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Book Reviews

DAVIS BITTON and MAUREEN URSENBACH BEECHER, eds. *New Views of Mormon History: Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987. 480 pp. \$19.95.

Reviewed by Stan L. Albrecht, dean of the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences, Brigham Young University.

Writing reviews of scholarly books for professional journals is generally viewed as an important part of one's role in the academic community. As a nonhistorian, however, it was difficult to approach the invitation to prepare a review on a series of historical essays without some degree of trepidation. Fortunately, the activity of reading this book soon became such an enjoyable exercise that other tasks were set aside in order to finish, and anxieties about commenting on it became less burdensome.

New Views of Mormon History is a compilation of twenty essays (including the introduction by coeditor Davis Bitton and the bibliography at the end prepared by David Whittaker) published in honor of Leonard J. Arrington. It would be quite inappropriate to review such an effort without first saying something about the man in whose honor it is written.

Davis Bitton's introduction begins with the statement that "Leonard James Arrington is the single most important Mormon historian of this generation" (vii). I know no one who would dispute that claim. His career has been long and distinguished. As one examines the history of any scientific discipline or field of study, one can generally identify a handful of scholars (often a very small handful) whose impact has been of great magnitude and whose contribution will influence that field far into the future. Arrington is such a scholar. His work provides a model for future generations of historians and others who will continue to attempt to illuminate the Mormon past. Leonard's vigor, productivity, and single-mindedness to the accomplishment of good social science make him a standout.

Of particular interest to this reviewer is the breadth of Leonard's impact on the larger social science community. He is, of course, claimed by the historians. Nevertheless, he began as an economist and his background and training in economics has informed much of his research

and writing. But his publications also have much to say about sociology and even anthropology. For example, *Great Basin Kingdom*, considered by many to be his most important work, provides an interesting sociological and cultural case-study of the development of a highly structured community, guided, at least at the beginning, by a plan for self-sufficiency and strong centralized control. Both the biographical essay at the beginning of *New Views of Mormon History* and the bibliography at the end reflect clearly the breadth of this influence.

How about the book itself? It is always difficult to really assess a volume such as this. It obviously has many dimensions. The most important of these is that each individual essay represents a clear tribute to a highly respected colleague. Several of the contributions are original with this volume; others have been previously presented in other forums. All have been presented by their authors as something they would like to include in a volume prepared to recognize Leonard.

The book is divided into four basic sections. The first deals with aspects of history and theology in early Mormonism. It includes essays by Richard Bushman on the role of the Book of Mormon in early Mormon history, Dean Jessee on some of the prison experiences of early Mormon leaders, Tom Alexander on the importance of the concept of covenants in Joseph Smith's theology, and David Whittaker on the historical background to the development of the "Articles of Faith." This set of authors represents a group of scholars who are among the most productive of the generation that follows Leonard. Each provides new and interesting insight on a different but important aspect of the early years of Mormonism.

The second section of the book focuses on the Mormon church and its members, both in Utah and abroad. This section constitutes a real potpourri. It ranges from essays dealing with the formalization (or attempts at formalization) of policy and doctrine (William G. Hartley on localizing responsibility for tithing collection and Dean May on how the bishops of Salt Lake City effectively subverted efforts to urbanize the United Order) to case studies of life in Salt Lake City's Thirteenth Ward (Ronald W. Walker) and growing up in the farm community of Union (Gordon Irving). It includes an essay on LDS education in the Pacific Islands by R. Lanier Britsch and one on the use of non-English languages in the Church by Richard Jensen. It also includes two very fine essays reflecting the role of women in the early Utah church by Carol Madsen and Jill Derr. The first of these details the role of early Mormon sisterhood in partisan politics and the second looks at changes in the Relief Society with the establishment of the Church welfare program.

The third section includes three articles on Mormon-gentile relations. The late Eugene Campbell discusses the conflict that occurred (and to some extent is still evident) between the effort of the Mormons

to establish the kingdom of God and the needs and expectations of the larger American nation. Richard Poll details the important symbiotic relationship that exists between Utah and the Mormons, and Jan Shipps provides an insightful discussion about moving beyond the stereotypes in Mormon and non-Mormon communities.

Finally, the last section is entitled "Mormonism in the Larger Perspective" and includes essays by D. Michael Quinn on parallels between Mormons and early Anabaptists, Paul Edwards on time in Mormon history, Jim Allen on important authors of works having to do with Mormon history, and David Whittaker with a final detailed bibliography of Leonard Arrington's work.

As is always the case in an effort such as this, the essays are somewhat uneven in quality and contribution. However, since such a range of topics is covered, virtually any connoisseur of Mormon history will find something of interest here. As James B. Allen notes, some publications have the impact on the reader of a sleeping pill. Despite the unevenness of the essays, none had that effect here. Whatever else this volume might represent, it constitutes a lasting tribute to a friend, colleague, mentor, teacher, leader, and pioneer. It also contains within its pages a set of diverse, but generally important, contributions to the continuing effort of a growing number of scholars to assist us all in better understanding the Mormon past.