Currents in Mormon Culture
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THE COVER Among those waiting to board the northbound Denver & Rio Grande Western
at Springville in 1915 were Bert Sumison, right foreground, who was leaving on an LDS mission
to Canada, and his brother, LaCell, a student at Brigham Young University. Photograph by
George Edward Anderson from the Rell G. Francis Collection.
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In this issue

The zeal to instruct and be instructed has left an indelible print on the face of Mormon culture. The outsider views with awe the stream of books, magazines, and manuals published with and without the church imprimatur and the number of meetings, classes, and social gatherings, beginning with Primary, that the active Mormon attends. These tendencies appeared early in Mormon history, although they did not always follow an orthodox pattern.

The Godbeite intellectuals, treated in the first article, strayed too far into free-thought radicalism for their more conservative brethren and quickly found themselves outside the mainstream. Yet, their brief flutter with spiritual phenomena attracted a following in the 1870s, and séances and planchette activity were widely reported. When this intriguing byway proved a cul-de-sac, Utah could nevertheless claim as enduring benefits a rival newspaper to the church-owned press and an important historical survey.

If dabbling with spirits was dangerous, reading fiction was scarcely better. Editorials denounced the ill effects of novel-reading in terms reminiscent of today’s “Pac-Man” scare. Mormon periodicals overflowed with facts on myriad topics, until, in the 1880s, editors found a way to slake their readers’ thirst for fiction by gradually introducing stories that taught gospel truths.

Whatever the average Mormon might or might not be reading, the centerpiece of his religious and social life was the ward meetinghouse. The third article details the wide variety of fare available. Much of it was instructional, but dancing, music (Fifteenth Ward choir above), and theatricals leavened the mix.

The remaining articles examine Mormon attitudes toward science in the broadest sense. The career of a well-known pioneer physician suggests that medical practice was still in its infancy and that Brigham Young and others viewed it with ambivalence. The history of the Deseret Museum reminds us that the quest for knowledge is a deeply rooted human need, a need that Mormons have been determined to satisfy within their unique institutional framework.
When the Spirits Did Abound: Nineteenth-Century Utah's Encounter with Free-Thought Radicalism

BY RONALD W. WALKER

Séance in 1871. Mary Evans Picture Library.
As I travel hither through the land,
I find the people strangely fantasied.

Hamlet

Before the appearance of Joe Hill and the Wobblies, even prior to the seething ferment of the agrarian and Populist crusades, Utah had the

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makings of a radical tradition. During the 1870s a group of able and reform-minded LDS dissidents challenged Brigham Young’s order with a Utah version of nineteenth-century spiritualism. And as the spirits did abound so also did free-thought radicalism. Traditional Christian formulations were cast aside. Equality of race, color, and sex was espoused, and a remarkably prescient theory of the positive functions of government was preached — very much on the order of modern governmental practice. Moreover, the Utah spiritualists produced more than séances and preachments. They spawned a rival church organization, the first successful anti-LDS newspaper, a seminal historical survey of Mormonism, and an unprecedented public forum that featured a stream of internationally renowned radical itinerants. The hothouse roots of Utah spiritualism failed to sustain a permanent growth; yet in passing, the movement added an interesting and untold chapter to Utah’s intellectual history.¹

When William S. Godbe and E. L. T. Harrison first entered the New York salon of the celebrated medium Charles Foster — apparently unknown and having not been previously introduced — they were greeted with the familiar voice of the deceased Heber C. Kimball, formerly of the LDS church’s First Presidency. “How do you do, Brother William” and “Brother Eli?” Thus began a series of fifty séances that, continuing through the early fall of 1868, provided the impetus for Utah’s free-thought spiritualism. Godbe and Harrison were the intellectual leaders of a group of disaffected Mormons, and not surprisingly their spiritualist experiences confirmed their religious doubts. They returned to Utah armed with a blueprint for transforming Mormonism into a mixture of philosophy and spiritualism. Accordingly, during the summer of 1869 their weekly Utah Magazine prepared the Saints for their “higher revelation” by a series of articles that foreshadowed the virtues and reality of spiritualism. More obvious were their journalistic jabs aimed at the alleged constrictions and temporal errors of President Young’s leadership. As a consequence, a high council court severed Godbe and Harrison from Mormonism.²


²O. H. Conger to the Banner of Light, reprinted in Salt Lake Daily Tribune, November 12, 1879. The spiritualists later frankly conceded the conspiratorial nature of their movement; see “Address to the National Association of Spiritualists,” text in Salt Lake Weekly Tribune, September 9, 1871.
The Godbeite or New Movement insurgency had formally begun. In rapid sequence the dissenters organized a rival Church of Zion, unsuccessfully sought Joseph Smith III, the son of Mormonism’s founding prophet, for its titular leader, and began to unfold their new message. “We are not only tending toward universalism,” Godbe soon announced, “but are there already.” The two leaders consequently repudiated a literal Second Advent, the physical resurrection, the Mormon concept of a personal God, and the Christian Atonement. At times their iconoclasm was laced with humor. “Even if the Bible was the divinest of all books,” Godbe reported, “that did not say a great deal for it.” Harrison in turn announced the “time had come for the destruction of the ‘old serpent, the devil,’ and he was happy to be able to announce to the audience the decease of that venerable and time-honored individual.”

By the fall of 1870 the Church of Zion was preaching a theology outside Christianity’s mainstream—a fact the Godbeites took pains to emphasize to their radically minded friends. “The words ‘Church’ and ‘Zion’ are objectionable to a certain class of free-thinkers,” the movement’s newspaper conceded.

They think because we call our Movement a Church that it must, like churches of the past, be limited by creeds; that it must claim a right to dictate the souls of its members . . . .

Nothing of this kind is the case. The Church of Zion is a system which aims to give the benefits of religious association and spiritual culture to its members, and at the same time free them from every species of mental trammels.

It may be asked, why use the word ‘church’ at all? We reply, because by long association that word is allied to the idea of a body combined for the development of holiness and purity of life . . . .

As to the word ‘Zion,’ we attach no fanatical or sectarian meaning to it. We use the word simply because it expresses the idea of something consecrated to the spiritual and the divine.

Moreover, Godbeitism became increasingly frank about its semi-disguised spiritualism. The Utah ministry of John Murray Spear forced the issue. A long-time campaigner in the cause, Spear had formed spiritualist societies in New York, Ohio, and California. At one point in his career he claimed a friendly group of spirits called “Electrizers” had revealed to him the secret of an electric motor that promised humanity a four-hour work day and universal wealth. While many spiritualists

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3 For these and other illustrations of Godbeite sentiment, see Mormon Tribune, January 8 and 29, February 19, March 12, and April 2, 9, 16 and 23, 1870.

4 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, October 8, 1870, emphasis in the original.
considered Spear bizarre, others saw him as a man of “childlike simplicity” and “one of the most attractive figures” in the movement. Clearly, the Godbeite leaders found him impressive. During the early fall of 1870 he initiated the disciples of Godbe and Harrison into the higher mysteries of spiritualism. Spiritualist circles were formed, séances were held, personal character sketches secured in the “entranced condition” were dispensed, and even a purported message from Joseph Smith was delivered. By 1871 Spear’s lectures were attracting “respectable” sized audiences not only in Salt Lake City but also in the Gentile citadel of Corinne.

The disciples of Godbe and Harrison, originally recruited to protest the alleged excesses of Mormonism, could no longer mistake the meaning of Godbeitism. Many were unperturbed. Joseph Salisbury proclaimed that the doctrines of the New Movement were actually the long-standing teachings of Andrew Jackson Davis, perhaps American spiritualism’s most commanding figure. Fred Perris and John Lindsay tested the spiritualistic waters in New York and were assured in a three-hour séance of the ultimate triumph of the Utah liberal movement. Along with Harrison and Godbe, Eli Kelsey, Henry Lawrence, William Shearman, Frederick Walker, Sarah Pratt, and Emily Teasdale (the latter two were wives of a present and future apostle) were among the recorded participants in the spiritualistic fervor sweeping the territory.

Thus, after less than two years following their break with Mormonism, the Godbeites not only frankly confessed their spiritualism but became deeply involved in its phenomena. In September 1871 they officially declared their allegiance. Godbe, Harrison, and Shearman personally petitioned the American National Convention of Spiritualists meeting in Troy, New York, for official recognition of their movement:

The Utah Movement which now for the first time represents itself in your councils, was planned in the spirit spheres for the threefold purpose of

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6 Glimpses of Spear's Utah activity can be found in Sketch of Amasa Lyman, September 22, 1870, and Amasa Lyman Journal, September 1870, both in Amasa Lyman Papers, Archives Division, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS Archives). See also Daily Corinne Reporter, September 21, 1871.

Breaking down the One Man power existing in Utah; throwing open this
country to the march of civilization, and developing its wealth and re­
sources for the benefit of the nation; and at one and same time for the
greater and nobler object of bringing the creed-bound inhabitants of this
Territory into communication with the light and intelligence of the higher
life.\textsuperscript{8}

Fears of Mormons in general and Godbeite polygamy in particular for a
moment threatened to dissuade the convention. But a firebrand delegate
turned the tide to the Utahns' favor. "Down with law, down with insti­
tutions, down with government," he declared. I would "receive an address
[for recognition] from the lowest depths of hell . . . all the more readily
if the devil himself brought it."\textsuperscript{9} The odious comparison was offset by its
results. The free-wheeling and free-thinking spiritualists enthusiastically
extended the hand of fellowship.

Acceptance of the Utah petition was a watershed. It signaled the
total eclipse of the Church of Zion by free-thought spiritualism. Hence­
forth such expressions as "the Church of Zion," "the New Movement,"
or even "Godbeitism" were displaced by "Liberalism," "Radical Reform,"
and "Free Thinking." Using these designations, Utah spiritualism would
continue for more than a decade as an important community force. In
contrast to the early high hopes of Godbe and Harrison, their movement
no longer posed a serious threat to Mormonism. Instead, its raspish and
radical spirit lent an element of plurality to the Utah scene, providing
an effective local counterweight to Utah's prevailing faith.

It is difficult to assess the spiritualists' strength. Their petition to the
National Spiritualists in 1871 contained only 160 names drawn from the
entire territory.\textsuperscript{10} But Utah spiritualism also included those who were
unwilling to proclaim themselves openly but who nevertheless sympa­
thized with or practiced its phenomena. A correspondent to the Salt Lake
Tribune in 1873 optimistically claimed that Utah's capital city alone
possessed 5,000 such investigators.\textsuperscript{11} Although such an estimate was un­
doubtedly highly inflated, spiritualism's influence was hardly insignificant.
Spiritualist-liberal centers emerged in Logan, Park City, Cottonwood,
Jordan, Beaver, Mount Pleasant, Ogden, and Salt Lake City, with the
latter three communities possessing their own free-thought assembly halls.
An attempt to organize Scandinavian anti-Mormon dissent upon spiritu­

\textsuperscript{8} Salt Lake Weekly Tribune, September 9, 1871.
\textsuperscript{9} New York Daily Tribune, September 16, 1871.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} Salt Lake Daily Tribune, November 16, 1873.
alist and reformist lines produced the immigrant newspaper *Scandinav* and societies that claimed 800 members throughout the territory. In such remote regions as Beaver, Mormon ecclesiastical authorities denounced spiritualism as tincturing “many” members of the supposedly highly orthodox Parowan School of the Prophets.

Obviously spiritualism had become very much a part of the mountain air. David Smith’s report on Utah conditions warned his brother, Joseph III, not to be too “bitter against Spiritualism. It actuates many here.” Brigham Young himself understood such pragmatism. When told how the William Cogswell family had been led from Los Angeles to Salt Lake and then commanded to join Mormonism by a spiritualistic planchette (a small, heart-shaped hand-rest, supported on its three ends by two castors and a small pencil), Brigham confirmed the instrument’s direction, and the Cogswells became leading figures of the Salt Lake Theatre. Ellen Pratt McGary reported planchette activity as far south as Beaver, Utah. But McGary said that spirits in southern Utah refused to take possession of hands placed upon the planchette and consequently no message could be spelled out.

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Beaver spiritualism: Minutes of the School of the Prophets, Parowan, Utah, May 13, 1871, LDS Archives.

32 David Smith to Joseph Smith III, November 12, 1870, David Smith Papers, Department of History, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Mo.

33 William J. Cogswell, “Was Brigham Young a Spiritualist?” September 24, 1900, MS, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, quoted with permission; Ellen Pratt McGary to Ellen Clawson, April 23, 1870, Hiram B. Clawson Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.
A further index of Utah spiritualism is provided by the itinerant spiritualists. During the 1870s Salt Lake City became a minor spiritualistic Mecca. Over forty-five harmonial lecturers and mediums can be identified as visiting the city with the actual count perhaps exceeding twice that amount. These included some of the most celebrated of their time: (1) Emma Hardinge Britten — practitioner of "inspirational speaking" and author of an early standard text, *Modern American Spiritualism*; (2) DeRobigne Mortimer Bennett — publisher, editor of the *Truth Seeker*, and prolific author of travel, anti-Christian, and radical works; (3) Mrs. Hannah F. M. Brown — editor of the *Lyceum Banner* and former president of the American Association of Spiritualists; (4) Warren Chase — abolitionist, feminist, mesmerist, author, founder of the Wisconsin Phalanx, Free Soil politician, and radical California legislator; (5) William Denton — leading psychometrist (a medium who read personal character by holding in his hand an object belonging to the subject) and author of over a half-dozen pseudoscientific works; (6) Charles Foster — one of the century's foremost mediums whose influence touched not only the Utah Godbeites but English, American, and Australian spiritualists as well; (7) the Keeler family — test mediums (mediums who performed before audiences "tests" supposedly achieved by spiritualistic intervention) whose legerdemain attracted upwards of 37,000 people to visit their native Moravia; (8) J. R. Newton — magnetic healer through the "laying on of hands" and formerly entrepreneur of the "Vital Recuperator" which promised a cure for all chronic diseases; (9) James Martin Peebles — a "Christian" spiritualist and widely read author and publisher; (10) Dr. C. Pinkham — dispatched to Utah from the World Congress of Spirits; (11) Dr. Joseph Simms — described as the "ablest author of physiognomy" (divination by facial features) and leading exponent of dietary health care; (12) Cora L. V. Tappan-Richmond — considered by many spiritualists to be the most talented trance speaker of her time (public speaking while in the bodily possession of another spirit); and (13) Victoria Claflin Woodhull — formerly president of the American Association of Spiritualists, publisher of *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, exposé of the alleged Beecher-Tilden affair, and social, political, and sexual radical.¹⁵

¹⁵Salt Lake Daily Tribune often announced the visitation of these spiritualists and provided a review of their public presentations. Although no comprehensive survey of spiritualism has yet been undertaken, Podmore, *Mediums of the Nineteenth Century*; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The History of Spiritualism*, 2 vols. (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926); and especially Moore, *In Search of White Crows*, contain useful information.
The national itinerants were impressed with what they found in Utah. Bennett found “hundreds, and possibly thousands” of Mormon apostates, many of whom had become “Liberalists and Spiritualists.”

Peebles likewise declared that the Utah spiritualists were “quite numerous” and held that their “devotion to the principles of harmonial philosophy ought to inspire, if not shame, many eastern [spiritualist] organizations.”

Particularly impressive was the Utah spiritualists’ command of a public voice. The Utah Magazine had been successively transformed into the Mormon Tribune and then bifurcated into the secular Salt Lake Daily Tribune and the spiritualistic Salt Lake Weekly Tribune. When the Daily Tribune passed out of Godbe’s hands in 1873, he temporarily preserved the Weekly as the Leader. Unfortunately, Godbeite journalism proved to be an impossible financial drain. But during its six years it gave spiritualism a magnified voice within the community while commencing the first long-lived anti-Mormon newspaper in the territory.

The Liberal Institute was probably more important in broadcasting the spiritualists’ views. It quickly passed from a Church of Zion meeting hall to an informal seminary of religious, literary, and political free thought. In the day of the Chautauqua and the public forum, the Liberal Institute provided the spiritualists with a hall for debate, lecture, education, entertainment, and social relaxation. The building was by all accounts comely and even “magnificent.” Although its 1,000-seat capacity was seldom used during the early 1870s, the institute’s Sunday evening services often proved more popular than any Mormon ward meeting in the city (the main LDS service was a communitywide afternoon program held in the tabernacle). In 1874 a local church worker voiced what must have been a general Mormon concern. She “exhorted the sisters [of the Retrenchment Association] not to attend these Spiritualist meetings that were held in the Liberal Institute” and expressed sorrow “to see so many of the saints drawn there.”

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17 James Martin Peebles, Around the World; Or, Travels in Polynesia, China, India, Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Other “Heathen” Countries (Boston: Colby and Rich, 1875), p. 5.
19 Sarah Decker, Minutes, Senior and Junior Cooperative Retrenchment Association, October 31, 1874, LDS Archives. For the assertion that the institute outdrew the Mormon ward meetings, see letter signed “Honest Poverty,” Salt Lake Daily Tribune, January 21, 1873.
Armed with perhaps the most ably edited journal in the territory and the most commodious assembly hall in the city, the Utah spiritualists commanded a disproportionate influence. Their position was also augmented with talent and wealth. The brooding and nervous E. L. T. Harrison earned his livelihood and reputation as an architect, but his pen and tongue also provided the free-thought spiritualists with resolve and design. George Crouch, Fred Perris, William Shearman, Joseph Salisbury, and W. N. Slocum were able spiritualists whose prose bolstered the Tribune. John Lindsay and T. A. Lyne were favorites of the Salt Lake stage. T. B. H. Stenhouse’s Rocky Mountain Saints aimed to provide Utahns with a spiritualistic interpretation of their history and in the process left an indelible historiographical mark. The merchant princes, W. S. Godbe, H. W. Lawrence, and the even more substantial Walker brothers lent the movement social and financial weight. Unwilling to wear their spiritualism too openly, the Walkers nevertheless maintained a room in their opera house for Liberal Society transactions and frequently supplied financial aid. T. C. Armstrong, William Manning, Thomas D. Brown, and Alfred Ward were merchants of lesser achievement who nevertheless possessed abilities considerably above the norm.

21 The spiritualism of most of these and other leaders is documented by the Salt Lake Tribune’s reports of Liberal Institute activity. The Walker brothers’ spiritualism is established in Bennett, Truth Seeker, p. 586.
During the 1870s others aligned themselves with spiritualism and thereby provided Utah history with interesting counterpoints. In early May 1870 Amasa Mason Lyman, formerly a counselor to Joseph Smith and subsequently a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles, declared his intention to join the Church of Zion. “He had smothered up his abilities to do good for three years,” he complained.22 He now promised to preach “the truth as he understood it.” Lyman’s definition of the truth had appreciably changed since his original embrace of Mormonism. While a leader of the San Bernardino Mormon colony he had experimented with spiritualism. Later, when presiding over the British Mission, his growing theological liberalism led him to deny the Christian Atonement, a position in which he persisted despite several sanctions from his brethren. Believing Lyman’s aberration to be more from mental distress than infidelity, Mormon church leaders in 1867 cut the apostle from the Twelve, suspended him from priesthood activity, and instructed him to find activities employing his head and hands that “health of mind and body will attend you.”23

Instead, Lyman cast his lot with the Utah free thinkers. In the absence of “Young Joseph” Smith’s availability, the Godbeites conferred upon the fifty-seven-year-old former apostle the titular presidency of the

22 Committee of the High Council to the President and Members of the High Council, May 12, 1870, Amasa Lyman Papers.
23 Letter of Brigham Young et al. to Amasa Lyman, May 1867, Amasa Lyman Papers.
Church of Zion. But it was spiritualism and not position that impelled him. By late 1870 Lyman was thoroughly initiated into its mysteries, and during the next several years he found himself in a séance as many as three or four nights weekly, his pubescent daughter, Hila, often serving as medium. Such deceased relatives as his father, father-in-law, children, and aunt delivered comforting messages from beyond the veil. Likewise, former Mormon leaders Heber Kimball, Hyrum Smith, Jedediah Grant, Newel K. Whitney, and Joseph Smith himself paid occasional visits. At first the old warrior toured the territory to declare vigorously his new faith. However, toward the end, Lyman retired to his Fillmore homestead, engaged in an occasional séance, and died as a symbol of free-thought emancipation to his fellow spiritualists.

