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A Mormon Bibliography, 1830-1930; Books, Pamphlets, Periodicals, and Broadsides Relating to the First Century of Mormonism Chad J. Flake, ed.

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Book Reviews

FLAKE, CHAD J., ed. *A Mormon Bibliography, 1830-1930; Books, Pamphlets, Periodicals, and Broadsides Relating to the First Century of Mormonism*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1978. 825 pp. \$75.00.

Reviewed by Russell T. Clement, instructor in Library Science at Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus.

After four decades of sustained effort, involving dozens of researchers, bibliographers, and the cooperation of major libraries, universities, and historical societies, this long-awaited bibliography is now in print. It is a great beginning in filling the acute need for ready access to materials on Mormons and Mormonism and should become the touchstone of scholarly Mormon bibliographies.

A Mormon Bibliography includes over 10,114 entries and has been beautifully printed by the University of Utah Press after years of typesetting and proofreading. As it is limited to "books, periodicals, Mormon newspapers . . . , pamphlets, and broadsides pertaining to the first century of Mormonism," it excludes "newspaper articles, periodical articles, manuscripts, maps, and prints" (p. x). Since there were no criteria outlined for including materials not wholly on Mormonism, one must rely on fairly subjective decisions regarding inclusion or exclusion. The editor explains that it "depended on the value of . . . the particular book to the study of Mormonism" (p. xi).

This massive bibliography was the brainchild and long concern of the Western Americana scholar the late Dale L. Morgan. He also wrote the introduction in 1970. It is appropriate that the work is dedicated to him for his pioneering efforts and prolonged dedication to the project.

Morgan's introduction is an informative and delightfully written journey through the last forty years of Mormon scholarship and the making of the bibliography. After terming pre-World War II Utah "a sadly impoverished area, bibliographically speaking" (p. xvi), Morgan chronicles his and others' involvement in compiling the tool. Beginning the preliminary work in 1942 by copying titles in the Library of Congress under pertinent subject headings, he struggled to delimit the project and first proposed in 1949 publishing a bibliography for 1830-1849.

The idea of a "Union Catalogue of Works on Mormonism" (p. xx), which format the bibliography partially follows, was shaped in

1951 when Morgan solicited the support of the Utah State Historical Society. In 1961, the Committee on Mormon Bibliography was formed, and it oversaw the project until publication. Throughout the introduction, Morgan details the contributions of numerous individuals and institutions who have advanced and restructured the work.

The editor, Chad Flake, Special Collections librarian at Brigham Young University, relates his involvement with the work and notes the problems of amassing and standardizing the entries. Portions of his preface could serve as a book review. He is particularly candid about weaknesses in the bibliography: inconsistencies in format, problems with dating and determining variant printings and editions, and the perennial bane of all bibliographies—incompleteness. The Editor's Preface contains much useful information and warrants a careful reading by serious users.

A Mormon Bibliography is printed on quality paper in a very pleasing format, but the blue cloth binding looks cheap and should have been heavier. The entries are arranged alphabetically by main entry in well-spaced, double columns. All entries are numbered, with apparently late inclusions noted by small-case letters. Citations contain standard bibliographic information and generally follow ALA rules and procedures. Author dates are given only to distinguish individuals with similar names (for example, Joseph Smith, Jr., and the Joseph Fielding Smiths). Foreign imprints usually include an English translation of their titles. Numbers in Sabin's *Dictionary of Books Relating to America* are also cited.

Reminiscent of nineteenth century primers, a full page black and white reproduction of an important work's title page appears at the beginning of each letter. These are expertly duplicated and, with their brief captions, serve to break up the pages of bibliographic monotony. Although alphabetical headings run on the top left corner of each page, it may have been more helpful to center the right page heading on the right side. Because main entries are listed only once and subsequent materials and editions marked with a dash, the user occasionally is required to look back several entries or pages to locate the author or first edition. An index arranged chronologically by date of publication completes the bibliography.

Although the bibliography is not (and was not intended to be) a complete Union Catalogue listing copies held in all libraries, it appears that throughout the years the major and minor bastions of Mormonism collections were repeatedly canvassed for entries. An impressive list of 200 institutions is given (and presumably used) in the "Key to Symbols" section.

As previously mentioned, the Editor's Preface points out major weaknesses in the bibliography. Undoubtedly, omissions and bungled entries will be found with usage. A minor but striking mistake is item no. 7212, which is a work published in 1935, five years after the cutoff date. Yet the significance of such a ground-breaking bibliographic tool should not be lost in minute nit-picking. *A Mormon Bibliography* is the first comprehensive, scholarly attempt at gaining bibliographic control in the area of Mormon publication. But it is only a starting point, not the terminus. Both Flake and Morgan are clear on this point. Flake mentions that supplemental volumes and corrections will need to be published. Morgan pinpoints its value precisely: "From here on it is going to be a basic tool, but other tools must join it in the chest before Mormon scholarship can be considered adequately equipped for its job" (p. xxiv). The Committee on Mormon Bibliography is already planning and gathering entries for a subsequent volume covering publications from 1930 to a more current date. *A Mormon Bibliography* stands as the foundation, something that will be improved and built upon.