

Larson, Gustive O. *Outline of History of Utah and the Mormons*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958.

Professor Larson's first chapter sets the style and tone of his entire book. This short introduction to the history of the Great Basin before the coming of the Mormons does not attempt to give the reader a detailed report of all that occurred but rather a brief insight into the fact that the basin area was well known to a few hundred white men before the Mormons set foot on it. The material given is remarkably complete for such brevity, and although it does not concern the Mormon people, it is of good general interest.

The next two chapters are background history of the Mormon people before they came to Utah. As a history of the state, these chapters would be superfluous if the history of Utah was not so interwoven with the religion of the Latter-day Saints that an understanding of one cannot be had without an understanding of the other.

The body of the book is written in chapters under topic headings such as "Exploration and Colonizing," "Early Government," "Indian Relations," "Entering Statehood," "Twentieth Century Mormonism." This method has necessitated slight repetition of some materials, but the surprising aspect is that there is such a small amount of it. The topics are handled in a skillful manner, giving the reader the feeling that the content of the book is far more orderly than would have been the case had the author tried to deal with each event in its exact chronological order.

The insertion of Chapter XII on the Colorado River Basin is a particularly commendable and worthwhile addition, because it deals with an integral part of both Utah and Mormon history that has been sadly neglected by many other historians.

A chief weakness of the book might be said to be in the oversight of the printer or of the proofreader. A few errors are so obvious that one is certain they are not due to lack of knowledge on the part of the author. The word *temporarily* on page 116 should have been printed as *temporally*. The word *Bibliography* should be at the top of the page (on page 277) instead of below the title of the first chapter. The Indian agent and sub-agents (page 143) could not have been appointed under the

Intercourse Act of 1854; just below this statement the author tells of the actions of the men in these appointed positions as early as 1851 (Mr. H. R. Day deserted his post as sub-agent on September 28, 1851). Samuel H. Woodson was not awarded a four-year contract to carry the mail in 1859 (page 172) but much earlier (1850) as is obvious from the remainder of the paragraph. Also Brigham Young did not die in 1887 (page 226) but in 1877 (page 260). On page 233 it is stated that the 1890 census showed that out of a total population of 207,905 there were 118,000 Mormons and 10,000 Gentiles; this leaves approximately 79,000 people unaccounted for. The map of the Colorado River Basin is on page 236 at the end of Chapter XIII, "Entering Statehood," when it should have been placed somewhere near the beginning of Chapter XII, "The Colorado River Basin."

In a few places references are left out that should have been cited. In a few other places where secondary sources have been cited (to the authors of which Professor Larson gives deserved credit in his preface) the original sources might also have been cited with increased value to the book.

The few maps and charts that have been used are a great aid to the reader. One could only wish that the author had used more of them in places where they would have proven helpful.

In a few cases the topics discussed are so brief that they are not covered adequately. The topic Gentile Merchants (page 170) appears to be incomplete. The short paragraph on the Colorado River Project might have been told more completely by the inclusion of two or three more sentences.

Still the strongest point of the book seems to lie in Professor Larson's ability to say so much so clearly and yet so briefly. Every sentence contains important matter. He cannot be accused of being verbose or of discussing irrelevant matter. The few paragraphs used to describe the Missouri troubles of the Saints might be cited as examples of extreme brevity with clarity and completeness of expression.

Summing up: A book well written in which the author has expressed himself with clarity of language, completeness of thought, and accuracy of information, having accomplished his purpose with consideration for the reader's time and enjoyment.

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