

Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952, by Randy Astle (New York: Mormon Arts Center, 2018)

Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952 is the first book in a series by Randy Astle discussing Latter-day Saint cinema and its history. In the introduction, the author describes the five chronological “waves,” or eras, in Latter-day Saint film (10–12). In this first volume, he discusses the first two waves, the first running from July 1898 to October 1929, and the second spanning October 1929 to January 1953. A discussion of the following waves and an in-depth analysis of all the information presented will appear in subsequent books (7).

Well equipped to tackle this subject, author Randy Astle is a professional in the field of film. He received his master’s degree in filmmaking from the London Film School and has worked extensively in children’s entertainment and other media. He has also been writing for *Filmmaker Magazine* since 2011.

With 671 pages, including notes and an index, the book is divided into three substantial chapters. The first is about origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the role of film within the Church. Chapter 1 also reviews nineteenth-century precedents for film and parallels in other branches of Latter-day Saint art. Chapter 2 explores the first wave of Latter-day Saint cinema, primarily dealing with members of the Church and the mainstream industry. It also discusses cinematic depictions of Latter-day Saints (which were usually quite hostile) and the propagandistic films the Church made in response. The chapter ends with a comparison between independent Latter-day Saint films and Church institutional films of the period. Chapter 3 discusses the second wave of Latter-day Saint film, beginning with

how the depictions of the Church and its members in popular film became kinder and more nuanced during this era. The chapter then moves on to how, during this period, Latter-day Saints joined the film industry in earnest at varying levels and spread film through their own private network and again ends with a comparison between institutional and independent films.

For those who have a love for film or media, Latter-day Saint culture, or the lesser-known aspects of the Church’s history, this book will be a satisfying and informative read. Astle offers an abundant amount of research and information in this book, and in so doing uncovers a world that many members of the Church scarcely knew they were a part of.

—Veronica Anderson

Business and Religion: The Intersection of Faith and Finance, edited by Matthew C. Godfrey and Michael Hubbard MacKay (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2019)

If you are interested in the intersection of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and finance, you will be intrigued by this compilation of papers presented at a March 2018 symposium sponsored by the Department of Religious Education at Brigham Young University and the Church History Department in Salt Lake City. The topics are many and varied and are divided loosely into the four sections of this volume.

Part 1 consists of two keynote addresses: one on the spiritual foundations of Church financial self-reliance by Presiding Bishop Gérald Caussé, and the other by Sharon Ann Murphy, a professor of history at Providence College, who offers new insights into the economic circumstances in which the

Kirtland Safety Society debacle played itself out.

Part 2, “Consecration and Cooperation,” comprises four chapters. Gerit Dirkmaat, an assistant professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU, discusses early conflicts over consecrated properties in the Church, focusing specifically on Ezra Thayer and Leman Copley. Jeffrey Paul Thompson, an archivist at the Church History Library, offers a fascinating history of the rise and demise of ZCMI (Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution). Patricia Lemmon Spilsbury, a missionary serving at the Church History Library, discusses the straw-braiding industry as an effort to implement cooperation and economic improvement. Finally, Brooke Kathleen Brassard, who holds a PhD in religious studies from the University of Waterloo, addresses the politics of cooperation among Latter-day Saints in Alberta, Canada.

Part 3, “Utah Territorial Economies,” includes four presentations, beginning with R. Devan Jensen, executive editor in BYU’s Religious Studies Center, who explores the history of the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company. Next is William P. MacKinnon, an independent scholar and leading expert on the Utah War, who discusses the financing of the Church’s standing army during that conflict. Sherilyn Farnes, a doctoral candidate in U.S. history at Texas Christian University, paints an economic portrait of the polygamous household of Eliza Partridge Lyman, whose husband, Amasa Lyman, failed to adequately provide for her and her children. The last chapter in this section is by Julie K. Allen, a professor of

comparative literature and Scandinavian studies at BYU, who offers a case study of Danish convert-immigrant economies in the Utah Territory, using the experience of Hans Jørgensen.

Part 4, “Economics and the Institutional Church,” comprises five chapters. Samuel D. Brunson, professor of law at Loyola University Chicago, explores the confrontation between Brigham Young and John P. Taggart, assessor of Internal Revenue for the district of Utah during the implementation of the nation’s first income tax. Brian Q. Cannon, professor of history at BYU, examines the lives and finances of the Church’s “thousand-dollar class”—a short list of members who paid over \$1,000 in tithing—in 1917–18. Scott C. Esplin, a professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU, discusses the financial decision the Church faced in the early twentieth century of whether to continue with Church academies or to establish seminaries adjacent to secular high schools. Joseph F. Darowski, recently retired from the Joseph Smith Papers Project, examines the genesis of the Church Security Plan between 1920 and 1936. Finally, Mary Jane Woodger, a professor of Church history and doctrine at BYU, and Kiersten Robertson, a BYU student, discuss the economics behind the construction of the General Relief Society Building.

This compilation, as these brief summaries indicate, contains a variety of topics that should be of interest to readers who want more information about financial aspects of the Church throughout its history.

—Roger Terry