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Mormons and the Media, 1898-2003: A Selected, Annotated, and Indexed Bibliography (with Suggestions for Future Research)

Sherry Baker
sherry_baker@byu.edu

Daniel Stout

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Satellite truck at Nauvoo Temple, June 2002. Seven news satellite trucks, including the one pictured here, transmitted coverage of the opening of the Nauvoo Temple. Beginning before its official founding, the Church has continued to use various forms of media to spread the gospel message and has been the subject of much media attention.
Print, electronic, and other forms of communications media have been consistently perceived and characterized by leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as tools to assist in spreading the gospel message throughout the world. President Spencer W. Kimball said, “Technology will help spread the gospel. . . . We shall use the inventions the Lord has given us to awaken interest and acquaint people of the world with [gospel] truths.”¹ More recently, President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “The Lord has inspired skilled men and women in developing new technologies which we can use to our great advantage in moving forward this sacred work.”²

Given this perspective, the Church from its earliest days has used various forms of media as vehicles of communication. It has produced or been affiliated with the production of numerous newspapers and magazines in the United States and in several countries worldwide. In the twentieth century, the Church embraced electronic media technologies promptly. “Music and the Spoken Word from Temple Square,” on the air since 1925, is the “longest running continuous program in the history of United States network radio.”³ General conference has been broadcast on radio since 1924, on television since 1949, and via the Internet since 1999. The Church’s official web site (www.lds.org) was launched in 1996, and the Church’s tremendously popular genealogy web site, FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org), was launched in 1999. In June 2000, all of the articles printed in English in Church magazines since 1971 were placed on www.lds.org where they could be viewed without charge by anyone with Internet access.⁴

While the Church has sent messages through various media, its organization, leaders, members, and culture have been the subjects of innumerable
newspaper and magazine articles; radio, movie, and television stories; books; and Internet sites. This bibliography brings together writing and research documenting the ways that the Church has participated in the media over the years and the ways that it and its members have been portrayed by the media over time.

The Bibliography

Our goal as mass communications scholars was to compile a bibliography of academic scholarship completed to date about issues relating to Mormons and the media. The bibliography provides interested readers with an annotated list of academic studies of Mormons and media communications from 1898 to early 2003. The works, which are cited and indexed, identify both those questions that already have been addressed by scholars and many questions yet to be adequately explored. Each entry’s abstract provides information beyond titles, authors, and dates and should be useful to scholars compiling a literature review on focused topics.

We hope that the bibliography will increase awareness of and encourage the production of relevant research and perhaps, in time, contribute to a more substantive discourse on the role of media in a number of Latter-day Saint forums from classroom to family.

Criteria for Inclusion. The primary criteria for inclusion in the bibliography are that entries be works (1) of academic scholarship and (2) about the mass media and Mormons and/or the Church. With a few early exceptions, the bibliography specifically excludes popular publications or Church media publications, such as Church magazines. The term “media” is interpreted broadly to include many forms of mediated communications. Studies of Mormon-related literature generally are not included, nor are studies of stage plays and other performing arts. Many studies of other scholarly topics relating to Mormons have relied in part on media sources in their citations but are not included here because the focus of this bibliography is specifically on studies of Mormons and media-related subjects and issues. Note, however, that we have also included several references to other bibliographies relating generally to Mormon studies. These are included to assist scholars in finding other relevant works not specifically listed here.

Possible Omissions. While this is a selected bibliography, we fear we inadvertently have overlooked important works about Mormons and the media. We invite readers to contact us about appropriate missing works that should be added to the bibliography and about new works as they are published. The bibliography will be posted online at the BYU Department
of Communications web site (www.comms.byu.edu) under authors’ names and will be updated periodically.

Organization and Analysis. The bibliography is organized chronologically by decade, then chronologically by year within each decade, and finally alphabetically by author’s name for each year. The chronological presentation is helpful in visualizing the growth and shifting emphasis in scholarship relating to Mormons and the media over time, both in terms of the topics studied and of the number of studies in each decade (see table 1). We have also included lists of the works by author and by subject to further aid in searching the bibliography.

Trends in Academic Studies on Mormons and the Media

Analysis of the bibliography from a chronological perspective suggests five trends of academic studies regarding Mormons and the media. The trends are not exclusive to specific time periods; rather, they are cumulative in that each includes the focus of past studies but represents the introduction of a new focus (new topic, subject, unit of analysis) on academic studies of Mormons and the media.

