



Thomas G. Alexander (2001), photograph by Mark Philbrick/BYU.

Honest History: A Conversation with Thomas G. Alexander

Interview by David R. Hall

Introduction

One of the most prolific historians of Mormonism and the American West, Thomas G. Alexander, has authored, co-authored or edited twenty-two books and monographs and published well over a hundred articles. Among his best known works are—*Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930*; *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City* (co-authored with James B. Allen); *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff*; and *Utah: The Right Place*. Over the course of his career Tom has played an important role in building bridges to the community of scholars, serving tirelessly on countless committee assignments. A fellow of the Utah State Historical Society and honorary life member of the Western History Association, he has served in the leadership of numerous professional organizations, including terms as chair of the Utah Humanities Council and the Utah Board of State History as well as president of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, the Mormon History Association, the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association, and Phi Alpha Theta history honors society. Among his many honors are awards for his publications from the Western History Association, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and three best-article awards from the Mormon History Association. He has also won the Mormon History Association's best book award on two occasions, one for *Mormonism in Transition*, the other for *Things in Heaven and*

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Earth. The latter also earned him the David and Beatrice Evans Best Biography Award. Not entirely comfortable with praise, when such honors are mentioned he most often responds that he is “just one of the boys.”

Born and raised in Utah, he attended Ogden schools before earning an associate degree at Weber State University and bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Utah State University. At the latter institution Tom began a very productive relationship with Leonard J. Arrington and S. George Ellsworth. He completed his graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where he wrote his dissertation on the relationship between territorial governments and the U. S. Interior Department in the Mountain West. The beginning of his career was initiated with a series of articles published in quick succession, and he has maintained a dizzying pace of research and publication. Tom has published widely in the fields of Utah and Western history, Mormon history, and environmental history. Among his many important contributions must be included his path-breaking scholarship on twentieth century Mormonism.

For forty years a member of the Department of History at Brigham Young University, he has witnessed its growth from small beginnings of some dozen faculty members to one nearly triple that size. Standards of scholarship among faculty have similarly risen apace. For thirty of those years at BYU, Tom was associated with the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, serving first as assistant director and associate director with Leonard Arrington and then as director from 1980-92. From 1992 until his retirement in 2004, he held the Lemuel Hardison Redd Chair in Western History. Under his guidance the Redd Center increased its endowment even as it published a series of monographs on the American West and sponsored a wide range of scholarly work by faculty and graduate students. Tom himself has mentored a large number of students in the craft of history and inspired countless more with his thorough and thought-provoking studies.

A lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tom has served two missions, the second with his wife, the former Marilyn Johns, a retired educator and, like her husband, a familiar figure at meetings of the Mormon History Association. They have five children.

The following interview was conducted with Tom at his home in Provo, Utah, on August 10, 2007.

The Interview

DAVID: Let’s have you start at the beginning by telling us a little about your family, where you grew up, and your experiences in school. We are trying to figure out how you ended up in history and being where you are.

TOM: We lived in a number of places before we moved to Ogden, Utah, when I was six, and essentially I grew up there. I was born in Logan, Utah, and my folks lived in Fillmore, Price, and Ephraim before we moved to Ogden. My father was a professor at what was then Weber College, now Weber State University, in the Engineering Department, and I went to the public schools in Ogden. I think the city had a conspiracy against me, because it tore down the schools as I finished going to them—Lincoln Elementary and Mount Fort Junior High. Fortunately, the city didn't tear down Ogden High, which I attended. That building is probably the best example of Art Deco architecture in the state. Designed by Hodgson and McClenahan, it was a beautiful building. I think I had a good education in the public schools in Ogden.

When I went to college I had a scholarship at Weber in social studies, but my father thought I ought to be an engineer, and so I majored in engineering for two years. I still have an associate degree in mechanical engineering. I went to the University of Utah in engineering for a quarter and was called on a mission to Germany. Going on missions was difficult at that time. It was just after the Korean War, and the draft board would only let one missionary go from each ward. But they would let a stake pool its mission allotments, so we actually had three missionaries out from our ward. All of us were good friends, and on our missions we sent a round robin letter to each of us—one in Illinois, another was in Brazil, and me in Germany. We had another friend, not from our ward but a close friend who was in Finland at the time. It took about a year for the letters to get around, but we kept up correspondence with one another.

By the time I finished my mission I decided that I really did not want to be an engineer, something I had already thought about before I left for the mission field. When I came back I spoke with Dello Dayton at Weber College. Dello had been an advisor to the social club that I was in, and he was a historian. I told him that I wanted to major in history, so I decided to go for a quarter to Weber to try to pick up some classes I hadn't had. I took a couple of classes from him. When I finished those classes I asked him to write a letter of introduction for me and talked with him about various places I could go. He suggested Utah State.



Thomas G. Alexander, 1935, age four months. Photograph courtesy Thomas G. Alexander.



Four generations of Thomas G. Alexander's maternal line, 1935. Sitting: Lavina Walker Hughes (great-grandmother) holding Tom. Standing: Mary Ann Hughes Bird (grandmother) and Violet Bird Alexander (mother). Photograph courtesy Thomas G. Alexander.

So I went to Utah State and worked there with S. George Ellsworth and Leonard J. Arrington. I also took a number of classes from Judd Harmon, finishing an undergraduate degree with dual majors in history and political science. I started doing some research work for Leonard Arrington while I was there. The last summer I was there I couldn't work for him because I was finishing my master's thesis. Before I left, he told me that he would like to hire me the next summer.

I went to the University of California at Berkeley for my PhD, but during the year I didn't hear anything from him. Then, in a fortuitous accident, I met him in the library at Berkeley. He happened to be there one day just at the same time I was. I reminded him that he had asked me about coming back to Utah State to work with him. He hired me then to come back during the summer, and the two of us collaborated on a series of articles on military defense installations in Utah. Essentially, I

would do the research and write a draft, and he would work through the article. These articles were published in the *Utah Historical Quarterly* and the *Pacific Historical Review* while I was still in graduate school. That experience launched me into my career as a historian.

As I was finishing my PhD at Berkeley, I started looking for a position. A number of positions were available then because of the expansion of higher education. Unfortunately, the situation became much worse within about five years after I graduated. At the time, however, there were a lot of history jobs. I was offered a position at Fresno State University in California and at Brigham Young University. Fresno State wanted me to become its specialist in California history. Well, when Marilyn found out that I was considering Brigham Young, she said, "Oh you don't want to go there. That's the enemy!" Both of us had graduated from Utah State. Nevertheless we agreed that I consider the position, and after some negotiation, I accepted the offer at BYU.

