



9-1-2006

Book Notices

Craig Foster

Jana Lloyd

Liza Olsen

Nathan B. Orman

Josh E. Probert

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>



Part of the [Mormon Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Foster, Craig; Lloyd, Jana; Olsen, Liza; Orman, Nathan B.; Probert, Josh E.; and Summerhays, James T. (2006) "Book Notices," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 45 : Iss. 3 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol45/iss3/16>

This Notice is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Book Notices

Authors

Craig Foster, Jana Lloyd, Liza Olsen, Nathan B. Orman, Josh E. Probert, and James T. Summerhays

Charles C. Rich DVD Library, produced by the BYU Studies Staff (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2005)

Charles C. Rich and his colorful life and career warrant a work as comprehensive as this DVD publication. Born in 1809 in frontier Kentucky, he spent a good part of his life pioneering and colonizing the expanding American frontier in his effort to establish The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and build up the kingdom of God.

The documents included in the *Charles C. Rich DVD Library* reflect Rich's life and his pursuit of "purity and holiness." Beyond the necessary system requirements, foreword and acknowledgments, and DVD bibliography, the collection has seven sections. The first section is a chronology of Charles C. Rich, his wives, and his family beginning in 1809, the year Rich was born, and continuing through 1917, when Emeline Grover Rich, the last of Rich's wives, died. Next follows a Biographies section and a Family Histories section, which include biographical studies of Rich and his wives. A letters section follows containing six letters written by Charles C. Rich. The Manuscripts section of the DVD contains high-resolution scans of handwritten manuscripts from as early as 1833 such as journals, mission records, financial papers, certificates, blessings, family documents, and personal, ecclesiastical, and business correspondence. Many photographs of Rich and his family have been included in the collection as well as some speeches he gave as a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Unfortunately, there is one drawback to this DVD collection. The collection, because it contains so many scanned documents, is not fully word

searchable. This means that though some individual documents can be searched, no searches can encompass the whole collection. This minor problem notwithstanding, I wholeheartedly recommend the *Charles C. Rich DVD Library* to scholars of Mormon or Western history, as well as those who are interested in studying the family dynamics of a nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint family.

—Craig Foster

Women in Utah History: Paradigm or Paradox? edited by Patricia Lyn Scott and Linda Thatcher (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005)

In 1983, the relatively new Utah Women's History Association met in the Salt Lake City Public Library and proposed that a volume on the history of Utah's women be written. In 2005 that goal finally came to fruition when two members of that organization, Patricia Lyn Scott, a section manager at the Utah State Archives, and Linda Thatcher, the Historic Collections Coordinator for the Utah State Historical Society and former president of the Utah Women's Association, published *Women in Utah History: Paradigm or Paradox?* in connection with the Utah State Historical Society.

Scott and Thatcher have compiled a series of essays from an all-star cast of historians, and the result is the most comprehensive look at the experience of Utah women yet. While the study of Utah's women has burgeoned in the past several decades, most works have focused on individual women or distinct groups of women. This book surveys the experience of a much larger category, from polygamous and monogamous Mormon women to Protestant and Catholic women to a variety of ethnic groups of women. It also examines the evolution of their lives within a multiplicity of contexts,

from the progression of their legal status to the changing roles they have assumed in the work force to their involvement in farm life, education, scholarship, arts, and politics.

Any serious scholar of women's history, Utah women's history, or Utah history in general will want to read this book. It celebrates the contributions Utah's diverse groups of women have made to the state's history and its ultimate thesis is this: that while Utah women's experience has differed from that of other women in the American West, it has also been representative of the experience of other women in the American West. Paradigm or paradox? Scott and Thatcher's answer is, simply, both.

—Jana Lloyd

God's Country, Uncle Sam's Land: Faith and Conflict in the American West, by Todd M. Kerstetter (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In a focused journey, Todd Kerstetter, assistant professor of history at Texas Christian University, considers the promise of religious freedom in the United States. He looks closely at three religious groups: nineteenth-century Mormons living in Utah, the Lakota Ghost Dancers in South Dakota during the 1890s, and the 1993 Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas. Each group sought a place of refuge in the Great American West, that region of the country most filled with individualism and independence, the mythic and heroic God's country. For each there was a dramatic and violent confrontation with both their neighbors and the government.

How far does the rhetoric of religious independence extend and for whom does it hold true? Speaking of the Mormons living in Utah in the nineteenth century, Kerstetter states that they "and anyone else who doubted it, learned that morally

speaking, the Constitution is a Protestant document and the United States is a Protestant nation" (80).

To a lay reader, the book is accessible and interesting. Kerstetter sets forth the features of the three historical events with detail sufficient to capture the mood and setting of each episode. He offers evidence as a historian, fairly and without comment, allowing each narrative to set the stage. He steps us through the inflammatory rhetoric and imprudent posturing of each side. The drama between these religious groups and their neighbors stands out all the more clearly for Kerstetter's dispassionate stance. We learn that the song of the West is not truly sung on key.

Each of these histories has been told before. Each is dramatic and tragic and makes for good telling. It is not difficult to find accounts from both devotees and detractors but in this telling, the combined weight of uncompromising religious values and the collapse of promised freedoms is significant. To those questions already raised in this book, there are more. Is there a point at which it is appropriate, even responsible for citizens or government to intervene and withdraw promised freedoms? Who decides when and where?

