

Among the Mormons

A Survey of Current Literature

Edited by Ralph W. Hansen

*The Fault lies in the carping spirit
of mankind, that we are always praising
what is old and scorning what is new.*

*Tacitus, DIALOGUE DE ORATORIBUS,
Sec. 18.*

*Indeed, what is there that does not
appear marvellous when it comes to our
knowledge for the first time?*

*Pliny the Elder, HISTORIA NATURALIS,
Bk. 7, Sec. 6.*

When *Dialogue* made its appearance in 1966 it was no doubt considered by some to be a daring undertaking. However, it was soon apparent that *Dialogue* served a purpose or, better, met a need. That others were aware of the success of *Dialogue* was made evident with the revitalization of the *Brigham Young University Studies*, which has published some very exciting issues of late. I would particularly call your attention to the Spring 1969 issue, which is devoted to the origins of Mormonism in New York. Individual articles in this issue are listed by author in the bibliography which follows. Recently there have been other journals vying for our attention and support. The first of these is *Mormon History*, which is published by David and Karla Martin, "active L.D.S. members, formerly Brazilian South Missionaries." The Martins' object is to "bring as much history as possible to as many people as possible." History, in this case, is defined as college theses on church history subjects, reprints of various books by and about Mormons, and "college papers." It is the intention of the publishers to issue *Mormon History* monthly in loose-leaf form so it may be kept in a binder. In the first issue, dated March 1969, the articles are all related to the question of the Spaulding Manuscript's relation to the Book of Mormon: "Sidney Rigdon, a lecture by his son John," "The Spaulding Manuscript in Oberlin (Ohio) College Library," "The Spaulding Story, Duly Examined," by John E. Page, and "The Spaulding Manuscript (pt. 1)." All of these are reprints and of some general interest. However, since the Martins reside in Illinois one cannot but wonder if an

emphasis on original sources, many still in the possession of Church members in the Illinois area, would be of greater interest to a wider readership?

Another new journal is *The Carpenter: Reflections of Mormon Life*, which is published by a group of students and faculty of the university and L.D.S. Institute in Madison, Wisconsin. *The Carpenter* describes itself as "an independent quarterly serving the literary interest of the Mormon community." The editorial preface to volume 1, no. 1, states that "*The Carpenter* will reflect the uniqueness of the Mormon experience and the variety of opinions and talents that make up Mormonism." In this first issue there is a section somewhat similar to *Dialogue's* "Roundtable" called "Forum" which is concerned with "The Morality of Hunting." In addition to articles of general or historical interest to church members (included in the bibliography below), the first two issues of *The Carpenter* contain a liberal portion of interesting poetry and fine art work, altogether a very impressive beginning for a journal using the resources of one L.D.S. community. No explanation of the name Carpenter is offered. Could this be an allusion to the occupation of Jesus? We wish our two cousins well and hope that they have a long life and serve to stimulate other new publications by L.D.S. communities or special interest groups.

A third journal which will appear in 1970 is *The Western Historical Quarterly*, sponsored by the Western History Association and Utah State University. Although devoted to the broad range of Western Americans, we can expect articles of Mormon interest to appear in this new quarterly. The Western History Association has had great popular success with its *The American West*, which will continue to be published. However, the desire for a scholarly journal has long been expressed by many members of the W.H.A. and the answer is *The Western Historical Quarterly*. With a captive audience (all members of the W.H.A.) it may be superfluous to wish them well, but showing no favorites, we dare not deny them a blessing.

The Carpenter: Reflections of Mormon Life. 1711 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53705. \$3.00. Quarterly.

Mormon History Magazine, Box 157, Mt. Prospect, Illinois 60056. \$6.00. Monthly.

The Western Historical Quarterly. Sent to members of the Western History Association (\$9.00 to Arrel M. Gibson, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069). Subscriptions without membership may be sent to the Managing Editor, *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84321. \$7.00, student \$5.00.

The Bibliography which follows represents periodical articles on Mormons and Mormonism in a broad sense. It is our effort to be comprehensive but time limitations prevent checking every possible source for items of Mormon interest. However, the reader will note three references to articles that appeared in not-so-recent issues of *The Trail Guide*, a journal published by the Kansas City Posse of The Westerners. Since it is unlikely that they will appear in another bibliography, they are listed for the information of interested persons.

The Westerners are thirty-two (or more) loosely connected groups of men throughout the world whose common interest is a love of the history of the American West. The first posse (or corral) was organized in Chicago in 1944. Corrals are now located in most major American cities as well as Paris, London, and other world capitals. Some of the corrals have active publishing programs producing quarterlies or annual volumes which are called Brand Books. As one can expect, the quality varies widely; nevertheless some first-rate information can be gleaned from these works and as I run into articles of Mormon interest they will be reported in these pages.

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RECENTLY RECEIVED

Hirshson, Stanley P. *The Lion of the Lord*. New York: Knopf, 1969. A biography of Brigham Young based on the vast sources available to scholars in historical collections other than the Church Historian's Office. In his preface the author makes the rather startling statement that the Church Historian's Office collection of "secret" documents is a myth. Recent scholarly use of CHO manuscripts belies both the secret and the myth. More about this aspect of the book in the next issue.