



4-1-2019

Utah and the American Civil War: The Written Record

William P. MacKinnon

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Recommended Citation

MacKinnon, William P. (2019) "Utah and the American Civil War: The Written Record," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 58 : Iss. 2 , Article 20.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol58/iss2/20>

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Utah and the American Civil War: The Written Record, edited by Kenneth L. Alford (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of University of Oklahoma Press, 2017)

There are two schools of thought about Utah's participation in the Civil War: it was *de minimis*, unworthy of comparison to the blood-soaked contributions of nearly all other American states and territories; or, it was larger than the size of its troop commitment to the Union Army and has a record more complex than is often understood. With this book, *Utah and the American Civil War*, Kenneth L. Alford is squarely in the latter camp, arguing that "the common belief that Utah Territory 'sat out' the Civil War is incorrect. Although the territory was removed from the war's devastation and provided only one active-duty military unit . . . , the war deeply affected Utah and its inhabitants—from pioneers and Union soldiers stationed in Utah to the Native Americans they clashed with throughout the war" (15). What follows to support this assertion is a mammoth, 864-page collection of military documents, ancillary material, and analysis. Alford is a native of Ogden, Utah; BYU professor of Church history and doctrine; retired army colonel; former West Point teacher; expert in large-scale data organization; and published authority on Utah's involvement in the Civil War. As such, he was extraordinarily well equipped to assemble and lead the team of undergraduate and graduate students who grappled with a tsunami of documents to produce this user-friendly reference book.

Most of the official documents presented here have previously been published by the War Department during the decades straddling the turn of the twentieth century. The documents, however, were embedded in 128 volumes of

military orders, telegrams, and letters bearing a title as cumbersome as their accessibility: *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. What Alford has done for readers interested primarily in the war's role in the West and Utah may be summarized with three words: organization, focus, and context.

In a useful introduction and three opening chapters, the editor summarizes the history of Utah and the Civil War while describing what the *Official Records (OR)* are and how they were produced about 120 years ago. In another five hundred pages, chapter 4 presents the heart of the study—the *OR* documents relating primarily to Utah. Chapter 5, one of the more unique parts of the book, devotes two hundred pages to additional records related to wartime Utah that were inexplicably excluded from the *OR*. Through eight short appendices, Alford then provides aids that give additional context to the subject at hand. These aids include information on military terminology, geography, and the territory's changing political boundaries. Enhancing the accessibility of all this information is Galen Schroeder's excellent thirty-six-page index, a seemingly mundane section but one that is crucial for a documentary history of this scope and complexity.

In reviewing a different documentary history (a recently published volume of the *Joseph Smith Papers*), a historian described that rather dense study as "the researcher's paradise and a casual reader's nightmare."¹ I do not view *Utah and the American Civil War* this way.

1. Ryan D. Davis, review of *Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, edited by Matthew C. Godfrey and

Because of its clarity and orderliness, Alford's study is unquestionably valuable to professional historians needing the details of what happened in Utah Territory during 1861–65, but the book also has merit for serious nonacademic readers. A wide range of students will find in these documents a useful, objective account of Utah's role in the Civil War. Alford's sense of balance is a good one to have alongside other recent narrative accounts by other historians who view Brigham Young's leadership during both the Utah War and the national fratricide that soon followed in terms of conspiracy theories and unpatriotic motives.

—William P. MacKinnon

The Expanded Canon: Perspectives on Mormonism and Sacred Texts, edited by Blair G. Van Dyke, Brian D. Birch, and Boyd J. Petersen (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018)

If you are looking for excellent scholarship and insights into Latter-day Saint scripture, you might want to start with this new compilation from Greg Kofford Books. The authors of the fourteen essays in this volume explore a wide range of topics related to the Latter-day Saint canon and offer a surprisingly consistent level of discourse. Usually anthologies include a few weak links, but that is not the case with this volume.

The opening essay, "The Triangle and the Sovereign: Logics, Histories, and an Open Canon," by David Frank Holland, is by itself worth the price of the book. Holland examines the sometimes uneasy interplay among the three sources of revelatory authority in the Church:

others, *Journal of Mormon History* 43, no. 3 (July 2017): 187.

canonized scripture, prophetic teachings, and personal revelation. His discussion of the limitations placed on the assumed sovereignty of prophetic declaration by the other two sides of the authority triangle should be carefully considered by every Latter-day Saint.

I don't have space to give even a cursory summary of the other essays, but a brief sentence about each of the authors and their topics should be sufficient to give a flavor of the book and its quality.

Brian D. Birch discusses "authoritative discourse in comparative perspective" (27), including the transformation of revelation in the Church from charismatic to bureaucratic and the notion of "practical infallibility." James E. Faulconer argues for a literal interpretation of scripture but employs a very carefully explicated definition of *literal*. Claudia L. Bushman proposes a body of extracanonical scripture for and by Latter-day Saint women and offers a thoughtful list of suggested inclusions. Grant Hardy examines the Book of Mormon "in the context of world scripture," looking for similarities and differences (73). In the shortest essay in the volume, Richard Lyman Bushman comments on "the way we approach the Book of Mormon as modern, educated Latter-day Saints, particularly as our reading is affected by the gold plates" (85).

In one of two essays written by non-Latter-day Saint scholars, Ann Taves struggles with the task of taking Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon seriously while trying to explain why he did not really have material plates to translate from. David Bokovoy next examines the book of Moses as a form of prophetic midrash, followed by Brian M. Hauglid, who recounts the Pearl of Great Price's path toward both canonization and legitimation. One of the most informative essays in the book is by Paul C. Gutjahr, the other non-Latter-day Saint