

# Missionaries for the Dead: The Story of the Genealogical Missionaries of the Nineteenth Century

*Jessie L. Embry*

The Latter-day Saints' enthusiasm for the restoration of the gospel led to many interesting types of missions in the nineteenth century. Members were "called" not only to preach the gospel, but also to go to the gold mines in the 1850s, to gather rags for making paper during the economic crisis of the 1860s, to serve as M.I.A. and Sunday School missionaries, to go to Europe to study art, and to go East for higher education and medical training.<sup>1</sup> Because they believed in salvation for the dead, genealogical work also became an important part of their missionary activities.

But doing genealogical research then was more difficult than it is now. As the records were not available in Utah, the immigrating Saints were encouraged to bring with them genealogical information concerning their friends and relatives, living and dead, who might not have the chance to come to Zion or who might never accept the gospel in this life. Then they would be able to have the necessary ordinance work done for them in the temples. An editorial in the *Millennial Star* warned those coming from England:

If you neglect the opportunities you now have to secure the information, you will see the time when you will perhaps seek for it, but not be able to find it until you have so far paid the debt of your neglect, that some kind angel from the spirit world will be justified in bringing you the necessary intelligence.<sup>2</sup>

Those who were already in Utah and had not brought their records with them tried to get the necessary information by writing letters

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1. See A. Glen Humphreys, "Missionaries to the Saints," *BYU Studies* 17 (Autumn 1976): 74–100.

2. "Editorial," *Millennial Star* 15 (6 August 1853): 521–23.

or visiting their relatives. Correspondence was not always successful, because relatives who had opposed the Church frequently would not answer the letters. Others did not have the necessary dates, and their ministers were not always willing to check through church records. Consequently, many members of the Church decided to search the records themselves, which often meant returning to their homelands, many as genealogical missionaries.

Some of their names were included on the official missionary lists of the Church with a special note that they were going to work on their genealogy. Some of the brethren also recorded the names of some additional people who had been set apart to serve on this type of mission. These records show that between 1885 and 1900 at least 178 Saints served as genealogical missionaries. Most of them were middle-aged or older retired men, although some young men and women and even a few couples went. They were mainly from Utah and the majority of them went to England. They were not required to serve for any set length of time. Franklin D. Richards went on one genealogical trip for seventeen days while John Adams Wakeham spent over three years gathering his genealogy.<sup>3</sup>

Genealogical missionaries were also different from others in that there were few if any formal calls made, the members simply volunteered to go.<sup>4</sup> They were invited to come to Salt Lake City to be set apart by one of the General Authorities and to be given a missionary card. In addition they were given a clergy discount card which allowed them to travel to Chicago for \$6.25.<sup>5</sup> As they were set apart, they were instructed

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3. Consideration of material in the Church Archives reveals the following profile of 178 genealogical missionaries from 1885–1900: Age: Under 20 (1); 20–30 (6); 30–40 (7); 40–50 (32); 60–70 (16); 70 and over (6). Sex: Male (135); Female (43). Home Residence: Utah (128); Idaho (7); Arizona (2). Mission to: Great Britain (90); United States and Canada (51); Europe (2). (Missionary Record, Reel 2 [1830–1906], Missionary Department, Church Archives; Franklin D. Richards Journal, Franklin D. Richards Collection, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.) The figures given in some sections of this profile do not total 178 because the records were not complete.

4. In response to a letter from Elder M. H. Fitzgerald, Franklin D. Richards, of the Quorum of the Twelve, said that if he wanted to go to Virginia to do his genealogy he should come to Salt Lake City to be set apart. Richards to Fitzgerald, 30 April 1892, Franklin D. Richards Collection, Church Archives.

5. Elder Richards told C. M. Hubbard that he would receive this missionary rate for his trip to visit his friends in the East. Richards to C. M. Hubbard, 23 November 1883, Franklin D. Richards Collection, Church Archives.

not only to search for the names of their ancestors but also to try to preach the gospel to their living relatives. On one occasion, for example, Franklin D. Richards recorded in his journal,

Yesterday I blessed Elder John Luther Dalton of the 5th ward Ogden for a visit and a mission to various states in the Union to visit relatives and search for the genealogy of his ancestors as well as to testify of the work of God unto them . . . and gave him a letter of appointment.<sup>6</sup>

Several of the missionaries left journals that give us some idea of what a genealogical mission was like. They wrote of visiting relatives, copying family Bibles and other records, and of trying to find out everything that people knew about their ancestors. They also went to the parish churches spending hours searching through the old registers. They searched cemeteries to find the gravestones of their relatives. Many recorded having special spiritual experiences where they felt the Lord had miraculously directed them to the proper sources.

