

The Life of an LDS Apostle

Working the Divine Miracle: The Life of Apostle Henry D. Moyle. By Richard D. Poll. Edited by Stan Larson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), xx + 240 pp., \$29.95

Reviewed by M. Guy Bishop, Woods Cross, Utah.

HENRY DINWOODEY MOYLE (1889-1963) lived a full life that has been well recounted by the late historian Richard D. Poll. Professor Poll achieved a solid reputation as a Mormon historian. He taught several years at BYU, leaving that institution in 1970 to assume the position of vice president for administration at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois. Poll published a scholarly biography of Hugh B. Brown (with Eugene F. Campbell) in 1975 and was a coeditor of the popular *Utah's History* (1978). Perhaps his best remembered contribution to Mormon studies was a 1967 sermon he delivered at the Palo Alto, California, Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints entitled "What the Church Means to People Like Me." The text of this famous speech was later published in *Dialogue* 2, no. 4 (winter, 1967).

With the backing of Leonard J. Arrington, Poll had completed his biography of Henry D. Moyle under the financial sponsorship of the Moyle family by 1982. Tragically, however, the family found his study to be insufficiently "faith-promoting." Poll was

"extremely disappointed," so the biography was not published at that time (xiii). Like many professionally-trained historians, Poll believed that history was best told "warts and all," and he has portrayed Moyle in such a manner (xv)

As Poll writes, "Helping people cope with economic adversity was Henry D. Moyle's calling for the last half of his life" (82). Asked to help shape the church's response to the Great Depression of the 1930s, Moyle served as chairman of the General Church Welfare Committee during those trying times. Reportedly, all he wanted inscribed on his gravestone was "A Welfare Worker," a clear indication of the importance he ascribed to this undertaking (82).

Always a "builder," according to his biographer, Moyle felt a "particular" challenge to acquire and develop properties that might aid the cause of the church's welfare program (91). While maintaining a successful law practice, Moyle also acted as president of the Cottonwood Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Along with his religious and humanitarian activities, Moyle also had a talent for making money. "Money interested Henry Moyle," Poll observes. However, it was the challenge of acquiring and using wealth, rather than money itself, that brought him pleasure. "[H]e delighted equally in investing it, spending it, and giving it away" (97).