**Bibliographic Era (1890–1910).** Little research was conducted by scholars about the media between 1890 and 1910. The term “mass media” was yet to join the American vernacular, radio and film were in early development, and television had not yet emerged.

Nevertheless, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, the steady flow of Church information products resulted in some systematic listings of media sources. Berrian (1898) published a catalogue of books, newspapers, and pamphlets treating Mormon topics. In 1909 a similar resource was created by the New York Public Library (“List of Works” 1909), which followed a bibliography of anti-Mormon works (“Pamphlets” 1906).

**Print History (1911–50).** During the first half of the twentieth century, much was being written about Mormons in newspapers and other periodicals. Studies of this media coverage, as well as of the nineteenth-century press as it related to Mormons, began to emerge. Media research of this period consists mainly of descriptions and analyses of the Mormon press.

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and coverage in the secular press. Histories of the *Deseret News* (Penrose 1912), Latter-day Saint periodical literature (Smith 1921), the “Latter-day Saint press” (Merrill 1930), and the press in Illinois (Snider 1933) reflect an emerging belief that print media history broadens understanding of the larger question of how Mormons struggled to integrate with the larger society.

In this period, the fundamental idea emerged that significant historical events in Church history can be explained partly in terms of mass media. Banks (1950), for example, posits that the martyrdom of Joseph Smith was related to suppression of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. An earlier study by Mulder (1947) suggests that Nordic-language newspapers in Utah encouraged assimilation to both Mormonism and Americanism. Clark (1944) explores the idea that knowledge about “mental contacts” between Mormons and non-Mormons can be expanded through the study of newspapers, and Wolsey’s master’s thesis at Northwestern University contends that the growth of the Church is partly related to radio broadcasting.

Richard L. Evans served as the spokesman, announcer, writer, and producer of *Music and the Spoken Word* from Temple Square from 1930 to 1971. Begun in 1925 and broadcast weekly, *Music and the Spoken Word* is the longest-running radio program in American history.
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(Wolsey 1949). This Wolsey thesis is the first broadcast-related (rather than print-related) entry in the bibliography.

Press Relations and Cultural Acceptance (1951–60). While histories of newspapers and studies of periodicals continue in the 1950s, the phenomenon of public relations first appears during this period. Research on public relations coincides with the increased use of mass media in missionary work as well as the favorable relationship between President David O. McKay and the press.

Press relations and cultural acceptance studies work from the basic assumption of the power of the media to influence public opinion. The studies (such as Ward’s 1959 study of Mormons in textbooks and Morris’s 1958 analysis of references to Mormonism in general magazines) examine how mediated messages portray Mormons and how mass media can better establish a favorable image for the Church and attract converts. Jeppson (1955), for example, analyzes press relations of a Latter-day Saint mission in France, and in an “information survey” Mullen (1957) makes recommendations for improving Church public relations.

It is also during this period that media content analysis is first used to determine attitudes toward Mormonism. Sostrum (1960) attributes a favorable shift in “Gentile attitudes” to changes in images of Mormons in periodicals.

Interdisciplinary Studies (1961–90). Between 1961 and 1990, media research expands dramatically, in terms of both the number of studies and the number of research questions addressed (175 entries appear in this time period, compared with 32 entries for the thirty years preceding it). As the Church passed through the turbulent political climate of the 1960s and 1970s and as the number of Mormons and Mormon scholars increased, researchers addressed the topic of mass media and Mormons from a variety of new perspectives. A wide range of disciplines including law, the humanities, economics, music, film, broadcast, sociology, and women’s studies was applied to the study of Mormons and media, both in historical and contemporary contexts.