Lyman was not without his converts. David Hyrum Smith, the posthumous son of Joseph Smith and long rumored to be the heir apparent of either the LDS or RLDS movements, commenced his second missionary tour of Utah in the summer of 1872. His public defense of the Josephite faith concealed the turmoil within him. By July “the testimony” of his father’s participation in plural marriage became “too great” for him to deny, and with that private admission, his susceptibility to Lyman’s entreaties grew. The former Mormon apostle met with Smith constantly, participated with him in spiritual phenomena, and may have been the influence, along with other spiritualists in Ogden and Malad, Idaho, that led Smith to write an undated letter to his brother questioning the efficacy of institutional religion. When in November 1872 Smith recommenced his public Salt Lake ministry, the Tribune proclaimed his sudden and growing sophistication. “Mr. Smith’s ideas are original and brilliant, his eloquence fluent, and his views cosmopolitan,” the newspaper asserted. “When his father declared before his advent to our atmosphere

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25 Lyman’s séance activity is detailed in his journal. For the Utah spiritualists’ praise of Lyman upon his death, see Salt Lake Tribune, February 7 and 27, 1877.


27 David Smith to Joseph Smith III, n.d.; the letter was unsigned. During this period David was also penning letters that, while mordant, expressed his “confidence in the destiny of the [RLDS] Church and its divine mission,” David Smith to Joseph Smith III, October 22 and November 19, 1872; all letters are found in the David Smith Papers. Smith-Lyman contacts are also suggested in the Amasa Lyman Journal, July through November, 1872. Joseph Smith III later confirmed his brother’s spiritualism in the Saints Herald 82 (October 22, 1935): 1360–61.
that he should lead ‘Israel,’ it was one of the truest inspirations he ever had.”

The Tribune’s praise probably reflected not so much Smith’s progress as a philosopher and elocutionist as his growing commitment to spiritualism. By the end of 1872 his discourses were filled with spiritualistic themes and imagery, and when “Eternal Judgment” was announced as the subject of an upcoming lecture, the Tribune ventured that Smith’s address would not be “as orthodox as its title would imply.” For the moment the spiritualists had the good fortune to possess the affections — and increasingly the public declarations — of a crown prince. But the physically and emotionally delicate Smith could not maintain his balance. In early February 1873 he experienced a “severe” attack of “brain fever.” Thereafter, he reacted erratically amid alternating rounds of insanity and lucidity. Rumors swept the city in late February that Smith desired baptism in the LDS faith. Several weeks later he penned a formal revelation counseling Joseph III to invite new men into the leading councils of the Reorganization. Despite his subsequent call in April 1873 to the Josephite First Presidency, his instability eventually forced his institutionalization.

With the departure of the ill-starred Smith, spiritualism lost whatever chance it may have had to transform Utah’s faddish interest into a widespread and committed following. But the core of influential devotees continued, occasionally augmented by conversion or immigration. In April 1874 George D. Watt, Mormonism’s first European convert, Brigham Young’s former secretary, and long-time church recorder, announced his spiritualism before a S.R.O. Liberal Institute audience. Watt complained that the “power, gifts, [and] influences” of the Mormon priesthood were “purely a matter of faith, nothing tangible, nothing real.” During the middle 1870s he circulated between the spiritualists’ Salt Lake and Ogden chapters as one of their favorite speakers. In 1876 Andrew Cahoon, forty years a Mormon and eighteen years a bishop, announced his con-

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28 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, November 14, 1872.
29 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, November 30, 1872. For Smith’s other spiritualistic discourses, see ibid., November 4, 14, 20, 27, 1872.
30 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, February 6, 12, 15, and 22, and March 6, 1873. David’s revelation to his brother disclaimed any personal ambition, March 15, 1873, David Smith Papers. Later in letters to the Salt Lake Daily Tribune, July 10, 1877, and January 6, 1878, Joseph Smith III refused to confirm or deny rumors that David’s illness was the result of malicious poisoning. Actually the brothers’ correspondence reveals that David’s instability had been a long-standing mutual concern.
31 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, April 12, 1874.
Free-Thought Radicalism

Moreover, as the decade progressed such Gentiles as Professor W. H. Holmes, M. M. Bane, Dr. Holland, J. E. Clayton, and O. H. Conger increasingly occupied the Liberal Institute lectern. Spiritualism’s touch upon Utah society had proven more than a light caress.

Why had some Mormons proven so susceptible to spiritualism? The pattern existed prior to the 1870s. Orson Pratt reported that “if you heard anything about . . . [Kirtland or Nauvoo] apostates” in the eastern cities of the United States, “there was scarcely a case but what they were spiritual mediums.”

The Salt Lake Tribune made a similar observation. “Mormon children who have never known anything but the faith of their parents, when they apostatize usually attach themselves to some of the Christian churches; but those apostates who were Mormons by conversion, almost without exception accept spiritualism.”

The obvious parallels between the two systems made spiritualism attractive to Mormons whose faith had withered. Both traced their origins to Wayne County, New York, where the Fox family rappings followed Mormonism by a single generation. Although only a belief in spiritual phenomena united the disparate spiritualists, their opinions and professions often seemed similar to much of Mormonism. Both belief systems represented a radical reformulation of traditional Christian thought, displayed their social consciousness at times in communitarianism, and possessed a lively sense of world mission. Each claimed truth wherever it might be found, asserted the spirit-body duality of man, believed in a pre- and post-mortality for eternally progressing mankind, experimented both with marriage relationships and dietary health codes, and shared a belief in a Father-Mother creative ethos. Even their forms and practices were at times similar, Spiritualistic trance speaking and Mormon “speaking by the Spirit” each ignored formalized delivery and relied upon a source outside the speaker himself. Mormon patriarchal blessings had their counterparts in phrenological, psychometric, and physiognomic readings. Both the Mormon and the spiritualist healed by “casting out devils,” although their respective beliefs ascribed priesthood authority and animal magnetism as the empowering force.

32 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, March 15, 1876. Like Watt, Cahoon had long struggled on the precipice before giving way to spiritualism. He had been released from the South Cottonwood bishopric as early as 1871 for disbelief. Minutes of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets, April 1, 1871, LDS Archives.


34 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, March 28, 1876.
But the Utah spiritualists went beyond citing common denomina-
tors. Mormonism, in their view, was a forerunner to their higher revelation. "Why my dear brethren," Lyman reportedly informed his former Mormon associates, "you here now are simply, as it were, at the foot of the mountain, whereas I . . . have gone to the summit of the mountain, and traversed its plateau, and gone far beyond." Too, by regarding Mormonism as a subgenus in its own making, spiritualism verified much in the Mormon experience. Joseph Smith thus was seen as a talented but unsophisticated seer whose Christianity gave his spiritualism the unnatu-
ral cast of institutional religion. The spiritual occurrences that many of the Godbeites had experienced while in Mormonism were now regarded as misread but valid phenomena.

Moreover, the scientific, intellectual, and progressive pretension of nineteenth-century spiritualism gave the lapsed Mormon a feeling of being on the frontiers of human experience. It hardly seemed possible, reported Elizabeth Cady Stanton, that men "who had just escaped from Mormonism, could so highly appreciate the value of truth outside of creeds." The Utah spiritualists, she found, had placed "themselves . . . decidedly on the side of science." Liberal Institute lecturers conducted chemical experiments, demonstrated the wonders of the microscope, tutored children in rational skepticism, and extolled geological uniformi-
tarianism and Darwinian evolution. Indeed, the reformers justified their spiritualism as religious or psychic science. Occasionally their rational and critical tendencies seemed remarkably blunted. (Dentons' psychometric analyses provided detailed descriptions of the Martian population, for example.) But scientific professions were never lacking. "It is folly . . . for priests to put up their puny heads against the power of science," Slocum wrote in the Weekly Tribune, "for all nature is on the other side."

The Utah spiritualists were equally advanced on other questions of the hour. From the beginning of their revolt they preached and practiced feminism. Elizabeth Hunt, Hila Lyman, Elizabeth Crouch, and Godbe's wives, Annie and Mary, served the movement as mediums or in leadership

Lyman's statement is from the Clinton D. Ray Reminiscences as cited by Davis Bitton, "Mormonism's Encounter with Spiritualism," p. 44.

For a representative expression of the Utah spiritualists' views on Mormonism, see E. L. T. Harrison, "The Question of the Hour; Or, Radical or Conservative Measures for Utah?" Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine 1 (October 1880) : 129-40.

Salt Lake Daily Tribune, July 4, 1871.

Salt Lake Weekly Tribune, June 17, 1871. Examples of the Liberal Institute's scientific fare are found in the Salt Lake Daily Tribune, May 27, 1871, January 13, February 7 and 12, March 4, 6, 8, 25, April 15, and September 9, 1872. For Dentons' psychometric analysis, see William Denton and Elizabeth M. R. Denton, The Soul of Things; Or, Psychometric Researches and Discoveries (Wellesley, Mass.: Denton Publishing Co., 1863).
In 1871 the thirty-member executive council for the Utah spiritualists had nine female representatives. Almost half of the nationally prominent spiritualists who toured Utah in the 1870s were women. Unlike elsewhere, the Utah reformers did not allow the claims of woman's equality to extend to the practice of free love, although probably many shared Shearman's private and abstract conversion to the principle. The itinerant spiritualists, however, were not always as discreet. C. W. Tappan, one-time husband of Cora L. V. Tappan-Richmond and a leading participant in the Utah spiritualists' political activities in 1872, was fined $100 for maintaining a house of prostitution on Commercial Street.

The free thinkers were equally bold in proposing a national reform philosophy. The Tribune during the early 1870s suggested the inevitability of class conflict, questioned the supremacy of property rights, supported the fundamental aims of the Paris Commune, and predicted that organized agricultural and industrial labor would yet revolutionize American social and political conditions. The establishment in 1872 of a local chapter of the People's party further illustrated their advanced views. An organizational meeting upheld political equality "regardless of race, color, sex, or previous condition [of servitude]," selected a representative for the National People's Convention, and authorized a local statement in behalf of the newly formed party. "Hitherto it has never appeared to have entered into the minds of politicians," Harrison and several others wrote in the manifesto, "that government should be a parental institution, upon which should rest the imperative obligation of caring for the weak, educating the masses, and studying the interests of the laboring classes. This high place of governmental life, however, will have to be sustained by the future statesmen of America." Almost two decades later Populism proposed similar premises and philosophy. By the 1930s the New Deal had adopted such a program as national policy.

Locally the reformers' views were as "advanced." Godbe denounced prostitution but called for its legalization and regulation. The Tribune's anti-Sabbatarianism was only slightly couched in ambiguity. "People nowadays," the newspaper declared, "are fast losing that puritanic spirit about Sunday once entertained." But there was nothing veiled in the Tribune's support of the positive functions of local government. It successively called for free public education, improved public roads, a city

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39 Amasa Lyman Journal, September 12, 1871.
40 W. H. Shearman to Lyman, September 13, 1870, Amasa Lyman Papers; Salt Lake Daily Tribune, July 12, 1872.
41 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, July 20, 1871; May 22, 1872; January 9 and July 3 and 4, 1873.
42 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, April 24, 1872. See also April 20 and 22, 1872, issues.
hospital, public lighting, a sewage drainage system, a city waterworks, an insane asylum, and an improved fire-fighting system. Even the recommended means of financing had a modern ring. "No city with honest, enterprising officers has ever been able to have an overflowing treasury," the newspaper advised. "On the contrary, such are always found to have a respectably-sized debt."43

At first glance, the spiritualists' programs and philosophy seemed an unlikely combination for isolated and theocratic Utah. Yet, to the serious-minded Saint with British roots or experience (one-third of the Salt Lake county population in 1870 was British born) the radicalism of the spiritualists was neither startling nor unique.44 The agitations of Victorian reform — the penny press, the flood of reformist pamphlets, the stumping Chartist mechanic, or perhaps the radical lectures of a local Hall of Science — had made municipal reform, workingman's democracy, trade unionism, and government activism familiar issues prior to his immigration. Likewise, science, progress, and reform were Victorian ideals that many British converts carried to Deseret.45

Utah reform, then, was a continuation. Most Mormon spiritualists previously were literate, informed, laboring middle class, liberal, and British (or had completed long missionary tours in England). Many had accepted British Mormonism as part of the protest mood of the times. Utah apostates, Harrison later suggested, had commenced their revolt as a "rebellion against the religious control of [English] ministers and priests" and only subsequently raised an opposition to Brigham Young. Mormonism then seemed a joyful antidote to reigning sectarianism, a simple Bible religion infused with spiritual gifts, "rationalistic," "daring," and "thought-awakening."46 It was, as the Tribune later claimed, "a Robert Owen kind of religion," liberal, millennial, and dedicated to building up a communal ideal in America.47 In this atmosphere of Victorian reform Lyman began to discard his scriptural literalism, while Harrison drank

46 Leader, October 25, 1873. Also see ibid., September 6, 1873; Harrison, "Question of the Hour," pp. 139-40; Salt Lake Daily Tribune, April 7, 1873; and Ronald W. Walker, "The Godbeite Protest in the Making of Modern Utah" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1977), pp. 2-26.
Free-Thought Radicalism  

deeply from the Owenite draught. When Utah proved too confining and fundamentalistic for their tastes, these British liberals, like many other lapsed Owenites in the United States and England, found release in free-thought spiritualism.  

In sum, Utah spiritualism had an important but selective attraction in pioneer Utah. The typical Saint, when converting to Mormonism, had burned the bridges of traditional Christianity behind him; mainstream Catholicism or Protestantism thus had little appeal for even the disaffected Mormon. On the other hand, spiritualism, with its many LDS parallels and its professions of “higher truth,” offered a religious and intellectual harbor. But its charms were not universal. Those who accepted free-thought spiritualism usually had been culturally prepared by their previous acquaintance with British liberalism.  

Predictably the Mormon leaders did not respond to the spiritualists and their programs with favor. “The apostacy,” Brigham Young privately declared when the Godbeites first commenced their rebellion, “was the thinnest whitewash of anything he had been acquainted with.”  

But fears that the rank-and-file Saints might prove less discerning brought a vigorous Mormon counterreaction. “Apostles, elders, bishops, and teachers,” reported the correspondent for the New York Herald, “have been busy here . . . talking privately with the people . . . to dissuade them from following what is called this new device of Satan.” The confidential sessions of the School of the Prophets — both in Salt Lake and elsewhere in the territory — were filled with warnings and anathemas, while Miles Grant, a national lecturer specializing in the deficiencies of spiritualism, presented several well-attended discourses at the Mormon Tabernacle.  

But when it became apparent that spiritualism would not offer a major challenge, church leaders were prepared to allow the spiritualist movement to collapse from its own weight. Do “not speak, or write about . . . [the apostates],” President Young advised, “or wish them evil.” Lorenzo Lyman, Amasa’s son who had converted to spiritualism, found such a policy exasperating. “Not that I am treated badly,” he conceded, “but simply left to myself and treated, as it were, with silent contempt.”

The “new movement” of the Owenites (the Utah spiritualists of course used the same phrase to identify their movement) is described in J. F. C. Harrison, Quest of the New Moral World: Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1969), pp. 250–52.  

Brigham Young, Minutes of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets, January 29, 1870.  

New York Herald, January 11, 1870.  

Salt Lake Daily Tribune, April 25, 1871.  

Brigham Young, Minutes of the Salt Lake School of the Prophets, April 23, 1870.  

Lorenzo Lyman to Amasa Lyman, November 9, 1871, Amasa Lyman Papers.
After the early months of 1870 the *Deseret News* lapsed into disdainful silence, while the *Juvenile Instructor* warned its youthful readers of the evils of apostasy without a single reference to spiritualism or the Utah dissenters. The *Keep-A-Pitchinin*, a semimonthly paper devoted to “cents, scents, sense and nonsense,” was probably a more effective foil. The journal during its brief career mercilessly lampooned the “New Move,” parodied its pretentious prose, and reminded everyone throughout 1870 that the Godbeites simply could not get “a-head.” The *Keep-A-Pitchinin* obviously hit a sensitive nerve, for the short-lived *Diogenes* attempted to reply in kind.54

Events confirmed the church leaders’ policy of silence and mirth. When the recusant Scandinavians learned that Brigham Young did not intend to make his United Order of Enoch scheme a question of membership, their protest expired. Likewise, most Mormon experimentation with spiritual phenomena seemed a replay of the national interest of the 1850s — ebbing rapidly following its crest. The local spiritualist press repeatedly failed to find a profitable following. The peak attendance at the Liberal Institute, except for programs of special interest, seemed highest in 1871-72 when the forum commenced.

54 I treat the Utah humor journal in “The *Keep-A-Pitchinin*: Or the Mormon Pioneer Was Human,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 331-44. For an example of the *Juvenile Instructor’s* approach, see its issue 6 (February 4, 1871): 23.
By the mid-1870s the Utah spiritualists began to reveal the chronic instability that plagued the movement elsewhere. Godbe, Kelsey, Sherman, Crouch, Stenhouse, and other able leaders allowed professional interests to draw them increasingly from Salt Lake. Their Sunday services at the institute became irregular. The free thinkers were reorganized into the Salt Lake City Society of Progressive Spiritualists in 1875, and several years later two competing groups emerged. Occasionally, the ministry of an itinerant medium would unite and revitalize them. But toward the end of the decade the spiritualists' infrequent meetings became nostalgic reunions that celebrated the past rather than looked to the future. Their last attempt at organization in 1882, the Free Thought Association, demonstrated that the intervening years had not cooled their sentiments. The association's organizational meeting at the Liberal Institute was well attended, and many in the audience warmly applauded as several of the old-time spiritualists expressed a "thorough-going radicalism" and a willingness to "demolish existing institutions." But their rhetoric always exceeded their organization. Several years later the once majestic Liberal Institute was transformed into a boardinghouse for the Presbyterian Collegiate Institute, and "Mormon" spiritualism was at an end.

A decade later, when a new group, the Progressive Spiritualists of Utah, recited the history of Utah spiritualism, there was no mention of the earlier glories of Godbeite free thinking. The New Movement protest, the faddish sweep of spiritualistic phenomena in the early 1870s, the well-reasoned spiritualism of the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Leader*, the clamor of the Liberal Institute, or even the former tide of itinerant mediums were forgotten. The few "Mormon" spiritualists who remained failed to affiliate with the new organization and found instead other channels for their free thinking. Harrison and Lawrence became charter members of the Unitarian congregation; the latter served briefly as its vice-president and for several decades as a church trustee. Godbe and Lawrence stood unsuccessfully as Populist candidates for a variety of state and municipal offices, denounced the concentration of personal and corporate wealth, advocated Salt Lake ownership of public utilities, and, at least in the case

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55 *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, April 27 and 28, 1882. For the spiritualists' organizational activities during the 1870s, see *Salt Lake Daily Tribune*, March 12, 21, 30, and 31, April 25, and May 2, 1875. Spiritualists also held meetings at Cisler’s Hall, sometimes in competition to the proceedings at the Liberal Institute; see *ibid.*, May 6 and 27, 1877.


of Lawrence, embraced the single-tax ideas of Henry George. A decade later Lawrence was elected to the Salt Lake City Commission as a Socialist.58

Time seemed to dim previous animosities and to conceal the reformers’ spiritualism. “Wm. S. Godbe is a man that I have always liked from my childhood,” penned the youthful Apostle Heber J. Grant in his diary. “He was extremely kind to my mother when I was a small child and she went out sewing for a living.”59 At Harrison’s funeral, Deseret News editor Charles Penrose testified to “his worth, integrity, and conscientiousness” and Apostle John Henry Smith delivered the benediction.60 Only Shearman returned to the Mormon fold. But the probity of the spiritualists’ personal lives and their obvious sympathy for Mormons and Mormon culture eventually eroded suspicions, renewed ties of friendship, and almost made them at one with their former religionists. During one of the spiritualists’ last meetings the Tribune found more than a trace of Mormonism in the radicals’ speeches and acts. “There is something in the air of Mormondom,” its correspondent wrote, “which would seem to insist that we be ‘devoutly thankful,’ even when assembling together for a feast of reason and a flow of soul. That’s a kind of salt that seasons and tempers the profaner discourse of the ex-Mormon in this land of salt and Saints.”61

58 The Great Campaign, People’s Party Extra, broadside printed in Salt Lake City, November 1899, copy in Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City; David B. Griffiths, “Far Western Populism: The Case of Utah, 1893–1900,” Utah Historical Quarterly 37 (1969): 399, 404; and Journal History, October 25, 1879, January 6, 1892, November 1, 1895, May 19, 1913, September 4, 1915, and April 5, 1924, LDS Archives. Lawrence’s personal independence eventually resulted in his expulsion from the local Socialist party.

