

(p. 269). Apostle Erastus Snow, the church's senior official in southern Utah in 1870, reported that the massacre had created "a new crisis," but the cause of this new crisis was not delineated (p. 271). Snow family tradition reports that when the apostle shared the news with Brigham Young, Young said, "Oh God! Now it will start again" (p. 271).

Realizing that he could no longer defend Lee, Young began to cut his ties with him. In February 1870, President Young met privately with Lee at Beaver, Utah, and "urged him to sell his Utah holdings and move south" (pp. 271-72). This John D. Lee refused to do. On 8 October 1870, John D. Lee, Isaac Haight, and George Wood were excommunicated for the murders. Lee was perplexed by this church action. In December 1870, he traveled to St. George and sought out Young to ask why now, thirteen years after the massacre, "all of a sudden [he] Must be cut off from this church [sic]. If it was wrong now, it certainly was wrong then" (p. 273).

Decades later, Brigham Young's successor as President of the LDS church, Heber J. Grant "worked hard to obliterate the memory of John D.

Lee." Speaking privately to a group of Lee's descendants in about 1927, Grant frankly acknowledged that if he had been present at the time, "I would have been in it too, or I hope I would." He further advised, "This affair should never be mentioned" (p. 343). Thus continued a long institutional effort to rub out John D. Lee and the infamous massacre from the LDS collective memory. Bagley observes that over the years, Mormons "fought and won the battle to define the history of the event and vindicate Brigham Young of any connection with the crime" (p. 348).

Bagley demonstrates that Young seemed to approve of attacking the Arkansans. His role, however, seems to have been more that of having a passing interest than of being a leader in the murder plot. Bagley is convincing regarding the dastardly acts committed by the southern Utahans, less so about Brigham Young's complicity. Granted, Brigham Young cast a large shadow over the Utah Territory and the final word on his involvement might never be fully known. With *Blood of the Prophets*, Will Bagley has given us the most complete look thus far at the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

## The Local Politics of Vice and Virtue

*Prostitution, Polygamy and Power: Salt Lake City, 1847-1918*, by Jeffrey Nichols (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 247 pp.

Reviewed by Helynn Hollstein Hansen, Associate Professor of Language, Western State College of Colorado, Gunnison, Colorado.

One of the most intriguing ironies of life in Salt Lake City during the nineteenth century was the clash of the Mormons who were morally outraged to see the advent of prostitution in their valley and the gentile residents who considered the practice of polygamy equally reprehensible. The struggle between these two groups to

smooth out their different ideologies and eventually to band together around the turn of the century to try to rid Salt Lake City of one of its most egregious and lucrative vices is the crux of Jeffery Nichols's intricately researched and meticulously documented historical study.

*Prostitution, Polygamy and Power* delves thoroughly and unapologetically into the seamier areas of Salt Lake history during the decades when conservative Mormon dominance gave way to the bawdier, earthier lifestyles of the gentile merchants, railroad workers, and miners who settled in the valley in the late 1860s and 1870s and the women who followed and pandered to their baser needs.

Nichols, an assistant professor of history at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, shows a competent acquaintance with Latter-day Saint history and values going back to the Nauvoo period, as well as an intimate knowledge of the characters and events of the first 70 years of the Utah experience for Mormons and non-Mormons alike. His narrative is rich with anecdotes about the most infamous prostitutes in Salt Lake City in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He notes with genuine regret the lack of journals and other personal documents to provide more details about the daily lives and emotions of the women who for one reason or another were driven to sell sex in the bastion of Mormonism.

Nichols discusses the harsh realities of women's situation in Salt Lake City. Those who were not safely ensconced in either a monogamous or polygamous marriage had frighteningly few options for earning their own living. "The evidence from Salt Lake City supports financial necessity, sometimes to the point of crisis, as the leading reason some women resorted

to selling sex," the author states. "Women's stories depict their desperate circumstances as they struggled to keep themselves or their families afloat" (p. 50).

The Mormons' condemnation of prostitution had originated with Joseph Smith, who denounced and suppressed brothels in Nauvoo. LDS members maintained that such phenomena were among the "corruptions of Babylon that the Saints sought to escape by moving to the Salt Lake Valley" (p. 25). As gentiles settled in the valley and faced protest and condemnation from Mormons over the rise of prostitution, they countered by calling Mormon males with plural wives "lustful Turks" with harems (p. 24) and labeling polygamy as an un-American and un-Christian practice that merely "gratified male lust—the same deadly sin that fueled prostitution" (p. 14).

Mormons, who saw the anti-polygamy crusade as a continuation of persecution that the church had suffered for decades, shot back that polygamy was divinely sanctioned by God, and several prominent women who were involved in polygamous marriages—including Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, and Sarah Kimball—vehemently defended their situation. The gentile-owned *Salt Lake Tribune* persisted in citing the similarities between the two practices. And so it went for decades, from the 1860s through the end of the century.

