

Mason's *Planted: Belief and Belonging in an Age of Doubt* is more about how to respond to other people's faith crises than about Mason's own personal religious struggles. The question should be asked, then, why Brown didn't also take such a readily available approach and simply lay out his meditations on the gospel instead of tacking on his somewhat superficial flirtation with atheism as a bait-and-switch frame narrative. One wonders if Brown's volume is simply trying too hard to attach itself to the rising cultural cachet of faith crisis narratives in Mormon culture at large. If this is as compelling a confrontation with doubt as the Living Faith series can come up with, however, the series might be better served by staying in its own lane.

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Smoot in New Light

Michael Harold Paulos and Konden Smith Hansen, eds.
The Reed Smoot Hearings: The Investigation of a Mormon Senator and the Transformation of an American Religion.
Logan: Utah State University Press, 2021. 302 pp.
Paper: \$46.00. ISBN: 978-1-64642-311-8.

Reviewed by Kathleen Flake

The eight essays in this collection describe and interpret the US Senate's investigation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the Progressive Era. Nominally an investigative hearing on the election of Utah senator Reed Smoot, who was also a member of the

Church's hierarchy, the four-year hearing interrogated for lawlessness the Church and its leadership, not only regarding its marital practices but also temple rites, economic holdings, and political activities. The larger history has been told by others; the contribution of this collection is to highlight and elaborate on some of the enduring questions raised by the hearings and personal detail obscured in other accounts.

The book is divided into two parts: the first concerns the hearings' public effect and the second, the actors. Konden Hansen's essay provides a theoretical frame to the essays that follow. He argues that "America's turn toward secularization began to grasp Mormonism only after" 1890 (9) and succeeded in disciplining it (as well as accepting Smoot) based on "new secular standards . . . rooted in liberal Protestant assumptions" (10) and defined by the triumph of "moral actions as opposed to theological principles" (43). Hansen credits the resolution of the Smoot hearings to Protestantism's "modernist crisis," an internal and eventually schismatic struggle for orthodoxy, which produced twentieth-century conservative evangelicalism and evidenced the multi-determined decline of the WASP establishment.

The remaining three essays in part one discuss, respectively, the Senate debate on whether to seat Smoot; the lawmaking efforts of the national anti-polygamy movements; and the attacks on polygamy after the Smoot hearings. Co-editor Michael Paulos's description of the statements, political positions, and scholarly interpretation of the Senate debate and its consequences will be very helpful to those new to this history. Byron and Kathryn Daynes trace anti-polygamy attitudes and efforts to amend the US Constitution. Although, as the authors say, there is little relation between these efforts and the Smoot hearings, their detailed charting of the fifty-five proposed amendments enables the reader to better understand and appreciate the scope and strength of the anti-polygamy protest. Largely in terms of the journalistic efforts of ex-Mormon Frank J. Cannon, or, as Joseph F. Smith liked to call him, "Furious Judas Cannon," Ken Driggs discusses the decade-long

reaction to the hearings. Each of the authors has demonstrated mastery of these topics in other publications and do not disappoint here, either in terms of their accounting for or interpretation of the hearings.

Part two of the book views the hearings through the experiences of Smoot's wife Alfa May Eldredge (Allie), his secretary Carl Badger, his Church president Joseph F. Smith, and his chief interlocutor, Idaho senator Fred T. Dubois. The book also contains an appendix by Michael Quinn that identifies post-manifesto polygamist marriages performed between 1890 and 1907. The absence of Smoot's journal for the period of the hearings makes all the more welcome Kathryn Egan's description of the 1903 to 1907 correspondence between her great-grandparents. Excerpts from Allie's and Reed's letters and details about their Nauvoo-surviving and Territorial-pioneering families add an intimate and insightful personal commentary on this very public event. Paulos adds a second essay describing Joseph F. Smith's four-day testimony before the Senate investigative committee and an analysis of the scholarly treatment of its significance. His inclusion of portions of the transcript enlivens the description, and its publication here will hopefully draw to it a portion of the attention it received in its day and deserves in ours. If anyone suffered nigh unto Smoot during the hearing, it was probably his secretary Carl Badger. Gary Bergera's reprise of his *Sunstone* essay is a welcome addition to the book, showing Badger as an even more "modern Mormon" than his boss, his "personal agony" a litmus test for the reaction of the Church's younger generation to the hearings' disclosures (222). John Brumbaugh closes the volume with the story of senator and former polygamy-raiding federal marshal Fred T. Dubois. A major orchestrator and would-be political beneficiary of the hearings, Senator Dubois is shown to have failed in both aims. He had to watch Smoot keep his title and himself lose it at the hands of an electorate who deemed him too obsessed with Mormonism.

This is an interesting collection of essays that illuminate a very important period in Latter-day Saint history. The general reader will

find much to amuse, as well as educate, and the scholar will find in it not only much of interest but also opportunities for further research. The relative brevity of these essays makes the volume of use in undergraduate courses in Latter-day Saint and US political history.

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The Promise and Limitations of Working-Class Male Protagonists

Levi S. Peterson. *Losing a Bit of Eden: Recent Stories*.
Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2021. 256 pp. Paper: \$14.95.
ISBN: 978-1-56085-292-6.

Reviewed by Melissa Leilani Larson

The ten stories that comprise *Losing a Bit of Eden* sustain Levi Peterson's position as one of the most adept scribes of the twentieth-century American West. Each story is well grounded in a particular time and against a specific landscape, and somehow all feels gently connected.

There is no doubt that Peterson is a master of language. This volume is brimming with striking turns of phrase that linger long after one