59 Heber J. Grant Diary, February 6, 7, 1885, Heber J. Grant Papers, LDS Archives.

60 Journal History, May 21, 23, 1900.

61 Salt Lake Daily Tribune, May 6, 1880.
MORMON LITERATURE OF THE 1880S MIGHT BE called, as was the Puritan literature of the 1680s, a "great body of low grade ore." Still, it should not be dismissed out of hand, for the Mormon magazines of the
1880s reveal a remarkable revolution in the attitude of Mormon leaders toward fiction. It was during this important transitional period that Mormons first recognized fiction as a legitimate didactic tool.

From about 1850 to the late 1880s Mormon leaders, along with many other religious leaders and educators throughout England and the United States, were justly suspicious of the shoddy dime novels and penny tabloids that were so abundant. And of course, during the first half-century of the church’s existence, the Latter-day Saints were not spending a great amount of time worrying about the development of a significant artistic tradition. The business of building their successive cities and setting the foundation stones for the literal kingdom of God on earth left precious little time for either contemplation or technical training. Still, in the rocky soil of this pioneer activity were sown the seeds of the fiction that would sprout in the decades to come.

In the early and middle 1880s, the seeds were not falling on fertile ground. As with so many others in America, the Saints were limited by a restrictive attitude that severely circumscribed their willingness to accept fiction in almost any form. During this time very little fiction was published in either of two widely circulated church magazines, the Contributor and the Juvenile Instructor. What they lacked in fiction, however, they made up for in antifiction editorials.

The basic objection was simple — fiction was not true. "Truth is stranger than fiction" was a favorite cry of the avowed antifiction fundamentalists; in a world of important and interesting fact, fiction seemed to them an absolute superfluity. In an 1886 Instructor editorial George Q. Cannon urged, "Read truthful statements. There is an abundance of truth in the world. Seek for it; take pleasure in it. Never allow your minds to be polluted by reading that which is untrue, or slanderous, or derogatory to holiness." To these mountain Saints whose torturous trek west had been fueled by an unwavering dedication to truth, "lying books" were understandably annoying.

There were other alleged ill effects of fiction. One argument held that reading fiction destroyed the memory. A subscriber to this school wrote:

It is a very easy matter to produce story books — mere fiction. A vivid imagination can run on and "conjure up" endless probabilities[,] possibilities and impossibilities, on which hungry, starving minds may feed till they

And a dilemma caught even those few readers fortunate enough to escape fiction’s memory-destroying effect. George Q. Cannon explained, “Some persons’ memories are so retentive as to be a nuisance to them. Instances of this kind are quite frequent among men who have a strong memory and who read trashy works.” The warning was the same for strong- and weak-minded alike: stay away from fiction.

The dictators of literary taste also condemned fiction because it was considered habit-forming, often comparing it to liquor in the evil it wrought. In an 1884 *Instructor* editorial Cannon proclaimed:

Novel reading has the same effect on the mind, in one sense, as dram drinking, or tea drinking has upon the body. It is a species of dissipation. The mind, under the influence of such a habit, is stimulated and the imagination unduly fed, until such people are almost unfitted for the everyday work of life. They become day-dreamers and are not happy when surrounded by difficulties. They are only happy when they can take refuge, as a dram-drinker would to liquor, in novel reading. They bury themselves in their novels and allow their feelings to be wrought upon by the painful trials and woes of their heroes and heroines, who only exist in the imagination of their authors.

Another often-repeated charge was that fiction reading both diminished interest in more important reading and wasted valuable time. If one had time to read after a day in the fields, why not scripture, or doctrine, or at least a useful book about science or invention? In 1883 Cannon reported:

On more than one occasion while traveling through the settlements we have been surprised as well as pained in our feelings to see trashy novels laid by the side of the Holy Bible on the front room table, and, judging from appearances, the former had been perused much more often than the latter.

These indictments, however, were mild when compared with other professed harmful effects of fiction, particularly novel reading. Indeed, Mormon antifictionists were not above using the sensational techniques of the “Eastern press” they so vociferously condemned, in order to paint sordid scenes of novel-bred sorrow. The church magazines were quick

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3 Cannon, “Editorial Thoughts,” *Juvenile Instructor* 19 (April 15, 1884): 120.
to excerpt newspaper accounts of "the dreadful effect which bad reading has upon the young in various parts of the United States." One miserable fellow is described in the Instructor as a once "dutiful son" who unfortunately falls into the insidious habit of reading "the sensational stories of the day." Novels drive him insane, and he brutally kills an innocent office boy as well as his own father. The grisly account of this filial murder is concluded with this masterpiece of understatement: "His poor mother, it may well be imagined, is nearly heart-broken, and bitterly mourns that her son was ever taught to read, for novel reading, she says, has been the cause of it all." Even as late as 1889 the Instructor was reporting accounts of fiction-produced crime. One article revealed the sad tale of a young woman who had murdered her husband, a "good, honest man, who had been faithful and kind to her." In her cell, after the trial was concluded, were found "the unopened Bible, furnished to all prisoners, and heaps of the cheap novels which she had delighted to read for years." And lest the point be missed, the article concludes with this analysis: "If her reading had been different, so[,] we venture to say, would have been her actions and her fate."

Finally, consider the awful fate of one Reimund Holzhey, a twenty-two-year-old robber-murderer who was once "a mild-mannered though rugged boy, winning the admiration and love of his associates by his brave and kind conduct."

Being fond of reading[,] he quickly devoured the contents of all books that came his way. One day he chanced to receive a dime novel which he hastily read. How fatal! That one novel created within him the desire for more such trash. He obtained these books and to these, he solemnly states, is due the credit for his career of crime. Over a hundred of these soul-destroying novels were found in his room. The poison upon which the mind of young Holzhey thus fed started him on a career full of adventure and excitement which will doubtless bring him to the gallows.

Though these purported harmful effects of fiction reading are obviously exaggerated, one should not dismiss them completely. Much of the "trash" was aptly labeled and, if not as harmful as claimed by Mormon leaders, it was, at best, void of redeeming value. This leads to an important question. Were the vehement condemnations of fiction by Mor-

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8 Cannon, "Editorial Thoughts," Juvenile Instructor 19 (April 15, 1884) :120.
8 "Dime Novels," Juvenile Instructor 24 (August 1, 1889) :352.
9 V. I., "A Solemn Warning," Juvenile Instructor 24 (September 15, 1889) :421.
mon leaders aimed at all fictional prose or merely at the glaringly sensationalistic slop of the dime novels and penny tabloids of the day? Yes and no. Although the *Contributor* and the *Instructor* were ambiguous on this question throughout the period of this study, a general pattern does emerge.

The first and most basic indictment, which clearly applied to all fiction, was that novels and short stories, no matter how well conceived, remained untrue. The uncompromising, antifiction hardliners who made no distinction between Dickens and the New York *Ledger* were, for the most part, more influential during the first part of this transitional period. George Q. Cannon left little room for misinterpretation when he said in an 1881 editorial, "Do not spend your time in reading novels or any works of fiction."¹⁰

In an 1881 *Contributor* article George Reynolds went so far as to make distinctions between different levels of fiction; his verdict, however, if arrived at somewhat more circuitously, was the same as Cannon's. Reynolds's three categories of fiction included, "the very best," "reputedly respectable," and "yet lower and still more dangerous." As the "still" indicates, to Reynolds all three levels of fiction were harmful, though in different ways. The best books were also the most eloquently effective in weakening the Mormon position. They challenged the existence of God, undermined polygamy through glorification of monogamy, and made young Saints dissatisfied with their lot. The middle-level novels were harmful because their "plots lie in infractions of the seventh commandment." The injurious nature of the bottom-level works was clearer still. Such a book was "intended to be impure" and contained "suggestive and half indecent pictures."¹¹

But even during this period some recognized that good fiction could serve an effective didactic end. In 1880 Junius Wells said that Charles Dickens's books had "done a world of good in praising virtue and ridiculing vice."¹² In an 1881 *Contributor* young Mormon writers were advised not to be discouraged in being unable to match the writings of William Thackeray, George Eliot, George Sand, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Such distinctions between legitimate and popular fiction were rare in the 1880s. They did, however, provide a foundation for the clear demarcation that was to come in the latter part of the decade.

¹⁰ Cannon, "Editorial Thoughts," *Juvenile Instructor* 16 (February 15, 1881) :42.
¹¹ George Reynolds, "Influence of Outside Literature," *Contributor* 2 (September 1881) :357.
¹² Junius F. Wells, "Volume Two," *Contributor* 2 (October 1880) :27.
Mormon church periodicals in the early 1880s may have been short on fiction, but they were long on fact. Both the Contributor and the Instructor were brimming with interesting fact. One of the Contributor’s expressed goals was to have an “interesting, solid and readable quality.” It succeeded on each of these counts. The variety of instructive articles in the Contributor and Instructor was overwhelming. They included such widely diverse topics as “Boiling Broth in the High Andes,” “Edible Bird’s

Illustration from an 1884 Juvenile Instructor article on the tortoise, an animal the author considered “more lucky than ‘Mormon’ missionaries, for . . . it always has a house to sleep in at night . . . .”


Interest in inspiring biographical narratives is manifest in such articles as "Bismark as an Orator," "David W. Patten," "Thomas Edison," "Ulysses S. Grant," "Newel K. Whitney," "Reminiscences of General Thomas L. Kane," "Handel," and "John Ruskin at His Home."

Even more impressive is the extensive list of travelogues, for as George Q. Cannon explained:

A knowledge of countries and their laws and institutions is very necessary for all the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and especially the Elders; for we take an interest in all nations such as no other people can do. We expect to gather the elect from every nation under heaven to build up Zion. Zion is to be composed of people from all the races upon the face of the earth. This is God’s design concerning Zion, and this will give Zion great strength in the earth.\(^{14}\)


How then did fiction burrow its way into this formidable mountain of fact, particularly in light of the almost hysterical antifiction bias of Mormon leaders? Before addressing this question, it will be useful to examine by actual page count the rise of Mormon fiction during the period from 1880 to 1890. From 1880 to 1882 there was virtually no fiction published in either the *Contributor* or the *Instructor*. By 1884, however, 4 percent of the *Contributor* and 12 percent of the *Instructor* were dedicated to fictional prose. By 1890 the amount of fiction had ballooned to 19 percent of the *Contributor* and 24 percent of the *Instructor*. Considering that the *Contributor* was started specifically to supplant the "light literature" that had gained so much popularity with the Saints, its embrace of fiction is all the more remarkable. In an 1879 letter to President John Taylor and the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Junius Wells had proposed that a new magazine, sponsored by the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association, be published. Wells wrote:

We have unwittingly adopted many customs and some ideas that must be eliminated to make us the people we aim to become. Intemperance, swearing, uncouth language, and the memory-destroying habits of reading light literature are among the evils that we have to contend with, and that we hope to overcome by cultivating "the gift that is within us," that we may

\(^{14}\) Cannon, “Editorial Thoughts,” *Juvenile Instructor* 17 (October 1, 1882) :296.
be examples of the believer in word, in conversation, in spirit, in purity, etc. And we hope to supplant light literature by getting good reading matter, which will be doubly attractive in owing its authorship to the inspiration of willing workers among ourselves.  

Wells's request was favorably received by the brethren and the Contributor was born.  

The Contributor was undoubtedly successful to some degree in combating eastern light fiction, but Wells was probably a bit optimistic with this 1881 assessment of his magazine’s success:  

It is taking the place with many young readers, hitherto occupied by light literature imported from abroad. It is wielding a powerful influence in the cultivation of taste for a purer, higher and better class of reading among the young.  

In the end, though Mormon antifictionists did not win the war, they did not exactly lose it either. The growth of fiction in Mormon magazines during the 1880s was more indicative of change in strategy than of surrender. This change in plan may have in part been derived from the Saints’ experience with drama. Interestingly, though fiction had suffered wholesale condemnation from Mormon leaders, the theater was held in high esteem from the beginning of the Utah experience. In an 1889 editorial explaining Mormonism’s embrace of drama, Cannon says of those American religious leaders who preached against the theater:  

They denounced it and frowned upon all who patronized it. . . . The result was that young people, in their eagerness to obtain amusement, broke away from the restraints of religion and were forced into an attitude of defiance. The theater, therefore, . . . [has] in too many cases been left to the giddy and the thoughtless, and to the wicked, and evil things have grouped themselves around places of amusement of this character.  

Cannon then presents Brigham Young’s solution to this problem:  

It was plain to him that amusements and recreation are necessary to human beings and to the full enjoyment of their powers. Instead, therefore, of prohibiting them, and separating himself and the leading men from them, he provided for them. . . . Young people, in this way, were kept from disobeying their parents in order to obtain amusement.  

In this same way, Mormon leaders solved the “fiction problem” by encouraging the development of a Mormon “home literature” rather than
Among his many church duties, George Q. Cannon provided editorial direction for the Juvenile Instructor.

USHS collections.

by prohibiting all fiction. A higher grade substitute fiction proved a much more effective weapon than antifiction editorializing.

George Cannon articulated this solution in an 1882 Instructor editorial:

There is a great need of more books for our children — books that will attract and at the same time instruct them. The multiplying of such works in our midst will do ten times more to counteract the evils of outside literature than all our public denouncing of such evils will. It will do more to form in our children correct tastes and righteous desires than all the public harangues we can utter to them. If we do not wish our children to read the pernicious, trashy stuff that is imported from abroad, let us furnish them something better at home.\(^a\)

\(^a\) Cannon, “Editorial Thoughts,” *Juvenile Instructor* 17 (February 15, 1882) : 56.
This article was clearly a call for scientific, biographical, and historical literature rather than fiction; it eventually became clear to Cannon and to other Mormon literary leaders, however, that the genre best suited to attracting, and at the same time instructing the young, was fiction.

The transition, however, was not a smooth one. For a time, editorializing in the Instructor contradicted the growing acceptance of fiction within its own pages. On the one hand, Cannon wrote in an 1885 Instructor:

There is no end of interesting narratives which can be related to children, that are entirely truthful, and that have an elevating effect upon them. . . . There is enough truth in the world to occupy all their time and attention, without it being necessary to have recourse to ghost stories or fairy tales, or any works of fiction. To-day our land is almost deluged with works of this description. There are periodicals without number entirely devoted to the publication of fictitious narratives and tales. Large numbers of people of both sexes are constantly employed in their manufacture. Thousands of volumes are issued yearly from the press filled with such trash. . . . We deplore the circulation of this literature of fiction among us. It gives us pain whenever we see the trashy papers—so many of which are issued by the eastern press—on the tables of the Saints, or in the hands of their children. . . . The effect of a persistent course of reading of this class of works is pernicious. Parents and teachers, and all who have care of the young, should do all in their power to prevent the growth of a taste of this kind. Young people, if not watched will fall into the habit unawares.19

Yet the pages of this same journal carried through eleven installments a serial novel that could be substituted for a modern soap opera with very little change. To outline the complicated and convoluted plot with its drunkards, sly lawyers, honest criminals, and golden-hearted old men, would require too many pages. Let it suffice to note that this story of fraud, deceit, violence, intemperance, misapplied justice, and most important of all, true love rewarded, is called “Hanna and Her Baby and Husband.” Even here, however, the editors felt it necessary to assure their readers that the story was “substantially true, but as all the characters mentioned are still living, other names are substituted and the scene is laid in a different place.”20 If a story was purported to be true, even if it had many of the characteristics of the light literature of the eastern press, it was considered acceptable.

This difference between editorial preachment and editorial practice is typical of the ambivalence that characterizes this transitional period of

the 1880s. These complex and sometimes contradictory attitudes were often reflected in the literature itself. Consider for a moment a delightful artifact of Mormon literary history called “Whatsoever a Man Soweth,” published in the Young Woman’s Journal. The story begins with a mother’s prophetic admonition: “Leonard Fox, if you don’t stop reading them trashy novels, day after day and day after day you’ll go clean crazy.” In the story, however, the boy does persist, and later in life attempts suicide. He is unsuccessful, however, and remains unreformed:

The terrible scene he had passed through partially roused him from his foolishness. But as his parents, utterly unsuspecting, never thought of watching him, and left him much to his own devices, supposing him at work at his chosen studies of the law, he at length fell into his old habits, and read more trash than ever.

Later on he marries, and further corrupted by his reading, he leaves his wife, family and eventually his senses:

From thence he was carried, raving mad. Aye, the selfish mind weakened by habitual mental intoxication and disobedience to counsel, the manhood enervated by neglect of energy and manly duty, even in its agony selfishly counting once and for all its own loss, its own remorse gave way and reason fled from its throne before the shrieking demons who entered that temple of mortality.

In the end Leonard recovers slightly and his sister-in-law says of him, “He never dares read a story or novel — not even the very best. He warns every young person he meets never to read novels.”

But if this seems a hard-line antifiction tract, the author goes on to meliorate that attitude with an interesting observation from the same spokeswoman. “Still,” she says, “I think he carries his warning to an excess. Young folks like something bright and gay to read. And books or novels are as great an educator as the theater. I only wish we had novels or stories written by our own people, with proper lessons taught therein.” The last note of this moral tale is important because it recognizes that fiction may at least have a didactic value.

This attitude, a qualified acceptance of fiction as a teaching tool, gained momentum quickly during the last half of the decade. Junius Wells articulated this major modification in strategy in an 1886 editorial. He said of the upcoming year’s bound Contributor collection: “that the matter of the volume may not be too heavy reading, it will be relieved

21 Susa Young Gates [Homespun], “Whatsoever a Man Soweth,” The Young Woman’s Journal 1 (October 1889) :1.
by a series of short stories from some of our talented lady writers, and the Christmas Story and Poem will appear as usual."\textsuperscript{22} There had been hints of this change in policy in the \textit{Instructor} as early as 1883. One delightfully bombastic author, who calls himself Walt, excerpted a tale from the \textit{Arabian Nights} and offered this explanation:

This is the story. Of course, it is fiction, but it teaches several excellent morals. . . . Strange is it not, that an odd story should contain so much good advice and still be all fiction? We must remember that there is good in everything. It only requires an awakening of the understanding, a sharpening of the perceptions, a spirit that seeks truth and a heart that wishes light and joy, and all becomes as fair as the path we tread on a Summer's day, when the heavens are bright, flowers scent the air and the whole world is filled with love and the Spirit of the Heavenly Father.\textsuperscript{23}

And by 1888 clearly the heavens were brighter, the air purer, the grass greener, and didactic fiction more generally accepted by Mormon leaders, for it was even included in the \textit{Contributor}'s "Course in General Literature." \textit{Readings from Washington Irving} was recommended not only because it was moral, but because it was stylistically well conceived. Junius Wells quoted this appraisal of Irving: "His careful, selected words, his variously constructed periods, his remarkable elegance, sustained sweetness, and distinct and delicate painting place him in the very front rank of the masters of our language."\textsuperscript{24}

An 1889 \textit{Contributor} article on how to organize a library advised, "a few volumes on standard fiction may prove valuable and entertaining."\textsuperscript{25} By this time the Mormon endorsement of didactic fiction was complete. B. H. Roberts, writing under the pseudonym Horatio, asserted in an 1889 \textit{Contributor} article entitled "Legitimate Fiction" that fiction was the best means of instructing the public and effecting social reform. He wrote: "The essayist is a character of the past, the novelist of a certain type is taking his place." Of this "certain type" of literature Roberts continued:

\begin{quote}
I can see no harm in such fiction as this; on the contrary, I recognize an effective and pleasing method of teaching doctrine, illustrating principle, exhibiting various phases of character, and making the facts of history at once well known, and giving them an application to human conduct. This class of fiction, indeed, is working its way into our own literature; and stories illustrating the evils overtaking young women, who marry those not of our faith, have appeared both in the \textit{Juvenile Instructor} and the \textit{Contributor}. \footnote{Wells, "Close of the Volume," \textit{Contributor} 7 (September 1886) :475.} \footnote{Walt, "Morals in Fiction," \textit{Juvenile Instructor} 18 (June 1, 1883) :173.} \footnote{Wells, "The First Year's Series," \textit{Contributor} 10 (December 1888) :75.} \footnote{"Association Intelligence," \textit{Contributor} 11 (December 1889) :80.}
\end{quote}
Nor do I think any one reading those stories can doubt their effectiveness; and I am of the opinion that this style of teaching can be employed successfully in other directions.