Interestingly, Marilyn is now a dedicated BYU fan. She's even got a license plate with "MA4BYU"—"M" for Marilyn, "A" for Alexander, then "4BYU." I could have gone to Fresno State, since I had worked as teaching assistant for Walton Bean in California history classes, but I was really more interested in Western history and particularly Utah and Mormon history. I did my doctoral dissertation on the financial aspects of the relationship between the Interior Department and the Intermountain territories from 1863, when Idaho and Arizona Territories were organized, and 1896, when Utah became a state. Idaho had already become a state in 1890.

DAVID: What led you to that topic?

TOM: It was actually a suggestion by Leonard Arrington, who said the subject was something that probably needed to be done. Eventually, I published the dissertation somewhat revised as a book under the title *Conflict of Interest: The Interior Department in the Mountain West, 1863-1896*.

DAVID: Who did you work with at Berkeley?

TOM: At Berkeley I worked with Walton Bean, but Mario DePillis was on my committee, and also Gunther Barth. Charles Sellers was in charge of the examining committee. They doctoral committee was separated from the committee that did the examinations.

DAVID: What was your experience like at Berkeley as a graduate student?

TOM: It was mixed. There were about five hundred graduate students at Berkeley at that time, so you didn't get a whole lot of personal attention. I



Thomas G. Alexander with his second car, a 1941 Ford, ca. 1952. Photograph courtesy Thomas G. Alexander.

had a very bad experience with Carl Bridenbaugh. I took classes from Clark Spence (he was there on a one-year appointment) and from Mario DePillis. I did very well in those classes. I also took historiography from Raymond Sontag and did very well. But I didn't get along very well with Carl Bridenbaugh, who almost torpedoed me.

DAVID: What was his problem? Just personality conflict?

TOM: I think it was partly a personality conflict. Fortunately, he left Berkeley for Brown University the year before I finished up the examination, so I didn't have to deal with him anymore. I finished the PhD and then took the position at Brigham Young University. I was on the faculty at BYU for forty years before I retired. The last twelve years I had an endowed chair, the Lemuel Harrison Redd Jr. chair in Western American history. I was able to teach Western and Utah history classes, and I originated the environmental history course at BYU. I've done some research and publication in that field, having to do particularly with the U. S. Forest Service, and with ecology and the environment of the Wasatch Front area.

DAVID: What was the History department like at BYU when you arrived? Who was there and how would you characterize it?



Glen M. and Violet B. Alexander family, ca. 1955. Front (l-r): Violet, Evelyn, and Glen. Back (l-r): Thomas and Melvin. Photograph courtesy Thomas G. Alexander.

TOM: When I came to the history department there were about thirteen faculty members. When I left there were thirty-five, so the department grew a great deal over the time I was there. I really like the people in the department. My closest friends in the department were James B. (Jim) Allen and Ted J. Warner; the three of us and our wives did a lot of things together. The first year I was at BYU (1964), Jim, Ted, and I drove in Jim's old Plymouth station wagon to the Western History Association meeting in Oklahoma. Ted and I were a bit embarrassed to ride with Jim, who had a "Goldwater for President" sticker on the back of his car. We traveled a great deal together to history conventions after that.

After I joined the faculty at BYU, I continued to work on articles with Leonard Arrington and then eventually published my doctoral dissertation. In 1972, Leonard was called to be the LDS Church Historian. At the same time he moved from Utah State to BYU, where he was appointed to the Redd Chair and as director of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. It was at that time that he asked me to serve as assistant director of the Redd Center. Because Leonard was living in Salt Lake and spending most of his time at the Church History Department, my position really was more like executive director, because I carried on the day-to-day operation of the Center. We had an office for Leonard, who taught classes at Brigham Young, but he spent most of his time in Salt Lake City until 1980. He and I consulted regularly on the Redd Center, and we worked together in planning the center's programs, such as the lecture series, monograph series, and research awards program. In 1980, when the Church History Division was moved down to BYU as the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, he was appointed director of the institute. Because of his directorship of the Institute, the university asked me to become the director of the Redd Center, and I remained in that position from 1980 until 1992. So I was in the Redd Center administration from 1972, when it was organized, until 1992, when I was appointed to the Redd Chair. I saw most of the growth of the Redd Center during those years. In the meantime I published several books: *Mormonism in Transition*, a history of the LDS Church from 1890 to 1930; and the biography of Wilford Woodruff. Jim Allen and I coauthored *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City*, then later I published independently *Grace and Grandeur: A History of Salt Lake City*, and I've added in a number of other books and of course published over 120 articles.

DAVID: You've got to be one of the most prolific scholars around, and certainly, as Jan Shipps has said, you're probably the only one who's read everything you've written. You've produced a huge amount history. How you account for your productivity?

TOM: I have a lot of interests in a lot of different things, and for me doing historical research is kind of like detective work. You find out something that nobody else has ever known or has known in the way that you know it. You do research on the subject, and then you organize the research and put it into words for the public. History is just something that interests me.

One of the problems that many historians have is that they are willing to do research, but they don't commit the research to paper. Doing research is a lot of fun, but writing is hard work. To try to write something, to get the words on paper and get them to sound right, to get them to make sense so that people can read and understand them, is simply very difficult. I think that's the thing that stops most people who don't publish very much from publishing. They just have a hard time getting the stuff down on paper. You've just got to force yourself to do it. My theory is that if you have problems with something, what you do is just sort of push your way through it and write on.

Jim Allen introduced me to the computer in about 1983. He said he had gotten a computer, an Apple, and wondered why I wasn't using a computer. I said, "Well, why should I do that? I write a manuscript and I give it to a secretary and she types it up and gives it back to me. Then I go through the manuscript and edit it. Afterward, I give it back to her and she types it up." He said, "Yeah, but editing it is so much easier on the computer than giving it to someone." He was right. I got a computer, and I've used it as a word processor ever since. The first computer I bought for myself was one of those IBM luggables. They weighed about fifty pounds and were about as big as a coffee table. You were supposed to carry it with you to do research. It was almost impossibly back-breaking, but you did it.

DAVID: Is that the one the Redd Center had for some time?

TOM: No, it was mine. The Redd Center did own one, but the one I used was my own.

DAVID: The Center had one, because I used to borrow it.

TOM: Right. I had the luggable for a while, and then I moved up and have been through a whole bunch of computers since then. Right now I'm using a Dell laptop, an Inspiron 1501. I've hooked it up so that I'm using it both as a



Thomas G. Alexander as an LDS missionary in the West German Mission, ca. 1957. Photograph courtesy Thomas G. Alexander.

laptop and as a desktop. With 120 gigabytes of memory, I don't need anything more than that.

