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Leonard J. Arrington, ed., with Thomas G. Alexander, Donald Q.
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Book Reviews

ARRINGTON, LEONARD J., ed., with **THOMAS G. ALEXANDER, DONALD Q. CANNON, RICHARD H. CRACROFT,** and **NEAL A. LAMBERT.** *Voices from the Past: Diaries, Journals, and Autobiographies.* Compiled by Campus Education Week Program under the direction of the Education Week Department, Division of Continuing Education, Brigham Young University. Provo: BYU Press, 1980. 154 pp. \$3.25.

Reviewed by Mark R. Grandstaff, master's candidate in family and local history as well as researcher for the Department of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University.

From the Church's inception, Latter-day Saint leaders have advocated—and Church members have kept—some form of personal record. Thanks to the efforts of individuals such as Willard Richards and Andrew Jenson, the early Saints were requested to turn in Church-related records. Jenson also encouraged Church members to write their autobiographies and submit them to the Church's Historical Office. Even today Church authorities strongly suggest that members write their personal and family histories and that they regularly record important events in a journal. Brigham Young University sponsors oral history programs such as the work done by the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. And many publishers specializing in LDS history have begun to issue important diaries, including those of Wilford Woodruff, John D. Lee, Hosea Stout, and Charles Lowell Walker. *BYU Studies* itself has recently published the John Taylor Nauvoo Journal (vol. 23:3).

Voices from the Past, according to its editors, is a compilation that “presents family records of true-life adventure and inspiration, and particularly emphasizes Mormon Family experiences from 1830 to 1880.” The volume is void of any other form of introduction. It is not annotated, nor does it give any clue as to why a particular journal, diary, or autobiography was chosen as a representation of “Mormon family life.” However, the work is arranged in chronological order, and it does demonstrate the value of using personal records in the study of Mormon history.

Selections relate eyewitness accounts of the Missouri persecutions, the Prophet's martyrdom, the British and Danish emigrants' journey across the ocean, the Saints' trials at Council Bluffs, Lot Smith's intrigues during the Utah War, and the pioneers' struggles as they attempted to establish a home in the vastness of Utah. To some degree, these accounts do enhance our understanding of Mormon history; yet they fail in the editors' stated purpose of giving the reader some feeling for Mormon family life. Especially disappointing is the fact that there is relatively little mention of polygamy. Certainly, if Mormon family life is to be adequately portrayed, more excerpts from polygamous families should have been included. Similarly, no excerpts discuss the implications of the 1890 manifesto for Mormon families. While one could argue that few families were directly affected, the Manifesto and its impact on the way the Mormons would in the future respond to their Church leaders cannot be ignored. These faults in combination with the lack of an introduction and annotation severely restrict the use of the work.

Nevertheless, this may be faithful history at its best—written by the faithful believer for his posterity rather than by the historian for the scholarly community.