Roberts then makes the important distinction that had been too often ignored in the first part of the decade:

While the class of fiction which snivels and drivels folly without end, and is composed of “sentimental friperry and dream,” and which mars what it would mend — is to be condemned; it by no means follows that the great works of Scott, Lytton, Thackeray, Dickens, Browning, George Elliot [sic] and Victor Hugo are also to be condemned. To bar such works as these from our homes or libraries would be to deny ourselves access to the richest treasures of English literature.26

Roberts may have misspelled a name and made an Englishman of Victor Hugo, but his exhortation was not lacking in enthusiasm. It was he and writers like him who opened the doors for eventual acceptance of Mormon fiction.

Most of the stories and novels published in Utah after the proscription against fiction was softened were genuine home literature and taught gospel truths. As one might expect, in most of these stories, subtlety was not the most prominent feature, neither in moral preachment nor in presentation. The authors were careful to make sure that the point would not be missed. A story called “Judith’s Decision,” published in the Young Woman’s Journal in 1892, illustrates this tendency to underline the moral:

“‘Mother,’ exclaimed Judith as she entered the sitting room and hung up her coat and hat, ‘I’m going to the World’s Fair.’” Judith goes on to explain to her mother how over the next few months, through industry and frugality, she will be able to earn and save the hundred dollars necessary for the trip. At this the mother asks, “‘My daughter, have you donated anything to the completion of the temple?’”

“‘Why, yes, I put my name down in our general fast meeting for five dollars, and I shall manage to pay that too.’”

There is, as one might imagine, a long lecture from father and mother on the need to finish the temple, the blessing of sacrifice and the implication at least that Judith ought to forego the fair in favor of a larger contribution to the temple. But Judith is adamant about the fair. Then the plot thickens — she meets and falls in love with a young man, but her love is unreciprocated. After a final snub, in a fit of remorse, she gives up the trip to the fair and slaps down her full hundred dollars, sacrificing

her all for the temple fund. Whereupon the lights come on in her sweetheart’s eyes as he recognizes the true nobility of this precious young thing and the story ends happily for all, with what must be one of the classic endings in Mormon literature. The boyfriend says, "'Your noble words tonight showed me my mistake, and in the impulse of delight I was almost beside myself.' And as he opens his arms, she felt his dear lips upon her own trembling mouth, and she murmured: ‘Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.’" The lessons about the vanities of the eastern world and the necessity to finish the temple are hard to miss.

Another story in the Instructor illustrates one more favorite theme: the blessings of obedience, in this case obedience to the principle of polygamy. It is the account of a fine young man “who had been born in the church and reared by good parents in the way of the Lord.” He is admirably obedient and “exemplary in every respect.” When he recognizes the divinity of plural marriage, he approaches his wife, who “could not in justice be left ignorant of his motives,” confident that she will be as eager to heed “the promptings of God’s spirit in the matter” as he. Much to his surprise, she is not amenable and declares angrily: “I would rather see you come home drunk every day of your life or see you bring your whiskey bottle to the house and fill yourself with liquor here, than to have you marry another woman.”

The rest of the story is not hard to imagine. The husband becomes an alcoholic and the story ends:

Today this man is a wanderer. His wife lives in one town while he seeks employment in places distant from her. With what he earns he supports her and also provides drink for himself. Though his love for the Church and its principles is still great, his prospects are blighted and his talents are fast becoming dim.

And to ensure that the reader not mistake the meaning of this story, a final paragraph is added:

Let this be a warning to all. While this man is censurable for allowing himself to be led away because of barriers which were placed in his path, his wife is also to blame in some degree for the part she took in the affair. All can, however, realize that it is dangerous to either allow obstacles to turn us from the path of duty, or to place stumbling blocks in the way of those who are endeavoring to serve the Lord.

28 D. V., “Taken at Her Word,” Juvenile Instructor 20 (September 1, 1885) : 263.
As might be expected, while there was no shortage of morals in this early Mormon literature, few were implied or dramatized in any depth.

The examples could be multiplied almost ad nauseam, and it is all too easy to haul out pieces and hold them up to contemporary ridicule. One finds, for instance, these desert dwelling Saints even inveighing against running away to go to sea, and from Salt Lake City that is quite a run. But laughing at this early Mormon fiction because it is not like Mark Twain or William Dean Howells, or chuckling at the antifiction editorials that preceded it because they are not free of hyperbole or paranoia, does not shed much understanding on Mormon literary history.

There are lessons to be learned from this episode of the cultural past. These first Mormon fiction writers were necessarily and blatantly didactic in order to justify their working in a still suspect genre. Consequently, plot and character development, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, humor, and subtlety all fell victim to heavy-handed moralizing.

Finally, to speculate, there may be another reason why these early writers failed as they did. If, at their best, they were unable to rise even close to the artistic level of what was being written in the rest of the United States, it may be that they were trying to force their expressions into forms that were not only inappropriate, but impossible. The Mormon literary problem of that time may have been that Latter-day Saint writers were trying to force the unique concerns of their own religious experience into the received forms of standard American literature of the period. They were at best imitative, and, in trying to imitate what they saw and read around themselves, they lost the singular qualities of the concerns with which they were trying to deal.

In the end, the artistic medium itself must be consistent; it must be smelted from the ore of elemental Mormonism; it must derive its symbols from the actualities of Mormon experience: its sacred books, its meetings, its temples, its private and public prayers answered. If there are lessons to learn from these literary beginnings, one of them certainly is that Mormon subjects are empty and vacuous unless they are couched in Mormon symbols and formed by Mormon structures. The water that will enliven Mormon art cannot come from other sources. Writers must, if they are to succeed, put down their buckets into the wellsprings of their own culture. That, it seems, is the “lesson” that the earliest Mormon fiction teaches.
The Mormon Meetinghouse: Reflections of Pioneer Religious and Social Life in Salt Lake City

BY JOSEPH HEINERMAN

Two primary elements constituted the Mormon ward: the bishop who was the chief ecclesiastical authority for the locals (that is, of those Saints residing within the ward boundaries) and the families or individual persons who were members. The bishop was familiar with both the spiritual and temporal affairs of every family entrusted to his care. His paternalistic responsibility often brought him into intimate contact with the

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ward membership. The Mormon meetinghouse was not only the center of each ward's religious assemblage, but it was also the essential site where social ties between friends and neighbors were formed or strengthened and familial relationships reinforced. The important role the Latter-day Saint ward played in early pioneer Utah was recently described as follows:

In pioneer Utah the ward was more than the basic ecclesiastical unit—it was the most important political unit and, except for the family, the most important social unit as well. . . .

The ward was the unit of welfare, the unit from which younger men (and later women) were called on missions to proselyte in "foreign" fields of labor; the unit where babies were christened or "blessed," younger men (and older men as well) ordained to the priesthood, funerals held, dances, musical festivals, and bazaars sponsored, young people taught and group consciousness established.¹

Dances, or the activity of dancing, was indeed an important social function in the early Utah pioneer wards. John Hyde, an embittered Mormon apostate, observed that "Mormons love dancing. Almost every third man is a fiddler, and every one must learn to dance. . . . In the winter of 1854–1855, there were dancing schools in almost every one of the nineteen [ward] schoolhouses."² And non-Mormon Capt. Howard Stansbury of the U.S. Army, who was engaged in making the topographical map of the Salt Lake Valley in the early days, wrote the following about Mormon social life:

In social life the Mormons are pre-eminent. In their social gatherings and evening parties, patronized by the presence of prophets and Apostles, it is not unusual to open the ball with prayer . . . and then will follow the most sprightly dancing in which all will join with hearty good will from the highest dignitary to the humblest individual.³

During his visit to the City of the Saints, another famed non-Mormon, Richard F. Burton, observed that "dancing seems to be considered an edifying exercise. The Prophet dances, the Apostles dance, the Bishops dance." After seeing some of the Mormon entertainments held in the Social Hall, Burton remarked that "there are 'Ward Parties' and 'Elders' Weekly Cotillion Parties."⁴ These ward dancing parties, attended by

many Latter-day Saints, have been discussed as follows: “Dance parties were frequently held in homes, schoolhouses or churches when the rough boards were smoothed with shavings from candles, a little cornmeal or even grated homemade soap. It was standard practice to have opening prayer.” Sometimes special facilities to accommodate these dances were constructed. For example, “in 1851 a dance hall was built by George Wardle on the west side of 2nd West St. between North and South Temple streets, which was a social center for Salt Lake City for some years.” The dance hall site was located within the Salt Lake City Sixteenth Ward boundary.

When a dance was sponsored, printed invitations were issued to the various ward members:

One invitation issued by the 20th Ward Ladies Relief Society was to a Pic-Nic Party and Dance to be held January 12, 1869 in the new schoolroom of the 29th Ward.

On Friday, January 29, 1869, the 19th Ward Literary Institute issued invitations to a dancing party for the benefit of the Sunday School. Dancing commenced at 6 p.m. . . .

The ward choirs seemed to have led out in giving dancing parties. A special kind of invitation was issued for a dance in the 13th Ward Assembly Hall February 16, 1888. At this occasion Olson and Pederson’s Band furnished the music while R. Hillman acted as prompter.

Education, always considered a top priority in Mormon cultural and social life, prompted each of the original nineteen wards in the valley to erect its own schoolhouse. Again, John Hyde wrote that the Latter-day Saints “have in Salt Lake City, nineteen school-houses, one in each ward.” In an address delivered before the sisters on February 4, 1869, at the Fifteenth Ward meetinghouse, President Brigham Young said: “I advise the Female Relief Society of this ward to look after the education of their children, and I recommend the introduction into their schools of the Deseret Alphabet; not that the old method may be thrown away or discarded, but as a means of facilitating the progress of the children in their studies.”

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9 *Millennial Star*, 31:269.
The dedication of a ward schoolhouse was commemorated as a formal event:

The Christmas Day celebration of 1852 took the form of a dedication. The 14th Ward School House [was] finished. The Quorum of the Twelve was represented . . . .

Captain Ballo’s band played lively tunes. All the above apostles made speeches. They “wanted to see schools established where higher education could be taught as well as the ABC’s, where the fine men and women of the future could be trained to carry on the work.” . . . Woodruff led the cotillion in one wing of the building, Elder F. D. Richards in the other. . . . At 12 o’clock they closed with prayer. The 14th Ward Celebration became annual. 10

The meetinghouse school environment was described as follows:

Jim [James Henry Moyle] went to school in the 15th Ward meetinghouse. There were no slates, pencils, or even desks. The scholars sat on the same benches from which their parents listened on a Sunday to sermons preached by men called from the congregation without previous notice, and the instruction of the day schools usually resembled these sermons.

His first teacher was a man named Green. He began by teaching his pupils the letters, then the words, and after that sentences. . . . Jim remembered best a teacher by the name of Haines, because “he took a special interest in me.” 11

Over the years improvement was manifested in the mode of teaching as well as the quality of the teachers. One of the new advanced schools was located in the Eighteenth Ward. At a special meeting of this latter ward on May 11, 1884, President (or Bishop) Horace K. Whitney felt that a school to be owned and controlled by members was needed because of the rapid increase of children within ward boundaries. He characterized true education as comprehending “all things which are for the good of mankind. . . . We wish to have a school in this ward where our children may be taught the principles of the Gospel. . . . and if it is established we will have to build a house ourselves. We cannot hope for any assistance from outsiders.” 12 The school was finally opened on September 2, 1889. A circular issued by the officials of the board of education of the ward designated it as a Latter-day Saint Seminary and listed the faculty, departments, textbooks, apparatus, and admission charges. Some of the

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10 Kate B. Carter, ed., Heart Throbs of the West, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939–51), 2:331.
12 Eighteenth Ward General Minutes, Ensign Stake, pp. 3–4, Archives Division, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
subjects to be taught besides theology and the rudimentary three R’s were geography, colors, and drawing for beginners. Advanced departments included penmanship, U.S. history, and vocal music. The circular proudly declared that the new library just established comprised “about one hundred volumes of valuable reading matter to which we hope to make many additions during the ensuing year.” The circular closed with this admonition: “Parents or guardians will be held strictly responsible for any damage done to school property by their children.”

It has been noted that vocal music was given as a part of the assigned curricula in the various church schools. This training was encouraged by the organization of the ward choir. Orson F. Whitney, bishop of the Eighteenth Ward, said:

> Among other upbuilding influences there was none more potent than the ward choir under the intelligent and skilled leadership of Horace G. Whitney. He made the Eighteenth Ward choir notable for its efficiency in all that constitutes an organization of that kind and was always active in preparing and presenting local entertainments for charitable and other worthy purposes.

If any participant in the choir possessed an outstanding singing talent then he or she was encouraged to develop it fully. For example, Nellie Druce Pugsley recorded in her life sketch the encouragement she received in the anticipated development of her singing ability: “Soon after Evan Stephens settled in Salt Lake he heard me sing in the 15th Ward choir and came to me after and encouraged me to continue with singing and taught me many beautiful songs as well as entire soprano parts in operas and oratories.” And Orson F. Whitney’s daughter, Margaret, displayed marvelous talent when she composed and produced operettas that were subsequently presented in the Eighteenth Ward to overflow audiences. One person wrote the following about this musical presentation:

> A unique little operetta is to be sung in this city tonight, unique in more ways than one. It is the work, both in music and libretto, of a girl of fourteen years, Margaret Whitney, daughter of Bishop O. F. Whitney. The play is called “Fanchette” and is in three acts. The author had drafted the plot and prepared the parts, teaching them verbally to the cast before any of their grown-up friends or relatives knew anything about it. . . . She

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13 Circular of the Latter-Day Saints’ Seminary of the Eighteenth Ward for the Third Academic Year, 1891-2, pp. 4-5, Historical Department Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Hereafter cited as LDS church library.


15 Carter, Heart Throbs, 9:19.
The Eighteenth Ward, near upper center, lay within eastern wall of Brigham Young's property. Before this church was completed in 1883, ward members (mostly Whitneys, Kimballs, and Youngs) often met in Brigham Young's schoolhouse. USHS collections.

... says the only reason she had for keeping the affair quiet was that she thought it was not important enough to say anything about it. 16

Some wards became more influential in dramatics and music in the community through the presence of eminent families residing within their boundaries. This was true of the Eighteenth Ward which achieved "a position of eminence" at its inception when the families of Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Newel K. Whitney were its sole occupants for the first several years. 17 The meetinghouse located on A street and Second Avenue from the very beginning became the center for manifold activities. Its rich cultural traditions have been particularly outstanding with several early members of the ward participating in theatrical performances in the Social Hall and later in the Salt Lake Theatre. Other members sang with the Tabernacle Choir and other noted musical organizations.

In 1857 William Willis, one of the early choral leaders of this ward, was "called by Brigham Young to lead the choir in his schoolroom on Sunday evenings and Fast Days." One chronicler of the ward refers to

16 Whitney, Through Memory's Halls, pp. 252–53.
17 Through Memory's Halls: Eighteenth Ward Reunion, February 22 to 27, 1953, p. 6, LDS church library.
the fame achieved by the choir under Horace G. Whitney, who assumed its leadership in 1878 when his brother, Orson F. Whitney, became bishop. He served in this capacity until his death in 1920 — a record of forty-two years of “continuous and devoted service that probably has few equals in this activity.” Under Horace, “the choir rose to a position of prominence and was regarded by many as the finest in the Church.”

Other prominent residents who later became members of the Eighteenth Ward were Joseph Toronto, a wealthy convert from Sicily; David O. Calder, a treasurer of Utah Territory and managing editor of the Deseret News; and John T. Caine, a leading actor with the Deseret Dramatic Association, a manager of the Salt Lake Theatre, and a delegate for Utah Territory to Washington.

Each ward has its own distinctive adult members who made indelible impressions upon the minds of the young people. For example,

The Moyle home in the fifteenth Ward, from the time that the boy Jim could remember, was a rendezvous for near neighbors who gathered frequently to discuss the news.

Bussel, an English immigrant, had two profitable vocations. If you had wheat to thresh, you asked him to do the job. For this purpose he had a special machine, of wonderful design. He put the sheaf into a hopper at the top, turned a crank on one side, and presently two streams flowed out at the bottom, one of wheat and one of chaff. It was a thing of magic to the Moyle boy and his friends.

His other vocation was that of doctor. Always he had on hand a variety of herbs. If you were sick, he either visited you and gave you a concoction, with the proper advice on how to use it, or sold you what you needed. It was from Daddy Bussel that Mrs. Moyle acquired her knowledge and skill in the use of herbs.

Dankinson was a Scotsman. A blacksmith by trade, he put shoes on your horses, mended your wagon or plow or harrow. The boys, always interested in fire and noise, would watch the tall, slender, aproned smithy raising the embers into red with his bellows. Then, after bringing the cold, dark iron deep into the live coals he would take it out white hot and hammer it on the anvil... the sparks flying in every direction.

Lloyd was one of the three shoemakers in the Fifteenth Ward. Every day and far into the night he toiled with awl and thread, shoulders bent making or mending boots and shoes. Even in his old age he continued to ply his awl and waxed thread at his familiar bench.

These three men of an evening gathered in the Moyle home, each to comment on the news according to his nature and background.

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18 Ibid., p. 22.
20 Hinckley, James Henry Moyle, pp. 49-50.
One of the frequent events in every ward in the valley was the day set aside for a missionary social wherein the departing elder would be given a lively farewell along with donations to pay for his travel expenses. One of such earlier customs was to give “tea-parties.” Elder Robert Gardner recalled several of these parties given in his honor:

When leaving to go home from the party I felt to expressing thanks for their kindness to me, and asking blessings upon their heads. And on three occasions I jokingly blessed the women with twins not meaning it, nor did I think any more about it. But when I returned, these three sisters had babies, two each, and there were no other twins born in Salt Lake Valley that year that I heard of.

Among the many cultural activities existing in the valley in the early 1850s were the lyceums held in the various ward meetinghouses. As a resident of the Sixteenth Ward John Pulsipher recalled that in 1851:

I had a good time attending meetings this winter. The young men and boys of our ward have a Lyceum which not only learns us to speak in public but have subjects for discussion that are instructive. The second quorum of Seventies to which I belong have regular meetings through the winter season from October till April every year since we came to the valley —& this is a source of information that is worth attending. Very seldom [do] I miss one of my meetings.