John Adams Wakeham, who was set apart for a genealogy mission in 1891 by John Henry Smith, returned to New England and recorded several spiritual experiences during his mission. On one occasion he went to visit a distant relative whom he had never met. He knocked on the door and when a lady answered he said that he was a relative of the Copp family and he had been directed to her since she was the granddaughter of William H. Copp. He asked if she had any of the history of the family. She questioned him for fifteen minutes and then told him that he had an honest face and she would let him come in. It turned out that she had been trying to gather the genealogy but had not been very successful.

Wakeham's brother suggested that he visit a Dr. John R. Ham in Dover, Maine, who had done some genealogy. Dr. Ham was a member of the New England Historic Genealogical Society and had a library with many books on genealogy. In these Wakeham found the name of his great-great-grandfather and also learned that his great-grandfather was an Indian, confirming a family tradition concerning an Indian ancestor, and also confirming a statement in Wakeham's patriarchal blessing that identified him as a literal descendant of Joseph.

Wakeham did not spend all his time doing genealogy. He stopped to see many friends and spent a great deal of time helping them. He spent two summers, for example, on the farm of A. H. Wenworth. At the end

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6. Franklin D. Richards Journal, 7 February 1890, Franklin D. Richards Collection, Church Archives.

of his mission he expressed gratitude for the help these friends gave him, but he was very disappointed that few of them had the courage to accept the gospel. He returned to Salt Lake City in 1894.<sup>7</sup>

Another missionary, John Amor, also an English convert, later wrote that he had always been interested in genealogy. As a child, in fact, he had spent much time reading the inscriptions on the tombstones in the churchyards because he had no playmates. After a long search for the right religion, he had joined the Church in 1867 and emigrated to Utah. He and his wife received their endowments in the Endowment House. He later wrote that shortly thereafter, "I began to have dreams concerning work for the dead. Several times a week I dreamed that I had died and had neglected to do work for those who had died and they were very much displeased with me, which caused me much sorrow." He said that the dreams did not cease until he finally started his genealogical work. He gathered as much information as he could from his mother. However, when Apostle Mariner W. Merrill said in the Logan Temple, "You should use every means in your power to gather your genealogy by writing and inquiry and not rest until all means are exhausted," he decided he had not done enough. He was set apart for a mission in 1896 and was promised that he would go and return in safety and be able to find the records of his ancestors.

Amor left with only five dollars in his pocket and arrived in England with three. Since he was on a special mission, he was allowed to travel without a companion, and in his search for the records he walked 1,400 miles and traveled 600 miles by rail and by water. He recorded several miraculous experiences. In one town he was allowed to check the parish records and instead of charging him the regular fee, the minister gave him fifty cents. Amor converted one member of his family to the gospel, but "the devil entered the wife of the family and said all manner of evil against me." The husband wrote to the mission president to see if the records that Amor had were correct and even tried to take them away from Amor. Because of these problems and because winter was approaching and Amor had no money, the mission president told him he could be released if he wanted to be. He was not sure that he wanted to go home, but, feeling that the president would not have suggested it if it were not the right thing to do, he returned to Utah.<sup>8</sup>

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7. John Adams Wakeham Autobiography, Church Archives.

8. "Biography of John Amor," Archibald F. Bennett Collection, Church Archives.

One of the most ambitious of all the genealogical missionaries was Franklin D. Richards, who later became the first president of the Genealogical Society. He went on several short genealogical missions to gather information from his relatives in Massachusetts. For example, in 1890 he and his son Charles spent nearly a month visiting friends and relatives and gathering genealogy in the East. After returning to Salt Lake City, he recorded in his journal,

Thanks and praise to God . . . for his good salvation and for the information that I was enabled to obtain in Lanesborough, Pillsfield, Richmond and other places of men whom I never saw before concerning our Dead that I may prepare a proper Record of my work such as will be acceptable when the dead shall be judged out of the Books that shall have been written.<sup>9</sup>

Later, as he was arranging these names for temple work, he recorded,

It is quite singular and rather wonderful how much thought, study and care is required to get the temple work ready and be sure of its accuracy when we have to pick it up in such a fragmentary condition as it comes to us.<sup>10</sup>