Mormon Audience Analysis (1991–2000). Prior to 1990, research focused primarily on mediated messages. These studies assume that the content of television programs, movies, newspaper articles, and so on held the key to understanding media effects (such as public attitudes toward Mormons). During the last decade of the twentieth century, however, the unit of analysis began to shift from media content to audience members, and studies on Mormon audience analysis began to emerge (see Hinch 1990). These studies assume that the most revealing sources of information about media and its effects are audience members themselves. Instead of relying on descriptions of media content to speculate about the effects of media
KSL engineer Rollow Kimball (left) and an unidentified man inspect a KSL-TV camera, Salt Lake Tabernacle, October 1953. Begun as small radio station in 1922, KSL's first television broadcast was on June 1, 1949. KSL is a subsidiary of Bonneville Communications, which is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

On audiences, audience researchers ask, How do Mormons describe their media-related experiences in their own words? A number of studies (Stout 1994; Valenti and Stout 1996; Stout, Scott, and Martin 1996) reveal considerable diversity in media use among Mormons. Other recent studies also explore the factors contributing to media selection by Mormon audiences (see Wilson 1997, and Simmons 2002).

Church Members and Mass Media

There is an emerging interest in the ways that Mormons use and make meaning of the media in their personal lives. This interest essentially is the study of the effects of mass media on Mormon readers, listeners, and viewers. There also is a growing interest in the relationship between Mormons and the media. Leaders within the Church increasingly are concerned about media effects, and numerous sermons and articles on the subject continue to be delivered in general conference and to appear in Church publications. In addition to these warnings about the media, however, there also are invitations to enjoy mass media that educate and uplift.
Latter-day Saint ambivalence toward the media underscores the importance of research about media use and media literacy in Mormon culture.

David Whittaker, librarian of the Mormon collection in Brigham Young University’s Harold B. Lee Library, has issued a call to scholars to study books and other printed materials in order to explain and understand the Mormon experience. People become part of a web of community in which they find their identities by means of what they read, he says. The same can be said about other media of mass communications. We can better understand individuals and their cultures and communities when we discover what media they consume(d) because, in part, it gives us insight into the “information environment,” “the various levels of discourse at work in any given culture,” and the kinds of knowledge that were and are available to them. Whittaker suggests that to understand historical Mormon culture, we need to draw out the full meaning of how works were “received, understood, and used” by members. Again, this can be said of contemporary culture as well and of Church members’ consumption and use of all types of mass media.

Suggestions for Future Research

Beyond listing academic resources, this bibliography reflects the values, priorities, and debates of a subculture. These data can be studied from several perspectives.

The bibliography might be conceptualized and discussed by using basic communications models as tools of analysis. Lasswell, for example, describes the central question in communications research in a five-questions model: “Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?” Similarly, Wilbur Schramm (often deemed to be the founder of the field of communications) describes the elements of the communications process in what is sometimes called the (simplified) SMCR model: source (the originator or sender of the communication), message (the content of the communication), channel (the particular medium used to convey the message, such as newspaper, radio, or Internet), and receiver (the destination of the communication: the readers, listeners, and viewers).

Many of the studies of Mormons and the media listed in this bibliography focus on the source (such as studies of particular newspapers and editors), and there are several studies on channels (such as studies of radio, film, and television). There are far fewer on receivers, inviting further research.

While all of the elements of the basic communications models are represented in the bibliography, studies of Mormons and the media have emphasized the “message” over the other elements identified by the five-questions and the SMCR models. That is, content-centered studies, such as
how Mormons are portrayed in media, outnumber those focusing on source, channel, receiver, and effects. Given the pervasive role of media in contemporary society, additional audience and effects research will be needed. What media do Mormons consume and why? How do Mormons throughout the world use the media? How does their media use conform to Church admonitions? How do Mormons negotiate issues relating to religious teachings in a secular media context? What is the role of the media in Mormon religious life? How do audiences outside the Church interpret and make use of Church-produced media?

The questions suggested by the basic communications models (and those addressed by many of the studies in the bibliography) often are somewhat narrow in scope. There is a need in studying Mormons and the media to address broader topics, such as those suggested by contemporary communications scholarship using cultural and critical approaches. Such studies might explore, for example, family rules, rituals, and cultures surrounding media; media-related meaning-making by Mormons (epistemological issues); the power and influence implications of media ownership by the Church; Mormon gender studies, ethnic studies, and minority studies in relationship to the media and broader cultures and subcultures; Mormons in larger cultural contexts (in the various international cultures in which they live) as represented in the media and as influenced by local and international media; comparative studies of Mormons and media in various cultural settings; questions about Mormons and popular culture; and engagement with philosophical and ontological questions about mass communications arising from the unique perspective of Latter-day Saint theology, foundational Latter-day Saint texts, and prophetic commentary.