Interestingly, I have gone through a long series of changes in technology. I wrote my master's thesis long-hand (with fountain pen rather than quill pen), and my wife typed it for me. I swore I'd never do that again, so I composed my doctoral dissertation on the typewriter. I took typing in high school because I figured it was a skill I would need. Even then, Marilyn retyped the dissertation. Afterward, I used the typewriter and composed on typewriter until about 1983, when I started using a computer. I started working with that old WordStar program, which I don't think exists any longer. Mariel Budd, our department secretary at the time, asked me one time why I didn't use WordPerfect. I said, "Well, I don't know anything about WordPerfect. Could you show it to me?" She showed it to me, and it looked like a whole lot better word processing program than WordStar, so I changed to Word-Perfect, and I'm still using it. I like it better than Microsoft Word, which most people use. In Word-Perfect you can get in to the codes, and if you've made a mistake somewhere you can see clearly where that mistake is. Then you can correct it by deleting the codes. With Microsoft Word it's hard to do that.

DAVID: Do you see yourself as a workaholic? Do you always need to be busy? Your output is just a phenomenal.

TOM: I'm not happy if I'm not busy.

DAVID: Was your family like that?

TOM: Yes, my father was always busy. I really didn't have a great relationship with my father. He was never at home very much. He taught night school during the week. He was never very active in the Church. My mother's family was always active, my brother, sister, and I always went to church. Dad didn't go with us. He seemed to me to be a hard person to get to know very well, but the funny thing about it is that when I went to college, I found out that he was extremely popular as a teacher, and the students thought he had a great sense of humor—a sense of humor that I didn't ever see. He was much closer to my younger brother than he was to me. Still, I think I probably inherited that workaholic tendency from him. I've always thought I've needed to work hard. I have an almost puritanical sense that if I'm not working hard I'm failing or being immoral in some way—that it's wrong not to work hard. I must say that I've slowed down some in the last couple of years. I don't work as many hours as I am used to. I'm into my seventies now, and I get tired more easily than I used to.

DAVID: Before I forget—this is out of context—but what was George Ellsworth like? What was he like as a teacher?

TOM: George is probably the best teacher I have ever had, and he mentored me in that regard. George was an excellent writer—an excellent word

craftsman. Leonard Arrington took George's class in historical research and writing at Utah State when he was there, and I took the same class, though later than Leonard. George was a brilliant teacher, but his productivity in publishing never matched that of Leonard's. I think I would say that George mentored me as a word craftsman and as a teacher. Leonard mentored me in research and writing—how to get things done. He always worked hard at writing.

DAVID: My impression is that you and Leonard were similar in the approach you took toward mentoring students. Leonard kind of took you under his wing, put you to work, and then you published things together. You've kind of done the same thing.

TOM: I've done the same with a number of students. You and I did several things together. Rick J. Fish and I and Harvard S. Heath and I did several things together, but I've never published with others to the extent that Leonard did. He published a whole lot of things with other people. I think that was partly his background in economics, because that's a model that most economists use. Historians, on the other hand, tend to do things alone rather than as a group.

DAVID: What was Leonard like to work for, or rather work with?

TOM: Leonard was a person of unbounded optimism—always friendly, always open. He worked hard. He expected you to work hard, but he always was in excellent humor, very jovial and very optimistic about things. One of the things that Leonard taught me was how to get along well in the profession with people who were not Latter-day Saints. Leonard was always open and friendly with people who were not from the Latter-day Saint community, and he always got along well with them. I learned that from him, and I think I've been able to do that too. From 2005-2007 I served on the council of the Western History Association, and I have served since the 1970s as parliamentarian of the association. I've been a member of the council and President of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association. From 2006 to 2008 I served as president of Phi Alpha Theta, the national honor society, and I am still on the executive committee of that organization. I've tried to be open to work with people. I think some Latter-day Saints get a kind of "holier than thou" attitude, or they're afraid to risk being friendly with those who aren't members. Some of them are turned off by the habits of other people. One of my friends, Don Pisani at the University of Oklahoma, told me about one of our BYU undergraduates who went to Oklahoma on a fellowship. He was assigned to work with Don as a teaching assistant. Don said that at the beginning of the semester he takes the students over to a restaurant where they sit down together, and he talks with them about their assignment. They have a meal together and he orients them to what they're going to be doing during the course of the semester. Well, this student said, "I can't go there. That's a bar." Don

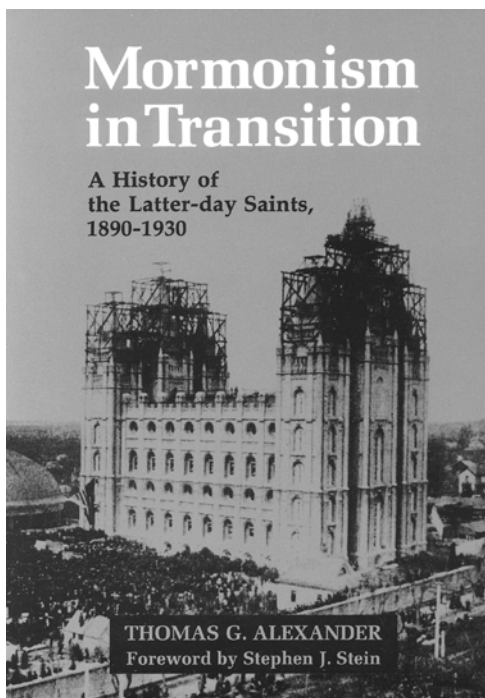
sat him down and pointed out that the place was a restaurant. He said further he'd been to a lot of different meals with me. At the meals, Don pointed out that he has his wine or a cup of coffee and I don't. He said that neither of us cares about that in the sense that it disrupts our relationship at all. Don is, in fact, one of my best friends in the history profession. Some of his personal preferences are different from mine, but he is one of the most moral and honest men I have ever met. I think Don was able to convince the student that he could go to a restaurant that served liquor and still not compromise his standards.

DAVID: This is one of the things I wanted to bring out. What do you think the value is of this kind of association with other historical groups? You seem to know nearly everybody that I come in contact with. So what's the value for a scholar—for a Mormon historian?

TOM: I think that the historical profession is a fraternity in a sense, and you have to know these people for a number of reasons. In the first place, they're people who are writing important things that students need to read and that you need to read. It's important to understand how their minds work in those things, and sometimes you can get that easier by informal contact with them than by just reading the things that they write. You can learn a lot from other people.