Many of the journals are so sketchy, it is hard to determine how successful the missionaries were in gathering their genealogy. A letter from Duncan M. McAllister to Wilford Woodruff implies that their efforts were not worth the expense. He said that at least fifty persons were making the trip to Europe each year to get their genealogy, at an annual expense of approximately \$25,000. In addition, nearly all other missionaries spent some time doing genealogical research. He calculated that one man with ordinary accounting skills could do more than fifty of these unskilled people.<sup>11</sup>

As the leaders of the Church received letters like this they began to realize that individual, unaided efforts to gather genealogy were not always successful and that if the Church wanted the members to complete the temple work for their ancestors they would need some aid. That is one of the reasons why, on 13 November 1894, genealogical and Church leaders gathered in the office of Franklin D. Richards to organize the Genealogical Society of Utah.

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9. Franklin D. Richards Journal, 15 June 1890.

10. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1894.

11. Duncan M. McAllister to Wilford Woodruff, 16 February 1893, Genealogical Society Correspondence, Church Archives.

The society started out in a small room in the Historian's Office with a few books and a big dream. Nephi Anderson defined this dream in 1912:

Let me suggest the future of this work. I see the records of the dead . . . gathered from every nation under heaven to one great central library in Zion—the largest and the best equipped for its particular work in the world. Branch libraries may be established in the nations, but in Zion will be the records of last resort and final authority. Trained genealogists will find constant work in all nations having unpublished records. . . . Then, as temples multiply, and the work enlarges to its ultimate proportions, this society . . . will have in its case some elaborate but perfect system of exact registration and checking, so that the work in the temples may be conducted without confusion or duplication.<sup>12</sup>

This dream has been fulfilled. The genealogical library is the largest of its kind in the world and there are now over 100 branch libraries. Records are being preserved and brought to Salt Lake City on microfilm and the Temple Index Bureau and the Computer File Index help bring order to temple work. Doing genealogy is comparatively easy for members of the Church today because they have many records in a central place.

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12. Nephi Anderson, "Genealogy's Place in the Plan of Salvation," *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 3 (January 1912):21–22.

# Mormon Bibliography 1976

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One of the most significant books on Mormonism to be published during the last year is James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard's *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*. It marks the first time that a single book by professional historians has attempted to survey the entire breadth of Mormon history. The book is not without critics or problems. Those who are used to seeing only the divine hand in all things will object to the fact that the authors have placed Mormonism in its historical setting, demonstrating that some of its teachings are similar to doctrines and principles which were being debated in New York and Ohio. On the other hand, those wishing that all the facts should be known are disappointed with the way in which certain problems are ignored or left without interpretive analysis. Others will become lost in the maze of twentieth century organizational changes and other minutiae. The book gives rise to two questions: (1) Can a truly objective history be written which will satisfy both sides of the question? and (2) Can the complexity of Mormon history be condensed into a single volume?

A book that has just crossed my desk which must rank as one of the worst pieces of bookmaking I have seen in quite some time is the Deseret Book edition of the Book of Mormon done on newsprint. As one opens the book and eyes the gray paper, the question arises: How on earth is anyone to be impressed with the book when it is presented on such poor and ugly paper? There must be a point below which a publisher cannot go and expect a favorable reaction to a printed page, and this edition has passed it.

As in the past, *Mormon Americana*, Volume 17 (1976), has been used for the compilation of the "Mormon Bibliography."

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## Book Reviews

Fell, Barry. *America B.C.: Ancient Settlers in the New World*. New York: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Company, 1976. Illus., appendix, biblio., and index, 312 pp. \$12.50.

Reviewed by John L. Sorenson, Professor of anthropology and sociology, Brigham Young University.

*America B.C.* will be welcomed by thousands of Latter-day Saint readers. In it Fell gives a vigorous blow to anthropological and linguistic orthodoxy by claiming, and to some degree demonstrating, that a wide variety of European peoples crossed the Atlantic repeatedly to North America over a period of thousands of years. He pictures, discusses, and interprets scores of inscriptions and artifacts many of which appear to be in languages and scripts related to Hebrew. With this kind of content the book is sure to interest some Mormon readers, but they will do well to consider carefully its weaknesses as well as its strengths.

Is the book any more reliable than others of this kind which have periodically made their appearance—with the fanfare of ringing cash registers—only to prove full of hokum? The answer is yes. While the volume in some ways claims too much, is sloppily presented, and lacks the niceties of scholarship, it does represent enough solid research that its effects will be felt among the acknowledged experts, who are totally unprepared for it.

