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The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory during the Civil War E. B. Long

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LONG, E. B. *The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory during the Civil War*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981. 289 pp. (plus index). \$17.95.

Reviewed by Eugene E. Campbell, professor of history, emeritus, Brigham Young University.

Asserting that a study of the American Civil War without reference to the vast western frontier would be "an incomplete account of that struggle" (p. xi), Professor Long has produced a detailed account of Mormon attitudes and activities during that tragic conflict in an effort to "fill in the gap" left by many Civil War histories as well as volumes on the American West. He recognizes that a "vast and controversial literature, most of it almost fanatically polarized" (p. xii), has been written about the Mormons; and he has made a serious attempt to produce an objective, unbiased study, letting "the participants speak their minds as much as possible" (p. xii) by liberal use of direct quotations from letters, newspapers, government reports, and speeches. This method has resulted in both strengthening and weakening his volume, for although the author has achieved the desired objectivity, his numerous, lengthy quotations detract from the readability and literary quality of the book.

Many of the quotes are from the Mormon leader, Brigham Young, and from the Union military commander in the region, Patrick Connor. These two men "overshadowed all other men in Utah Territory and in the Rocky Mountain West of the 1860s" (p. xi), and their conflicting views and actions are the central focus of Professor Long's study. Brigham Young felt that there was no need for General Connor, nor his troops, to guard the overland mail and telegraph lines, and the Church leader regarded Connor's building of Camp Douglas on a bench overlooking Salt Lake City as a threat to the Mormon capital. President Young also believed that the Civil War was God's punishment to an evil nation and was pleased that the Mormon people were far removed from the conflict. General Connor was convinced that Salt Lake was a "community of traitors, murderers, fanatics and whores" (p. 101) and that it represented a threat to the success of the Union cause. He also believed that the Indians in the region were dangerous enemies and he concentrated his energies on controlling these two forces. The results were tragic for the Indians and annoying to the Mormons. His principle contribution to the area was to foster the development of Utah's precious mineral deposits as a means of attracting non-Mormons to the Territory. The number of non-Mormons who came was not sufficient to solve "the

Mormon problem," but the mining developments had a profound impact on Utah's subsequent history.

Professor Long has chosen to follow a chronological account, giving almost a day-by-day description. For example, chapter V is entitled "Indians, Militia and Apostates" and covers the different events occurring in the spring and early summer of 1862. Chapter VI, "Crossing the Jordan," details Connor's entry into the Territory with his California Volunteers in the fall of 1862. Chapter VII, "Tragedy on Bear River," describes the massacre of the Bannock and Shoshoni Indians early in 1863. Long then devotes a chapter to a variety of events in the spring of 1863, followed by another chapter on "Indians and Governors." A topical approach, in which he discusses the entire Indian problem and policies, might improve his presentation.

The book is remarkably free of errors, although there are a few minor ones. He overestimates the population of Camp Floyd and adjoining Fairfield (p. 7) by 3,000 people, and he confuses the location of Cedar Fort (not Fork) with that of Cedar City (p. 175).

Professor Long has not plowed new ground in this study, for much of the material has already been published in *Utah Historical Quarterly* articles such as Gustive Larson's "Utah and the Civil War"¹ and Leonard Arrington's "Abundance from the Earth: The Beginning of Commercial Mining in Utah,"² as well as in Brigham D. Madsen's study of the Northern Shoshoni in Cache Valley.³ Long's principle contribution is the detail he supplies, based on a careful study of the documents available, especially Connor's Camp Douglas newspaper, the *Union Vedette*. The final chapter, "The Saints and the Union Endure," is a thoughtful, balanced summary of both the Mormon and the federal government point of view in which Long sees two strong, opinionated men opposing each other, especially with words, but men realistic enough to work out "unwritten and sometimes subtle compromises" (p. 273). Long feels that "both men deserve much credit for avoiding the armed conflict that would have been disastrous to both Church and state" (p. 273).

The University of Illinois Press continues to publish quality books on various aspects of Mormon history, and Professor Long's study is worthy of inclusion in the growing list. Students of both Civil War and Mormon history will find it interesting and enlightening.

¹Gustive Larson, "Utah and the Civil War," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 33 (Winter 1965): 2.

²Leonard J. Arrington, "Abundance of the Earth: The Beginning of Commercial Mining in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 31 (Summer 1963): 192-219.

³Brigham D. Madsen, *The Northern Shoshoni* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Press, 1980).