

trative structure of the L.D.S. stake. Upon him fell not only the responsibility for ecclesiastical, political and economic direction but a vast number of decisions that were essentially private. But the latter were often charged with staggering potential for good or evil. As example may be cited the case of Allen Frost, a crusty Englishman, who after repeatedly "seeking counsel" from Erastus Snow migrated from Kanab to Arizona into a social and economic situation that forced him progressively away from the Church. Although Snow was usually authoritarian in approach, he was a practical leader and when circumstances called for it could follow a democratic course. The first years of his Dixie experience show him best in his role. Still very much the neophyte on that frontier, he conferred frequently with the people, drawing heavily upon their joint wisdom. Then, as he gained in experience and confidence, one sees increasingly the authority of the Mormon leader rather than the democracy of the people.

Missionary and Church leader, Erastus Snow probably influenced a vast part of 19th century Mormondom more than any man save Brigham Young. His life merits the attention given it by Andrew Karl Larson. For those interested in the history of "Zion's Outposts," *The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer* will be of great value. Hopefully, however, it will not be regarded as the last word on Erastus Snow, for his role in the extension of the Kingdom deserves a more interpretive study.

An Irrepressible Conflict

Henry J. Wolfinger

The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood. By Gustave O. Larson. San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1971. 328 pp. \$7.50.

A thorough study of Utah's troubled relations with the Federal Government during the last quarter of the nineteenth century has been long overdue. Interest in Utah's pioneer era has dominated historical scholarship, to the neglect of later periods. As a result, Hubert Howe Bancroft's and Orson F. Whitney's lengthy histories of Utah and B. H. Roberts' multi-volume history of the church still must suffice for broad and yet detailed overviews of the 1880's and 1890's. Not only are these works dated, the most recent of them having been published a full forty years ago, but all of them are marked by a strong pro-Mormon bias which leads to a characterization of the period as an era of federal persecution of a defenseless minority group interested solely in the practice of its religious principles. The development of a significant body of new research during the past two decades has demonstrated the need for revising this analysis of the conflict between the Church and the government nationally, and between the Mormon majority and the Gentile minority locally.¹ Unfortunately, Gustave O. Larson's *The "Americanization" of*

¹Examples of such revisionist scholarship include the following: Klaus J. Hanson's provocative *Quest for Empire* (Michigan State University Press, 1967), which suggested that the Mormons' problems with the government owed more to the Church's exercise of authority in politics and its aspirations to extend the Kingdom of God on earth than to the practice

Utah for Statehood does not provide this needed reexamination. The study is marred by a number of errors of scholarship and an untenable interpretation of the period.

The focus is on the tumultuous 1880's and 1890's, when the government's efforts to "Americanize" Utah reached fruition. The initial chapters of the work sketch territorial-federal relations through the 1870's and analyze the twin issues underlying the protracted conflict between the Church and the government — the practice of polygamy and the Church's domination of civil affairs. In this context Prof. Larson defines his theme of "Americanization":

It was a demand for undivided loyalty to the United States government, for the acceptance of the country's democratic processes under the Constitution, including the separation of church and state. It was a call for the maintaining of the *practice* as well as the *form* of the divided powers of government, the elective processes, and the establishment of free public schools. In other words, it involved abandonment of certain political, economic, and social peculiarities, including plural marriage. . . .²

The core of the study pursues this theme from the 1880's, when the government launched a concerted campaign to suppress polygamy, through Mormon submission to "Americanization" during the early 1890's to the resulting grant of statehood in 1896. It is in this section that Larson develops his thesis that the conflict between the Church and the government was both unnecessary and avoidable. As he puts it, "There is reason to believe that much individual and community suffering would have been avoided had the federal government allowed 'the corrective force of advancing civilization' to operate as it moved in to end Mormon isolation."³ He suggests that had the government moderated its approach and permitted sufficient time to pass, it could have gained the support of a strong element of monogamous Mormons who would have moved to bring the community into accord with the nation by outlawing the practice of polygamy. But federal zealotry, dictated by popular antipathy towards the Mormons, escalated the conflict between the Church and the government and bred resistance among all sectors of Mormon society. This, according to the author, precluded the possibility of negotiating a settlement of the polygamy question.⁴