Despite its already heavy representation in the bibliography, the study of mediated images of Mormons remains an important topic for future study. People form opinions about Mormons based on information available from a multiplicity of sources. As the Church grows, so will depictions of Mormons in a variety of media. Analyses of these portrayals in all forms of media (including the Internet) may allow better prediction as to how the Church will be accommodated by the larger society.

The bibliography is heavy on studies of print media, but thin on studies of Mormons and broadcast media. Such studies might include, for example, personalities, content, production organizations, institutional uses of broadcast media, Mormon audience uses of broadcast media, and broadcast media effects.

There is scant research about Church magazines. The magazines, their readers, their content, their impact, and their contribution to Mormon culture remain a vast potential field of inquiry.
The comprehensive history of the Church's efforts to influence media coverage through its public affairs activities has yet to be written. These efforts have been both centralized and regionalized. Both levels need further study and analysis.

The bibliography focuses heavily on Utah-based media. More studies are needed on all aspects of Mormons and the media nationwide and, especially, worldwide.

The Internet and its relationship to Mormons, the Church, and Mormon/non-Mormon interaction is ripe for study from the perspectives of institutional uses, member uses, nonmember uses of official Mormon sites, anti-Mormon sites, content studies, impact/effect studies, and historical studies.

Arguably, the preponderance of rhetoric in the Church about media revolves around its use by youth and the potential negative effects and dangers of that use. It is surprising, therefore, that there are so few studies that specifically explore Mormon youth media use, the role of media in the lives of contemporary Mormon youths, meaning-making of media content, effects of media use, and the impact of media on Mormon youth culture.

Finally, the works represented in this bibliography largely are atheoretical. The literature has not begun to address questions that relate to theory, such as the ways in which the study of Mormons and the media is informed by theory and the ways in which theory might be informed by scholarship in this field.

Conclusion

The relationship between media and Mormon culture has not been fully studied. The reasons are unclear. What is quite certain, however, is that this type of research will be in high demand in the future. We are hopeful that this bibliography, which organizes relevant literature into a foundation for future study, will facilitate and accelerate such research efforts.

Sherry Baker (Sherry_Baker@byu.edu) is Associate Professor and Associate Chair for Graduate Studies in the Department of Communications at Brigham Young University. She received her Ph.D. in mass media history, law, and ethics from the University of Utah.

Daniel Stout (Daniel_Stout@byu.edu) is Associate Professor in the Department of Communications at Brigham Young University. He earned a Ph.D. from Rutgers. He is co-editor of the Journal of Media and Religion.
The authors would like to thank Holly Cox, Mary Beth McMurray Fortunato, EmmaLee Haight, Tecia Hall Memmott, and Michele Riley (all master's students in the Department of Communications at Brigham Young University) for their assistance with this bibliography and Dr. Allen Palmer for his comments.


2. Gordon B. Hinckley, as quoted in Rasmussen, “Computers and the Internet,” 278.


6. Gordon B. Hinckley points out a number of benefits of magazines, movies, and television programs:

   Let there be good magazines about the house, those which are produced by the Church and by others, which will stimulate their thoughts to ennobling concepts. Let them read a good family newspaper that they may know what is going on in the world. . . . When there is a good show in town, go to the theater as a family. Your patronage will give encouragement to those who wish to produce this type of entertainment. And use that most remarkable of all tools of communication, television, to enrich their lives. (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Opposing Evil,” *Ensign* 5 [November 1975]: 39)


Bibliography by Decade

1891–1900


1901–1910


1911–1920


1921–1930

discontinued, and why—after being forced to move so many times—the Church felt it was important to have a free press with which to express their views.

1931–1940


———. 1932. "Early Printing in Utah Outside of Salt Lake City." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 5:83–86. Attempts to set forth the scant knowledge of pioneer printing in Utah outside of Salt Lake City in hopes of receiving new information from authorities on local history.

———. 1933. "Pioneer Printing in Utah." Reprint from the June issue of *National Printer Journalist.* L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Covers the history of printing in Utah from the first use (printing money) through several of the early newspapers, both pro- and anti-Mormon.


1941–1950

Clark, James R. 1944. "A Study of the Significance of the Newspaper in Mental Contacts between Mormons and Non-Mormons, 1824–1850." Master's thesis, Brigham Young University. Examines relationships between size and location of the Church membership in the United States and Great Britain during the period 1824–1850 and the "mental contacts" made between Church members and others as expressed in newspapers of the period.