Fell glosses over his qualifications in his introduction to the book. Actually his preparation is more solid than he lets on. Marine biology is his profession and he is currently at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. But his study of Latin and Greek in secondary school in New Zealand and Gaelic at the University of Edinburgh led to an expanding interest in inscriptions throughout the Mediterranean and via Spain into Atlantic Europe. He definitely has a knack with ancient languages, having deciphered, for example, the hitherto-baffling Mohenjodaro script of western India. He has expressed delight, in correspondence to me, “that one of the Israeli scholars recently mistook me for a Hebrew on the basis of my Semitic decipherments!” He definitely has the scholarly power to deal with the inscriptions he has confronted, although the burden of carrying on two careers has led to his cutting corners in the presentation of the results of his epigraphical scholarship in the present volume.

Since word began to get around a few years ago about Fell's interests and abilities, many people have sent him materials and a few workers have assisted him professionally. As a result he has a large collection of inscriptions, numbering in the hundreds, from the Pacific Basin and New World. He now claims to have identified in the American inscriptions no fewer than eleven scripts from across the Atlantic, representing at least five languages: Basque, Iberian Punic, Libyan (of the Semitic family), Celtic, and Egyptian. Dates for the Old World use of the scripts range forward from 800 B. C. *America B. C.* prints many of these inscriptions and his readings of them. It also shows and treats artifacts and sites found in the United States whose equivalents are associated in Europe with Celtic rituals.

Some of the most startling items, however, are long-known texts which Fell reexamines. He compares a "sacred creation chant of the Pima Indians" recorded authoritatively around 1902 with Arabic with startling results. He finds a heavy admixture of "Libyan" in the language of Zuñi in New Mexico. And, in one of the most impressive analyses, he clearly relates the previously-known writing system of the Micmac Indians of Maine (supposed to have been invented by an early Catholic priest among them) to Egyptian hieratic glyphs which seem to have been in use in Maine before Christianizing began. I am assured by colleagues competent in the material that there is indeed solid substance at this point.

Among the variety of material Fell has brought forward much is indeed significant and interesting. That doesn't mean that he sweeps all opposition in front of him. Flaws abound. Documentation for many assertions is slight or absent. Some of the inscriptions are so crude one wonders whether they really are what he claims. His statements about when certain scripts were used are vague and sometimes inconsistent. On point after specific point Fell will probably be rebutted by more conventional and careful scholars.

For example, on page 283 Fell claims that the word for "tree" in "the Wabanaki dialect" of Maine is *abassi*, which is also said to be a Hebrew or Phoenician word instead of the normal word for tree in other Algonquian languages across northern North America. A colleague of mine thoroughly prepared in a number of Semitic languages recognizes no such word in Hebrew, the nearest being a term meaning "wild grape." The author plays fast and loose in other places, too, stretching a meaning here or a spelling there. This is all the easier to do since his inscriptions show only consonants. And why refer to "African" language (pages

178–90) when surely he must have had something more concrete in mind. Still, the author has apparently been unaware of supporting evidence which can be pointed out in some instances which make his case even stronger.

Altogether the book is paradoxical. The sloppy methods cast considerable doubt on the significance of what is offered, yet every now and then the work strikes a vein of pure gold. The easy way out would be for critical people to pick at the weaknesses and dismiss the whole. I am afraid that is precisely what most professionals will do, particularly since few are prepared in more than one of the disciplines involved. Their lives will be easier, for awhile, if they do so. But someday, in a more sophisticated form, these impressive finds will no doubt be presented with the power they deserve.

Meanwhile Fell has much more information in his files. New Libyan material is in his hands which he says is connected with the enigmatic early Hohokam culture of Arizona. Nor does *America B.C.* contain any of his Pacific material, which seems to show the presence of Semitic-speaking voyagers in the Pacific islands who came via the Indian Ocean in B.C. times. (Ironically, our Mormon tradition about Israelites in the islands could prove correct without reference to the questionable Hagoth tradition, as 1 Nephi 22:4 may have been trying to tell us all the time.)

The Book of Mormon is nowhere mentioned in this volume, but if, as I expect, a good deal of Fell's evidence holds up under closer scrutiny, the effect will be felt by Latter-day Saints. For instance, if voyaging across the oceans proves to have been commonplace in ancient times, Mormons as well as orthodox archaeologists will need to do some reinterpreting.

Fell will no doubt be smitten vigorously by hostile critics. He and his handful of collaborators are in a vulnerable position professionally. Their limited resources could be augmented significantly by sales of this book. Mormons who wish to assist one who shares some of their position in the face of opposition from the professional establishment could strike a blow by buying this book. They may enjoy it, too.



