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Nauvoo & Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources

Gerrit van Dyk

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formulated and his conclusion is earnest. Those interested in and familiar with Mormon theology will find this a refreshing read, while the uninitiated may struggle with the sometimes-intense philosophical web weaving. Either way, Spencer's book adds freshness and credibility to the literature, and his contribution to this topic is noteworthy.

—Lauren McCombs

Plain and Precious Things, by D. John Butler (N.p.: D. John Butler, 2012).

D. John Butler received his law degree from New York University and currently practices law in Idaho. He is also a fiction writer and the author of *The Goodness and the Mysteries: On the Path of the Book of Mormon's Visionary Men*. In *Plain and Precious Things*, Butler casts the beginning of the Book of Mormon in a specific light: Lehi and Nephi as spiritual outsiders looking in on a corrupt Jerusalem. According to Butler, Nephi and Lehi's teachings contradict many of the Jewish doctrines in Jerusalem that are described in the latter part of 2 Kings.

Josiah was the king of Judah and a contemporary to Lehi, and although the Old Testament generally implies in its history that Josiah's reforms are positive, Butler shows, through the lives and visions of Nephi and Lehi, that many of those reforms were corrupt and contributed to Jerusalem's destruction.

Butler takes Nephi at his word about his writings: they were written to restore the "plain and precious things" that had been removed from Hebrew scripture and temple practices. In particular, Lehi's dream and Nephi's vision can be seen as temple visions that corrected and transcended the practices found in Jerusalem's temple. Scholars in biblical studies, particularly Margaret Barker

in *The Older Testament*, have taken a critical look at Josiah's influence and the changes he made to the Jewish temple and religion. Butler's argument is similar, except it is taken from the Book of Mormon and shows 1 Nephi's tree of life visions in the context of the temple—a perspective most readers may not have considered.

Those interested in temple studies will find *Plain and Precious Things* particularly interesting, but any Latter-day Saint will enjoy this book because of its straightforward style and singular interpretation. Butler guides readers through some complex reasoning in a way that is friendly both to lay readers and those who study the temple from a scholarly perspective. This book encourages readers to think deeply and discover new layers of meaning about the temple and tree of life, along with considering the inexhaustible richness of the Book of Mormon.

—Lexi Devenport

Nauvoo & Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources, by Kip Sperry. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2014.

For over a century, the LDS and RLDS (now Community of Christ) churches have had an interest in Nauvoo and Hancock County. Among Latter-day Saints, the Nauvoo period is seen as a kind of religious renaissance. It was there that Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society, clarified the nature of the temple and vicarious work for the dead, and forever altered the cosmological view of the Saints through sermons like the King Follett discourse. With so much interest today in what happened 170 years ago on the banks of the Mississippi, Kip Sperry's *A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources* in

Nauvoo will surely be of great value to family historians and scholars for years to come. Sperry is a well-known family historian who has published and presented on numerous family history topics. He is currently Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University, where he specializes in family history. Sperry has collected all the disparate resources on Nauvoo into one place, creating a gargantuan volume that sets out to be “a guide to many articles and books that have been published describing various aspects of family history and historical research” related to Nauvoo and western Illinois (viii).

The book is divided into five chapters. The first is a nice historical overview of the significance of Nauvoo to the Restoration traditions. The second chapter then provides an eighty-six-page chronology on the history of Nauvoo, beginning with the inclusion of Illinois in the Northwest Territory in 1787 and continuing to the present day; here there is particular emphasis on the growth of the LDS Church and also on the growth of the Community of Christ. Family historians will enjoy chapter 3,

because it contains almost 170 pages of research strategies for finding information related to Nauvoo ancestors. This chapter is the meat of the book, with over fifty sections devoted to particular resources and resource types, from diaries and gazetteers to patriarchal blessings and tax records. Each of these sections then reviews the resource type and where those resources can be found in various libraries and repositories. Church historians will be delighted by chapter 4, which has a 140-page bibliography of sources related to Nauvoo and Church history. They will also be delighted by chapter 5 and the appendices, which contain over 200 pages of information on historical repositories, maps, and even a short entry on the Icarian movement (a group of French utopians who settled in Hancock County after the Latter-day Saints went west). Readers less familiar with post-Mormon Period Nauvoo will enjoy learning about other immigrant groups who settled in Hancock County and about major events in the development of the Community of Christ and Emma Hale Smith Bidamon’s involvement.

—Gerrit van Dyk