

## Brief Notices

*Alexander William Doniphan: Portrait of a Missouri Moderate*, by Roger D. Launius (University of Missouri Press, 1997)

“It is cold-blooded murder. I will not obey your order. . . . [I]f you execute these men, I will hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God” (64). So runs one of the most spine-chilling lines in LDS history, spoken by a non-Mormon, Missouri State Militia Brigadier General Alexander Doniphan, whose refusal to obey the order of his superior, General Samuel Lucas, during the Mormon War of 1838 preserved the life of Joseph Smith and six of his associates.

In this fascinating volume, RLDS historian Roger D. Launius fills in the picture of Doniphan’s life as lawyer, politician, and military tactician. A portrait emerges of a man who tenaciously held to principles of honesty and decency throughout his life, yet who also “symbolized reason, understanding, and moderation” (280) in an era deeply divided by sectional conflict. This elegantly written biography argues that Doniphan’s moderation “speaks to the present crisis in American politics” where extremism crowds out “room in the middle for interchange and compromise” (xiii).

The bulk of this work chronicles major themes in Missouri political history before Doniphan retired from public life in the 1870s. Only one entire chapter in thirteen and parts of two others—or about 15 percent of the book—have anything to do with Mormons. Still, the seven years (1833–39) covered in these chapters were momentous in the movement of the Church and even today continue to swirl in misinformation and minor historical controversy. Some readers will observe that this work, building on the work of Stephen LeSueur (*The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987]), corrects

some inaccuracies about this period; others may feel that it creates a few of its own, in part because of its overreliance upon LeSueur and its persistent attempt to show bias on the part of the early Mormon leaders. Overall, Launius’s narration of the Mormon War is moderate, becoming of the evenhanded spirit of Doniphan himself.

—Jed L. Woodworth

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*The American Inns of Court: Reclaiming a Noble Profession*, compiled and edited by Paul E. Pixton (Matthew Bender, 1997)

In August 1979, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger met with his administrative assistant Mark Cannon at a Utah summer cabin for a rest stop to visit with Dallin H. Oaks, then president of Brigham Young University, and Rex E. Lee, dean of the BYU law school. Out of that auspicious encounter emerged a nationwide program called the American Inns of Court. The Chief Justice had long campaigned to improve the professionalism and civility of lawyers practicing in the courts of the United States. Today, less than twenty years later, over three hundred law schools in the United States sponsor a chapter of the American Inns of Court to inculcate in future litigators high qualities of ethical skills in legal advocacy.

BYU law school was the first school to embrace the concept. Thanks to Judge Sherman Christensen, Clifford Wallace, and many others, the charter unit of the program was inaugurated in Provo in 1980. Pixton’s book tells the story of that founding of the American Inns of Court, which prepared the way for the program’s proliferation throughout the nation. Thoroughly documented with numerous memos, letters, and recollections, this interesting institutional history, produced

at BYU, shows how this national organization received its constitutional underpinnings from the work of its charter unit.

—John W. Welch

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*Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: California*, edited by David F. Boone, Robert C. Freeman, Andrew H. Hedges, and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1998)

Inspired by the 1996 sesquicentennial of the arrival of the *Brooklyn*, the ship that brought almost two hundred Latter-day Saints to the shores of the Golden State, *California* is an impressive addition to the Regional Studies series and has many interesting stories to tell. Since the arrival of those first Saints, California has witnessed important events in both national and Church history. The book's fifteen articles treat subjects as diverse as the march of the Mormon Battalion, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, and the riots that erupted in Los Angeles following the Rodney King trial. Organized chronologically, the essays present a myriad of images, each one adding a distinctive flavor. Eliminating any single essay would leave the work incomplete.

The contributors bring to the volume numerous approaches and perspectives, giving the reader a taste of the richness and variety that has characterized the Saints' experiences in California. With some articles focusing on individuals, others on groups or events, and all demonstrating the Golden State's significant role in the past, present, and future of the Church, *California* is never boring. However, with the exception of the article by Richard Holzapfel, the volume might have benefited from illustrations that would give life to lengthy descriptions of people and places.

*California* makes a valuable addition to the growing body of works on Church

history, reminding the reader that the Church is not confined to the Wasatch Front. The volume offers satisfying and enlightening reading for anyone interested in learning more about the complex and compelling story of the Latter-day Saints.

—Amber Esplin

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*My Servant Brigham: Portrait of a Prophet*, by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and R. Q. Shupe (Bookcraft, 1997)

"The heart of this book is the images" (3), assert the authors of this brief but attractive volume. Providing "some lesser-known word pictures and visual images, photographs and artifacts" (3) from the life and world of Brigham Young, this work skillfully weaves together a well-documented running text with visual images, often ingeniously utilizing images as text.

Many images are seen here in print for the first time, such as the handsome portrait of Brigham Young featured on the cover (also 107). Rare views were dug out of nineteenth-century national copy, the Library of Congress, or private hands. There are no earth-shattering discoveries—no long-hoped-for photograph of Brother Brigham out among his people—but even the expert will learn something new from this collection. In particular, images of Brigham Young's carriage, his death mask, and a document listing the measurement of his physical lineaments (120, 141, 142) will interest both scholar and layman alike. Scholars will benefit from corrections and clarifications on the dating of portraits and will puzzle over an image purported to be a fragment of Brigham Young's original membership certificate (59), dating his baptism to April 9, 1832, five days earlier than his own recollected date of April 14.

Telling a story through images, as this book attempts to do, inevitably leaves out elements of the story where images are lacking or do not get the point across.