DAVID: Let me ask this question. When I hear this question I always think of Marvin S. Hill, because Marv told me this one time about teaching at BYU. He said, "Sometimes I think it's the most wonderful place in the world to teach, and at other times I wonder, 'Why am I here?'" What do you think the benefits and the challenges have been as an educator at BYU?

TOM: I have never had the thought that I should not be here. A lot of what you think about your position at BYU depends on what you make of the



Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

position. I really liked teaching at BYU, and part of the reason for that was the people I got to work with. I can't think of a finer group of men and women to work with than the faculty in the history department at BYU. I get along well with them. The other advantage I had was that I was able to do research and writing while I was there. I had all the money I needed to do the things I needed to do and to go to conferences and so forth. I talked with colleagues from other universities who told me that they had a difficult time finding sufficient funds to go to conferences, that their funds were limited, or they had to spend a lot of their own money to do those things. I did not have that problem at BYU, because of the position I had at the Redd Center, which helped considerably in that regard, and it was also the willingness of department chairs and colleagues to support the work I was doing. During the time that I was at BYU, the university moved from being what I would consider a second-rate institution to a first-rate research institution. The president of the university might not say it publicly, but if you look at the university's standards for promotion and tenure and for salary increases, it's true. The rewards of being a faculty member at BYU really depend a great deal on how much you're able to publish, or whether you're publishing in well-recognized scholarly journals and things of that sort. I would say that this was something that attracted me to BYU during the time I was there. I would probably still be actively teaching and doing research at BYU if it hadn't been for the fact that we were called on a mission in 2004. I had to make a decision then if I was going to accept that mission call. I actually retired a year earlier than I was going to. I had an agreement with the dean that I could keep the Redd chair until age seventy, and that would have been in 2005. But the mission call seemed important to me.

The Church Education System wanted Marilyn and me to go to Berlin and to work at the LDS Institute of Religion—to work with young single adults. We were to teach a class in LDS Church history and help activate young single adults, and that seemed to me to be important. Interestingly, my department chair then, Neil L. York, was very much opposed to it. He said, “Your mission is here at BYU.” But I talked to the dean, David Magleby, who thought it was a wonderful idea. In fact, he knew that I was president of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American History Association, that I was president-elect of Phi Alpha Theta, and that I was on the council of the Western History Association, and so he worked out an arrangement with the Area president, who at that time was Marlin K. Jensen, to allow me to come back for conferences from Berlin. This allowed me to remain active in the profession during the time we were on our mission.

DAVID: You said that the academic standards at BYU improved dramatically during your years at BYU. Who was responsible for these changes?

TOM: I think there are a number of people—Dallin H. Oaks, Jeffery R. Holland, Rex E. Lee—all of them were responsible. All of them had academic aspirations themselves. All of them had academic backgrounds, and they understood that if the university was to achieve any kind of recognition, faculty members were going to have to compete with faculty members at other universities on the same basis. We simply couldn't say, "Well, we're a teaching institution and a religious institution and we have different aspirations." BYU is certainly different. The university has a dual heritage—Athens and Jerusalem—but it has to compete with other universities. President Kimball's second century address in 1976 emphasized that. He said that we need to be bilingual—to speak the language of faith and the language of scholarship.

DAVID: Maybe we can talk a little bit now about your association with the Mormon History Association. When did that start?

TOM: The Mormon History Association was organized in December 1965. I'd been on the BYU faculty then for just over a year, but the prime mover in pushing for the organization was Leonard Arrington. We had a number of preliminary meetings in connection with an organization called something like the Utah Council on Higher Education—I don't remember the exact name for it, but it was something like that—which met at various places, and we had decided that we wanted to organize an association of Mormon historians.

DAVID: So who are we talking about?

TOM: The people involved in that were Leonard Arrington, George Ellsworth, Jim Allen, Davis Bitton, Wesley Johnson, Richard L. Bushman, and Richard Poll. In organizing we included some people who worked in other fields but who had some interest in Mormonism, like Ted Warner and De Lamar Jensen. In addition, there were some people who weren't Mormons such as Merrill Wells, director of the Idaho State Historical Society. At any rate, we decided to have our organizational meeting at the American Historical Association meeting in San Francisco in December 1965. We each had a number of assignments. One of my assignments was to try to find a place where we could hold the meeting, and so I arranged that. Leonard arranged a program. We decided how we were going to organize, and a number of other things were done.

We met together in San Francisco and held an organizational meeting. For several years after that we met in conjunction with other historical organizations—the Pacific Coast Branch of the American History Association or with the Western History Association. We were able to get status as an affiliate organization of the American Historical Association. We decided to elect Leonard as the first president, the logical choice. Eventually we were large enough that we felt that we could hold a separate annual meeting, and of course since

then the organization has grown extremely large. We're limited now on the places that we can hold the meetings because we have seven hundred to one thousand people who come to the annual meetings. Enormous groups of people attend. You've attended the meetings and know how big they are now. I'm not sure that any of us understood at the time we formed the organization that it was going to become as large as it is today.

DAVID: Why did you feel that there was a need for an organization like this?

TOM: There had become by that time a great deal of interest in the history of the LDS Church. The Church was growing rapidly at the time, and various people had shown an interest in the history of the organization. We believed that as a field of study the history of Mormonism warranted an organization that focused on that subject. The Church's history has a number of interesting and significant events and movements. Among them are the communitarian movement, problems of persecution, the growth of the organization, the Church's missionary system, the way the Church was able to colonize in a large section of the Intermountain West, the development of irrigation, the kinds of ecological and environmental problems the Church has faced in this region, the conflict with the federal government during the late nineteenth century over theocracy and the practice of plural marriage—all of these things are topics of interest to people who are not just Latter-day Saints, but who have an interest in the history of religion in the United States as well.

As you know, the Church has continued to grow rapidly; it now has about thirteen million members. We have more members outside the United States than in the United States. It's been one of the most successful religious organizations formed in the United States. Its history has continued to interest large numbers of people.

DAVID: What relationship do you think there is between the "New" Mormon history (which you might want to define) and the Mormon History Association?

TOM: The people who've been critical of the New Mormon history really don't understand that the people who have promoted the New Mormon history have been generally faithful historians—people active in the LDS Church who are interested in trying to explain the Church as a religious organization in ways that can be understood not only within the Church but by people who are outside of the organization as well. It's not, as some have insisted, a form of positivism. It is, rather, a group of faithful historians who are trying to understand the history of what to them is essentially a religious movement and who are willing to accept on their own terms the religious experiences of Church leaders and Church members.