This work has definite strengths. The author has consulted a wide range of primary as well as secondary sources, and he has made particularly good use of these materials in those chapters that give an interior view of "the underground" and "the raid." For instance, his chapter on "the 'pen' commun-

of polygamy; Leonard J. Arrington's definitive *Great Basin Kingdom* (Harvard University Press, 1958), which delineated the breadth of the Church's economic policies while developing the thesis that "the Mormon Question" was based in part on a fundamental antagonism between the American business philosophy of freewheeling competitiveness and the Church's carefully organized system of cooperation; Stanley S. Ivins' and Merrill Hough's articles on the public school controversy (respectively, "Free Schools Come to Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 22, and "Two School Systems in Conflict: 1867-1890," *ibid.*, 28), which focused attention on an area of Mormon-Gentile cultural conflict; Howard R. Lamar's "Political Patterns in New Mexico and Utah Territories 1850-1900" (*ibid.*, 28), which placed Utah's difficulties with the government within the perspective of the territorial system as a whole.

²*The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood*, p. ix.

³*Ibid.*, p. 280.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 276-80 and pp. 301-04.

ity" utilizes extensive quotations from a variety of autobiographies, diaries, and autograph albums. The result is a superb piece of social history that evokes the reaction of the "cohabs" to their prison experience and illustrates the sustaining strength of their religious commitment. A fine description of the operations of the Church "underground" is furnished in portions of several other chapters. Here the author succeeds in capturing a sense of the tension that surrounded Church leaders as they sought to fulfill their official duties and yet evade capture and arrest.

But these excellent descriptive sections do not compensate for the failings of scholarship and analysis that mar this study. One such failing that shapes the overall interpretation of the work is Prof. Larson's neglect of the most recent scholarship in his field. Thus, he clings to the older view that President Buchanan's change of policy towards the Mormons in the midst of the Utah War resulted from "a change in public sentiment favoring reconciliation."⁵ Norman F. Furniss spent a major portion of one chapter in *The Mormon Conflict* analyzing this change of policy and concluded that it resulted from Congress' failure to support the expedition with additional funds and manpower. Congressional procrastination, according to Furniss, was not due so much to a change in sentiment towards the Mormons as to embroilment in the inter-sectional conflict over slavery.⁶ This study is cited in Larson's bibliography, but no use is made of this conclusion, nor is it commented upon. Likewise, Larson attributes to Chief Justice James B. McKean the statement that his divine mission in Utah demanded that he trample under foot any federal or local statutes interfering with his efforts to suppress polygamy. Thomas G. Alexander examined this statement in his study of McKean's judicial career, and though Prof. Larson cites this piece of revisionist scholarship, he apparently has failed to notice its conclusion that the statement was apocryphal, since it contradicted the Chief Justice's judicial rulings and legal philosophy.⁷

There are other errors that more thorough research could have avoided. For example, in discussing the cases of Ammon M. Tenney and four other prominent Arizona Mormons convicted of polygamy before Chief Justice Sumner Howard in December, 1884, Larson states that "they were charged with unlawful cohabitation (a misdemeanor [*sic*]) and on conviction were punished for polygamy." From this he concludes that they were "subjected to mock trials" and cites their cases as an instance of the extremes of the anti-polygamy campaign.⁸ However, a check of the *Pacific Reporter* would have revealed that the defendants *were charged* with the crime of polygamy, and that their convictions were upheld on two occasions by the Arizona Supreme Court. This is not to conclude, of course, that their trials were necessarily fair. But the author's charge that they received "mock trials" requires at

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶*The Mormon Conflict 1850-59* (Yale University Press, 1960, pp. 168-75, esp. pp. 174-75.)

⁷Alexander, "Federal Authority versus Polygamic Theocracy: James B. McKean and the Mormons," *Dialogue*, 4 (August, 1966), 98-100, esp. p. 100; "Americanization" of Utah, p. 73.

⁸"Americanization" of Utah, p. 111.

least an examination of the proceedings and decisions of the Arizona courts in their cases.⁹

As these examples suggest, Prof. Larson's view of the anti-polygamy campaign resembles that of the orthodox accounts of B. H. Roberts and O. F. Whitney. He too deplors and condemns the actions of the federal officials in enforcing the laws. Hence, he repeatedly refers to the anti-polygamy campaign as "the crusade" and to the federal officials who conducted it as "the Utah crusaders." Furthermore, he has little use for the political activities of the Gentile minority. The Liberal party — the political organization of the Gentiles — is described as "a ring" and "the Gentile political clique" which on occasion "screams" for federal legislation or intervention by federal troops. At one point he even asserts that the radical Gentiles "called for the guns of Fort Douglas to be turned on the Endowment House unless its secrets be revealed." Given the near proximity of a number of major Gentile business establishments to Temple Square, on which the Endowment House was located, this call for cannon fire can hardly be taken seriously.¹⁰