HILL, DONNA. *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977. xviii + 527 pp. \$12.50.

Reviewed by Davis Bitton, professor of history at the University of Utah and assistant Church historian.

When the great biography of Joseph Smith appears, wrote Daryl Chase several years ago, its author will be "a first-rate scholar in the field of Christian church history and a specialist in the heretical religious movements which have originated in New England," . . . "an authority in American history down to the Civil War, and know the important part the Christian churches played in that period." He will have access to all the manuscript materials pertinent to the subject, Chase added, and will be "a good sociologist, psychologist, and student of the Bible." Although she possesses several of these qualifications, Donna Hill is not this imaginary ideal biographer, and the "definitive" biography of Joseph Smith remains unwritten. It may of course always remain that elusive ideal that is never attained but is worth pursuing; but major strides are resulting from the analytical essays of Marvin Hill, the careful work of Dean Jessee with the Prophet's holograph writings, and the forthcoming volume by Richard Bushman, supported by a Guggenheim Foundation grant, that will carry the life of Joseph Smith to 1830. In any case, the publisher's blurb that *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* is "definitive" may be a bit premature.

This is an important book and a "fair" book. It also contains disappointments. To first consider some of its inadequacies, one can start with such a simple matter as the evidences of the publisher's haste, the typographical errors, the minor flaws. David Brion Davis is rechristened David Briton Davis. *Mormonism Unveiled*, Eber D. Howe's 1834 blast against incipient Mormonism, is fastened as a title onto the later works by Parley P. Pratt and John D. Lee, although both of them did manage to spell the second word properly. *The Western Humanities Review*, whose lack of receptivity to scholarly articles on Mormonism has been a disappointment to readers familiar with its flair under the editorship of William Mulder, is listed as one of the journals publishing on Joseph Smith and his followers "with almost bewildering frequency." Martha Cragun Cox, author of one of the most vivid Mormon journals, is identified as Cragun Cox, robbing a grand old lady of her femininity, while Andrew

Jenson is identified as “a former Church Historian,” a belated promotion he would have welcomed during his lifetime.

The bibliography and notes indicate a strong effort and are full of valuable references. It would be a mistake, however, to see this as a “complete” bibliography for the subject. On the controversy over the First Vision, James B. Allen’s valuable article in the *Improvement Era* is unmentioned. Under dissertations and theses one looks in vain for Michael Quinn’s “The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1932: An American Elite” (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976), which may have been completed too late for inclusion, but the same excuse can hardly justify omission of Quinn’s “Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1932: A Prosopographical Study” (Master’s thesis, University of Utah, 1973). There are other surprising omissions. Readers will be well advised to consult the superior bibliography in James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Deseret Book, 1976).

But enough of such nit-picking. Although the style is uninspired, it is workmanlike. And clearly, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* is an important book, a fact best appreciated by considering how the author deals with certain strategic questions. This, after all, should be the test, for the main external facts are well enough known and can be quickly discovered by going over a chronology such as Hill herself has provided at the front of the book. On the First Vision she shows an awareness of the scholarly controversy and the different versions of the experience but concludes, after considering the visions of others at the time, that “he spoke the truth when he said that in his youth he had the religious experience which was as meaningful to him as he maintained.” She examines the evidence of Smith’s money-digging activities. One is left with the impression that there was far more to these reports (and those of divining rods) than the traditional versions usually allow. And she seems to accept the 1826 trial, although in fact the reader is left with unresolved contradictions. Yet she does not feel compelled to jump to conclusions about the validity of the basic religious claims, which she treats with due seriousness.

The troubles of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio and Missouri are given rather full treatment. The whole experience of the Kirtland Bank is treated frankly and the Prophet does not emerge “covered with glory.” The persecutions in Missouri are explained with balance, showing that zealous Mormons provoked some of the opposition. Sidney Rigdon’s Independence Day oration is quoted, omitting some of the most

damning passages but with enough intact to make plausible the anti-Mormonism of the Missourians. Yet somehow Hill's presentation of this work avoids the tone of the anti-Mormon accounts, for the faith of the Saints is evident throughout.

Of particular interest in any life of the Mormon prophet is the subject of plural marriage. Two chapters convey much of the complexity of this subject and the turmoil it caused within the Smith family and among the inner circle of Church leaders. It is not a treatment that will be consoling to members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, for the practice of plural marriage clearly originated with Joseph Smith. Nor will it be inspiring to those Utah Mormons who are not fond of dwelling on this aspect of their history. Yet Hill has done what any responsible biographer must do—examine the evidence and follow it where it leads her.