DAVID: So you think this approach was basically a rigorous scholarly approach?

TOM: I think, partly, it was. Certainly if you look at the work of people like Leonard Arrington, Davis Bitton, Jim Allen, Richard Bushman, and others. The kind of work they have done would be generally applauded by people who are in the Mormon History Association and recognized by people who are on the outside of the organization as well.

DAVID: Do you think the Mormon History Association has been an important factor in gaining acceptance for scholarship regarding Mormonism in the larger academic community?

TOM: Yes, there's no doubt about that. The organization, of course, has its own journal now, but members from the organization have published about Mormon history in other national journals and in scholarly presses as well. Another thing that's helped has been the Tanner lectures, where people who are not specialists in Mormon history are asked to look at their field as it relates to Mormon history and then to give a lecture about those aspects. Some important scholars nationally and internationally have participated in the Tanner lectures.

DAVID: You were president of the Mormon History Association. Do any particular highlights stand out, not just during your presidency, but throughout your experience with the association?

TOM: The publication of the *Journal of Mormon History*, and the ability then to attract larger numbers of people and people who are willing to present papers at the organization's meetings. I wouldn't cite anything particular as a highlight. One thing that's been important has been the ability of the organization to bring together those from the former Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ) with people from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and carry on a dialogue between those two groups; and also to bring in people who are not Latter-day Saints, people like Jan Shipps, Sarah (Sally) Barringer Gordon, and Mario DePillis, to join the discussion as well.

DAVID: And Larry Foster.

TOM: That's right.

DAVID: One of the things that strikes me about the meetings of the Mormon History Association, even though it's gotten very big, is there's still a camaraderie, a closeness in the association that you don't see in other historical associations.

TOM: I think that's true. My wife, Marilyn, enjoys going to the Mormon History Association meetings. She, of course, isn't a historian, but she has a good association with the people who are members of the Mormon History Association and a lot of others, either husbands or wives who aren't historians

come. They have a fine association with one another as well. Bob Flanders told me on one occasion that he considered the Mormon History Association to be sort of like his church.

DAVID: Let's talk a little bit about some of your scholarship and maybe how you got involved in some of these projects. We'll start off with what I think is the blockbuster, although there are a number of blockbusters in your career, but the one that moved me the most and really led me into contact with you was *Mormonism in Transition*, which is such an important work. How did you get involved in that?

TOM: In the 1970s one of the proposals that Leonard Arrington made to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve while he was Church Historian was to publish a sixteen-volume history of the LDS Church. He proposed to do that by inviting various historians to write on particular periods of the Latter-day Saint history. He asked me to write a history of the Church from 1900 to 1930, and I agreed to do that. In many ways it was breaking new ground. The only thing that had been done to cover that history had been part of the last chapters of B. H. Roberts' *Comprehensive History of the Church* and the work by James Allen and Richard Cowan on the Church in the twentieth century. These had been overviews rather than exhaustive investigations of the early twentieth century. No one had really done an in-depth study of the Church in that period before.

In doing the research and writing, I was extremely fortunate. I had access to virtually everything I wanted to see—the diaries of General Authorities, minutes of the Council of the Twelve, records of the Presiding Bishop—virtually everything I could think of that I wanted to see I was able to look at. In doing both the research and the writing I was able to envision the project quite broadly—to look at the Church's relationship to politics, the development of doctrine, internal development of various auxiliaries and organizations in the Church, the kinds of problems that Church members had during this period, the effort to deal with plural marriage after the Church decided that it was no longer going to authorize the practice—in short, the myriad of problems, challenges, and opportunities that the Church faced during that period. What I saw essentially was that the Church was really quite successful in dealing with those problems in spite of the difficulties it had and the opposition from outside. When I was finished with the manuscript it was taken to the Council of the Twelve and they couldn't decide to go ahead with the publication of this or any of the other books that had been completed, and only part of the books that were commissioned were completed, I think only about five or six out of the sixteen. Some of the authors ran into health difficulties. That was the case with T. Edgar Lion who was to do the book on Nauvoo; that was turned over to Glen M. Leonard, who eventually finished the book.

DAVID: I think that was Eugene E. Campbell's problem. Wasn't he working on one?

TOM: Yes, he was working on one. He wasn't able to finish it because of health, so Fred R. Gowans finished that book for him. At any rate, they couldn't decide to go ahead and publish, but what they agreed to do was to reserve the right for Deseret Book to publish the books as a series if it chose to do so, but then they let us go outside and find publishers. Richard Bushman found a publisher at the University of Illinois press for *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, which dealt with the period down to 1830, and I also published with University of Illinois press. Some of the books have been completed since and have since then been published by Deseret Book. Glen Leonard's book *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise*, was published by Deseret Book, which has never taken up the option to publish my book, though it still has the right to.

DAVID: I was not aware of that option.

TOM: Yes, Deseret Book still has the option if it wants to. My book, I think, was quite successful. I got the best-book award from the Mormon History Association for *Mormonism in Transition*.

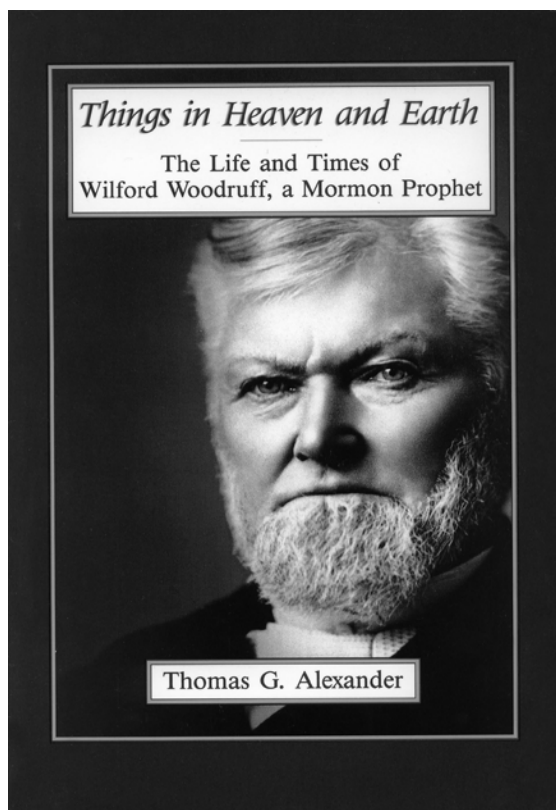
DAVID: The thing so striking to me, and I've learned subsequently striking to many people, was that it was breaking new ground. In many ways it still stands alone for a whole era. We're starting to get a little bit of scholarship out on that period, but it's such an important book about such an important time in the Church. There are those who, surprisingly perhaps, are troubled by the book. Is there anything you can say about that? It's probably in link to the larger issue of the New Mormon History.

