

by author, title, and subject. Because the essays themselves cover so much material and are packed with important references, the index is an essential tool.

Some may quibble with the assessments and interpretations of the scholars included, and the nature of their contributions, of who and what is included or left out. It is almost impossible in a work of this magnitude to avoid such criticisms. As I indicated in the beginning, Mormon history brings its share of possibilities, problems, and pitfalls. Still, as Roger Launius observes, the on-going challenge facing historians of the Mormon experience is to “balance the stresses and strains of Mormon historical inquiry” with the goal of honest observation that “seeks to understand the past on its own terms” (86). This is a valuable volume in that effort and one that points the way in the years ahead for other considerations of Mormonism’s place in history. The publisher, editors, and contributors deserve commendation for the scope and stature of their work.

A Scholarly Tribute to Leonard Arrington

Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University Libraries, *The Collected Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lectures* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005), 296 pp., \$29.95.

Reviewed by Newell G. Bringham, Professor of History and Government, College of the Sequoias, Visalia, California

Contained in this informative volume are ten essays originally delivered as annual lectures from 1995 through 2004 honoring Leonard J. Arrington, renowned scholar of Utah-Mormon history, former LDS Church Historian, and one-time Utah State University professor of economics. The lectures also pay tribute to Utah State University’s Special Collections and Archives, where Arrington chose to deposit his personal papers and related historical materials in an archive that bears his name. In establishing this lecture series, Arrington requested that the university’s historical collection serve as the focus for a series of annual lectures, each dealing with some specific aspect of Mormon history.

Arrington’s vision has been fulfilled in a most able manner, evident in the outstanding qualifications of the ten scholars combined with the quality of the essays each contributed. Arrington himself set this tone in his own inaugural 1995 lecture, “Faith and Intellect as Partners in Mormon History.” He argued that, throughout the history of the LDS Church, “faith and intellect have [had] a mutually supportive relationship” (1). In making his case, Arrington pointed to various statements and actions by early Mormon Church leaders and spokespersons,

specifically, Joseph Smith, Eliza R. Snow, Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon, and Emmeline B. Wells.

Richard Bushman, Columbia University emeritus professor, brought his expertise concerning the life and time of Joseph Smith to his 1996 lecture essay, "Making Space for the Mormons." It is one of the volume's most innovative essays, specifically in its use of space as a method of cultural analysis. Bushman provides illuminating insights concerning the centrality of Zion as a physical space in Joseph Smith's thinking: One of Joseph Smith's "most powerful acts was to create a conception of space that governed the movement of tens of thousands of [Latter-day Saints] over many decades" (35). Bushman's essay also contrasts Nauvoo with Chicago, which during the 1840s rivaled Mormonism's gathering place in size and influence.

In a third equally evocative essay, "The Exodus as Reformation," Richard Bennett, professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University and noted expert on Mormon migration, examines from a fresh perspective the story of the LDS exodus to the Great Basin commencing in 1846. Drawing on his training and interest in American intellectual history, Bennett describes the Mormon migration as an exercise in "covenant and obedience" (57). The migrating Saints "believed that they were on a divine errand" in the wilderness, reminiscent of that undertaken by their Puritan progenitors two centuries earlier. The Latter-day Saints believed that the success of their undertaking "depended on their behavior" and were convinced that a "scourge awaited the rebellious among them," while "blessings" in abundance were "in store for the faithful" (58).

Howard R. Lamar, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, prolific author, and primary promoter of the New Western History, examines the Latter-day Saint experience from a fascinating cultural perspective in "The Theater in Mormon Life and Culture." According to Lamar, theatrical performances played a significant role in Mormon pioneer Utah with Brigham Young a most enthusiastic backer and financial investor in this enterprise. In fact, he initially proscribed non-Mormon actors and tragedies from the old Salt Lake Theater, a venue modeled after the Drury Lane Theater in London. The theater, notes Lamar, served three functions in pioneer Utah: first, through "romantic fantasy" it "provided an 'escape' from 'the limitations of life in Utah'; second, 'it provided release from . . . a stern religion full of 'thou shalt not's'; and, finally it represented 'an effort to do the forbidden, or even to parody the everyday life of the Saints' (87).

Claudia Lauper Bushman, former professor in the Honors Program at the University of Delaware and author of books on aspects of American social and women's history, displays her skills in "Mormon Domestic Life in the 1870s." Bushman critically evaluates the quality of home life among the Latter-day Saints, using as a point of departure the observations of non-Mormon Elizabeth Wood

Kane, wife of Thomas L. Kane, long-time friend and patron to the Latter-day Saints during her visit to Utah in 1873–74. Bushman, drawing on Elizabeth Kane's astute observations, effectively presents the "complexities and contradictions" (118) of LDS domestic life which both fascinated and appalled non-Mormon outsiders.

Kenneth L. Godfrey, former Institute of Religion director in the Church Education System, who has extensively researched the Nauvoo experience, produced "The Importance of the Temple in Understanding the Latter-day Saint Nauvoo Experience: Then and Now." In a carefully crafted and finely focused essay, Godfrey notes that both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young emphasized that "the gathering was intrinsically bound to the temple experience" (126). According to Godfrey, Joseph Smith envisioned the temple as "a place of refuge and divine protection for the Saints from the evils, dangers, and cares of the world." It would moreover serve as "the edifice where through divine oracles, God would reveal his wisdom to his people" (126–27).

Jan Shipps, professor emeritus of religious studies at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, author of two books and nationally recognized observer of the LDS scene, brings her expertise to "Signifying Sainthood, 1830–2001." In this largely autobiographical essay, Shipps reflects on her experiences as a non-Mormon encountering Mormon culture as an undergraduate at Utah State University during the late 1950s. "Identity markers" which served as "means of signifying Sainthood" (160) included the obvious—abstinence from coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco—and the less obvious but equally important family size and structure; "appropriate" clothing, and personal grooming (for men, beardlessness and short hair), and for both sexes a strict prohibition on tattooing and body piercing, or as it was termed, "mutilation." Shipps concludes with the speculation that "Sainthood [in the future] increasingly will be signified by things connected with Latter-day Saint temples" (180).