I do not wish to undervalue what this book offers: a basically favorable reexamination of Joseph Smith that is forthright in confronting the evidence. If it is not psychologically searching (the author disavows "psychological analysis"), it addresses most of the knotty problems. In general, she has done her homework. Readers should come away with confidence that nothing has been swept under the rug. For the most part they should also come away with an impression of Joseph Smith that is not hero-worship in any simple sense but one of respect and sympathy. "With my view of him as an inspired spiritual leader who had ordinary human failings, I think he would have been entirely in accord," she writes. "He himself saw the danger to his followers of holding illusions that he was sanctified, and he repeatedly insisted that he had a man's passions and weaknesses. He was entirely convinced of his mission on earth but thought that the Lord had chosen a weak thing through which to accomplish His work." (p. ix).

In a sense the Hill biography owes its importance to its placement on a spectrum. On the one side are the unfriendly accounts, including the skillful presentation of a slanted interpretation by Fawn Brodie. On the other side are the various appreciations or faith-promoting accounts. (Are there other biographical accounts—perhaps of Gandhi or St. Francis or Mohammed—which tend to slide off into either the one side or the other?) Now Ms. Hill has come along with a work which, though with some disappointments, offers something close to a satisfactory middle ground. It is a favorable interpretation by and large, but one that shows awareness of all the evidence. Those Mormon readers who prefer to close their eyes to some of the unedifying scenes or the difficulties of

interpreting conflicting testimony do not really want biography; they want hagiography, and there are other works that will provide it for them. Some general readers who want a lively story well told and who can swallow an unconvincing major premise (that Joseph Smith lied but convinced himself that he was telling the truth) may still prefer Brodie. For most readers, it would seem that Donna Hill has provided the treatment that can be recommended: middle-of-the-road, sympathetic, thoroughly researched.

KORN, ALFONS L. *News From Molokai*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976. 345 pp. \$14.95.

Reviewed by Robert J. Morris, instructor of modern languages at BYU-Hawaii when this review was written, and currently a student at the University of Utah College of Law.

Alfons Korn, professor emeritus of English at the University of Hawaii, has provided scholars of Mormon history in Hawaii with a rich vein of high-grade ore in an area of research heretofore seriously deficient. The letters and notes in his recent *News From Molokai* encompass the lives of three Hawaiian Latter-day Saints in the latter half of the nineteenth century who collectively represent in very human terms the birth pangs of modern Hawaii and the role of the Church in that process. The three are Jonathan Napela, Koi Unauna, and Queen Liliuokalani. In their collective story lies a great drama for both the researcher and the playwright.

The book is comprised of correspondence between Dowager Queen Emma Kaleleonalani and her cousin Peter Kaeo, both *alii*, or nobles. Their letters were written in the years 1873-76, when Peter, then a confirmed leper, had been confined to the leper settlement at Kalaupapa, Molokai. The correspondence is significant because it reflects the attitudes of two Hawaiians of noble birth during a period of political intrigue, cultural change, and new social values, "especially of the more piercing emotions that sustained some of those values, not only into the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but also very evidently beyond" (p. 278). The numerous references to Mormons and Mormonism throughout the letters suggest the depth to which these conditions and the Church intermeshed.

When Peter Kaeo arrived at Kalaupapa late in June 1873, he found Jonathan Napela and his wife, both also of chiefly lineage, already in residence. Napela, a former magistrate at Wailuku, Maui, had been one of the first Hawaiians to accept the Restored Gospel when it was taught to him by George Q. Cannon. He had become Cannon's missionary companion, helping him to translate the Book of Mormon into Hawaiian. Napela had once been involved with Walter Murray Gibson on Lanai, had lived for a time at the Mormon settlement at Laie, Oahu, and had journeyed to Salt Lake City to be ordained a high priest under the hand of Brigham Young. Now he had finally come to Kalaupapa as a *kokua* or helper to his wife who had contracted leprosy.

From the friendship which developed between Peter Kaeo and the Napelas we see a picture of Mormons caught between the new culture and the old ways, between the new religion and the traditions of their fathers.