TOM: Some were troubled by it because I tried to deal forthrightly with problems the Church had during that period, such as problems with its members in defining doctrine. And it had problems with plural marriage, especially new plural marriages, during that period. Some people like to think the Church's doctrines were cast in stone in Joseph Smith's time and there weren't any problems after that. And some would like to argue that in 1890 the Church gave up plural marriage and there weren't really a lot of difficulties with it after that time. But the historical record simply doesn't bear that out. The Church had to deal with many problems in both those areas, and it was quite successful in handling them during that period. But there are people who don't like to talk about problems.

DAVID: The tone I found is exactly as you have described it. The Church was successful in dealing with these challenges, and the Church organization functioned eventually and essentially as it was supposed to, which was to deal with the challenges of the new era as they came up. Let's talk about some of

the other books you wrote. How did you get involved with Jim Allen in writing *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City*?

TOM: Pruett Publishing Company in Boulder, Colorado, approached Jim about doing a history of Salt Lake City. Jim and I had worked together on a couple of articles before that time, and I told him I'd be interested in working with him on that, so we agreed to publish *Mormons and Gentiles*. What we did was agree to divide the chapters up. I did the chapter on the Progressive Era and the one on the period since the Second World War. Jim did the middle of the nineteenth century and the study of the 1930s. We agreed I would be listed as the lead author. We had published *Manchester Mormons*, which was an edition of William Clayton's 1840-42 journal. We had agreed that Jim would be listed as lead author for that book. Gibbs Smith published that book. Thus, when we agreed to do a second book, we agreed that I should be listed first.



Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

Both books, however, are the work of both of us, equally.

DAVID: *Mormons and Gentiles* was also a path-breaking work. . . .

TOM: John S. McCormick had published *Salt Lake City: The Gathering Place*, and there had been some work on the city before, such as Edward Tullidge's work. Some of our work redid the work of others, but we carried the story down to the present, and that had not been done comprehensively before.

DAVID: You brought up *Manchester Mormons*. How did you and Jim Allen get involved in that project?

TOM: Jim was approached by somebody from the Clayton family, Comstock Clayton, I be-

lieve. They had found a journal of William Clayton's that dealt with the 1840-42 period in England, and Jim asked me if I'd be willing to work with him on editing that journal. We worked together to do it. It deals with what was happening in Manchester and in England after the LDS missionaries left from that first mission when Heber C. Kimball led the mission to England. It considers the people who were members and the problems that they had, and then their migration to the United States, to Nauvoo, to join the Saints there.

DAVID: Obviously it went well because you subsequently did the next book.

TOM: Interestingly, *Manchester Mormons* was supposed to be the first in a series that Peregrine Smith publishers was publishing of Mormon diaries, but it was the only one that appeared in the series. Peregrine Smith didn't follow through to do further books, further diaries, in that series.

DAVID: How did you get involved with your biography on Wilford Woodruff?

TOM: Signature Books had published the Woodruff diaries. Gary Bergera from Signature Books approached me and asked if I would be interested either in publishing an abridged version of the diaries or a full-scale biography of Wilford Woodruff. I thought about it for a little bit and first I told him that I'd like to do an abridged version of the journal. I called him back within a couple of days and told him, no, I'd really rather do a full-scale biography of Wilford Woodruff. I explained that I thought that his life was important enough to have a biography that went beyond the things that Matthias Cowley had done. I didn't know at the time that Francis M. Gibbons was working on a series of biographies on Church leaders. Had I known, it wouldn't have mattered anyway, because I was interested in doing something quite different from what he did. So I undertook that project of writing the biography, and of course, it also won the best book award from the Mormon History Association and the Evans Biography Award.

DAVID: What were some of the challenges of writing the book?

TOM: A number of things. In the first place, the image that members of the Church and scholars have generally had about Wilford Woodruff was completely wrong. The general impression was that he was this old farmer from New England, and that was not the case. Wilford Woodruff was a student at the Farmington Academy, a classical New England academy. He would have studied Latin, Greek, and other things like that at the academy. It would have been equivalent to a junior college education and, of course, different from the kind of junior college education one would get today. So he was well educated, and you could tell that from the journal. Like many people, there were some misspelled words, but his grammar was good. He was insightful.

Information on his continuing education appears in his journal. He recorded in the journal the things he was reading, and he read widely.

It was a very interesting experience to work on that biography. I spent some time in Connecticut going through school records and other things that had come from his experience there and learning more about his background and family. I was able to get access to other papers. I was able to use a collection of Woodruff family papers at the University of Utah. I was able to see a number of things relating to Woodruff and his family that had not been published before—the kinds of family relationships, how his plural family worked, and what he did as president of the Church. I was able to deal with some of the problems he had when he became president. There was a great deal of antagonism toward George Q. Cannon on the part of some members of the Council of the Twelve, and it was interesting to see how President Woodruff was able to deal with those. He was quite forthright in the journal until he became president of the Church, and then there were a lot of things he didn't talk about in the journal. And I was able to deal with some other things in connection with his life.

DAVID: So he emerges as a much more vigorous and intellectual person than is often portrayed?

TOM: Yes, he was also an extremely spiritual person—a person very much in tune with the Spirit. That's one of the reasons I picked the lead title for the book, *Things in Heaven and Earth*. What is very interesting is that the year I published that book, I'd seen Hamlet three times, and the title of the book actually comes from Hamlet's discussion with Horatio, where he says, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Horatio was a very secular kind of person, whereas Hamlet was in tune with ghosts and witches and other things during that period, and that struck me as a good description of Wilford Woodruff's feelings as well. So I picked that as a title for the book.

DAVID: How long did it take you to write that?

TOM: It took about three years.

DAVID: Very impressive. What about your book on the history of Utah? How did you get involved in that?

