

from the progression of their legal status to the changing roles they have assumed in the work force to their involvement in farm life, education, scholarship, arts, and politics.

Any serious scholar of women's history, Utah women's history, or Utah history in general will want to read this book. It celebrates the contributions Utah's diverse groups of women have made to the state's history and its ultimate thesis is this: that while Utah women's experience has differed from that of other women in the American West, it has also been representative of the experience of other women in the American West. Paradigm or paradox? Scott and Thatcher's answer is, simply, both.

—Jana Lloyd

*God's Country, Uncle Sam's Land: Faith and Conflict in the American West*, by Todd M. Kerstetter (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In a focused journey, Todd Kerstetter, assistant professor of history at Texas Christian University, considers the promise of religious freedom in the United States. He looks closely at three religious groups: nineteenth-century Mormons living in Utah, the Lakota Ghost Dancers in South Dakota during the 1890s, and the 1993 Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas. Each group sought a place of refuge in the Great American West, that region of the country most filled with individualism and independence, the mythic and heroic God's country. For each there was a dramatic and violent confrontation with both their neighbors and the government.

How far does the rhetoric of religious independence extend and for whom does it hold true? Speaking of the Mormons living in Utah in the nineteenth century, Kerstetter states that they "and anyone else who doubted it, learned that morally

speaking, the Constitution is a Protestant document and the United States is a Protestant nation" (80).

To a lay reader, the book is accessible and interesting. Kerstetter sets forth the features of the three historical events with detail sufficient to capture the mood and setting of each episode. He offers evidence as a historian, fairly and without comment, allowing each narrative to set the stage. He steps us through the inflammatory rhetoric and imprudent posturing of each side. The drama between these religious groups and their neighbors stands out all the more clearly for Kerstetter's dispassionate stance. We learn that the song of the West is not truly sung on key.

Each of these histories has been told before. Each is dramatic and tragic and makes for good telling. It is not difficult to find accounts from both devotees and detractors but in this telling, the combined weight of uncompromising religious values and the collapse of promised freedoms is significant. To those questions already raised in this book, there are more. Is there a point at which it is appropriate, even responsible for citizens or government to intervene and withdraw promised freedoms? Who decides when and where?

—Liza Olsen

*How Free Can Religion Be?* by Randall P. Bezanson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In *How Free Can Religion Be?* Randall P. Bezanson, who holds an endowed professorship of law at the University of Iowa, surveys the U.S. Supreme Court's leading cases on the religion clauses of the First Amendment. Of particular interest to students of Mormonism will be Bezanson's treatment of *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), in which the Court rejected the