



2015

Conversations with Mormon Historians

Allyson Jones

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



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

Recommended Citation

Jones, Allyson (2015) "Conversations with Mormon Historians," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 54 : Iss. 3 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol54/iss3/18>

This Notes 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 scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

This book specifically provides personal insights from an LDS minority group regarding how their faith applies to and influences everyday life. This collection of memoirs, published by a nationally focused imprint of Deseret Book, is well suited to any audience seeking to be equally entertained and uplifted.

—Sydney Hughes

Conversations with Mormon Historians, edited by Alexander L. Baugh and Reid L. Neilson (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015).

“For a boy growing up on a small farm in northern Utah, it would be quite amazing if I am remembered at all. I’ve had an exciting life. In lots of ways, it’s a life I did not fully dream of when I was thinning sugar beets—better than I could have hoped, I think,” (274) says Kenneth W. Godfrey about his experience being a career historian. For the historians who work hard to ensure that people of the past are remembered, *Conversations with Mormon Historians* works hard to ensure that the historians themselves are remembered also.

This book is a compilation of interviews with some of the eminent past-generation Latter-day Saint historians—interviewed by some of the eminent LDS historians of this generation. Because both the interviewers and the interviewees have a deep adoration for Mormon history, the comradery between the scholars is palpable upon the book’s pages. The list of

distinguished historians interviewed includes Thomas G. Alexander, James B. Allen, Richard Lloyd Anderson, Milton V. Backman Jr., LaMar C. Berrett, Claudia L. Bushman, Richard L. Bushman, Kenneth W. Godfrey, Dean C. Jesse, Stanley B. Kimball, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Robert J. Matthews, Max H. Parkin, Charles S. Peterson, Larry C. Porter, and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. Each historian brings different interests, ideas, personalities, and experiences to the book—and each makes the book an enjoyable and enlightening read.

Each chapter focuses on a different historian and includes questions about the historian’s childhood, family, education, and career. The interviewed historians have a talent for taking the reader back in time through their stories. Milton V. Backman states, “I believe that history is fascinating because it is a series of stories. It is something more than just dates. It is life experiences. It’s unfolding the past. It’s reconstructing patterns of living” (124). These historians have lived long and full lives, and the pages within the book deeply and richly unfold the past through their personal narratives. It is appropriate to acknowledge that these historians—who have spent their lives studying the histories of others—have, in turn, made history themselves. The book is filled with funny anecdotes, impressive accomplishments, and spiritual moments. Overall, *Conversations with Mormon Historians* is an informative and lighthearted read for anyone interested in any aspect of history.

—Allyson Jones