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Salt Lake School of the Prophets

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Devery S. Anderson, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 1867–1883* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2018)

In 1833, Joseph Smith established the first School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio. The school was a place where men in the Church of Christ, founded by Smith in 1830, met to learn about spiritual and secular matters and to prepare for missionary work. During these meetings, Joseph Smith saw many visions and received revelation. The Kirtland school ended in 1837, but thirty years later, Brigham Young revived the School of the Prophets in Utah. This school was called the Salt Lake School of the Prophets and is the main subject of Devery Anderson's new book *Salt Lake School of the Prophets, 1867–1883*.

Devery Anderson is the marketing manager at Signature Books and has previously published on Latter-day Saint history: he was an editor of a three-book documentary series: *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845*; *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846*; and *The Development of LDS Temple Worship, 1846–2000* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005, 2005, and 2011 respectively). Anderson's new book, *Salt Lake School of the Prophets*, is another documentary work, which reproduces the minutes kept at the meetings of the School of the Prophets led first by Brigham Young and later by John Taylor.

Instead of focusing on spiritual and secular education (like the Kirtland school), the Salt Lake City School of the Prophets met to discuss doctrine and theological questions, oversee local political and economic matters, and formulate strategies to combat some of the political, social, and economic issues of the day. Some of these issues included conflicts with people in the community who were not members of the Church, relationships with American Indians, the completion of the transcontinental railroad, and

protests against the communal economy the Church was trying to enforce in the region. The school also dealt with new movements created both by and against the Church, conflicts between the Church and missionaries from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and the battle between the federal government and the Church over polygamy. The decisions made in these meetings had a notable impact on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as Utah Territory.

After the school shut down in 1874, President John Taylor was inspired to reconvene the school in 1883. After the first couple of meetings of the revived school, however, it ended, as did another school that had been established in St. George, Utah. Anderson speculates that these schools shut down so soon because federal government investigations made it dangerous for the General Authorities to meet together (xx).

In the book, the minutes from the meetings held by the schools are split into seven time periods: 1867–69, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, and 1883. The book also includes an introduction, thirty-three pages of biographical sketches of members of the Salt Lake school, photographs, and five appendixes detailing the rules observed by the first class of the School of the Prophets, the trial of William S. Godbe and Elias L. T. Harrison, minutes of the Salt Lake United Order in 1874, meetings held by the St. George School of the Prophets in 1883, and Brigham Young's discourse on December 20, 1867.

Salt Lake School of the Prophets is a good read for anyone interested in Church history and the political environment of nineteenth-century Utah. There is much to learn from the meetings held by the different iterations of the school and the changes that Church leaders made in the community as a result.

—Hannah Charlesworth