"Journalism in Pioneer Days." 1944. In *Heart Throbs of the West.* Comp. Kate B. Carter. 5:129–68. Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Includes several
short pieces concerning journalism in Utah. Topics range from the Women’s Press Club to Mormon printing in California to Utah’s “First Newsboy.”


Esplin, Ross S. 1949. “A Survey of Fiction Written by Mormon Authors and Appearing in Mormon Periodicals between 1900 and 1945.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. A critical study of Latter-day Saint periodical fiction. Argues that such fiction does not make a significant contribution to the literature of the world due to its restrictiveness in purpose, theme, and appeal and its “superficiality.”


Wolsey, Heber G. 1949. “Religious Broadcasting by the LDS Church.” Master’s thesis, Northwestern University. Examines growth of the Church from six members in 1830 to more than one million members by the 1940s and relates this growth (in part) to the Church’s use of radio broadcasting.


1951–1960


Jack, Ralph L. 1954. "Woman Suffrage in Utah as an Issue in the Mormon and Non-Mormon Press of the Territory, 1870–1887." Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Studies women’s suffrage as an issue during the 1870s and 1880s, when women in Utah were authorized to vote. Pays particular interest to the *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune*.


Mulder, William, and A. Russell Mortensen, eds. 1958. *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers*. New York: Knopf. Chronicles the history of the Church and the settlement of Utah. Includes pieces written by Church leaders (Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Sidney Rigdon) and observers—both unknown and well-recognized (Samuel Clemens, Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Wallace Stegner).

as presented in high school and college textbooks and impressions left by textbook authors.


1961–1970


publishers and editors who managed to keep Wasatch County’s weekly newspaper circulating more than seventy-five years without missing an issue.


Heller, Luther L. 1966. “A Study of the Utah Newspaper War, 1870–1900.” Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Describes and analyzes the editorial conflict between the *Deseret News* and the *Salt Lake Tribune*. The News wanted the Church to be a dominating factor in daily community life while the *Tribune* wanted to reform the state.


1971–1980

because of the Tribune's relationship with the Deseret News and other Church issues.


Sellars, Marie L., H. Reed Geertsen, and Robert M. Gray. 1971. "Religion, Alienation and Immunization Participation." Rocky Mountain Social Science Journal 8, no. 1:139–26. Reports that during the national polio immunization drive in 1963, Utah had among the highest participation rates for preschoolers in the country, with Church members higher than others. Most of this success was attributed to the news media.


Irving, Gordon. 1972. "Content Analysis of the Evening and Morning Star, 1832–1834." Typescript in volume with binder's title Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s. Americana Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Studies the content of the Evening and Morning Star, the first of many official periodicals sponsored by the Church.


Snow, Edwina Jo. 1972. "Singular Saints: The Image of the Mormons in Book-Length Travel Accounts, 1847–1857." Master's thesis, George Washington University. Studies the image of Church members in book-length travel literature of the 1850s, showing that the Latter-day Saint image in travel accounts reflects both negative stereotypes found in other publications of the time and also unique dimensions that occasionally are positive.


Latter-day Saint portrayals. Includes influence of Church members on the early film industry.


Arrington, Leonard J. 1974. “Mormonism: Views from Without and Within.” BYU Studies 14, no. 2:140–53. Discusses how the Church hoped to establish a favorable image through missionary work, tracts, and other literature and how anti-Mormons worked to present an unfavorable one through their own publications.

Casterline, Gail F. 1974. “In the Toils or Onward for Zion: Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852–1890.” Master’s thesis, Utah State University. Compares the media portrayal of plural wives with the way those women described themselves. Uses sources available between 1852 and 1890 to support conclusions.

Cracroft, Richard H. 1974. “Distorting Polygamy for Fun and Profit: Artemus Ward and Mark Twain among the Mormons.” BYU Studies 14, no. 2:272–88. Discusses the use of Mormon oddities, such as polygamy, by humorists of the time, as well as Twain’s use of Ward’s material and approach to mocking the Church.


Norton, Walter A. 1976. "Joseph Smith as a Jacksonian Man of Letters: His Literary Development as Evidenced in His Newspaper Writings." Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University. Studies the development of Joseph Smith’s writing as shown through numerous newspaper articles. The author refers to this development in terms of the Jacksonian era, which symbolized the rise of the common man and the triumph of democracy.