These pejorative references do more than reveal the element of bias. They also produce errors of analysis. As an illustration, Prof. Larson's hostility towards the federal officials causes him to confuse the means which the government employed in enforcing the laws with the ends that it sought to achieve from the anti-polygamy campaign. He states that the government wished to legislate existing polygamous families out of existence and for this reason undertook prosecutions for unlawful cohabitation during the 1880's¹¹ But the fact that the government ended these prosecutions once the Church pledged not to solemnize further plural marriages belies this claim. Indeed, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the government's actual aim was to halt the *spread* of plural marriages. It was this goal that in turn required a legal attack on established plural families. Polygamy itself, the offense of marrying more than one woman, was exceptionally difficult to prove. The ceremonies took place in private and no public records were kept. On the other hand, cohabitation, the offense of living with more than one woman as a wife, could be proved easily by public association of the husband and his wives. Moreover, the charge of cohabitation had an added advantage.

⁹Apparently the source of this charge is the statement of a pro-Mormon witness before a Congressional committee more than four years after the date of the trial; cf. citation no. 40 on p. 112.

Similarly, in discussing the arrest of Apostle George Q. Cannon in late winter of 1886 on charges of unlawful cohabitation, Prof. Larson contends that the sum required for his bond — \$45,000 — was "exorbitant" (pp. 110, 149, and 157). This case serves as an illustration of the theme that the federal officers "would sometimes turn prosecution into persecution" (p. 110). No doubt the amount required for Cannon's bond was large, but hardly exorbitant, since it did not prevent him from jumping bail and avoiding trial.

¹⁰References to "the crusade," "Utah crusaders," etc., can be found on pp. 83, 112, 117, 127, 132, 133, 146, 181, 213, 231, 269, 274, 276, 278, and 299, while references to "the Gentile political clique" and their "screams" for federal intervention are located on pp. 139, 141, 144, 145, 253, and 300. At points the descriptions become even harsher, when the anti-polygamy campaign becomes "carpetbag harassment" (pp. 217 and 302) and members of the Liberal party are noted as "carpetbaggers" (p. 248). The statement relative to turning the guns of Fort Douglas on the Endowment House is contained on p. 83. No source is cited for this statement.

¹¹"*Americanization of Utah*, p. 278.

It could be used against ranking Church officials whose plural marriages fell outside the statute of limitations. This brought pressure directly to bear on those Church leaders who were in a position to decide whether polygamy continued or ceased. Hence, it is not surprising to find that for each polygamist convicted on a charge of polygamy, twenty or more were convicted of cohabitation. The charge of cohabitation was the key to the government's anti-polygamy campaign. Once the campaign had achieved its objective through the issuance of the Manifesto, the federal officials chose to tolerate existing plural marriages and the number of arrests for cohabitation sank almost to the vanishing point.

The author's highly critical attitude toward federal law enforcement reinforces his thesis that the government and the Church could have avoided a major conflict over the polygamy question. Although the manner in which the federal officials enforced the laws undoubtedly did much to augment Mormon opposition, Larson fails to recognize that the more fundamental issue at stake was whether the government should enforce these laws at all. In this respect it is essential to note that Mormon resistance to the anti-polygamy laws, as expressed by "the underground" and the flight of Church leaders to foreign missions, did not develop from the loose construction which the federal courts gave to the charge of cohabitation. Nor did it result from the practice of segregating indictments for cohabitation into a number of separate but equally punishable counts. Even before the evolution of these judicial practices the Church had instructed its polygamous members to evade arrest. The Church's determination to resist the anti-polygamy campaign was evident as soon as the federal officers made it clear that a major effort to enforce the laws was at hand. The mode of enforcing the laws had little to do with this decision. Given this determination, it becomes difficult to discover a route whereby the government and the Church could have arrived at a peaceful settlement of the polygamy question.¹²

In fact, the duration as well as the intensity of the struggle over polygamy suggests that at the root of the problem involved not simply the enforcement of the laws, but an even more fundamental conflict between civil and ecclesiastical authority. On the one hand, the government was determined that the laws be enforced. National sentiment regarded polygamy as a grave breach of the Victorian moral code and demanded its suppression. Moreover,

¹²In the trial of Angus M. Cannon, May, 1885, Judge Charles S. Zane defined the crime of cohabitation and ruled that proof of sexual relations was not necessary to secure conviction on the charge. The doctrine of "segregation" was first developed in Judge Zane's court the following September. On the other hand, as early as February of that same year instructions were being given polygamists that they should "take time by the forelock and keep out of the way." (Nels Anderson, *Deseret Saints* [University of Chicago Press, 1942], p. 332.) It was apparently the trial of Rudger Clawson that prompted the development of the "underground." In this case the United States Attorney succeeded in purging the jury of all who believed in the rightfulness of polygamy and filling their vacancies through an open venire. This process of eliminating most Mormons from jury panels in polygamy cases opened the door for a large-scale prosecution of polygamists.

