



1-1-2020

Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952

Veronica Anderson

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



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

Recommended Citation

Anderson, Veronica (2020) "Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 59 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol59/iss1/16>

This Notice 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 ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952, by Randy Astle (New York: Mormon Arts Center, 2018)

Mormon Cinema: Origins to 1952 is the first book in a series by Randy Astle discussing Latter-day Saint cinema and its history. In the introduction, the author describes the five chronological “waves,” or eras, in Latter-day Saint film (10–12). In this first volume, he discusses the first two waves, the first running from July 1898 to October 1929, and the second spanning October 1929 to January 1953. A discussion of the following waves and an in-depth analysis of all the information presented will appear in subsequent books (7).

Well equipped to tackle this subject, author Randy Astle is a professional in the field of film. He received his master’s degree in filmmaking from the London Film School and has worked extensively in children’s entertainment and other media. He has also been writing for *Filmmaker Magazine* since 2011.

With 671 pages, including notes and an index, the book is divided into three substantial chapters. The first is about origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the role of film within the Church. Chapter 1 also reviews nineteenth-century precedents for film and parallels in other branches of Latter-day Saint art. Chapter 2 explores the first wave of Latter-day Saint cinema, primarily dealing with members of the Church and the mainstream industry. It also discusses cinematic depictions of Latter-day Saints (which were usually quite hostile) and the propagandistic films the Church made in response. The chapter ends with a comparison between independent Latter-day Saint films and Church institutional films of the period. Chapter 3 discusses the second wave of Latter-day Saint film, beginning with

how the depictions of the Church and its members in popular film became kinder and more nuanced during this era. The chapter then moves on to how, during this period, Latter-day Saints joined the film industry in earnest at varying levels and spread film through their own private network and again ends with a comparison between institutional and independent films.

For those who have a love for film or media, Latter-day Saint culture, or the lesser-known aspects of the Church’s history, this book will be a satisfying and informative read. Astle offers an abundant amount of research and information in this book, and in so doing uncovers a world that many members of the Church scarcely knew they were a part of.

—Veronica Anderson

Business and Religion: The Intersection of Faith and Finance, edited by Matthew C. Godfrey and Michael Hubbard MacKay (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2019)

If you are interested in the intersection of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and finance, you will be intrigued by this compilation of papers presented at a March 2018 symposium sponsored by the Department of Religious Education at Brigham Young University and the Church History Department in Salt Lake City. The topics are many and varied and are divided loosely into the four sections of this volume.

Part 1 consists of two keynote addresses: one on the spiritual foundations of Church financial self-reliance by Presiding Bishop Gérald Caussé, and the other by Sharon Ann Murphy, a professor of history at Providence College, who offers new insights into the economic circumstances in which the