The “existential shock and suffering of that destructive scene” in Kalaupapa (p. xxvii) are shown up here in all the horror of an archetypal night journey that competes with anything in the leprosy stories of the Bible for grotesqueness. Peter writes: “Napela has just told me that they tried a man for burying another one which was eat by the Hogs” (p. 24). Napela was involved in such trials since he was a *luna* or overseer of the settlement and responsible for the adjudication of such matters: “Napela has begun to have Beef killed at the Beach so as not to let those poor men without fingers handle the meat for those at the Beach” (p. 33).

Peter never mentions that Napela taught him Mormon doctrine, though Father Damien, the famous Catholic “leper priest of Molokai,” tried on several occasions to convert both Peter and Napela to Catholicism. For the Napelas and Peter Kaeo, religion included not only theology but politics, and they were religiously concerned about the fate of the kingdom of Hawaii. They shared many dreams and visions portending the hoped-for death of the king, Kalakaua, and the ascension of Queen Emma. “Signs, Omens, and Dreams,” Peter writes to Emma, “are the orders of the day here, and all on your behalf” (p. 186).

Peter and Napela paid frequent visits to the resident priestess, or *kahuna*, to hear her forecasts of doom and invocations of the “ancestral gods” in Emma’s behalf. They fasted and prayed together, Old Testament fashion, for divine intervention in the lives of all their enemies. The central political issue at the time was the proposed “Reciprocity Treaty” with the United States and the cession of Pearl Harbor as a naval base, and both were seen in terms of white supremacy versus Hawaiian home rule. “Mr and Mrs Napela and I are Praying every morning on your behalf, beseeching our Lord that he may . . . subdue your Enemies which infect the name of Hawaii . . .” (p. 173).

Anti-Mormons within the settlement caused Napela to be stripped of his rank as *luna* only months after his appointment. He pleaded with the Board of Health to be permitted to remain with his wife, and this was granted. Then early in 1874 Emma wrote to Peter: “Do you divine Taffy’s [Kalakaua’s] object in soliciting the Morman party, so as to secure their votes in case of anything happening to His Majesty before a successor is appointed?” (p. 169). Shortly thereafter Emma tells of a plot to poison her, allegedly perpetrated by Kalakaua, his brother, and one “Koi.”

This was Koi'i Unauna, a kinsman of Kalakaua, a lawyer, and a court genealogist, who was baptized a Mormon by Jonathan Napela in 1862.

A third side of the political triangle was Kalakaua's sister, Mrs. Lydia Dominis, about whom Emma loved to gossip: "Mrs Dominis has a new love, a native boy of Waikiki" (p. 88). Any such "news" about "Mrs Dominis"—fact or fiction—is of interest to Mormon scholars because she became Queen Liliuokalani upon Kalakaua's death. She was deposed in a revolution a few years later, thus ending the monarchy in Hawaii, and on 7 July 1906, while in private life at her home in Waikiki, she was baptized a member of the Church, eleven years before her death.

Though the Church has flourished in the Islands for a century and a quarter, we have not yet produced a synoptic, scholarly study of what that existence has meant. Hawaii's special situation both geographically and ethnically—its significance as a crossroads and a gathering place—suggests that the human business which has been transacted here, both in and out of the Church, has large implications for any Mormon concerned with the Pacific Islands and Asia.

When George Q. Cannon first came to these Sandwich Islands, the Savior himself appeared to him at Pulehu, Maui, to show his approval of this work. Now, as the new official history of the Church is presently being written, we must hope that the appropriate people will be concerned with the works of scholars like Alfons Korn as they strive to provide a truer view of the Hawaiian context of Mormonism.

WISE, WILLIAM. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Legend and a Monumental Crime*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976. 317 pp. \$11.95.

Reviewed by Leonard J. Arrington, LDS Church Historian and director of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University.

Historians, Mormons and non-Mormons alike, will recognize immediately that *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Legend and a Monumental Crime*, by William Wise, is wildly inaccurate both in its statements of "fact" and in its interpretations. This is not surprising since the book was written without use of the trial records, government reports, travelers' accounts, letters, and diaries which are in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino, California, the Brigham Young University Library in Provo, Utah, and the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. Nor has Mr. Wise even prepared himself for treating the topic by reading responsible histories of the Mormon people. Overlooking the many available, Mr. Wise has relied primarily upon such outdated potboilers as those by T. B. H. Stenhouse, William Linn, and M.R. Werner. In thus slanting his history of the Mormons, which occupies fully half of the book, he is seeking to build up a case of negative expectations so that when he finally gets around to his real topic, the tragedy at Mountain Meadows, the reader will readily accept his accusations.