—Liza Olsen

How Free Can Religion Be? by Randall P. Bezanson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In *How Free Can Religion Be?* Randall P. Bezanson, who holds an endowed professorship of law at the University of Iowa, surveys the U.S. Supreme Court's leading cases on the religion clauses of the First Amendment. Of particular interest to students of Mormonism will be Bezanson's treatment of *Reynolds v. United States* (1878), in which the Court rejected the

claim that the First Amendment protected the Latter-day Saints' religious practice of plural marriage.

It is clear that *How Free Can Religion Be?* is a book written by a law professor. Bezanson writes, "This book . . . is neither a history nor a compendium of legal answers. It is, instead, a set of questions and arguments, a written Socratic dialogue, with me on one side, and the reader on the other" (5). Those unburdened by a legal education can get some taste of what a constitutional law class is like by reading the book, while others who have run the gauntlet of law school will find the stream of question-punctuated commentary familiar.

The strengths and weaknesses of Bezanson's approach are on display in his discussion of the *Reynolds* case. He provides a workman-like summary of the facts, albeit one that ignores virtually all the published work done on the case by legal historians both within Mormon studies and within the legal academy generally. He then walks the reader through the Court's reasoning step-by-step, asking—without answering—at each point whether the moves made by the Court were justified in light of this or that competing argument.

The appearance of the *Reynolds* case in Bezanson's book is a testament to the continuing importance of the fundamental legal questions raised by the confrontation between Mormons and the federal government over the practice of polygamy. It also illustrates the extent to which Mormon history as a discipline has failed—with a few notable exceptions—to present the richness of its research on this period in a form capable of penetrating the mainstream constitutional discussion that Bezanson models.

—Nathan B. Oman

Believing History: Essays on Latter-day Saint Belief, by Richard Lyman Bushman and edited by Jed Woodworth and Reid L. Neilson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)

Those who enjoyed Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* will be just as pleased with *Believing History*, a collection of Richard Bushman's essays on Mormon history and his personal beliefs. The essays in *Believing History* are not necessarily related, but by reading them together one captures the flavor of both the author's scholarship and his person. The essays span a period of thirty-two years, beginning in 1969 and ending in 2001. They have all been published previously in books and journals, including some in *BYU Studies*.

The value of *Believing History* is that it brings all of the essays—and thus, much of Bushman's thought—into one place. The book also contains a new afterword by Bushman where, like the first two essays of the book, he identifies himself as a "dialogic historian" who is "fighting on both fronts" (281) of critical scholarship and uncritical belief within Mormon studies. In writing to both skeptics and believers, Bushman shows his desire to not alienate readers from either audience.

In adding structure to the collection of essays, the editors—both of whom have studied under Bushman—have divided the selections into three general categories: (1) Belief, (2) The Book of Mormon and History, and (3) Joseph Smith and Culture. While the essays are categorized as such, their richness defies categorization as Bushman addresses a wide array of historical and social issues including the possibilities for faith among skepticism, the roles of the kingdom and Zion in a world dominated by secular corporatism, the urban landscape created by early

Mormons, the rhetorical space created by the language of Joseph Smith's revelations, and the way that sources closest to the Book of Mormon translation are used or ignored by both believing and non-believing historians.

—Josh E. Probert

Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment, edited by George B. Handley, Terry B. Ball, and Steven L. Peck (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006)

Latter-day Saints are becoming increasingly environmentally sensitive. LDS scripture and modern prophetic utterance is full of counsel regarding their responsibility to the environment. Bringing together seasoned experts in fields from public management to botany, *Stewardship and the Creation* gives compelling interpretations to that surprisingly ubiquitous prophetic counsel.

In the past century, there has been little practical consensus among Latter-day Saints with regard to an environmental ethic, but in reading the various viewpoints that *Stewardship and the Creation* has to offer, a more unified consensus begins to emerge, one based on the principle of subduing the earth so that it brings forth more abundantly. Several articles address the significance of technology, ingenuity, and human energy as resources that can be employed to bring forth bounteous life of all kinds on the earth. Respect for the earth isn't so much about conserving God's creations as it is in multiplying his creations. Though preserving natural habitats may be a great work, actively managing habitats is a greater, even sacred, work. The latter work has ties back to Adam, who, as a steward with dominion over all things, actively tended the Garden of Eden and then

later subdued the earth in order to bring forth plant, animal, and human life more abundantly. Godliness has deep ontological meaning for Latter-day Saints, and an environmental tradition that places Latter-day Saints in the position of co-creators with God in bringing forth life more abundantly has great potential to resonate with them. *Stewardship and the Creation* successfully resonates in this way.

Of particular interest is the book's dialogue concerning LDS eschatology: If God rarely does things that we can do for ourselves, why would we not be involved in returning earth to its paradisiacal, edenic state at the Second Coming of Christ? And, as that great day of regeneration approaches, what are we as Saints doing, environmentally speaking, to prepare for it?

A few of the articles seemed too forceful in attempting to reconcile the current political environmental movement with LDS religious principles. Notwithstanding this, those Latter-day Saints who read the book and take their stewardship over the earth seriously will find themselves vastly more educated and equipped to inspire others in why and how we should care for the environment.

—James T. Summerhays