sunday best nor their show-piece quilts can fully reflect the day-to-day working lives of these women.

These two books, then, give us a glimpse of a particular group of women's lives, a piece of the patchwork that made up the complex whole of a lived life. If we hope to find women's stories, we are certainly looking in the right place when we turn to the domestic scene and the quilts that

represent that realm of life. However, although we can "read" the quilted textiles as texts, there is always also as much silence and ambiguity stitched into them as there are stories to be told. Even though the stories are incomplete, the authors of both books deserve our thanks for the labor of love that led to the publication of these two books. Both books help us to acknowledge and honor the pioneer women who paved the way for many of us who now live in the state of Utah.