And Wandle Mace, who after his arrival in the valley in September 1859 became a resident of the Second Ward, recorded:

During the winter lyceums were opened in each ward, which afforded opportunity for the young, as well as the older members, to be instructed in public speaking. Sometimes there were lectures, sometimes debates were held upon various subjects both religious and scientific. I took an active part in these activities. The question “Are faith and belief the same?” was suggested for one of the debates and I was asked to oppose. Elder James H. Hart took the affirmative position. Later I was requested to debate the same question with one of the Elders in the Fourth Ward.

Since a number of poor Saints resided in each ward, efforts were made by some of the more well-to-do to alleviate the impoverished con-

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21 See for example, “An Invitation to a Missionary Sociable in the Eleventh Ward Meeting House in Honor of Harry W. Cushman, who is about to depart for a mission to Great Britain. Contributions to aid the missionary will be taken at the door.” This item is in the LDS church library.

22 “History of Robert Gardner Written by Himself,” January 7, 1884, p. 26. A few copies of this work were printed for limited circulation on August 7, 1934.

23 Diary of John Pulsipher, 1835–74, 2 vols., typescript, transcribed by Louise Mathews, Historical Records Survey Project of the WPA, 1936, Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City.

24 “Life Story of Wandle Mace Written by Himself,” pp. 269–70, typescript copy in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.
Built in the early 1870s, the Sixth Ward meetinghouse accommodated a school on its lower floor. USHS collections.

ditions of the poor and others who lacked even basic temporal needs. One faithful member who possessed humanitarian concerns and feelings of magnanimity towards such persons was Feramorz Little. It was said of him that he manifested "that sympathy with an open hand for their relief" yet "disliked ostentation" when distributing sums of money for
their benefit. One of his most benevolent acts was the erection of a home for the poor of the Thirteenth Ward. His primary object in doing so was "to furnish comfortable dwellings for them [the poor]." When the building was completed he transferred the property to the bishopric of the ward for them to manage it.  

The women's Relief Society, organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1842 in Nauvoo, was revitalized as a viable church organization by Brigham Young in 1855. Besides "aiding the poor, the sisters were asked to be frugal and avoid buying luxuries. They were to assist in the operation of cooperative stores and support home industry." This was all accomplished under the direction of ward and stake priesthood officials and members. In an address delivered before this female religious body assembled in the Fifteenth Ward meetinghouse on February 4, 1869, President Young admonished the sisters to be like Mother Eve of remote antiquity: "Before me I see a house full of Eves. What a crowd of reflections the word EVE is calculated to bring up! Eve was a name or title conferred upon our first mother of all the human beings who should live upon this earth. I am looking upon a congregation designed to be such. ..." Then he said: "Let a young woman start out in life and magnify her existence by helping to fill the world with her posterity as mother Eve was commanded to do...." Finally, he encouraged the female Saints to pursue interests that would promote their spirituality:

... The inquiry arises, how shall we do this? I can say, truly, we must possess the spirit of meekness, kindness and longsuffering; we must possess patience, that in patience we may possess our souls. We must seek to enjoy the spirit of intelligence that comes from Heaven. We should govern and control every evil passion, and order our lives so that we may enjoy the meek and humble spirit of the Lord Jesus.

Later, in another general assemblage of the sisters in the Fifteenth Ward meetinghouse to honor Mrs. Sarah M. Kimball, the ward Relief Society president, the following transpired:

Sister Zina D. H. Young spoke for a short time and said she thought if the sisters would unite their faith she would like to hear Sister Kimball bless the sisters in the gift of tongues.

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25 James A. Little, Biographical Sketch of Feramorz Little (Salt Lake City, 1890), pp. 114–15.
Sister Kimball expressed a wish that the Lord would give her His Spirit to bless the sisters in that gift; and then she spoke in tongues, blessing all. Sister Young gave the interpretation, which was full of instruction, comfort and blessings to the sisters. After singing, the assembly was dismissed with prayer by Sister M. Lois Massis.

Many young men had fond memories of past church social activities. Brigham Y. Woodruff, for example, journalized: “June 10th, 1873. This day went on an excursion up Parley’s Canyon with the Young Men’s Temperance Society (of which I am a member.) We had a good time.” But many of these social activities involved ward meetings for the young people. One such meeting was recorded by Joseph Goddard: “I attended a juvenile meeting in which Bro. Daniel Woods instructed us on being obedient to our parents. The meeting was held in the 17th ward schoolhouse.”

At these ward meetings much valuable instruction was imparted by church leaders to the lay members. When the Fifteenth Ward was divided (or made into another ward) in April 1898 the members, who over the many years had enjoyed inseparable ties of close friendship and intimate associations, protested and raised many objections. To resolve this difficult situation, George Q. Cannon of the church’s First Presidency was asked to address the disgruntled membership. According to recorded ward minutes,

He [Cannon] felt that we all would feel in the near future that this ward division is the proper thing. He does not blame the saints for not wanting to make another ward after the long associations and good times together. It is necessary for us to have experience for we do not know ourselves until we have been tested.

That “Religious life . . . centered around the ward” is an observation of some Latter-day Saint historians. That this religious life was to be administered competently and effectively in these wards was evidenced by the establishment of church auxiliary organizations — for example, the first Primary for young children was begun by Aurelia S. Rogers in the Eleventh Ward in 1878 and the organizing of the YMMIA (Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association) was commenced in 1875 by

29 Woman’s Exponent, 16:14.
30 Brigham Young Woodruff Diary, 1857–77, June 10, 1873, LDS Archives.
31 Joseph Goddard Diary, February 18, 1857, LDS Archives.
32 Minutes of Fifteenth Ward Meetings Commencing October 27, 1895: April 3, 1898, pp. 177–78, LDS Archives.
Junius F. Wells in the Thirteenth Ward. And the first Sunday School ever to be organized in the valley was held in the Fourteenth Ward on December 9, 1849.

Besides the semiannual general conferences of the church, many interesting doctrinal views were expressed by ecclesiastical leaders at the pulpits of the ward meetinghouse. Members of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve were regular speakers in the evening meetings. One such sermon was delivered by Parley P. Pratt on March 9, 1856, in the Fourteenth Ward. In his remarks, recorded by Samuel W. Richards, Pratt showed "how Zion could never be built up while Gentiles could have place among us, and that the brethren would sell their possessions to them and their grain to support them in wickedness among the Saints. It was not so in heaven, must not be so among the Saints upon the Earth if the New Jerusalem was ever built." 34 Certain obscure doctrines were also pronounced during these weekly religious assemblages. For example, in discoursing upon the contemplated New Jerusalem (in Jackson County, Missouri) of the future on January 11, 1853, in the Fourteenth Ward, Orson Pratt said that "the city would be translated and they would be everlasting habitations and remain forever." He also said that he "did not think the sun or any star which mortal eye can see were Celestial bodies." But as soon as a world or some other form of heavenly orb received the ultimate celestial glory, "it could not be seen by no man than a spirit could be seen or a resurrected body by mortal man." 35

Reminiscences of early events in the church were presented by various Latter-day Saints at these meetings. One time, Robert T. Burton of the Presiding Bishopric referred to that memorable meeting on August 8, 1844, in Nauvoo:

When Brigham Young arose to speak, I [Burton] with hundreds of others stood up to look upon the face of the martyred Prophet. His voice, manner of addressing the people, his very form and feature was Jos. Smith's exactly. There was no mistaking the man who was to lead the people. God used this method of convincing us of this important fact. I was there and saw and heard these things. 36

Ward meetinghouses were also considered sources of inspiration and spiritual strength by many faithful Mormons. To unify the Saints in their eternal quest, prayer meetings were conducted: "March 8, 1854. Prayer

34 Diary of Samuel W. Richards, March 9, 1856, LDS Archives.
35 Wilford Woodruff Journal, January 11, 1863, LDS Archives.
36 Minutes of Fifteenth Ward Meetings, January 20, 1901, p. 294, LDS Archives.
meetings were held in the respective wards in Great Salt Lake City and suburbs one night in the week for the youth over eight years of age at which they improved their gifts by speaking, praying, and singing."\textsuperscript{37} Not only were prayers offered collectively in these meetinghouses but also on an individual basis. "Men sought then divine aid for their immediate needs, divine help in extracting them from difficulties," observed one Latter-day Saint concerning Utah pioneer religious customs. Continuing the narration, he related how his Tenth Ward bishop, David Pettigrew, whose habit it was "to go in the evening at the close of the labors of the day to the meetinghouse to pray," lost a valuable yoke of oxen. After praying one evening in the meetinghouse to receive divine assistance in finding his oxen, Pettigrew came to the narrator of the story, James Jensen, and said: "James, I have had a dream in which I was shown that you had my team, and I wish therefore that you would go in search of them." Responding to this request, Jensen set out to a place called Dry Creek, whereupon, after praying to be led to the lost oxen, he discovered their whereabouts and returned them to Bishop Pettigrew at noon that same day.\textsuperscript{38}

The ward meetinghouse was also the site of spiritual manifestations. One such example involved the miraculous healing of the dislocated shoulder of Charles Lambert, a member of the Seventh Ward. Lambert had protested to the ward bishopric that another member named Gallup, who advocated the apostate ideas of early church dissenter Francis Gladden Bishop, should be retained as a school trustee. Lambert contended that Gallup’s holding such a prestigious and respected office in the ward afforded him ample opportunity to circulate his apostate principles among the people. A special meeting of the ward priesthood was appointed by the bishop to take the matter under consideration. Gallup was informed that his fealty to the church had been questioned. With boldness he arose and declared his unbelief in the doctrines of the church and then, continuing his anti-Mormon tirade, proceeded to state that Joseph Smith was a wicked and an adulterous man, having associated with drunkards and fraudulent characters. Angered by these slanderous remarks, Lambert, who had been seated on the opposite side of the room, began leaping over the benches toward Gallup, crying out, "I will send you to hell!" Raising his right arm, which he had been unable to use for months, Lam-
bert was ready to deal the apostate a blow with his clenched fist. Gallup successfully dodged the intended blow; but those who witnessed the event observed in surprise: “Brother Lambert has recovered the use of his arm!” The dissident Mormon was deprived of his office by vote of the priesthood assembly, and Charles Lambert and his wife rejoiced that he had again obtained full use of his arm.39

To provide for the temporal needs of their members the wards actively participated in the cooperative movement of the late 1860s: “When the ZCMI cooperative was set up early in 1869, Brigham Young asked the bishops to establish ward stores as the main outlet. By the end of the decade ‘no known ward or settlement was without one.’ ”40 The distinction of establishing the first “ward store” in Salt Lake City was ascribed to “the members of the Tenth Ward, who completed the organization of the Tenth Ward Co-op before February 2, 1869.”41 And during the commencement of the United Order in 1874 home industry was stimulated in the wards—an excellent example being the Nineteenth Ward’s establishment of a soap factory, a knitting factory, a glass factory, two tanneries, and three lime kilns.42

The ward meetinghouse was not only a sacred place of worship as the synagogue to the Jews or the mosque to the Moslems, but it was also the primary center of cultural, social, educational, and religious activities. The lay members, both male and female, young and old, devoted more time to the meetinghouse and the multifarious interests revolving around it than did their religious counterparts in other Christian denominations. In the meetinghouse the camaraderie of Christendom was developed into an unparalleled cohesiveness between laity and leaders. The cultivation of talents and abilities in the different arts was encouraged or promoted at the meetinghouse, and certain individuals excelled and obtained eminence as musicians, public speakers, theologians, artists, etc. Finally, the religious significance attached to the ward meetinghouse can never be adequately explained. With all it embodied, then, the Salt Lake meetinghouse became a unique and distinctive institution of early pioneer Utah.

42 Jenson, Encyclopedic History of the Church, p. 753.
Delegate John M. Bernhisel, Salt Lake Physician Following the Civil War

BY GLEN BARRETT

Born near Loysville, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, in 1799, John M. Bernhisel, the "first university-trained physician to embrace Mormonism," received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1827. Joining the Mormons ten years later, following a rather extensive correspondence with Joseph Smith from his office in New York City, Bernhisel became Smith's personal attache and family physician, living in the prophet's Mansion House in Nauvoo, Illinois.

After the Mormon exodus of 1846 led to the settlement of the Salt Lake Valley, Bernhisel doctored those suffering from gunshot wounds and accidents while en route to the Great Basin country. But a new career was soon to replace doctoring, for he was sent to Washington, D.C., initially to seek territorial status, then statehood, for what Brigham Young preferred to call Deseret.

Dr. Barrett is professor of history at Boise State University.
Bernhisel, Utah’s first delegate to Congress when the territory was organized in 1850, served in this capacity until the midpoint of the Civil War. Returning to Great Salt Lake City to remain in 1863, he engaged in an interesting and significant medical practice for the next eighteen years. On February 16, 1864, he was elected president of the Salt Lake Board of Examination of Physicians, a trying task for a university-trained person since few of the thirty-four “doctors” who came to Utah prior to and during the Civil War were graduates of medical schools. Brigham Young told his people that they were better off without doctors, who could only be useful in the case of broken bones.

Nevertheless, Bernhisel remained loyal to his adopted church (although he rejected polygamy), and he succeeded in retaining the confidence of Brigham Young as well as other leaders, while administering to the health of Mormons and Gentiles alike. The doctor was an ardent supporter of the practice of bleeding, as was his mentor, Philip Syng Physick, under whom Bernhisel studied at the University of Pennsylvania. On one occasion in Salt Lake City, when considerable blood had been taken from the arm of a patient, his associate Dr. Washington F. Anderson protested, but Bernhisel advised, “bleed her to death,” meaning, bleed her until she faints.1

Bernhisel dedicated his handwritten thirty-two page “Inaugural Dissertation,” dated March 20, 1827, to Dr. N. Chapman, “Professor of the Institutes and Practice of Physic and Clinical Practice,” and Dr. Thomas C. James, “Professor of Midwifery,” his instructors at the University of Pennsylvania. “Apoplexy,” the twenty-eight-year-old Bernhisel wrote, “is a disease in which the animal functions are suspended, while the vital and natural functions continue; respiration being in general difficult and laborious, and frequently attended with a peculiar noise, called “stertorous.” “Intoxication,” according to Bernhisel, was frequently confused with apoplexy, but distinguishing between the two was difficult only when intoxication had been induced by liquors such as beer that did not afford the principal identification, the breath — “strongly impregnated with the smell of the liquor.” Large doses of opium, when taken into the stomach, also produced symptoms very similar to apoplexy, he wrote. Too, “phenomena like those of apoplexy” were sometimes brought on by over-loading the stomach with food.

Continuing, Bernhisel pointed out that a large head or a short neck might "occasion a predisposition to apoplexy"; a short neck was a particular handicap because the heart must be much nearer to the head, and consequently the blood must flow with more rapidity through the arteries to the head while, on the other hand, the return of the blood through the veins would be more easily interrupted. Corpulency was another "predisposing cause" because the blood vessels in a fat person would be compressed in every part of the body except the head. The blood in a corpulent person accumulated and produced compression of the brain. Exposure of the feet to cold and wet produced a "languid circulation"; painful and long application of the mind to any one subject and old age all contributed to this disease, according to the budding doctor.

Strenuous exercise, the direct rays of the sun, violent passions of the mind — such as anger, grief, and joy — stooping down for any length of time, extreme intoxication, breathing "vitiating air" in a crowded room, and vomiting were all said to be "powerful and exciting" causes. As for treatment, Bernhisel concluded that bleeding should be employed immediately, and this could be done best by opening a vein in one or both arms. The quantity of blood to be drawn at one time should always be in "proportion to the urgency of the symptoms, the fulness of the pulse, and the condition of the system." Bleeding should always be more "copious," he wrote, when apoplexy resulted from falls or bruises. When general bleeding had been carried as far as the patient's strength might permit, "cupping and scarifications of the neck, temples and back parts of the head" were never to be omitted if the symptoms continued.

Purging of the bowels, cold water poured on the head, cool and fresh air, blistering of the head, and the application of mustard, garlic, or horseradish to the palms of the hands and soles of the feet were all recommended. For those victims who survived, Bernhisel urged temperate eating, particularly in the evening before retiring, and the avoidance of "ardent spirits." Exercise was considered important, anger must be suppressed, and old habits should be changed in a gradual manner.²

Health problems and medical practices in the Great Basin were not unusual; but certain theological concepts and attitudes that Mormonism fostered tended to create special problems for those who were trained in the orthodox, university medical departments. Thus, Bernhisel's medical practice was not ordinary — different at least from what it would have

² John M. Bernhisel, "Inaugural Dissertation on Apoplexy" (M.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1827), pp. 8–32.
been had he located in San Francisco or some other city among a heterogeneous populace.

It is true that the medical practitioner on the frontier — most any community in the mid-nineteenth-century West — was sometimes belittled or ridiculed by those who were not familiar with the newer developments in medical science. Physicians who administered drugs were frequently called “poison doctors,” while the services of the untrained “doctors” and midwives, who had developed some expertise through trial and error, were often sought. These botanical or Thomsonian doctors (Samuel Thomson, a self-taught New Englander who patented a purging system in 1813 and sold certificates for twenty dollars with his book, *New Guide to Health*) frequently made medicine a sideline while providing for their families by farming or with a trade.

Some leaders among the Mormons publicly dispraised the doctor of orthodox medicine, but John Bernhisel was not personally criticized. His methods qualified him for Thomsonian disdain, but the friendship he enjoyed with both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young protected him. Also, his urbanity, culture, and refinement, in addition to a pleasing appearance and personality, made Bernhisel a highly regarded member of the community. Too, his service in Washington, D.C., as Utah’s delegate to Congress had won him a great deal of respect.

On at least one occasion a Thomsonian practitioner treated one of Dr. Bernhisel’s patients and claimed to get better results with his method than those used by Bernhisel. Priddy Meeks, a South Carolinian, administered burdock, cayenne pepper, and dandelion to Andrew Love, who was being treated by Dr. Bernhisel. Soon after this, Love’s “kidney complaint” disappeared. Bernhisel, aware of the medicinal values of some plants, also prescribed cayenne pepper occasionally and purging, but for the most part, Thomsonian medicine had little or no influence upon his practices.

When Bernhisel returned from Washington in 1863, the dominant diseases in Utah were infantile diarrhea, typhoid, and diphtheria, all evidence of poor sanitation, polluted milk and water, and ignorance. The most common causes of death were consumption or tuberculosis, “child bed,” and those diseases just mentioned.

By 1863 the population in the Salt Lake Valley had increased from about 1,600 people, who had spent the winter of 1847–48 in their wagons, huts, and tents, to more than 8,000 in the city alone. The number of physicians had also increased. Nevertheless, Bernhisel’s office, located in a front room of his recently constructed residence on the northeast corner
of North Temple and West Temple streets, was a busy place. There he carefully observed the ethics of his profession, conducted office calls, and consulted with colleagues with considerable formality. As a female patient departed, or as he left the bedside of a matron while making a home call, he frequently advised, "cultivate, my dear madam, as far as possible, a cheerful, happy and contented disposition, and all will be well." This he repeated so often that the phrase became a byword in some homes.

On ordinary occasions and for professional visits Dr. Bernhisel most often wore a frock coat and a high silk hat. As the years went by this attire came to be considered old-fashioned, making the doctor appear to be a rather formidable antiquarian. Only rarely did he travel outside of the city, after making five round trips across the plains, but on one occasion he endured the approximately 150-mile trip to Fillmore, the former territorial capital, to attend to the members of the family of an old friend, William Clayton. House calls within Salt Lake City constituted most of his professional work, but he also had patients at the mental hospital, constructed in 1872, Saint Mark's Hospital also built about this time, and Holy Cross Hospital established in 1875.

Violence and serious accidents were not uncommon at the time. Bernhisel and the other physicians were frequently called upon to splint broken bones and bandage wounds, some of which were caused by gunshot. In the early 1860s the McRae brothers, Renny and Alex, were accidentally killed in Emigration Canyon; and Samuel Bunton was killed by Jason Lance who, in turn, died for his deed just thirty-three days later. Sliding logs took some lives as did falls from wagons and trees, and falling rocks also took a toll.