TOM: Actually it was for the centennial of Utah statehood, *Utah, the Right Place*. Richard Sadler was the chair of the centennial committee, and Max Evans was director of the Utah State Historical Society at the time. They envisioned a multi-volume history of Utah of four or five volumes dealing with different periods, and then one volume to cover the entire history of the state. When they asked me if I'd be interested in participating in that project, I told them I would be. I would like to write the single volume—the history of the state—and they agreed with that. So I finished the volume and it was

published in 1995, a year before the centennial. Since then I've done two revisions—one partial revision and another major revision of the book. I'm kind of disappointed in what has happened since that time. A number of people have used it as a textbook in Utah history classes, but Gibbs Smith publishers has allowed it go out of print, and now it's not being published any longer. I've had a number of people, particularly Gene Sessions at Weber State University, who have tried to get me to find another publisher for it. I've actually talked with John Alley at Utah State University to see if they'd be interested in trying to get Gibbs Smith to release the copyright so they can publish the book. They are currently publishing *Utah's History*, which I was also involved in. I was one of the editors for that, but it is woefully out of date and I think *Utah, the Right Place*, would much better serve students in their classes rather than the other one. Some teachers have told me that they've been able to get Gibbs Smith to publish packet additions of it or to allow the universities to publish packet editions of the book.

DAVID: There's definitely a need for your more thorough, up-to-date version. I know you've also done a lot of work in Western history, but also in environmental history. You worked on some projects for the U. S. Forest Service, but where did your interests come from in that regard, or your involvement, rather?

TOM: I've been interested for some time in the way in which this region developed and what happened over time in its development. I was approached by a research company who wanted to put a proposal in to the Forest Service to do a history of the Intermountain Region of the Forest Service. The Intermountain Region, or Region Four, covers Utah, Nevada, Idaho south of the Salmon River, Wyoming west of the continental divide, and a small area in Colorado and Arizona. I agreed that I would write that history if they got the contract. They got the contract, so I wrote the book, and it was published by the Forest Service. I've since written an update to it, but it hasn't been published. That led really to an interest in what has happened over time in the Wasatch Front region, and I projected the possibility of doing a book on the Wasatch Front. I've never completed it, but I did an article that was published in the *Western Historical Quarterly* dealing with the Wasatch Front and what has happened over time in that region. I hope still sometime to be able to do a book on that.

DAVID: I know environmental history is something of a great deal of interest to you. Do you think that there is a Mormon aspect of environmental history?

TOM: Oh, I think there's no question about that. The Mormons of course were heavily involved in the development of Utah and the Wasatch Front region. Some Mormon leaders played various roles in the environment. Reed

Smoot, for instance, was chair of the Senate Committee on Public Lands and Surveys. I published three articles on the role he played in various aspects of environmental history. People in Utah don't really understand how important his role was. Before he was ever involved with the Senate Finance Committee he was chair of the committee on public lands and was a strong supporter of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot's conservation programs. He was responsible for the development of a number of pieces of legislation. He also was responsible for the designation of the first two National Parks in Utah, Zion and Bryce National Parks. I was so impressed with his role in those matters that I used his role in the creation of those two parks as my presidential address for the Pacific Coast Branch of the American History Association.

DAVID: You have had a very long association with the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies. Tell me a little about how that came about.

TOM: As I mentioned, when Leonard Arrington left Utah State to come to BYU, he was appointed director of the Redd Center, and he asked me to serve as assistant director. Subsequently I served as associate director, and when he left to become director of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute I became director of the Redd Center. It's interesting, when he asked me if I would do that, the idea was that I would serve for maybe a year or two until Richard (Dick) Poll could be brought back to Brigham Young University from Western Illinois University. He would then serve as associate director of the Redd Center. It was my good fortune and Dick's bad fortune that Charley Redd didn't like Dick Poll.

DAVID: Why didn't he like Dick Poll?

TOM: I don't really know. The two of them were neighbors in Provo. But he didn't like Dick, and he didn't want Dick to be associated with the Redd Center. So that project simply didn't get off the ground, and as a result I stayed at the Redd Center. So it was partly because of Charlie's prejudice that I remained at the Center. I should say I had an excellent relationship with the Redd family, and while I was director we were able to raise additional money from the family. I developed an excellent relationship with Charley's nephew, Carl Butler. Carl and his sister donated considerable funds to establish the Butler endowment at the Redd Center while I was director. And I was able to get the Redd Foundation to double the basic endowment for the Redd Center during the time I was there. William (Bert) Wilson helped considerably with that because he got President Rex Lee to match the money they gave. The family agreed that they would contribute the money necessary if the university would match that money. The Developmental Office didn't want to do that because it would mean that they would need to come up with half a million dollars over a five-year period. But Bert went to Rex Lee, who was then president of the university, and got him to intercede with the Development Office to agree to



Thomas G. Alexander speaking at the Lion House, Salt Lake City, Utah, November 21, 1995. Photograph courtesy Thomas G. Alexander.

do it. So the family agreed to contribute to that money, and the endowment for the Redd Chair in the Redd Center doubled as a result. The money we got from Karl Butler and his sister amounted to something in the neighborhood of \$750,000 to \$800,000 dollars, making the endowment significant. So when I left the Center it was in excellent financial shape, partly because of the work I'd done in fund raising. I should say that I certainly didn't regret fund raising. I enjoyed doing it because of the people I was able to work with. I still have an excellent relationship with the Redd family members. I had an excellent relationship with Annaley Redd, Charles' wife, until her passing. Annaley was an interesting person. She and Charley had broad interests. Annaley almost considered me a part of the family. When we'd go down to the ranch and La Sal, Annaley had a sign saying she didn't let anybody else come into her kitchen to work in there. One day she was doing something in the kitchen and I went in and started helping her. She said, "Oh you can come and help. You're part of the family." I still consider Hardy, Paul, Robert, Becky, Maraley, Regina, Beverly, and Kathy to be good friends.

DAVID: What was the purpose of the original endowment and the subsequent endowment?

TOM: The Redds were interested in having the story told of the people who settled and developed the West.

DAVID: So very broad?

TOM: Very broad, and what we decided to do was to define the scope of the Redd Center's interest as the Mountain West. An awful lot of work was being done on the Pacific Coast and the Plains, and Leonard and I discussed the matter. We decided we didn't want to move into those areas. At first we decided to do a monograph series, and we were successful in publishing a number of monographs. But that kind of died out. At the same time we had a lecture series. We had a monthly lecture first, but the interest in that seemed to decline as well, and now the Center has two lecturers a year. I was succeeded as director by Bert Wilson, then by Edward A. (Ed) Geary afterward. Brian Cannon is the present director. I held the Redd Chair from 1992 to 2004, when we went on our mission, and now Ignacio Garcia is the holder of the Redd Chair.

DAVID: What is the purpose of the Redd Chair?



Thomas G. and Marilyn J. Alexander family, August 2000. Front (l-r): Marilyn, Brooke, and Tom. Back (l-r): Brenda, Mark, Paul, and Tracy. Photograph courtesy Thomas G. Alexander.