It should also be noted, in discussing Mormon resistance to the anti-polygamy laws, that the Church committed its authority against any compliance with the laws. Ecclesiastical discipline was applied to those Mormons who attempted to conform to the requirements of the law. The best known of a number of such cases was that of John Sharp, a prominent Mormon who was deprived of his bishopric for entering a plea of guilty and promising to comply with the laws in the future.

not only did the open and persistent violation of the laws undermine the authority of the government in general, but it threatened to subvert the established structure of society, which was seen as resting on the nuclear family. On the other hand, the practice of polygamy for the Mormons involved the Church's ability to sustain a religious principle commanded by God. Although but a small portion of the Church membership was polygamous, a surrender of any religious principle in the face of outside pressure was bound to challenge the authority of the Church in other fields. Consequently it is not surprising that the Church authorities regarded the anti-polygamy campaign in broad terms as an attack on the Church itself. If one views the polygamy question in these terms — as a classic confrontation between Church and state over their respective spheres of authority — it is hard to accept Prof. Larson's contention that the issue could have been resolved without serious struggle.

Likewise, the local controversy between Mormons and Gentiles may have had deeper implications than the author recognizes. Prof. Larson, like others before him, views the conflict between the Mormon majority and the Gentile minority as "a struggle for local political control."¹³ It might be more accurate, however, to suggest that the Gentile aim was full participation, rather than dominance, in local politics. In this respect it is significant to note that the Liberal party, representing the Gentile minority, ended more than twenty years of political activity soon after the Mormons dissolved their People's party and divided along national party lines, with the Church issuing a pledge that it would not dictate to its members in political affairs. If political control was the Gentile aim, as Prof. Larson claims, it was neither promoted nor achieved by the abandonment of the Liberal party and the movement of the Gentiles into the national political parties with their Mormon majorities. Since the People's party had been generally recognized as the Church party, whose policy and leadership were designated by the ecclesiastical authorities, the political realignment of the 1890's suggests that the Gentiles were primarily interested in removing the Church, rather than its members, from politics.

The cleavage between Mormons and Gentiles ran much deeper than politics. Indeed, Prof. Larson's concept of "Americanization" suggests an underlying social and cultural conflict. Yet his analysis of "Americanization" rarely penetrates beneath the surface political controversies with which the 1870's and 1880's were rife. As a result, he does not examine what is perhaps the most striking feature of Utah society during this period: its complete polarization into Mormon and Gentile camps. As noted, local politics presented neither of the national parties and none of the national issues. Mormons gathered into the Church party and Gentiles aligned under the banner of the anti-Church party. Similarly, the territory was divided socially and economically. Mormon Utah was predominantly rural and agrarian. The Gentiles congregated into the territory's urban commercial centers whose

¹³"*Americanization*" of Utah, pp. viii, 62, 208, and 300-01. Initially Prof. Larson cites Utah's theocratic government as a primary source of Mormon-Gentile conflict. But this issue is given less and less attention in the later sections of the book. It appears that he believes the issue was limited to "an effort during the first two decades in the Great Basin to perpetuate a theocratic government" (p. 299).

focus was the mining industry. Few Mormons could be located in the mining communities that dotted the Utah landscape, and almost no Gentiles could be found in the small towns that dominated the agricultural scene. Two school systems operated within the confines of the territory. Mormon teachers taught Mormon pupils in the public schools, while Gentile teachers instructed Gentile children in private schools, many of which were established by missionary groups. There was also a dual judicial system for the settlement of civil disputes. While the Gentiles utilized the territorial and federal courts, the Mormons obeyed the injunction that "they should not go to law before the ungodly" and turned to ecclesiastical tribunals for the settlement of personal and property disputes. No benevolent, fraternal, or commercial organizations crossed religious lines in Utah. Even national holidays such as the Fourth of July featured separate Mormon and Gentile celebrations.