Eid, Leroy V. 1977. “Puck Depicts the American West.” Arizona and the West 19, no. 4:347–62. Describes how Puck, the leading humor magazine in Gilded Age America, embedded western stereotype images of such subjects as the Mormons.


Parkin, Max H. 1978. Contemporary Accounts of the Latter-day Saints and Their Leaders Appearing in Early Missouri Newspapers, 1831–1839 (Including Select Non-Missouri Newspaper Articles by Missourians and Articles in Missouri Newspapers after 1839 about the Mormon Experience in Missouri). L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Collects accounts of Latter-day Saints and their leaders. Includes a bibliography of the contents of the collection and reproductions of the actual news stories.


printing in the Church and an archaeological investigation into the location of the *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo (1839–46).


Gottlieb, Robert, and Peter Wiley. 1979. "Static in Zion: Long Stuck with a Churchly Image, the Mormon Media Reach Out for the Young—and Are Called Back by the Elders." *Columbia Journalism Review* 18, no. 2:59–63. Discusses Bonneville International Corporation, a major media conglomerate, and the tension between the Church's stress on the moral mission of the media and the equally strong pressure to make its media operations pay off.

Haroldsen, Edwin O., and K. Harvey. 1979. "The Diffusion of 'Shocking' Good News." *Journalism Quarterly* 56, no. 4:771–75. Studies the diffusion of news about the Church's announcement concerning the priesthood revealed that "shocking" good news can ignite the interpersonal communications system, that news has more credibility when obtained from the media than when obtained interpersonally, and that people use mass media to verify news obtained interpersonally.


1981–1990


Cragun, LeAnn. 1981. “Mormons and History: In Control of the Past.” Ph.D. diss., University of Hawaii. Analyzes the Church as a case study of the socio-political phenomenon of groups attempting to control their past and justify their actions in the present. Censorship of publications is discussed.

Lyman, Edward L. 1981. “The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood.” Ph.D. diss., University of California at Riverside. Addresses the successful effort to alter the Church’s image in the nation’s press as Utah attempted to obtain statehood.


Miller, Heather R. 1981. “Conversion, the Mass Media, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” Ph.D. diss., United States International University. Addresses the importance of mass media on religious conversion. Investigates the use of mass media in the Church and determines its relationship to conversion numbers.


Whitaker, Wetzel O. 1983. *Pioneering with Film: A History of Church and Brigham Young University Films*. Provo, Utah: n.p. Provides a personal history of Latter-day Saint motion pictures as told by Whitaker, head of the Motion Picture Department at BYU for twenty-two years.


Cracroft, Richard H. 1984. "'Ten Wives Is All You Need': Artemus, Twain and the Mormons—Again." *Western Humanities Review* 38, no. 3:197-211. Reprises Cracroft's first article on the subject and a discussion of similarities between Ward's and Twain's approaches to poking fun at the early Church.


Roof, Wade C. 1984. “American Religion in Transition: A Review and Interpretation of Recent Trends.” Social Compass 31, no. 2–3:273–89. Examines new and older religious groups, noting the increasing use of radio and television by fundamentalist church groups such as Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Mormons.


Appleton, Marianne, and A. Garr Cranney. 1985. “Reading Habits of Church-Active LDS Women.” BYU Studies 25, no. 3:47–53. Tells of active Latter-day Saint women who follow the encouragement of Church leaders to read the scriptures and Church periodicals.


image of the ideal Latter-day Saint woman. Based on authoritative, published discourses (in papers, magazines, and journals) selected from 1830 through 1984.


Anderson, John R. 1986. "American Women and Conservative Religion in the Post-War Decades: Southern Baptist and Mormon Women’s Magazines, 1945–1975." Ph.D. diss., Washington State University. Discusses how the magazines for women of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Church during the three decades after World War II reflected both the theologies of the two denominations and the time period in which they were written.


D’Arc, James V. 1986. "Two Articles: Darryl F. Zanuck’s Brigham Young: A Film in Context, and, ‘So Let It Be Written . . . ‘: The Creation of Cecil B. DeMille’s Autobiography." Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University. Deals with the social context of the late 1930s and what the motion picture Brigham Young meant not only to the leadership of the Church at the time, but also to those in the motion picture business.

