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## Writing Mormon History: Historians and Their Books

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Joseph W. Geisner, editor. *Writing Mormon History: Historians and Their Books*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2020.

In *Writing Mormon History: Historians and their Books*, edited by Joseph W. Geisner, well-known historians reflect on their influential publications in the field of Mormon studies. These historians describe their interest in their respective topics, key points and resources they discovered, and their obstacles and successes on the path to publication.

Polly Aird describes researching an ancestor who was branded an apostate during the mid-nineteenth-century Mormon Reformation. Will Bagley candidly recounts his investigation of the horrific 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre. Todd Compton recalls his pre-internet research on Joseph Smith's plural wives. Brian C. Hales explains the background of his three-volume history of Joseph Smith's practice of plural marriage. Melvin C. Johnson uses his biographies on Lyman Wight and John Hawley to advise future historians.

William P. MacKinnon describes decades working on his two groundbreaking volumes about the Utah War. Linda King Newell narrates her collaboration with Valeen Tippetts Avery (deceased) on the first-ever scholarly biography of Emma Hale Smith. Gregory A. Prince recounts the many interviews that led to his acclaimed biography of President David O. McKay. D. Michael Quinn provides

excerpts from his journals documenting his career as a Mormon historian. Craig S. Smith uses his time researching historian-pioneer Juanita Brooks to examine the uncertain history of Brooks's publication of her grandfather's biography.

George D. Smith describes the journey of four of his books on multiple topics: William Clayton's diaries, the beginnings of plural marriage, B. H. Roberts's Book of Mormon analyses, and Brigham Young's journals. Vickie Cleverley Speek details her biography of James J. Strang, a participant in the post-Joseph Smith succession crisis. Susan Staker summarizes her current work in progress, a study of Joseph Smith's stories. Daniel P. Stone gives insight into a little-known Mormon prophet, William Bickerton. John G. Turner reveals details about his biography of the complex, controversial Brigham Young.

This book gives insight into historical controversies, the construction of Mormon studies, and the complicated relationship between scholars and the modern organizations whose history they strive to reassemble. In the introduction, Geisner expresses a desire to publish a second volume including more women historians, people of color, and studies of Restoration groups other than The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (x). However, regardless of omissions, historians, students of history, scholars, and aspiring authors will all benefit from this volume.

—Tina Hawley