The second half of the book, that dealing with the massacre itself, is ostensibly based on published government documents including reports of the two trials of John D. Lee. Like the Warren Report on the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the documents are replete with wild allegations, contradictory claims, rumor, eyewitness accounts, memories several years later, and responses to charges. It takes a simple mind to select from this kind of material a single story and tell it as if it were perfectly obvious. This is what Wise has done. In this respect he dismisses the best available treatise on the massacre, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* by Juanita Brooks, published by Stanford University Press in 1950 and republished by University of Oklahoma Press in 1962. Widely praised for the thoroughness of her research and her relentless honesty in following the evidence where it led her, Mrs. Brooks wrestled with the larger, more significant question of how the massacre could have happened. Her most valuable insight has to do with the fact that



the Mormons in Southern Utah had come to perceive the Fancher train as criminals and enemies, that a war psychology had been whipped up by the approach of a body of 2,500 federal troops, and that once a series of events was set in motion it became impossible to reverse it. The possibility of Brigham Young's complicity is one she naturally considered. Her conclusion is that he cannot be blamed for the crime in the sense of having ordered it. But Brooks sought not primarily to pin the responsibility in a simple way but to understand. Recognizing the background of persecution in which the Mormons had themselves been victims, and the hysteria of the Utah War period, she was able to present the evidence in a way that made sense to Mormons and non-Mormons alike—to professional historians and “buffs”.

Now what would justify a new book on this subject? There is no new evidence—or at least none that is introduced by Mr. Wise. There is no new frame of reference through which to see the old evidence—or at least none that is introduced by Mr. Wise. The most important secondary study of obvious importance and relevance is Norman Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict, 1850–1859*, published by Yale University Press in 1960. Unknown to Mr. Wise. Wise has a chapter on the Gunnison Massacre, and the standard, thoroughly researched reference is a master's thesis, “The Gunnison Massacre” by David L. Miller, Jr., of the University of Utah. Also unknown to Mr. Wise. There is every evidence that Mr. Wise wrote this book hastily—there is a lack of familiarity with the relevant scholarly research and of an unseemly and damaging reliance on a few older works that historians have learned to treat with extreme caution. Mr. Wise's work would not pass muster as a dissertation or thesis in any respectable American university, for his mentors would quickly recognize the inadequacy of his documentation.

Does it matter to Mr. Wise that Brigham Young sent a still-surviving letter to the Mormons in Southern Utah telling them not to interfere with the emigration trains passing through Utah? “You must not meddle with them,” he counseled. This letter, as Juanita Brooks concluded, “clears Brigham Young of any direct responsibility for the massacre.” Surely Wise could understand, if he took second thought, that Brigham Young and the Church had everything to lose by wiping out the Fancher train. No one was more sensitive to the need to arouse sympathetic public opinion among Americans in the East than Brigham Young. This was the basis for his Sebastopol plan of evacuating Salt Lake City and other communities during the Utah War. This helps to explain his firm orders to Mormon troops to avoid inflicting casualties on the approaching U.S.

troops. Mr. Wise would like us to believe that this same Brigham Young, at the same time, turned around and, with flinty eyes and fire-spouting nostrils, gave the order to obliterate a passing wagon train. Where is the evidence? Mr. Wise furnishes none.

If William Wise offers no evidence to support his assignment of guilt, what does he do? He tells the story based on circumstantial evidence. With no direct evidence one way or the other he over and over again assumes that he knows what happened. His favorite word is “doubtless,” which of course means that there is no evidence but that Mr. Wise’s surmises are sufficient. Doubtless Brigham Young had his eye on the Fancher train from the time it entered the territory; doubtless he knew how much money it had and thought that the gain would be worth the price of a crime; doubtless Charles C. Rich persuaded the company to go by the southern route; doubtless Young and his associates discussed the details of the Fancher train’s progress; doubtless he gave the order to move ahead with the massacre. Doubtless Mr. Wise has interwoven his own conjectures at key points in order to help make the whole thing appear doubtless.

Hastily prepared and largely dependent on selected tendentious secondary studies, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* is an excellent model of what careful scholarship is not.

## Corrections

The following corrections should be made in S. George Ellsworth's review of James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard's *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* in *BYU Studies* 17 (Winter 1977):241-46:

(1) Insert the following on page 243, line 6, immediately following the colon: "Church organizations, organizations, and institutions (67 pages, 10.5 percent);".

(2) On page 246, the last line of the review should read: "In short, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* is an excellent draft, ready to be polished by authors and editors."