Dr. Bernhisel's home on northeast corner of West and North Temple streets, opposite Temple Square. Endowment House roof shows in lower left. USHS collections.
Brigham Young counted several doctors among his personal friends and counselors, and Bernhisel was one of them. Williard Richards, Young's cousin who accompanied him and the pioneers to Utah in 1847, had studied Thomsonian medicine and received a diploma before his conversion to the Mormon church in 1836 at Kirtland, Ohio. Bernhisel's partner in many medical cases requiring surgery, Washington F. Anderson, was a graduate of both the University of Virginia and the University of Maryland (1841–44). He gained the good will of Brigham Young even though he was not a churchman, and when Young died, August 29, 1877, he was attended by Anderson as well as doctors S. B. Young and J. and F. D. Benedict, all trained physicians.

Bernhisel and his associates, generally aware of the limitations of their training, were students of the significant medical questions of the day. A doctor Shipp, in the Salt Lake Sanitarian, asked the question, "Is medical practice a failure?" Responding to this question, Shipp suggested that the profession as a business was successful but that personality played a greater part than knowledge or training in most cases. Actually, the physician's contribution was almost totally limited to his emphasis upon hygiene. "Can we cure measles? Can we cure whooping cough? Can we cure scarlet fever or any of the specific or continued fevers" any better than Hippocrates did? Shipp asked. "We are limited to keeping the bowels open, the head cool, and the feet warm," this Salt Lake City doctor concluded.

In spite of these views and the general lack of confidence in their methods and prescriptions, Dr. Bernhisel and his colleagues made commendable contributions to the health and welfare of the populace. Although bleeding became unpopular during his career, many of Bernhisel's admonitions became acceptable. Proper exercise and diet had been common health rules for generations, but Bernhisel's views with regard to the use of condiments, particularly seasoning salt, were considered unusual if not ridiculous by some of his contemporaries. Today, with salt-free diets being prescribed by specialists for those suffering from high blood pressure and various circulatory problems, Bernhisel's advice to his wife, Elizabeth, appears to be modern. "Will you please . . . see that Sarah does not put so much salt into the victuals as she used to do for it is unwholesome," he wrote from Washington in November 1862. "We should always eat what is wholesome, and not eat merely to gratify the appetite like the brutes, for that is disgusting," the doctor advised.

Bernhisel’s practice, whether with Washington F. Anderson, with other doctors, or alone, continued through the 1870s and ended only when the doctor himself expired in September 1881. During the last year of his life he was at the bedside of three children and two adults when they passed away. On September 25, 1881, he closed the eyes and folded the hands of Mathias, the three-year-old son of Oluf and Kristina Due, then went home with a fever to his own bed and died there three days later.

Some months before Bernhisel’s death, Dr. Anderson and his daughter, Belle, called on him at his home across the street from the Mormon Tabernacle. Belle later recorded this visit, thus preserving a singular description of the doctor in his last year. The plain two-story house resembled the uncompromising personality of its owner, she wrote. Belle remembered the several sandstone steps, the iron knocker, and the cautious opening of the door by the eighty-year-old doctor, who peered at his visitors through his spectacles. “He was clad in a dressing gown and carpet slippers, and had a book in his hand. Evidently we disturbed him in his reading, but his face lit up in pleasant recognition and he invited us into one of the large, rather bare rooms of his house,” Belle concluded.

The local newspapers (*Salt Lake Tribune*, *Salt Lake Daily Herald, Deseret Evening News*) noted Bernhisel’s death, making comments regarding his service as Utah’s delegate in Washington and his amiable characteristics, noting that he was a “universally respected doctor” and a gentleman of “marked intelligence.” A month after his funeral the *News* said in a front-page tribute,

> there is no evidence that he...ever faltered in the faith...his slender, well proportioned figure, clear cut features, fleecy white hair, and subdued gentlemanly demeanor never failed to strike the beholder with a feeling of respect.... There can be no doubt that his longevity was largely the result of his temperate, we should rather say, abstemious habits.... He even avoided the use of condiments.... His gentleness disarmed those who would have been otherwise ready to roughly assail his opinions and position.

The good doctor’s life and portions of his 1827 dissertation are worthy of emulation and consideration today.

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5 “Dr. Bernhisel is Dead,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 28, 1881, October 31, 1881.
For a time the Deseret Museum ethnological and historical collections were housed in the Bureau of Information Building, left, on south side of Temple Square. USHS collections.

The first museum in Utah opened in early December 1869. Located in a pioneer home, it was at first called the Home Museum, sometimes referred to as the Salt Lake Museum, but through popular assent and usage became officially known as the Deseret Museum throughout the half-century that it existed as a significant educational and cultural institution.

Mrs. Eubanks is a genealogist and former elementary schoolteacher.
The idea for this museum was conceived in the autumn of 1867 during a discussion between John W. Young, son of Brigham Young, and Guglielmo Giosue Rosetti Sangiovanni. The former had been the leader and the latter the interpreter for a group of tourists who had visited the principal cities of Europe earlier that year. Recalling that experience, these two men were led to the idea of a display that would enable visitors to Utah to see “at a glance” its resources. They developed a plan “of making a collection of the animals that inhabit the mountains of Utah, with specimens of natural curiosities and native products; to be increased by the addition of specimens of interest from every quarter of the world as fast as they could be obtained.” Such was the proposition submitted to the Utah Territorial Legislature two years in succession. When these attempts to establish a museum as a public enterprise failed, John W. Young proceeded on a private basis and placed the following advertisement in the *Deseret Evening News* of November 26, 1869:

**HOME MUSEUM**

Friends of Science and of the progress of the Territory will oblige me by preserving Animals and Birds indigenous to the Rocky Mountains, as I will gladly purchase them for our Home Museum. If any prefer to contribute rather than sell, they will not be refused. Contributions of every kind that will add to the interest and usefulness of the Museum will be received and properly cared for with pleasure.

For further particulars inquire of G. G. R. Sangiovanni, at my residence opposite the City Hall.

John W. Young

This and subsequent appeals brought a good response, resulting in a large number of interesting specimens. The first contribution was a pair of black bears, presented by the Walker brothers. “Many things were bought and many more donated,” according to James E. Talmage. “The miner, the artisan, the hunter, and in fact citizens of all classes brought their contributions.” With the acquisition of live animals, the institution became known as the Home Museum and Menagerie. It was located in a two-room adobe home that stood on South Temple just west of Brigham Young’s residence and east of the present Hotel Utah. Brigham Young had assisted in building this home, one of the first constructed in the valley. The inside was used as a museum and the animal cages were

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2 *Guide to Salt Lake City, Ogden, and the Utah Central Railroad* (Salt Lake City, 1870), p. 16, copy in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.
positioned outside around its large enclosure.\(^4\) Sangiovanni, popularly known as “Sangio,” was the first curator.\(^5\)

The museum and menagerie collections grew rapidly. By December 14, 1869, the exhibits were opened and the *Deseret Evening News* carried the following announcement:

**The Museum and Menagerie** — We were very much pleased in visiting the home museum of John W. Young, Esq. That gentleman has already formed a very fine nucleus for an excellent museum, and every means is being taken to augment and enrich the collection of objects, either by purchase or contribution. The proprietor is taking measures to supply his menagerie with a complete collection of birds and animals indigenous to this region. Residents of remote parts of the country where rare specimens of wild animals and birds are more plentiful than in this immediate locality, will confer a great favor on Mr. Young, and render material aid in furthering the object he has in view, by securing such specimens as may come within their reach and forwarding them to him.

The latest addition to the menagerie was made today. It is a very beautiful specimen of the black-tailed deer, captured in Montana and presented to the institution by J. Gilmer, Esq. of the Gilmer and Salisbury stage line.

We think the day is not far distant, when, if this matter is persevered in, we shall have a fine zoological collection and a very excellent museum.

The *Deseret Evening News* did much to support the new venture. The Christmas Eve edition announced that the museum and menagerie would be open a part of Christmas Day. The writer urged, “Go and see it; it will be interesting to both young and old. It promises to be a regular feature of great interest.” Many articles appeared in the first half of 1870 describing additions to the collections and the progress of the institution, already referred to as the Deseret Museum.\(^6\) One announcement tells of the acquisition of the sword of Gen. Joseph Smith, the prophet, and the powder horn of Elder David W. Patten. The writer then continues:

Other valuable specimens and interesting relics have been lately added to the collection, which is daily growing in value, importance, and attractiveness. John W. Young, Esq., its proprietor, has reason to be gratified with his success in gathering together a collection so valuable in so short a time; and we do not know of any way in which twenty-five cents could be better invested than in paying a visit to the Museum and Menagerie.\(^7\)

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\(^4\) *Guide to Salt Lake City* . . . , pp. 16, 38. This home was the birthplace of Heber M. Wells, first governor of the state of Utah. See Talmage, “Deseret Museum,” p. 955.


\(^6\) *Guide to Salt Lake City* . . . , p. 16. This publication also refers to the institution as Home Museum and Menagerie. See p. 38.

\(^7\) *Deseret Evening News*, February 3, 1870.
Another newspaper article tells of the occasional problem of young people crowding around the gate hoping to get in without paying the admission fee. Visitors were asked to support the fee because of the proprietor's expense in establishing and maintaining the institution. "It is an admirable movement," the article reads, "and gives promise, if encouraged, of becoming a very valuable establishment and a great public benefit, and it should be sustained."8

The citizens of Utah did support the museum and menagerie through both contributions and attendance. Reportedly, its popularity was immense, and it was well-patronized all the time. Schoolchildren came by battalions in the charge of their teachers. The live animals of the menagerie attracted them the most.9 Before six months had elapsed, the contributions to the menagerie included five bears, two deer, two grey wolves, three coyotes, four wolverines, one silver grey fox, two badgers, two woodchucks, one bald eagle, three golden eagles, two lynxes, three wildcats, two pine martins, two porcupines, two pelicans, two otters, and a variety of native birds.10 Deseret Evening News advertisements, appearing from January through June of 1870, appealed for contributions or specimens to be donated or purchased. The donor's name would be inscribed on

8 Deseret Evening News, January 4, 1870.
Joseph L. Barfoot, curator of Deseret Museum, was devoted to science. USHS collections.

contributions of “Foreign and Domestic Curiosities of every kind that will add to the interest and usefulness of the Museum.” The proprietor, John W. Young, offered money for live animal specimens in amounts ranging from three dollars for a pair of martins to one hundred fifty dollars for a pair of mountain lions. President Brigham Young contributed many things from his own private museum. Returned missionaries brought articles from their fields of labor, and newcomers associated with the recent opening of the mining industry contributed to a rapidly growing mineral collection. Within the first six months an extensive fossil collection, including the complete specimen of a mastodon, was obtained.

Sangiovanni seemed to have a special talent for the care of live animals, but the museum was in need of a scientist to classify the specimens and relics. Such a man was Joseph L. Barfoot, employed next door at Brigham Young’s residence as night watchman. His position evidently brought him “in close relations with the President, who valued his clear, scientific judgment and spent with him many hours of the watch, attending with great interest his explanations of natural phenomena, and consulting him upon endless questions involving a knowledge of the sciences.”

John W. Young employed him to classify the ever-growing collection. When Sangiovanni withdrew from the museum and menagerie early in 1871 because of a “little difference” with John W. Young, Barfoot became the curator. This was a position “for which his nature and education admirably adapted him.” He soon became known as “Professor Barfoot,” retaining this title and his position as curator the rest of his life.15

When the Utah Central Railway was completed in 1870, the Home Museum and Menagerie was one of those advertising in a guide book prepared for passengers visiting the area.16 Many came.

As mining in Stockton, Bingham, and the Cottonwood canyons attracted attention, “the museum became the public depository of mineral specimens from every mining district,” beginning a valuable, extensive, and varied collection of ores and minerals.17

The zoo or menagerie part of the enterprise gradually decreased, eventually disappearing altogether. The museum aspect developed rapidly and emerged as the dominant feature. Soon the adobe home of the museum, too small for the expanding institution, was needed for the use of the Deseret Telegraph. As a result, in May 1871 the collections were moved to another adobe building across the street from the south entrance to the tabernacle. Erected as a store, this building provided some improvement over the former location, but it was far from ideal. Entrance had to be gained from the rear of the long building by climbing some rickety steps on the outside; it was “poorly lighted and ill-provided,” and the space was limited.18 An assistant, writing to Brigham Young in 1875, complained that the building was unheated and described it as “a very cold and cheerless place.”19 Still, the museum was fulfilling its original purpose. The museum register, available for the years 1874–77, shows visits by many distinguished educators and scientists from all over the world.20

The museum’s survival during this difficult period is attributed to the ability, energy, and sacrifice of Professor Barfoot. His devotion to science and to the value of the museum as an educational institution is...
apparent from a study of his accomplishments and the tributes of those who personally knew him. It was said that “Volumes might be written concerning this good and learned man.” He had a prodigious capacity for work, combining that quality with a vast and inexhaustible scientific knowledge. He was patient, modest, and willing to devote his time and talents free to the public. He gave the museum its reputation as a veritable mine of information. When Dr. James E. Talmage became curator in 1891 he wrote: “I well remember, years ago, of the great assistance received from a former curator, the venerable Professor J. L. Barfoot; and how then I felt, that, could I but be privileged with ever so humble a post in the museum, how fully would my ambitions be gratified.”

The influence of the Deseret Museum and its curator was extended as Barfoot dispensed information by writing for all the home papers and periodicals of the day. The index to the Juvenile Instructor lists over 250


short articles, mostly of a scientific nature, written by him. These included series entitled “Our Museum,” “Stories About Utah,” and “Chemistry of Common Things.” A “Chronicles of Utah” series and an occasional scientific sketch appeared in the Contributor. Often writing under noms de plume “Beta” or “Beth,” he did incalculable good in awakening an interest in and popularizing hitherto dry scientific subjects by his luminous treatment of them.” Furthermore, Talmage added, “As I look over the old records and go through the time-stained papers that were once in Barfoot’s custody, many of them written by his own hand, I read a story of the devotion to scientific investigation which to me is an ever-present inspiration and encouragement.”

Little money was available for the maintenance of the museum. The curator and his assistant divided the amount received from admission fees, less expenses. They realized $3.25 each for one week in October 1875. By 1878 John W. Young had invested about $30,000 in the museum, but it was reaching “a position where it needed more support than one man could be expected to afford.” Therefore, on September 18, 1878, its ownership was transferred to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with President John Taylor as proprietor-in-trust. The goal of the museum had never been making a profit. With the change in ownership, the interest and instruction of the people remained its primary purpose. Many of the most valuable specimens were Barfoot’s private property, which he could have sold during any of the many times he was in need, but realizing their value to the public, he would not part with them. In this way and others, Barfoot chose to give his all to this cause. He lived in the humblest of circumstances, yet at the time of his death some claimed he was the rightful heir to the eminent earldom of Crawford. In his Brief History of the Deseret Museum, written in 1880, one can sense his excitement and pleasure in the extensive and valuable collections and his gratitude to the many who had contributed to them.

Barfoot’s Handbook Guide to the Salt Lake Museum, printed in 1881, reveals the museum’s offer to sell boxes of geological or ethnological

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24 Johnson to Young, p. 3; Deseret Evening News, September 18, 1878; Salt Lake Daily Herald, April 25, 1882; Wells, “Joseph L. Barfoot,” p. 250; Barfoot, “Brief History,” pp. 1–9. Barfoot’s middle name was Lindsay, a name passed down from his father, William Lindsay Barfoot, and his grandmother, Mary Lindsay. Heirs to the earldom of Crawford have always been of the Lindsay family line, dating from 1398 with David Lindsay. Barfoot was also a lineal descendant of Robert Bruce, the warrior king of Scotland, and of the martyred Bishop Nicholas Ridley. Wells was one of those asserting a claim to the earldom for Barfoot.
specimens. Prices ranged from $2.50 to $10.00, with a collection of cards showing early views of Salt Lake City offered for $2.15. Barfoot died on April 23, 1882. Between this date and January 1891 when James E. Talmage took over the directorship, the Deseret Museum was "left in the custody of a succession of caretakers none of whom made pretension to scientific qualification or trained ability." The museum also lacked funds to do more than just survive. In a probable effort to do something about the state of the museum as well as to promote other educational pursuits, a group of citizens formed the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association in June 1885. Soon after its incorporation this body acquired possession of the Deseret Museum and the lot on which it stood. Two association officers, George Reynolds and Don Carlos Young, assumed the supervision of the museum during the next five years, keeping it from actual dissolution, although they were not qualified to do more. Reynolds supposedly did some of his best writing in one of its obscure corners.

On December 9, 1890, a special committee of the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association met "to consider the present condition of the Deseret Museum and to take steps for the improvement of the institution. Soon thereafter the museum property was sold, and Talmage, already well known as scientist and educator, was given charge of the collections. He thought his appointment might be temporary, but he was to serve for twenty-seven years. Following his appointment he wrote:

Spent remainder of day in the Museum. I have been installed as Curator to the Museum; and though my time is very fully occupied otherwise, yet I hope to be able to devote sufficient attention to affect the rearrangement and classification of the specimens. For many years the Deseret Museum has been devoid of a Scientific director, and the value of the collections has naturally lessened because of the loss of labels and lack of classification.

Talmage also expressed his desire that the museum would grow and planned to issue a series of bulletins "calling for specimens, and giving

26 Talmage, "Deseret Museum," pp. 970–71, 962. The articles of incorporation of the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association stated that its objects were "to found and maintain a repository and collection of natural, scientific and literary curiosities and works of art..." Reynolds, a long-time friend and admirer of Barfoot, was associated with him in missionary work in London from 1861 until they both emigrated in 1865. He took charge of Barfoot's funeral arrangements and spoke at the service. See Diary of George Reynolds, May 15 to July 25, 1861, Archives Division, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (cited hereafter as LDS Archives); and Deseret Evening News, April 25, 26, 1882. Reynolds was the author of several books on the Book of Mormon.
James E. Talmage, director of the Deseret Museum, actively participated in the collection of specimens. USHS collections.

instructions for their collection and preservation.” The first bulletin left the press in January. Others followed. Feeling that he could not successfully build up more than one collection, he added his own personal cabinets containing close to 2,000 specimens to the Deseret Museum. 27

The beginning of this new era was marked with a move to the Templeton Building, then one of the newest structures in the city. However, facilities there were crowded, and only a part of the exhibits could be shown. Some of these were damaged by coal dust, as the side door of the museum opened into an alley where coal was delivered. The Deseret Museum opened here on February 2, 1891, and remained at this location until March 1893. 28

Talmage felt that his duty required him to secure specimens for illustration and study, and he gathered them at every opportunity. He

25 Talmage Journal, December 9, 1890, January 31 and April 16, 1891; Deseret Museum Acquisition Books, Lee Library. The Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association paid Talmage $2,500 for his collections and $500 for his work as of April 16, 1891. He used this money for a trip to Europe where he promoted the work of the Deseret Museum. See John R. Talmage, The Talmage Story (Salt Lake City, 1972), pp. 87-88.
and the museum taxidermist even went out hunting for birds together one January afternoon, killing a number to be stuffed as examples of winter plumage.\textsuperscript{29} He also became excited over a deposit of selenite that had been discovered in Wayne County. He capitalized on this deposit, arranging for about fifteen tons of the gypsum crystals to be distributed by the Deseret Museum to museums and other educational institutions in the United States and Europe. Most often the selenite was exchanged for fine specimens from the recipient institutions, thus increasing the Deseret Museum collection. As a result, "the name of the Utah institution became known in scientific circles far and near," and the way was opened for the Deseret Museum to obtain membership in the Museums Association with headquarters in London.\textsuperscript{30}

J. Reuben Clark, Jr., served as a museum assistant between 1891 and 1903 when he was a student at the Latter-day Saints College and later at the University of Utah.\textsuperscript{31}

The sale of the old museum lot by the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association brought funds that were then used in the construction of a new, three-story building, known as the Church University Building, on First North between First and Second West. The Deseret Museum was moved to the top floor of this building where it was open from March 17, 1893, to July 30, 1903.\textsuperscript{32} The April 20, 1895, issue of Scientific American featured this museum with an article and several pictures, noting its extensive collections.