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Brigham Young University. Discusses how the Liahona: The Elder's Journal, the official publication for all the Latter-day Saint missions of North America for nearly four decades, was an effective aid to missionary work and a source of edification and comfort to missionaries and members.

Gottlieb, Robert, and Peter Wiley. 1986. America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Written by two investigative journalists, this interpretive history of the Church’s rise to power and prominence after World War II. Special emphasis is given to the mechanisms the Church has used to reach this level of power.


Sataty, Nechama. 1986. “Utopian Visions and Their Critics: Press Reactions to American Utopias in the Antebellum Era.” Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania. Studies four major communitarian groups, including Mormons, through newspapers and magazines (1820s through 1840s) to assess their significance to American society.


cultural press history and textual analysis of contemporary indigenous serial literature in a nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint young women's periodical.


Shupe, Anson D., and John Heinerman. 1988. “The Mormon Communications Empire.” In Money and Power in the New Religions. Edited by J. T. Richardson. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press. Examines the “Mormon communications empire” for the purpose of explaining how modes of mass communication can be used to reshape the evolution of religious groups, affecting the ability to increase proselytizing and the degree of public tolerance.

Smith, Wayne P. 1988. “Annotated Scripture Citation Index to Three LDS Presidents in Three Official LDS Periodicals, 1970–1985.” Ed.D. diss., Brigham Young University. Identifies several types of indexes to books and periodicals and then focuses on scripture citation indexing of religious periodicals. Develops an exhaustive annotated scripture citation index to a selected body of Latter-day Saint periodical literature that could be used as a model for further indexing.


Mormons and the Media, 1898–2003

D'Arc, James V. 1989. "Darryl F. Zanuck's Brigham Young: A Film in Context." BYU Studies 29, no. 1:15–33. Discusses how the film Brigham Young reflected the Latter-day Saint culture and national opinion in the United States during 1940, the year it was first released.


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De Pillis, Mario S. 1991. "Viewing Mormonism as Mainline." Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 24, no. 4:59–68. Justifies applying the term "mainline" or "mainstream" to Mormonism. Includes a discussion of how media enterprises owned by the Church have aided the Church's progression toward being viewed as a legitimate and mainstream religion.


Lively, Robert L., Jr. 1991. "Bodleian Sources for the Study of Two Nineteenth-Century Millenarian Movements in Britain." Bodleian Library Record 13, no. 5:491–500. Summarizes the Bodleian (Oxford) Library’s holdings relating to the Catholic Church and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Materials include films of items relating to the British Mission and copies of the British Latter-day Saint periodical.


Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel. 1992. "Stereographs and Stereotypes: A 1904 View of Mormonism." Journal of Mormon History 18, no. 2:155–76. Discusses a stereograph (3-D photo) tour of Latter-day Saint sites, produced at the turn of the twentieth century, as one of the only positive representations of the Church at that time.


Isakson, Janika. 1993. Female Arguments: An Examination of the Utah Woman’s Suffrage Debates of 1880 and 1895 as Represented in Opposing Utah Women’s Newspapers. A University Scholar project, Brigham Young University. Available in the Harold B. Lee Library. Contrasts and compares the rhetoric used to enact social reform by the Anti-Polygamy Standard and the Woman’s Exponent in the woman suffrage movement.


Nibley, Paul. 1993. “How Mormons See Themselves in Film.” Sunstone 16, no. 5:14–17. Argues that Latter-day Saints’ attempts to view themselves and accept portrayals of themselves in media as a “Brady Bunch family” keeps Church members from examining real conflicts in their lives and finding real solutions.


Copeland, David A. 1995. "The Mormon Problem and the Press." In Outsiders in Nineteenth-Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives. Edited by Frankie Hutton and Barbara S. Reed. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press. Examines the ways that the Church increased its outsider status and was attacked by the American press when polygamy was unveiled as a religious practice.


Ostler, Craig J. 1996. “Nauvoo Saints in the Newspapers of the 1840s.” Nauvoo Journal 8, no. 1:30–33. Analyzes newspaper coverage of the Church and its members during the Nauvoo years.


Shipps, Jan. 1996. “The Neglected Story of Mormonism Today: What Mike Wallace Missed.” Sunstone 19, no. 3:82–86. Argues that Wallace’s interview of President Gordon B. Hinckley missed significant matters that are critically important to the story of Mormonism while he tried to illustrate that Church members are not “weird.”

their education and entertainment aspects but also condemned for their secular and potentially corrupting aspects.


