



2017

Just South of Zion: The Mormons in Mexico and Its Borderlands

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Recommended Citation

Holzapfel, Richard Neitzel (2017) "Just South of Zion: The Mormons in Mexico and Its Borderlands," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 56 : Iss. 3 , Article 19.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol56/iss3/19>

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Against the Wall: Johann Huber and the First Mormons in Austria, by Roger P. Minert (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 2015)

Johann Huber (1861–1941) was one of the earliest Austrian converts to the Latter-day Saint faith and arguably the most notable. Being involved with political causes opposing the strong influence of the Catholic Church in the Austrian Empire, his already controversial political life was further complicated by his baptism into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1900. He was heavily persecuted by neighbors, Catholic clergy, and government officials alike, yet he remained steadfast in his faith. He played a significant role in the establishment and growth of the LDS faith in Austria up to the time of World War II.

This book is the first to explore the life and influence of Johann Huber in depth. Letters, photographs, and interviews throughout the book bring his story to life with intimate detail, including an interview that the author, Roger Minert, had with Huber's grandson, Wilhelm Hirschmann, in 2014. An appendix lists Johann Huber's descendants, showing the enduring legacy of this dedicated Latter-day Saint.

This book's personal tone, as well as its detailed citations to facts, events, and personal accounts regarding Johann Huber and the early Church in Austria, will appeal to those intrigued by Church history and biography, especially international biography. Huber's firmness and dedication to the LDS faith in the face of powerful persecution adds an overtone of inspiration to this biographical documentary, suiting it well to readers keenly interested in the lives and sacrifices of faithful Latter-day Saints who were pioneers in their lands.

—Melissa Howland

Just South of Zion: The Mormons in Mexico and Its Borderlands, ed. Jason H. Dormady and Jared M. Tamez (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015)

Jason H. Dormady and Jared M. Tamez are doing important work in borderland studies—studies surrounding the history of the U.S.–Mexico borderlands and surrounding regions.

Dormady is an associate professor of history at Central Washington University and the author of *Primitive Revolution: Restorationist Religion and the Idea of the Mexican Revolution, 1940–1968* (2011). Tamez is a well-known history PhD student and blogger focusing on the LDS experience in Mexico, LDS Hispanics in the United States, and race and Mormonism.

The book began as an idea generated during a roundtable presentation about the Latter-day Saint experience in Mexico at the Utah Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies conference in 2012. Mormons went to Mexico in 1847 as soldiers in the Mormon Battalion during the Mexican-American War, as proselyting missionaries when Brigham Young called a party of six missionaries to take Spanish-language materials about the Church from Salt Lake City to Mexico in 1875, as refugees from U.S. federal prosecution for plural marriage in the 1880s, and as permanent settlers establishing Mormon colonies near the Sierra Madre Mountains in northern Mexico beginning in 1885.

Ten authors, including established and new historians, provide readers with a thoughtful look at a controversial topic: the LDS experience in Mexico. During the process, Mormons “expended considerable effort to maintain as foremost their identity as members of what they considered the Kingdom of God on earth, often culturally isolating themselves from their

Mexican neighbors” (6). This tension plays out as native Mexicans and native LDS Mexicans interact with each other and with LDS Anglo-colonizers, LDS Anglo-missionaries, and LDS leaders during more than 170 years.

In dialogue with previous scholarship, *Just South of Zion* provides new insights about some old topics, including plural marriage, LDS colonization, and transnational identity. It also plows new ground with topics such as the role of LDS women in local worship, indigenous intellectuals, and the roles of masculinity and violence in Mormon identity.

Because this book is the first collection of scholarly work by academics whose primary focus is Mexico and the borderlands instead of LDS history, the discussions and tone will be new to most Latter-day Saints. The audience is obviously not LDS, as the detailed “Glossary of Terms Related to Mormonism or Mexican Mormons” reveals (203–6). Instead, the book is addressed to academics in Mexico and the United States who have or should have interests in “looking at one of the most active groups of transborder migrants in US-Mexican history—the Mormons” (19).

In the end, *Just South of Zion* provides a fresh survey of religious pluralism in Mexico and an informed approach to LDS international history.

—Richard Neitzel Holzapfel

Far Away in the West: Reflections on the Mormon Pioneer Trail, edited by Scott C. Esplin, Richard E. Bennett, Susan Easton Black, and Craig K. Mancill (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2015)

This book contains twelve articles chronicling the story of the Mormons’ great trek west. It is divided into three

parts, each containing four articles that cover a different aspect of the story of the Latter-day Saints moving west. Part 1 focuses on the Mormons being forced from their homes in Nauvoo. Part 2 examines their journey across the plains and through the Rocky Mountains. Part 3 discusses what the Mormon Trail means to people now, how it has been interpreted, and how it is being preserved.

The book is edited by Richard E. Bennett (professor of Church history and doctrine, BYU), Susan Easton Black (professor emerita of Church history and doctrine, BYU), and Scott C. Esplin and Craig K. Mancill (associate professors of Church history and doctrine, BYU). Esplin, Black, and Bennett also contributed their own essays to this book, with the latter also penning the introduction. Other contributors include Douglas Seefeldt (assistant professor of history, Ball State University), Alexander L. Baugh (chair of the Department of Church History and Doctrine, BYU), Wendy Top (independent historian, Pleasant Grove, Utah), Terry B. Ball (professor of ancient scripture, BYU), Spencer S. Snyder (student at Virginia Commonwealth University pursuing a master’s degree in health administration), David F. Boone (associate professor of Church history and doctrine, BYU), Hank R. Smith (adjunct professor of ancient scripture, BYU), Kenneth L. Alford (associate professor of Church history and doctrine, BYU), Richard O. Cowan (professor emeritus of Church history and doctrine, BYU), and J. B. Haws (assistant professor of Church history and doctrine, BYU).

The first essay in part 1, by Seefeldt, discusses the maps of the west that were available around the time of the Mormon exodus. Baugh’s essay explores John C. Frémont’s western expedition in 1843–44 and how it influenced the