As time went on, the Salt Lake Literary and Scientific Association was unable to maintain the museum, and the title reverted to the church in November 1899 when the church assumed the association's many liabilities and few assets. Arrangements had been made, however, for the title to the building to be passed, after a certain number of years, to the University of Utah as part of the endowment of a chair of geology. In 1903 the Deseret Museum found itself homeless, and in July of that year its collections were boxed and stored in the temple. Exchanges of specimens with other institutions continued, however, so that there was no termination of growth. The Deseret Museum became a charter member

\textsuperscript{29} Talmage Journal, January 20, 1892. Talmage expressed a dislike for killing but hoped it was justified for this purpose.


\textsuperscript{31} Talmage, "Deseret Museum," p. 972. Clark later became a successful lawyer, undersecretary of state, U.S. ambassador to Mexico, author, and counselor to three presidents of the LDS church.

\textsuperscript{32} Talmage, "Deseret Museum," p. 972.
From 1893 to 1903 the Deseret Museum made its home on the top floor of the Church University Building. USHS collections.

of the American Association of Museums when it was established in 1906, even though the collection was in storage.\(^33\)

The home finally obtained for the museum was in a new structure, the Vermont Building, located on the corner of South Temple and Richards Street, covering the site where the museum had stood forty years earlier. Again it was "across from the south gate of the Tabernacle." Still serving as curator, James E. Talmage wrote:

With due confession of sentimental emotions, be it said, that in the installation the Director had his offices established over the actual spot on which


When the University of Utah moved to its present campus the ownership of the Church University building passed to the state, then to Salt Lake City, and next to the Salt Lake City Board of Education under which it was used by the Salt Lake High School and later by West High School. See Talmage, "Deseret Museum," p. 959; Talmage, "Passing of the Deseret Museum," p. 528.
The Deseret Museum

had once stood the old house of sun-dried bricks, wherein his worthy pre-
decessors had striven so devotedly to keep the institution alive, under condi-
tions of real poverty, both as to equipment and personal remuneration.\(^{34}\)

The Deseret Museum reopened on July 11, 1911. On that day, Dr. Talmage wrote in his journal:

Today the Deseret Museum reopened its doors to the public. It is now eight
years since the collections were boxed and stored, and nearly a year since
we began the removal to the Vermont building the present home of the
Museum. While the exhibits are not in perfect order, they are in good
presentable condition, and the work of more thorough arrangement and
classification will continue.

Subsequent entries in the curator's journal reveal many days spent at
work there.

Specimens in the reopened museum were classified in popular, rather
than technical, groupings. The mineral collection occupied one entire
corridor running the length of the building. The prize of this exhibit was
the 550-pound group of selenite crystals. The ethnological exhibits in-
cluded, among 1,050 specimens, a collection of artifacts and human re-
 mains of the Cliff Dwellers "conceived to be the finest of its kind in the
United States." The collection of over 500 specimens of mounted animals
and birds and 600 mounted insects was said to be "the largest and most
select of any such in the intermountain region." The fossil exhibit of about
1,300 specimens was "among the most extensive and valuable brought
together anywhere in the West." The valuable local history collection of
the Daughters of Utah Pioneers was so extensive that a separate booklet
was required for its description. The museum also contained a library of
over 2,000 volumes, some rare.\(^{35}\) A report in the Deseret Evening News
of July 22, 1911, stated: "This museum is one of the most valuable assets
the state has among the educational institutions."

Shortly after the reopening of the museum, the admission fees were
dropped.\(^{36}\)

Talmage was called to the apostleship of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints on December 7, 1911. The following month he wrote:

My call to Church work necessitates some readjustment of my labors in
connection with the Deseret Museum and of a professional nature. It is the

\(^{34}\) Talmage, "Passing of the Deseret Museum," p. 528.
\(^{35}\) Talmage, "Deseret Museum," pp. 975–82.
express wish of the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve, that I retain the directorship of the Deseret Museum, and that I employ such assistance as may be necessary to make it possible for me to leave at any time without causing interruption of the work. Acting under these directions I appointed my son, Sterling B. Talmage to the office of Curator of the Deseret Museum, he to work under my direction. His appointment was made during the last week of December, and he entered upon his duties with the first of the new year. As the instruction had been given me by the Council of the First Presidency and Twelve, I reported my action to that Council at today's meeting. It was unanimously approved.37

As in its earlier days, the museum placed an advertisement in the newspaper in 1912, asking for contributions of historical and scientific value and suggesting the need for preservation of such items and the danger of injury or loss if not "gathered and deposited where such can be preserved for the good of the people."38

From the beginning of the Deseret Museum, lack of space was a chronic problem, even when moves were made to larger quarters. The 75,000 square feet allotted the museum in the Vermont Building was no exception, as there was no suitable expansion room available in the office building. However, the collection continued to grow and visitors continued to come, with the registered visitors averaging 4,000 per month between 1915 and 1918. Lack of space and the need to cut unnecessary expenses as well as provide an even more convenient location for visitors led to the decision to provide new accommodations for the Deseret Museum in a special addition to the Bureau of Information on Temple Square. A large ground-floor area and a spacious balcony were both to be used for exhibits.39

When the museum closed at its Vermont Building location on July 28, 1918, the name "Deseret Museum" was discontinued and Talmage was released from his long and devoted service. The collections were divided into two separate series destined for different depositories. The mineral, fossil, paleontological, and zoological collections that had been gathered as educational materials were transferred to the Latter-day Saints University (High School) where they were housed in the then new Joseph F. Smith Memorial Building. This collection became known as the LDS University Museum. It remained there until the spring of 1931 when, at the closing of the school, it was transferred to Brigham

37 Talmage Journal, January 11, 1912.
38 Deseret Evening News, March 14, 1912.
Young University in Provo. Many of these items are now part of the collections of the Monte L. Bean Life Sciences Museum and the Geology Department.

The other holdings of the Deseret Museum were placed in the new building on Temple Square and called the LDS Church Museum. The ground floor housed the ethnological material — the artifacts and human remains of the Cliff Dwellers, along with exhibits relating to the American Indians and the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands. The balcony was used to display the pioneer and historical items in the Mormon section of the museum. A platform and pagoda were constructed to exhibit the first log cabin built in Salt Lake City. The part of the pioneer collections that belonged to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers was moved from Temple Square the following spring to the Utah State Capitol where it was formed into exhibits showing pioneer history and industry.\(^4\) Since 1950, when

\(^4\) *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 28, 1918; Talmage, “Passing of the Deseret Museum,” p. 530; Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the L. D. S. College, May 20, 1931, LDS Archives.

the DUP Pioneer Memorial Museum was opened, these relics have formed an important part of the collection there. The mummies and some other Indian items were later given to BYU and are now part of the collections of the Museum of Peoples and Cultures. It is believed that some specimens are now at the Utah Museum of Natural History at the University of Utah.

The museum on Temple Square closed in 1976 when the relics were moved to accommodate the building of a new visitors' center. Many things are in storage, but some are on display at the Historical Department in the Church Office Building awaiting the opening in 1983 of the new church museum across the street west from Temple Square on the north end of the block. Among the many exhibits to be placed there will be items from the old Deseret Museum.

Thus, the Deseret Museum accomplished its original purpose and more. It acquainted visitors with Utah’s pioneer and natural history, served as an educational and cultural aid to the community, made a valuable contribution to the preservation of artifacts pertaining to Utah and Mormon history, gathered and preserved large quantities of scientific specimens, and contributed to the formation of other museums and collections that continue to instruct and edify.

42 *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 24, 1976.

The Atlas of Utah represents a prodigious cooperative effort. Moreover, it succeeds. The five editors (Deon C. Greer, Klaus D. Gurgel, Wayne L. Wahlquist, Howard A. Christy, and Gary B. Peterson), together with Brigham Young University Press, sixty-five contributing professionals and scholars, and sixty-one participating students, bring us a work that is both lavish and encyclopedic. Among its attributes are breadth and balance, accuracy, editorial consistency, color, beauty, intelligent layout, and, best of all, a vast wealth of sound information, including much Utah history.

Greer, Gurgel, and Wahlquist developed the concepts behind the Atlas over the better part of a decade. During the same period they won grants from the Utah Bicentennial Commission, the Four Corners Regional Commission, and Weber State College, and donations in kind from various governmental offices and individuals. In all, support amounted to more than $300,000. It adds up to one of the truly exciting publication achievements in recent Utah history.

The book’s 110 essays are presented topically in seven major sections and twenty-one subsections that progress logically and chronologically from the state’s global and geological settings to fast-food chains and ski resorts. Reference, the first section, locates Utah and provides material useful in reading the rest of the book as well as for general reading. Included is information on place names and county maps. Second is a section on land, with subsections on topography, flora and fauna, water, and climate. While time is dealt with in both historical and geological sweeps in its maps and essays, there is a distinctly contemporary or current thrust to such topics as earthquake epicenters, deer herds, and average annual runoff. The people are presented next, with attention being given to native cultures (both prehistoric and historic), exploration, settlement, conflict and accommodation, population and family characteristics, and public services. A section on social institutions takes a close look at Utah’s churches and voluntary and fraternal associations. The government section depicts the growth of political institutions, including the boundaries of the state itself, the emergence of counties, and the confines of judicial districts, multi-county regions, and congressional districts as well as patterning elections since statehood. Although this is a relatively short chapter, its central placing in the book seems to underscore the centrality of Utah as a political entity in the totality of this presentation. The longest single section, the economy, is subdivided into sections on agriculture, minerals, timber, energy, manufacturing, business, transportation, communication, employment, and the quality of the environment. Recreation concludes the book, with subsections on tourism, travel, and land and water recreation.

Generally, the Atlas’s 340 maps are superb. Five colors and beautiful finishing heighten their impact as does the use of a wide range of mapping techniques.
Many of them strike me as being works of art. Among the most attractive and instructive are the historical maps (pp. 75–107) and the maps that show resource utilization (pp. 204–20). They give special meaning to the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. As strong as the maps are, however, they seem occasionally to be difficult to read and sometimes raise rather than settle questions. I found this to be true in the subsection on electoral patterns (pp. 169–77) where scores of small maps shaded in various hues of red and blue march across the page. They make for lots of color but are not easy to read. Another map where the “colors game” leaves me perplexed is in the nonagricultural employment subsection (pp. 248–49), where numbers employed in the various fields are conveyed only in the most general terms by shaded columns. The text does provide a few clues about how employment numbers break down, and an earlier subsection on manufacturing (pp. 222–23) gives specific employment figures in a small inset. Such an inset for employment generally would have added much. But these are small problems.

Photographs are another important feature of the Atlas. Some of them are of the first order. Indeed, the full-page color plates that head the sections elevate the photographic essay to a high art. Like many color shots, they are strikingly beautiful. But to a most uncommon degree the context of the Atlas allows them to interpret, give meaning, and tell what is important. The cover jacket photo of a mountain stream at low water puts the entire Utah experience in perspective. The village scene at the frontispiece interprets another point in the character of Utah and its heritage as do pictures of desert skylines, downtown Salt Lake, the Salt Lake Temple, Zion National Park, and a view of Geneva Steel, full of pollution and with a rough-haired range cow in the foreground. But perhaps the central point of the color essay is a great study of the rotunda in the State Capitol (p. 158). It establishes the Atlas as a general study of Utah, and in its dignity and strength seems to state that the full character of Utah emerges best in the political context. Some fifty-seven other photos support the general presentation. In some cases they add greatly. In others, particularly the historical photos, problems of presentation and reproduction impair the effect.

Utah history fares well in the Atlas. Trails, settlements, historic sites, battles, forts, and many other historical themes show up to good advantage. The sections on people, social institutions, government, and the economy are especially fruitful. The historical information presented is in the main straightforward and lacking in interpretive thrust and does less with the dynamics of historical change than one might hope for in a geographical treatment. Exceptions to this generalization are subsections on Mormon expansion that convey both movement and interpretive points.

Looked at as Utah history, the Atlas may be compared with historical atlases published on neighboring states by the University of Oklahoma Press. The Atlas is many things the others are not, including a polished production in color. Although its focus extends beyond history, it compares favorably in what it shows about state history in the narrow sense. Yet, as one looks at other atlases, one feels that the Atlas of Utah, like much of our approach to Utah history, is inward in its focus. By comparison, one sees less emphasis on how Utah fits in the western and national context, what role it played in Manifest Destiny, and indeed how the state fits into more recent regional and national developments. In this sense one might wish that the Atlas were a bit less narrowly construed.
In the main, however, it is a major and exciting contribution to Utah history. Utahns from every walk of life and every age level will find it useful. In addition, as time advances, it will take on added value as a historical source on life in Utah in the 1980s.

CHARLES S. PETERSON
Utah State University

The New Beehive Songster: vol. 1, Early Recordings of Pioneer Folk Music, collected by Austin Fife et al., record and 18-page booklet; vol. 2, New Recordings of Utah Folk Music, collected by Hal Cannon et al., record and 12-page booklet. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1980. $9.00 each.)

If Francis James Child, Francis B. Gummere, and George Morey Miller were alive today, they would say: I have told you, and told you, and told you that folksong is oral literature, that it is smallpox from mouth to mouth, that authorship of songs is as anonymous as gossip, and that transportation from generation to generation, like other literature, is the test of its value. Few of the songs on these records qualify as folksongs under this definition. These, however, are, of course, folksongs and folk music because they have been collected, arranged, recorded, and written about by such eminent folklorists as Austin Fife, Lester Hubbard, Jan Brunvand, and Hal Cannon. Folksong definitions have changed and will change as folk life changes. Reasonable scholars have accepted the palpable fact that folksong is any song completely possessed by folk who belong to a homogeneous group, drawn together by an ethnic, religious, economic, geographical, occupational, or other unifying force. Under this accepted definition these records are eminently folklore, and as such are of significant value to scholars of history, folklore, anthropology, literature, and music.

These records present the very grassroots of music and literature, unsophisticated as a mongrel dog; in other words, these are selected from field collections of folk music. The singers and instrumentalists are homespun, neither polished nor corrupted by training, publicity, or critics. Performers are all — I exaggerate — almost all old enough to brag about their longevity. When Hal Cannon explains that “she is 97,” we are amazed that she can sing at all, amazed as we would be to see a dog climb a tree. When these have-been singers of old songs sing — though one foot and part of the larynx are in the grave — we realize that had they lived a generation later and had had a chance and a promoter, they, like the coal miner’s daughter, might have been gold record recipients like Loretta Lynn. Do not say that the National Endowment for the Arts misused federal funds in financing this work.

Ever since the time when Sir Walter Scott collected his Minstrelsy of the Scotch Border (1802), folk music themes and folk ballad plots have been employed in classical music and sophisticated literature. Furthermore, modern rock and country musicians lean heavily on the interests of the folk. Indeed, they are the folk. Folk includes all the people. Mass communications tend to play up the lowest common denominator of folk taste. This is evident in the repetitious rhythms and words and ungrammatic and prosaic phrases in too many modern songs — some of which have as few words as a parrot. Folklorists may develop a new definition of folksong. One arbitration can spawn another.

The instrumental music and folksong on these records were collected from Mormons — a homogeneous folk cul-
ture. It reveals their interests, history, art, and thought. In this lies the chief value.

The written introduction for volume 1 is significant, scholarly, and succinct; that of volume 2, fitting; notes on songs and music, excellent. Words of the songs in the script provide the scholar added value and interest.

Choosing material for folk publication is maddening, for folklore is loaded with junk. The folklorist must find the wheat among masses of chaff. In doing this the publishers of The New Beehive Songster have done well. Some numbers are obvious choices, old favorites such as “This Is the Place” and “Once I Lived in Cottonwood” — for lyric, dramatic, and historic value; “The Coyote” for its music quality and originality; all the instrumental numbers for rhythmic and lyric quality and for preservation of original folk art.

Why some other numbers were chosen is not clear. Even the notes hardly justify them. Why do editors give us the Hubbard, far-out, flat, folk-ruined version of “The Handcart Song”? Its only value lies in nailing down what has already been proven, that the song is truly property of the folk. The bad version of “Gay Paree,” though representative of the elementary humor of hyperbole in many old songs, is not the best choice. The version and rendition of “The Farmer’s Curst Wife” (Child 278) is likewise inferior to others.

The folklorist always tries — or should try — to preserve the significant values of folk creations.

More volumes of this series may be forthcoming. I hope so, for these alone do not complete even a sampling of types of Mormon song. For example, a majority — heaven’s plenty — of Utah folk-song of eighty or a hundred years ago were sentimental songs, conspicuous because of absence from these records.

If you are a scholar of history, folklore, music, or literature, buy these records. They will serve you well. If you like old instruments, good rhythms, old yet new because they are old sounds, treasure it. It will delight you. If you are a senior citizen, play it. You will be proud.

THOMAS E. CHENEY
Provo


d Indian Policy in the United States: Historical Essays. By FRANCIS PAUL PRUCHA. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981. Ix + 272 pp. $19.95.)

The history of the American Indian has, until fairly recently, been done by very few people. True, there have been sporadic outbreaks of interest in the field usually followed by intensive apathy and lassitude. Yet, the Native Americans have been very well served by the few notable practitioners who took them seriously and developed their history with precision and dignity. Father Francis Paul Prucha, S.J., is prominent among these, and while he has a few peers he has no masters.

This Indian Policy in the United States is a compilation of essays by Father Prucha. Most are republished from other sources, but a few are seeing the first light of day. All are examples of Prucha’s traditional approach to the study of the American Indian. He has none of the ethnologist or the oral historian within his makeup. Paul Prucha does documents and he does them extremely well. He works primarily in Indian policy as reflected in the documents, and few people can search out those documents as well as he. The style is scholarly and reproachable; the research impeccable. In the hands of a lesser man, the above might be damning praise, as it could indicate not only dullness but also an unwillingness to take chances. Nothing could be further from the truth, as Paul Prucha will take some
dramatic interpretations and back them to the hilt. Witness his essay on reassessing Andrew Jackson and his Indian policy. Screams of outrage are still echoing through the halls of academe as well as the lodges of the Cherokees and Creeks. The essay will always be controversial; and yet it needed to be done, and only Prucha could have done it.

The essay on scientific racism is a beautiful example of Prucha's work. He takes on the authorities who stated that in the nineteenth century scientific racism condemned the Indians to being pure savages forever and that these inherited characteristics were unavoidable. Prucha sees it differently. He shows quite clearly that while Indians were condemned, it was not because of innate character traits but rather because of their culture. He shows with great clarity that the effect of this racist thought was practically nonexistent in Indian policy which was based on the assumption that the Indian could indeed be "civilized," that a change in culture would bring a change in behavior.

One could go through this work essay by essay and be justified in so doing. It is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that here is a real professional at work and that anyone seriously interested in the history of the American Indian as it affected and was affected by the United States must possess this book. It is not only significant, but it will last.

JOSEPH H. CASH
University of South Dakota

That Awesome Space: Human Interaction with the Intermountain Landscape. Edited by E. RICHARD HART. (Salt Lake City and Chicago: Westwater Press, 1981. 147 pp. Paper, $8.95.)

The past decade has seen a resurgence of humanism in regional studies, a reaction, perhaps, to the quantification movement of the sixties. Unfortunately, many of the so-called humanistic regional studies have been guilty of exactly the things that created the demand for more scientific approaches—imprecise definitions, lack of coherent paradigms or themes, inconclusive results, and lack of applicability to other regional investigations. Happily, That Awesome Space is not a work that falls into that culpable category. It represents, rather, an effort to awaken scientists and technicians to issues that are ethical and aesthetic, to pose for them questions that are both relevant to the unique problems of the American West and presented from the unique perspectives of the humanities. Indeed, the very theme of the book is that while the major decisions confronting the American West today—water quality and quantity, impact of mining and agriculture, urban sprawl, the energy crisis and its implications—are perceived as scientific and technical in nature, they cannot be readily reached without an essentially humanistic component in the approach to them.

