



1-1-1979

*Mormon in Motion: The Life and Journals of James H. Hart, 1825-1906, in England, France, and America*  
Edward L. Hart

Charles D. Tate Jr.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>

Recommended Citation

Tate, Charles D. Jr. (1979) "Mormon in Motion: The Life and Journals of James H. Hart, 1825-1906, in England, France, and America Edward L. Hart," *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 19 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol19/iss1/10>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

## Book Reviews

HART, EDWARD L. *Mormon in Motion: The Life and Journals of James H. Hart, 1825-1906, in England, France, and America*. Provo, Utah: Windsor Books, 1978. 313 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by Charles D. Tate, Jr., professor of English at Brigham Young University and editor of *BYU Studies*.

*Mormon in Motion* is most certainly a contribution to Mormon biography. It is a vivid account of James H. Hart, one of the early Saints who spent his life building the Kingdom. It is the second significant Mormon biography to appear in 1978.

But this book is different from the other significant biography, *Spencer W. Kimball*, in its accomplishment for Church members. This second biography is a successful study written in spite of a rather severe lack of materials. Where Ed and Andy Kimball had more materials than they could possibly use (plus a living subject to talk with), Ed Hart had only four small journals that covered but a small part of the life of his grandfather. Because this is the kind of problem many of us face in writing of our forebearers, *Mormon in Motion* demonstrates how it can be done successfully. Too many "biographies" simply print the available journals, with very little study, or interpretation, or editing; there is little attempt to set them in their milieu or to fill in the subject's life before and after the period the journals cover.

In *Mormon in Motion* Professor Hart has done an admirable job. Recognizing that the journals had to be the main part of his book, he has spent many years searching to gather everything available about his grandfather's life before and after the years covered by the journals. Even so, the gaps in information of the life of James H. Hart are significant, especially in the later years. Professor Hart sets an example in his decision to treat the materials by subject rather than by straight chronology. Some readers may find this treatment disconcerting, but, even so, what is important is the example and the success achieved; Professor Hart shows others how this common problem of incomplete information can be handled. His book was not dashed off in a couple of weeks before a family reunion but was a project of years of scholarly research and study. Though the major part of the manuscript won the First Prize Award in the Utah State Institute of Fine Arts competition for biography in 1973, it was

some five years later before Professor Hart felt the manuscript was suitable for publication.

Part II, the journals, is of course the best part of the book. Professor Hart has provided excellent explanatory notes throughout. When the journal entries are in French, translation is provided. But the real fascination of the journals is not simply informational; it is the presentation of James H. Hart, the real man, who came through trials of life more severe than most of us will ever face, and emerged with a steadfast faith that the Lord was just and would set all seeming injustices right. There are numerous incidents of his great faith and devotion. He had an absolute faith in the brethren; he truly sustained those who were placed over him. This is exemplified in his record of the difficulty he had with his mission president to whom he was first counsellor. This mission president was obviously in error and in fact was very rude to the Harts. It was a most difficult time, for James H. Hart was married at the time and his wife was expecting their first child. Yet, as he wrote about the conflicts, he maintained his position as a faithful Latter-day Saint, retaining his absolute faith in the brethren, remaining in his calling and serving the Lord even after his wife miscarried, most probably from the emotional complications of their situation. Totally trusting in the Lord's justice, Hart said after they had lost the baby, "All will be well" (p. 88). And it was. In time, he and his three wives had ten children.

*Mormon in Motion* presents James H. Hart as an exemplary representative of the Mormon pioneer of the last half of the nineteenth century, especially in his blend of practicality and spirituality. Hart was always ready to bear testimony, to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to baptize those who came believing. He himself had great faith. He believed in miracles and expected them. He often scolded his companions for not having more faith, for not anointing their sick, and for not healing them through the power of their faith and priesthood. But, at the same time, he was a man of great works who often insisted on reasonable and logical explanations for things that faith apparently did not explain.

*Mormon in Motion* builds testimony. One cannot read it without being affected by the life of James H. Hart, one who fought the good fight and won. His life inspires us all to fight harder, to sacrifice more willingly, and to build the Kingdom wherever we may be.