Xu, Shi. 1996. "The Images of the Chinese in the Rocky Mountain Region, 1855–1882." Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University. Relates how the newspapers and journals affiliated with the Church were consistently sympathetic to the Chinese. The friendly attitudes of the publications came from both their religious beliefs and the shared sense of persecution.

Armstrong, Richard N. 1997. "Researching Mormonism: General Conference as Artifactual Gold Mine." Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 30, no. 3:151–68. Discusses how records from general conference, which was first broadcast on radio in 1924 and on television in 1949, provide researchers with the most significant source of authoritative Latter-day Saint leader rhetoric since the organization of the Church.

Givens, Terryl L. 1997. The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy. New York: Oxford University Press. Addresses nineteenth-century depictions and perceptions of the Church, claiming that the fear inspired by "Mormons" stemmed from their "demystification" of Christianity, and studies how the representations of Church members in popular fiction affects the religion's relationship with American society.

Hafen, Thomas K. 1997. "City of Saints, City of Sinners: The Development of Salt Lake City as a Tourist Attraction, 1869–1900." Western Historical Quarterly 28, no. 3:342–78. Shows how the mass marketing efforts of transportation, media, and tourism enterprises endeavored to create images of Salt Lake City according to their respective conceptions of their audiences.
Rather, Susan C. 1997. "Film Propaganda and the Christian Way of Knowing the Truth: A Look at LDS Documentary Film Making." Master's thesis, Brigham Young University. Discusses how the tension between apparently conflicting theological mandates in the gospel of Jesus Christ, as understood by the Church, is reflected in content and stylistic elements of Latter-day Saint documentary films.


Smith, Craig S. 1998. "The Curious Meet the Mormons: Images from Travel Narratives, 1850s and 1860s." *Journal of Mormon History* 24, no. 2:155–81. Examines eighteen selected travel narratives written in or translated into English that detail visits to Salt Lake City between 1849 and 1867 and were printed between 1851 and 1872.


Published Social Science Literature on the Mormons, by Armand L. Mauss and Dynette Ivie Reynolds). Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Provides an indexed bibliography of Latter-day Saint history, including subject headings related to communication studies: publications, public relations, and media and public images of Mormons and/or the Church.


Marsh, W. Jeffrey. 2000. “When the Press Meets the Prophet.” In Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book. Discusses the evolution of media relations since the sustaining of Gordon B. Hinckley as President of the Church, as well as a listing of twenty-five interviews granted by President Hinckley to a variety of media outlets.

Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century. 2000. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book. Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium. Traces events that have marked the unprecedented growth and expansion of the Church during its 170 years of existence. Many of the included essays emphasize media-related topics.


Saunders, Richard L. 2000. Printing in Deseret: Mormons, Economy, Politics, and Utah’s Incunabula, 1849–1851. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. Presents a history and descriptive bibliography. Includes a bibliographic history of the press, chronicling more than fifty of the earliest printed documents, or incunabula, created during the initial settlement years.

3. 4. 5. and 15 specifically address the relationship of Mormonism to the press and mainstream America. Addresses the role of media in shaping Latter-day Saint image, the radical changes brought about by Church media efforts, the perception of Latter-day Saint people in America, the Southern Baptist Conference held in Salt Lake City, and a review of Latter-day Saint tradition and its relation to American mainstream religions.


2001–2003

Takagi, Shinji. 2001. "Mormons in the Press: Reactions to the 1901 Opening of the Japan Mission." BYU Studies 40 no. 1:141–75. Addresses the explosion of media attention (over 160 pieces) covering the first four missionaries in the Japan Mission and suggests that the coverage both served to spread knowledge of the Church and to provide a historical and social context for missionary work.


Scott, David W. 2003. "Mormon 'Family values' versus Television: An Analysis of the Discourse of Mormon Couples Regarding Television and Popular Media Culture." Critical studies in Media Communication 20, no. 3:317–33. Examines the readings of television texts from the perspective of audience members who are, because of their religious practices, ideologically situated to the right of much that is offered on television. The findings in this case are consistent with Stuart Hall’s notion that individuals bring contradictory and conflicting discourse into their readings of media texts.
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