Amid the controversy, Mormons turned their heads from the unspeakable fact that some of their own men were using the services of prostitutes. Nichols's narrative turns gossipy as he reveals how the monogamously married Frank J. Cannon, half-brother of LDS Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, frequented the brothel of well-known madam Kate Flint in the 1880s. Embar-

rassed church leaders protected him from scandal and even paid off his debt to the house of ill fame (p. 65).

The polygamy-prostitution tension began to fade into the background after the U.S. Congress passed the Edmunds Act, which dealt a blow to plural marriage, forcing male polygamists (including LDS president John Taylor) underground. Federal pressure eventually spurred President Wilford Woodruff to issue the Manifesto in 1890 and President Joseph F. Smith to reinforce the end to polygamy with the Second Manifesto of 1904.

Meanwhile, prostitution had gained such a toehold in Salt Lake City that numerous elegant brothels had sprung up in the downtown area, particularly Block 57 (running east-west from State Street to Main between 200 and 300 South [map, p. 53]). Their opulence testified to the lucrative profits they generated (p. 67). Nichols notes, however, that many of Salt Lake City's prostitutes were black or Asian, and most were poor. The savvy madams pocketed the bulk of the income.

The last third of the book describes the early twentieth-century cooperative efforts by Salt Lakers to eradicate prostitution from the city. Nichols calls the Manifesto the starting point of the "Americanization of Salt Lake City" (p. 214). With the polygamy issue quickly fading into the background, Mormons and gentiles at last felt a spirit of cooperation and united in this common cause. By this time, prostitution had been regulated and all but made legal by containment in Block 64, a large central district between 100 and 200 South and 400 and 500 West that had come to be known as the Stockade.

Nichols's text includes several pages of black and white photos of various madams in the city as well as

the journalists, policemen, and politicians who were their protectors or nemeses. There are also photos and maps showing the locations of the most infamous houses of ill repute. The narrative is generously laced with vignettes about the lives of the madams and the largely unsuccessful efforts to prosecute and jail them for any length of time. One of the most intriguing characters was Dora Topham, who was sentenced to 18 years of hard labor when the notorious Stockade was finally shut down in 1909. Topham won her appeal in 1912 and left Salt Lake, only to reopen her business in Ogden, and later in San Francisco.

Protestant women in such organizations as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the YWCA, who earlier had established "rescue homes" for polygamous wives, now banded with Mormon women (with the approval of President Joseph F. Smith) to create the Women's Home Association of Salt Lake City. Their goal was to reform prostitutes by attempting to instill domestic values in them, so they might yet marry respectable men. These homes had limited success, but the anti-prostitution alliance generated by the women's efforts did drive prostitution in Salt Lake City into a more illegal underground than it ever had existed in before. Unfortunately, improvements in genuine economic opportunities for women were very slow in coming, thus "guaranteeing that there would always be women desperate enough to sell sex" (p. 216).

Nichols concludes with the observation that although the rhetorical link between prostitution and polygamy eventually withered in Utah, neither practice has completely disappeared from the state. His epilogue chapter provides updates on more recent cases

of Utah polygamy (such as the 2002 jailing of Tom Green, husband of five wives) and facts about the ongoing prostitution problem in contemporary Salt Lake City.

In conclusion, Nichols has provided a fresh, revealing overview of two topics in Salt Lake City's history that often have been considered, if not taboo, then generally too delicate for

close, honest inspection. His study treats polygamy and prostitution issues with honesty, sensitivity, and a professional historian's eye for detail and documentation. For anyone interested in either women's issues or the lesser-known realities of Salt Lake City's early growing pains, this book is a fascinating read.

## Navigating the Difficult Terrain of the Mormon Experience

*Studies in Mormon History, 1830-1897* by James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 1152 pp.; and *Mormon History* by Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 279 pp.

Reviewed by John Sillito, Professor of Libraries and Curator of Special Collections, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

For the last several years I have had the opportunity to serve on the Mormon History Association's book awards committee. That assignment—in addition to my day job as Curator of Special Collections at Weber State University—keeps me well aware of developments in the Mormon publishing world. Over the last few years, a number of important and well-written studies of the Mormon past have emerged. Some scholars are looking at issues which have long been of interest, others are turning their attention to new areas of study. All of this suggests to me that the future of Mormon historical study continues to be impressive.

Assessing the future, however, is always predicated on an understanding of the past. In this regard, two important and useful books are now available for scholars of the Mormon experience. They are *Studies in Mormon History: An Indexed Bibliography* and *Mormon History*. Both volumes are published by the University of Illinois Press, and both represent the work of three of Mormon history's finest, and most prolific, scholars—James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker.

The origins of *Studies in Mormon History* date from the mid-1980s when the editors recognized the need for a comprehensive, indexed bibliography of Mormon historical materials. This is a daunting task, and the authors admit to being "older and wiser" after their "single-minded and dogged" task of compiling all "books, articles, master's theses, and Ph.D. dissertations" dealing with the history of the church (p. ix). The results are impressive. The editors (along with their colleagues Armand Mauss and Dynette Ivie Reynolds whose bibliographical contributions to both volumes on social science literature are impressive) have compiled annotations of some 15,000 books, articles, theses, dissertations and other sources.