Also looking at Mormon life and culture from an outsider perspective is Donald Worster, professor of environmental history at the University of Kansas and the author of several foundational studies of western environmental history, including his award-winning biography of John Wesley Powell, *A River Running West*. Worster's Arrington essay, "Encountering Mormon Country: John Wesley Powell, John Muir, and the Nature of Utah," brings a fresh perspective to the relationship of Powell and Muir with the Mormons and the larger landscape that drew each to the Great Basin on different occasions during the nineteenth century. Powell saw much that he liked in LDS culture, specifically the Mormon spirit of cooperative enterprise, even though he "was no friend of Utah's 'ecclesiastical organization,' being an 'agnostic and secularist'" (191). John Muir, likewise, was ambivalent concerning the Mormon people, "liking and disliking them in about equal measure" (197). On the negative side, Muir was appalled by the

Mormon concept of “environmental conquest,” not surprising given his strong advocacy of environmental preservation. At the same time, he admired the Mormons’ attitude toward children. Their children, he wrote, “are petted & loved & left to grow like wildflowers (unlike the real wildflowers which were destroyed)” (199).

Completely different in tone and tenor are the final two essays in the volume. Each in its own way provides intriguing insights into the craft and challenges of writing Mormon family history. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, professor of early American history at Harvard University and Pulitzer Prize winning author, investigates the mystery surrounding the life and death of an LDS ancestor in “Rachel’s Death: How Memory Challenges History.” In this engaging account, Ulrich unravels the confusion and conflicting accounts surrounding the death of her great-grandmother, Rachel Hannah Thatcher, while at the same time providing frank insights into family tensions resulting from the structure of polygamy and exacerbated by the age difference between her polygamous great-grandfather, John Bethel Thatcher, and another much younger wife, Sarah Maria Davis.

Similarly, family tensions underlie F. Ross Peterson’s equally frank account, “A Personal Examination of a Mormon Family.” Peterson, currently president of Deep Springs College in California and former professor of history at Utah State University, is the author of three books dealing with diverse aspects of American western history. Like Ulrich, Peterson confronted differing, often conflicting accounts of less than ideal conditions in the marriage of his paternal grandparents, Parley and Johanna Peterson. Peterson forthrightly evaluates the oral accounts of family difficulties passed down through filtered family tradition, carefully comparing these oral accounts and memories with such documents as newspapers, LDS ward records, state and federal government tax records, and census data. In describing his grandparents’ estrangement and ultimate divorce, Peterson candidly summarizes: “Jealousy, anger, mistrust, and frustration led to desertion and failure to provide” (240). Taken together, the two accounts by Peterson and Ulrich represent the craft of family history at its best. As such they stand as ideal models for all practitioners of family history.

In conclusion, the ten essays comprising this volume are a fitting tribute to Leonard J. Arrington, widely acknowledged as a major progenitor, if indeed, not the prime promoter, of the New Mormon History that has emerged over the past half century. Among its characteristics are an attempt to achieve objectivity combined with a willingness to confront controversy. Also a characteristic of recent Mormon scholarship has been the expanded variety of techniques and methodologies utilized both in research and writing. These characteristics are amply demonstrated in these essays, all ably written. We may hope that such scholarship will continue into the future and that, a decade hence, a sequel to *The Collected Leon-*

and J. Arrington *Mormon History Lectures* will appear, providing equally illuminating insights into the state of scholarship of the New Mormon History.

Peer-Reviewed Genealogy

Val D. Rust, *Radical Origins: Early Mormon Converts and Their Colonial Ancestors* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 253 pages. \$35.00.

Reviewed by Mark Decker, Department of English and Philosophy, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin

I have a distant relative who is an avid genealogist. She is fond of joking that, whenever two people talk about genealogy, one of them is bored. If this quip has any truth to it, Val D. Rust has scored quite a coup. Rust, a professor of education at UCLA, has turned what began as a “quest to gain some perspective on the radical religious roots of my own family” (165) into an intellectually stimulating and highly readable argument that Mormonism “is grounded” in America’s “early colonial period” and that it “springs more from the tradition of radical religious content than from mainstream Puritanism” (xi). *Radical Origins* manages this feat largely because Rust reaches beyond his own family and examines the genealogies of 583 early (pre-1835) Mormon converts in an attempt to create a genealogy of a belief rather than of an individual family. Yet despite this expansion of scope, Rust’s book ultimately suffers from a selective emphasis that leaves it unable to account for all of Mormonism’s radical origins.

Rust does provide much support for his claim that “those who were drawn to the message of Joseph Smith, Jr., especially in the earliest years, likely had family and community histories” of radical religious involvement “that predisposed them to resonate with that message” (5). This legacy of New England radicalism is at least plausible because, as Rust documents, “approximately 20 per cent of the 1650 population of New England were direct-line ancestors of LDS converts” (27) and because most of those ancestors did not live in Puritan Boston but in more doctrinally heterogeneous places like Rhode Island. If this radical religiosity were transmitted intergenerationally, Mormonism would have been attractive in part because the “new convert had likely grown up hearing tales . . . filled with accounts of miracles, spiritual experiences, privations, and persecutions that distinguished the family as religious radicals” (21).

Rust also does an admirable job of presenting this argument to two distinct audiences. Academic experts in colonial American history will appreciate Rust’s engagement with the relevant scholarly literature. Those approaching the text from other perspectives who may not have a strong background in early American