The region encompassed in this study lies between the Colorado Front Range and the Sierra, between the plains of Montana and the deserts of the Southwest. It is an awesome space indeed, and it has contemporary problems of equally awesome proportions. For generations people have tried to interpret its landscapes and to comprehend the pressures on it; for all its vastness it is a space that has been, in the words of the editor of the volume, "organized and used. It has been painted and written about. It has been perceived in totally different ways by several peoples with several disparate concepts of time. And it has been altered." This interaction between the Intermountain landscape and the humans who inhabit and use it has provided the point of departure for
the essays in this book. Arranged into four subgroups, each with an organizing introduction by the editor, the essays deal with the spatial organization of the Intermountain West, the western landscape in art, the temporal characteristics of the western experience, and the role of humans in changing the face of the land. The essays themselves are like the landscape with which they deal — spare, reduced to essentials, and meaningful in their simplicity.

The first section of the work treats the organization of western space and spans the topic from the land-use patterns of pre-Columbian peoples through the nineteenth-century planning of western towns and cities to the contemporary values for the design of urban places. Collectively, these essays ask whether traditional means of organizing space and planning land use have relevance for the West of today and whether understanding the historical developments and philosophies that have led to today’s West will enable westerners to choose better the directions they must take regarding the region and its resources tomorrow.

The second and third sections present That Awesome Space as a state of mind, represented by painters and pottery makers, filmmakers and photographers, authors and poets. In these sections, the roles of romanticism and stereotypes are dealt with in the context of the West of both yesterday and tomorrow. Central to the overall theme of the book, these sections ask whether the romanticism that has been — for many westerners at least — a curse can in fact be the single thing that will save the western landscape from unconscionable exploitation.

This issue of exploitation is the organizing concept of the fourth and concluding section. In the final group of offerings the essayists correlate the humanistic views and values of the first three sections with the land ethics currently at work in the West, whether those ethics involve the search for new energy resources or site-planning for the MX missile system. It is in this section that the book makes its most significant statement, presents its strongest argument, and most fully realizes the premise upon which it was based — that contemporary decision-making requires a humanistic outlook and that environmental decision-making in particular must be user-oriented. Bruce Jackson, in his concluding essay, puts it squarely: “We need the insight of historians to understand the errors of the past. We need the insights of artists to understand the boundaries of the present. And we need the passion of us all to make sure that there is a future.”

JOHN L. ALLEN
University of Connecticut


Book dealers’ catalogs were the main source of information on Western Americana before publication of The Plains and the Rockies in 1920. The bibliography was originally compiled by Henry R. Wagner, who was born in Philadelphia, attended Yale University, and practiced law in Kansas City. He eventually gave up his law practice for mining, which took him on trips to the West where he began to acquire western materials while they were still relatively inexpensive. He realized that someday these items would be extremely valuable not only monetarily but for research purposes as well.
In 1919 Wagner began to compile a bibliography to consist of "...original editions of original narratives made up from a catalog of my own books together with my 'Wants'...[to present]...the fact and fiction of the period between 1800 and 1865 as written and printed during that same period." A wide range of items were included in the bibliography, including "...books, pamphlets, photographs, brochures, and ephemera...." The geographic area to be covered included most of the territory west of the Hundredth Meridian.

The bibliography was first printed in 1920 while Wagner was in New York. Returning to find that the book had not been proofread accurately he stopped its sale and printed a six-page errata sheet to go with the forty-odd copies already sold. Feeling that there was a demand for the work, he made corrections and additions, and it was reprinted in 1921 by John Howell of San Francisco.

*The Plains and the Rockies* was the first substantial bibliography in the field of Western Americana and was used as a resource by researchers, libraries, private collectors, and book dealers. Because of this volume, prices skyrocketed as demand increased for the items. Many important collectors entered into the Western Americana field because of its publication: W. R. Coe, Thomas W. Streeter, Philip A. Rollins, Everett D. Graff, and others.

Errors and omissions in the first revised edition made a second edition desirable, but Wagner had moved on to other collecting areas and was not interested in revising the work himself. Charles L. Camp, professor of paleontology at the University of California, Berkeley, was selected to edit the second edition. Camp was a collector of Western Americana who had written several books and articles in related fields.

The second edition, which closely resembled the first, was published in 1937 by Grabhorn Press of San Francisco. In addition to making some corrections, Camp added more than seventy-five new entries. He did not retain the original numbering system found in the first edition, but after the 1937 edition appeared book dealers and bibliographers made reference to "Wagner-Camp" numbers in their publications, and it became important to maintain the numbering system found in the 1937 edition.

The third edition was published by Long's College Book Company of Columbus, Ohio, in 1953, but because of the manner in which new works were added, it contained many bibliographic and typographical shortcomings. Camp started revisions for a fourth edition, but at the time of his death in 1975 he had made only a modest effort.

The fourth edition was funded by Warren R. Howell, who was interested in publishing it, to honor his father, John Howell, who had published the two first editions. But, in checking, Camp's manuscript was found to need major revisions. Robert H. Becker, former associate director of the Bancroft Library, was chosen to revise the fourth edition. It was expanded to almost seven hundred items, but it maintained the same complex numbering system. A standard bibliographical form was adopted, giving title transcriptions "line by line," signature, page and size information, references to the item in other bibliographies, notes, and location symbols. The book was designed by Andrew Hoyem and printed at the Arion Press in San Francisco.

This new edition has its own problems: its complex numbering system, which is not explained, and no table of contents, which would have been helpful since the publication years are not prominently displayed as they were in the third edition. Notes have been shortened, sometimes leaving out valuable
information. Additionally, locations were taken from the National Union Catalog and were not verified, causing the work to lose some of its validity as a reference tool.

The overall worth of this bibliography is beyond question, though, for it is one of the indispensable works for collectors of Western Americana.

LINDA THATCHER
Utah State Historical Society

He Was Singin’ This Song: A Collection of Forty-eight Traditional Songs of the American Cowboy, with Words, Music, Pictures, and Stories. By JIM BOB TINSLEY. (Orlando: University Presses of Florida, 1981. Xiv + 255 pp. $30.00.)

Jim Bob Tinsley has collected forty-eight songs he thinks are most important in the cowboy tradition. These songs describe a broad range of cowboy experience and are arranged into eight categories: At Work, On the Trail, Tragedy, The Great Beyond, Horses, Off Duty, Gone Wrong, and The Serious Side. Within this framework he does much more than tell stories; he gives us a thorough historical treatment of cowboy life, work, and values as well as famous trails, historic outfits, characters, and in most cases insightful song etymologies.

Each song is presented with words, music, and guitar chords. This is followed by three or four pages devoted to detail about the song and its origins, and a text that ties the subject matter of the songs to larger aspects of cowboy life and history. Additionally, photographs are amply used to reinforce the points of these short essays.

The general research that has gone into this work is quite good. It represents Tinsley’s lifetime of investigation and living the cowboy persona as a cowboy performer on the radio from 1935 and his experience as a long-time high school English teacher and scholar.

The primary problem of the book is that Tinsley’s brand of western scholarship is somewhat dated. His view of cowboy history, though factual, is always colored by the romance of the frontier and cowboy life without making clear the distinction between that romantic view in the American popular mind and that particular occupational life.

For example, Tinsley is correct in including popular songs from the thirties, but then he displays them in the context of nineteenth-century cowboy life which is only ancillary to their true function, the marketplace. He also takes this linear approach to performance, distracting from the realities of the cowboy occupation. He says in his introduction that “Some of these songs have never been done better than in the arrangements by the Norman Luboff Choir. Its performances will influence singers for many years.” This, in fact, is quite wrong. Folk art is always most vital when performed and transferred within the folk group. While cowboys have learned from and enjoyed Gene Autry (who wrote the foreword for this book) and the Sons of the Pioneers, the influence of Norman Luboff and Mitch Miller on them is negligible.

Historically, the major influences in any occupational setting are the intimate and personal interactions rather than the popular or the official. Over and over the book attempts to validate the art and poetry of the cowboy through scholars as well as popular artists’ perspectives. This is not unusual, but the distinctions are never made explicit.

This monochromatic view is best displayed when Tinsley says “Florida cowboys were like cowboys anywhere.” It is good that the book treats the importance of Florida to the American cattle indus-
try, but to say that cowboys were all the same is ludicrous. I've been told by several old cowboys that they were always able to tell where cowboys were from by their hats, clothes, saddles, songs, etc. The fact is that show biz has done more to homogenize cowboy characteristics than any other medium. Beyond this philosophic criticism with the book, the remainder of my criticism pertains to specific gaps in the material.

Tinsley has given no credence to the influence of dance and instrumental music in the development of the cowboy song. Only in the case of "The Girl I Left Behind Me" is adequate space given to this influence. Whereas, "Rye Whiskey" and its place as a standard western fiddle tune associated with "The Drunken Hiccups" is never noted. As well, "Old Paint" as the last waltz at cowboy dances in Oklahoma and "Yellow Rose of Texas" as an old dance tune are never set in that context.

Generally, the text has little sensitivity to musicological influence in cowboy song styling. For instance, in tracing the roots of "Utah Carroll," Tinsley makes reference to several versions of the song, including one collected by Austin and Alta Fife. He does not differentiate, however, between these versions, whereas he could have added something substantive had he known that the Fife collection clearly represents an older style that suggests the age of the song.

Tinsley takes issue with the origins of the word "buckaroo" as coming from the Spanish word "vaquero." He claims the word is instead a derivation of the Gullah word "Buckra," which means white man or boss. If Tinsley had spent any time with cowboys of Oregon and Nevada who have always considered themselves, first, buckaroos, he would have noticed the strong ties they hold with the Mexican cowboy. I would take the real-life conclusion this suggests over armchair scholarship, particularly when any buckaroo will tell you where the word came from, and that is "vaquero."

I would recommend this book. It has a great selection of cowboy songs, stories, history, photographs, and song-sleuthing. Apart from the insensitivity to the cowboy occupation versus the popularized stereotypes, this is a nice addition to the body of published material on this important form of American folk song.

Hal Cannon
Utah Folklife Center

 Builders of the Kingdom: George A. Smith, John Henry Smith, George Albert Smith.

Just to look at a book such as this one had the effect of taking away my breath. There on the dust jacket were the stern portraits of three of the great figures in Mormon history. It seemed that I had known them personally as I journeyed through that history, encountering all three along the way as they played powerful roles in various stories I sought to trace. And there at the bottom (although in modest print) loomed the name of Merlo Pusey, Pulitzer Prize winner, premier Mormon biographer. This will be a great one, I thought as I opened the book, settled back in my four-dollar chair and began to read.

By the time I finished the foreword by Leonard Arrington, my mind was already searching back to the times I had met all three Smiths. In 1975 Dean May and I spent three days in a jeep retracing the route of the Iron County Mission Trail. During the winter of 1850–51, George A. led a company of some 100 wagons from Salt Lake City to the pres-
ent site of Parowan. Dean was in the process of editing the diary of the journey and wanted to see firsthand the landmarks along the way. I remembered standing near the bank of the Sevier River near Yuba Lake as Dean read to me Smith's diary entries for December 25 and 26, all about two oxen that had disappeared and then turned up, one fatally wounded with arrows. Smith had expressed his love for the old beast and then ordered it destroyed, but not before he tenderly dressed its wounds and covered it against the cold. George A. seemed an intimate friend after that experience, and I subsequently relished other contacts I had with him as I continued my meandering study of Mormon history.

At about the same time that I took that trip with Dean to Iron County, I was in the last stages of editing the memoirs of James H. Moyle, loyal Mormon and loyal Democrat who weathered John Henry's "gumshoeing" (as Moyle called it) in behalf of the Republicans after 1890. Moyle, while not in any measure of agreement with Smith and his mission, commented continually upon the apostle's strength of character and enormous charisma. John Henry, wrote Moyle, could wrap his big arm around the shoulders of a Saint and within minutes have him ready to abandon any allegiance to the Democratic party in order to help build a viable GOP in Utah so that Republican congressmen (by prior agreement) would support statehood. What an impressive fellow he must have been, I thought, as I turned to chapter one.

But before I could read a line, the frail and studious image of George Albert Smith came into my mind. What a contrast he was to the other two Smiths, I mused, as I contemplated George A.'s corpulence and John Henry's ebullient immensity. Yet, George Albert became president of the church, and because of that it is his slender image, perhaps in a Scout uniform, that endures in the minds of average Mormons. I was born shortly after he succeeded Heber J. Grant as church president, and I can remember hearing as a boy about "President Smith's poor health." In later years I tended to hold George Albert in reverence because he was the last prophet who allowed the hair God gave him on his face (at least some of it) to grow.

With all this in my head, I finally started to read. As I worked my way through the first two chapters, I began to feel somehow disappointed, but I could not tell why. By the time I got into chapter three, however, I started to notice the problem. I tend to plod along when I read, pausing regularly to reflect and to check footnotes and the like. There were hardly any footnotes here! Whole issues passed by without raising any curiosity in my head. Was I bored? Could I be, with Merlo Pusey and the three-generational Smiths? In chapter three, I was in very familiar territory with George A. on a mission and preaching alongside Jedediah Grant, about whom I had just finished a book. Suddenly, Pusey was telling me about a debate Grant had had with a Methodist minister. I wanted to know more. I searched eagerly for a reference. Well, I said to myself, this must be from Smith's journal. I wondered how I could have missed it. Mormon Thunder was already in page proofs, but I would have paid Pusey twice for his book if he had just referenced that incident.

The rest of the book contained at least a hundred similar quirks, at least for me. Other examples of my queaziness over the volume include lamenting that I knew more about the Iron County Mission from listening to Dean May read from Smith's diary than Pusey could begin to tell me in chapter eleven where he discussed it. I always figured that a biography ought to provide scope and depth to an issue that a diary cannot hope to project. The chapter on the
Iron County Mission seemed to move instead through a very narrow tunnel. I looked ahead eagerly to the material on John Henry’s activities surrounding the cessation of polygamy and the drive for statehood but again failed to enjoy the enlightenment I had anticipated. On page 163, I nearly choked when I discovered that according to Pusey, John Henry “never allowed his politics to dominate his religious interests.” How, I thought, can a Pulitzer Prize winner use the word never in such a context when the evidence is so abundant as to the unethical activities of Smith and others in this connection? Or were ethics not a part of Smith’s religious interests? That I could not believe.

When I got into the life of the third Smith, I was still a believer in Pusey, in spite of all that had gone before. I relished the way in which I was certain the biographer would deal with the pressures George Albert undoubtedly felt as member of the royal family and as the son and grandson of apostles. My hopes again betrayed me, however, as Pusey instead chose to portray his subject with the pastel brush. Somewhere around chapter 26 or 27, where George Albert becomes a young apostle, we learn of his modesty and conviction that he might not be the intellectual or charismatic equal to others who might have been chosen in his place, but we never sense any of the real anguish that must have pierced this sensitive man when the gossip of nepotism surfaced after his calling. He quickly satisfies himself as to his “moral” qualities and a page later is functioning “admirably,” being well “suited to the work of an apostle.” Now, I thought to myself, how in the world does one become suited to such a thing as being an apostle? And then it struck me — some 225 pages into the book I realized that what we have here is not a serious biography but a good old-fashioned family history. Having dabbled some myself in both biography and family history, I became immediately embarrassed that I had not figured this out much sooner.

I finished the book with this discovery in mind and managed to enjoy it much more, much as one can enjoy a good hamburger. It was the expecting a cut of prime rib that had messed me up with my reading of Building the Kingdom. This was just an ordinary family history, well written and handsomely packaged. I made the mistake of expecting something extraordinary when nothing of the sort was ever intended.

Gene A. Sessions
Weber State College


By title, Using Local History in the Classroom clearly states this book’s purpose. Unfortunately, many nonteaching historians will thus deprive themselves of this fine resource. Whether one is an experienced local historian willing to consider new challenges or a neophyte wondering where to begin, this book provides a rich mine of ideas and sources.

Sturdily bound, with good quality paper and a pleasing typeface, the book is divided into an introduction and three parts. The illustrations are line drawings and photographs incorporated into the text at the appropriate point. It is a pleasure to see the illustration while reading about it instead of having to turn to a separate section.

The introduction gives a brief background on local history. Although they write in an encouraging manner, the authors nonetheless sound a clear warn-
ing as to potential pitfalls. A careful reading will assist a writer in avoiding the mistakes that could relegate a manuscript to the undusted shelves instead of becoming a valuable asset to a collection.

Part one, comprising three chapters, concerns sources available to the average local historian. The traditional sources are outlined but so are the often overlooked means of gaining a historical insight. Some valuable suggestions include building styles and materials, fire insurance maps in conjunction with photographs, posters and notices, and cemetery locations and gravestone styles.

The second part, four chapters of varying length, offers insight relating to family, economic, social, and political history. Each chapter deals with a single topic and provides a variety of ideas in local history investigation.

The final part contains a single chapter and three appendices. This is the only section of interest primarily to the teacher. The authors outline the basic steps in setting up a local history program in a school. A pleasing aspect is the general, nonrestrictive guidance provided, allowing individual teachers to establish programs compatible with localized conditions. Even here, however, the nonteacher can learn basic steps in the preparation and expansion of local history away from a "pet" topic.

Although written for use on the secondary and college level, very little adaptation is required for the innovative elementary school teacher to make use of this book. By design it is a topical (by chapter) resource, but a cover-to-cover first reading is advisable. As a stimulus to thought process, this is an extremely valuable volume.

With one exception, shortcomings are minor. Notes are in a separate section following the appendices. How annoying this may be depends upon the individual reader. In a straight-through reading some redundancy is present. However, when used as a topical resource this same repetition is necessary. The average reader will, in all likelihood, reach for the dictionary two or three times. This is annoying only when the definition is found a few paragraphs (and overleaf) away. The sole major fault is the lack of a bibliography. Numerous references appear throughout the text, with adequate citation that the reader may follow through on the source cited. Nonetheless, it is very frustrating not to have a comprehensive bibliography. This oversight should be corrected prior to another printing.

Teachers and nonteachers alike, who are interested in local history, will find Using Local History in the Classroom a worthwhile addition to their personal library.

Marlowe C. Adkins, Jr.
Sky View High School
Book Notices

*Then and Now: A Photographic History of Vegetation Change in the Central Great Basin Desert.* By Gary F. Rogers. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1982. 152 pp. Paper, $15.00.)

A tool for the specialist in ecology, range management, or natural history, this volume uses photographs of identical scenes, taken decades apart, to document changes in vegetation. Rogers, a geographer from Columbia University, concludes that “Frequent appearance of annual-dominated vegetation in the new photographs may herald a new age in Great Basin natural history.” As annuals increase, perennial grasses decrease; fire frequency increases; grass, shrubs, and trees decline; the land deteriorates. More research and planning are needed.


This book is simply a reprint of the excellent 1941 edition, one volume in the American Guide Series, produced under the auspices of the Writer’s Program of the WPA.

This reprint will provide students and tourists with an excellent picture of Wyoming before its energy boom developments. Additionally, T. A. Larson’s brief introduction helps readers see the contrast between those yesterdays and the state in 1980. The book is still an interesting and useful source of information about Wyoming history, its highways, historic sites, and its people. The numerous photographs reveal a world that has changed much in four decades.


A lot of information about furniture is packed into this slim book. Thirty-two American furniture styles are covered, each with a page of illustrated examples (an average of five photographs per style) opposite a page of descriptive text and a keyed listing of distinctive style elements.

*Of All Things! A Nibley Quote Book.* Compiled and edited by Gary P. Gillum. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1981. Xi + 178 pp. $10.95.)

Although this book is obviously intended for an audience of Mormon faithful, apologist Hugh Nibley’s words of wisdom on reverence for life, government, etc., have a wider appeal: “The world polarizes around over-rated individuals” or “If God were to despise all things beneath him, as we do, where would that leave us?”
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