This polarization is indicative of a wide difference between Mormon and Gentile social philosophies, another aspect that Larson slights through his concentration on politics. The Mormon commonwealth served as both a self-contained refuge from the outside world and the locus for a society that would establish the Kingdom of God on earth. In religious terms the Mormons had fled "Babylon," already staggering under the weight of sin and corruption, to build up "Zion." Zion as such represented a radical social experiment. In examining the political implications of the concept of the Kingdom of God, Klaus J. Hansen stresses that it involved "a political organization intended to prepare the world for a literal, political government in anticipation of Christ's millennium."¹⁴ With considerable force he argues that the theocratic application of this concept was a focal point of conflict between Mormons and Gentiles.

Other sources of friction are revealed in Leonard J. Arrington's detailed treatment of Utah economic history. His study provides insights into the distinctiveness of such Mormon institutions as cooperatives, boards of trade, and United Order communities. He notes that the economic program developed by the Church emphasized insularity, self-sufficiency, and social cohesiveness, in sharp contrast to the Gentile stress on competitive individualism and freewheeling speculation.¹⁵ Although Prof. Larson states that the "Americanization" of the Mormon commonwealth involved "abandonment of certain political, economic, and social peculiarities," his analysis does not grasp the implications of the broader issues raised by the revisionist studies of Hansen and Arrington.

What appears to have distinguished the Mormon-Gentile conflict from other forms of late nineteenth century cultural and ethnic strife was the leading role the Church played within the structure of the Mormon community. Nineteenth century Utah in this respect was no less a theocratic commonwealth than seventeenth century Puritan Massachusetts. The hand of the Church was ever-present and ever-active. It could be seen in the process of expansion and settlement through the use of "mission" calls. It was apparent in the high proportion of key civil posts held by ranking

¹⁴*Quest for Empire*, p. x.

¹⁵*Great Basin Kingdom*, passim.

Church officials. In economic policy it was evident through heavy investment in such municipal enterprises as Salt Lake City's gas works and street railway system, and the mobilization of community resources for the development of the territory's rail and telegraphic networks. The Church even undertook the establishment of basic industries for the production of iron, sugar and cotton. Not only was the authority of the Church a significant factor in promoting the social cohesiveness so necessary for the success of such projects, but its pervasive influence permitted the long-range planning essential for the development of distinctive institutions.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the strife between Mormons and Gentiles, as well as the conflict over polygamy, took the form of an attack on the temporal power of the Church. Both clashes involved the extent and exercise of ecclesiastical authority. Even high-ranking Church officials recognized that the position of the Church and the influence of its leadership was at stake in the struggle. George Q. Cannon, one of the wisest of the Church's statesmen, indicated this in a sermon delivered at the time. He said:

We know that the fiercest persecution we have passed through in our experience was anterior to the practice of polygamy, was when polygamy was not a doctrine of this Church. Therefore, the hatred that is entertained to-day against this work is not traceable to that doctrine nor to that practice. It is the organization of the Church of God upon the earth. It is the restoration of the Holy Priesthood. It is the authority by which man is bound to man, by the effective bond or union that has been so wonderfully manifest in the history of this people from the commencement until the present time.¹⁶

Cannon focused on the crux of the issue through his reference to the authority of the priesthood as the essential bond of unity within the Mormon community. On the basis of this authority, characterized as "priestcraft" by the Gentiles, the Church had constructed the programs and institutions that set the Mormon commonwealth apart from the world.

These comments are not meant to deny Prof. Larson's claim that the "Americanization" of Utah involved much community and individual suffering. Enforcement of the anti-polygamy laws was severe, and the federal judiciary did stretch the meaning of the term "cohabitation." Legislation directed at the Mormons was not only harsh and repressive, but in instances reached the limits of constitutionality. All this, however, is a common theme throughout most of the histories of this period. More important, the emphasis on the bitter rhetoric and outright bigotry so apparent in the struggle to "Americanize" Utah serves to produce the conclusion, implicit in Prof. Larson's work, that few if any fundamental issues were involved in "the Mormon Question." To accept such a conclusion is to write off much of Utah's history as a vain exercise of passions or as a study in human irrationality. Perhaps the time has come to accept the contemporary statements that "the Mormon Question" involved such issues as the cohesiveness of the Mormon community and the authority of the Church over its membership in both temporal and spiritual affairs. Such a perspective promises to provide historians with a vantage point for evaluating the broader social changes that resulted from the "Americanization" of Utah.

¹⁶*Journal of Discourses*, xxiv, 362.