TOM: The Redd Chair is like chairs at other universities. It's endowed with the funds from the grant the Redd family made. That supplements the salary of the chair holders. The chair holder is expected to do research and writing in the field of Western History, and of course that is what I did while I held the chair, and Ignacio is continuing that. His interests are somewhat dif-

ferent from mine, and that's fine. He's interested in Hispanics in the West, and there's no reason why that shouldn't be a part of Western History.

DAVID: What projects are you involved in now? What things do you have on your agenda?

TOM: When we were in Berlin I had a heart problem. I had an episode of tachycardia which meant that my heart was beating at 185 beats a minute. I was taken to the hospital and could have died, because when your heart is going that fast it simply wouldn't stop, and it does not pump enough blood into your system. I had had episodes of tachycardia before, but they had always subsided, only this time they didn't. The doctors actually had to zap me to reset my heart. You see in the movies the doctors coming in with the paddles and people jumping up three feet off the gurney. I didn't know what had happened because I was sedated at the time. After they had reset my heart, the doctors did an angiogram. They found that one of my arteries was seventy percent blocked, and so they implanted a stent there. They had scheduled a procedure to cauterize the node that was causing the tachycardia. When the Missionary Department found out that I had had the heart problem, they sent us home immediately, and I had the problem treated here in the United States. After I was better, we were reassigned to the Church History Department, and I was asked to work there as an editor on the Mountain Meadows Massacre project. The authors of the study were Richard E. (Rick) Turley, Ron Walker, and Glen Leonard. They had a contract with Oxford University Press to write the book. I wasn't writing for them, I was working as an editor, and I spent most of my time editing and rewriting the section on the period that Rick Turley had drafted about what happened after the massacre. We were to be released from our mission in December of 2005, which would have been the eighteen months of our mission. However, Elder Marlin Jensen at the Church History Department asked me to continue working on that project, and so I continued to do that into the early part of 2007. At the time, the directors of the department agreed that they could probably get along without me. In meantime I have several other projects that I've been working on.

I was invited to give the Arrington lecture last fall at Utah State University, and I used for that paper some of the research that I have been doing for this Mountain Meadows Massacre. I looked into the Church officials' investigation of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. I came to a much different conclusion than Will Bagley and others have. I think that the Church leadership really undertook a serious investigation of the massacre and eventually found out what had happened. Bagley thinks it was all a cover-up and that Brigham Young himself had ordered the massacre. I think he's wrong about that. I don't think he has the evidence for it. He's used a lot of the rhetoric in his book, and he lets rhetoric substitute for evidence, which I think is not a good historical

method. I also did a paper on the role that the federal judges played in the coming of the Utah War. I presented that at the Mormon History Association Meeting, and I used it with some additional work as my presidential address to the Phi Alpha Theta Society in January 2008.

Before we went on our mission, I signed a contract with the Edward Hunter Snow family (Edward was a son of Erastus Snow), to do a biography of Edward Hunter Snow. I had to put that on the back burner while I was working on the Mountain Meadows Massacre project, but I've been working on that project, and I need to finish that biography. I also agreed to give a paper on the role that David Eccles played in the development of the Utah Construction Company. I gave that paper at a symposium in October 2007 at Weber State University. So I'm working on a number of projects, and I'm working on a couple of encyclopedia entries, one on Brigham Young for Gordon Bakken at Cal State Fullerton, and a couple of others.

DAVID: So you've got enough to keep you busy for awhile.

TOM: Right, I keep myself off the street, except when I'm out walking in the morning. I try to walk a couple of miles each morning.

DAVID: How would you sum up your contribution or the things you've tried to do as a historian?

TOM: I think I've tried to further our understanding of the history of Utah, the Intermountain West, and the Latter-day Saints. I've tried to help readers gain a better understanding of the relationship between the Latter-day Saints and the federal government. The first articles I published—which I wrote independently—were articles on some of the judges. My master's thesis was on the federal judiciary in Utah, and I published an article on Charles S. Zane and one on James McKean. I think I would probably revise the McKean article if I were to do it over again, because it left the wrong impression with readers. I indicated in the end of the article that I thought McKean used bad judgment in the way he dealt with the Mormons, especially with Brigham Young and the Church leadership. Some of the people who've read the article thought it was a whitewashing of McKean. The article on Zane, I think, stands very well. Zane was interested in upholding the law, but he also was willing to accept the surrender of the Latter-day Saints after the Manifesto. He dealt fairly with city authorities and others, and he gladly worked with the Mormons and others in dealing with problems in the territory to achieve statehood. The people appreciated his work so much that they elected him as the first Chief Justice of the Utah State Supreme Court. *Mormonism in Transition* pushed forward frontiers of knowledge on the history of the Church in the twentieth century. The biography of Wilford Woodruff revised our understanding of what Wilford Woodruff was like. It also helps us understand what he was about—how he related to the rest of the Church members, and how he went about mak-

ing changes in the late 1880s and early 1890s. I hope my general history of Utah has helped in our understanding of the state, particularly in the twentieth century. More than half of our history since the settlement of Utah by Euro-Americans has taken place since 1900. Other histories have not really dealt with that history in a way that it ought to have been. I devoted more than half of that book to the period since 1900. The work I've done on the environmental development of Utah, on the Forest Service, on the Wasatch Front, on Reed Smoot, and on Sylvester Q. Cannon has helped in understanding these individuals and events. I think a number of different things I've done have been useful in helping to understand the history of the LDS Church and of this region and of this state.

DAVID: What are some of the challenges for Mormon historians and those involved in writing about Mormon history?

TOM: I think one of the major challenges is getting out of the nineteenth century in the history of Mormonism and of Utah. I must say that I've contributed to some of that problem because some of the research I've done has been in the nineteenth century. But we really need to understand better the history of the Church and of Utah in the period since 1900, and especially since 1930. No single volume has been written on the history of the period after 1930. Jim Allen has been working on trying to finish his work on that period, but he hasn't been able to publish that yet.

On the history of the Church, we really need to understand better the growth of the Church. We need to have some histories that focus on the people in countries other than the United States. We know a great deal about the people in Utah in the nineteenth century, but we don't know as much on the people in other areas, and now more than half of the Church members live outside the United States, and we really don't understand them very well.

DAVID: Any last thoughts about how you'd like to be remembered as a Mormon historian or a historian in general?

TOM: Well, I hope that I'm remembered as a good and an honest historian—one who's tried to help other people as well. I hope I'm remembered that way. I've tried to be honest, and I think that honesty is the single most important attribute a historian can have. You've got to be honest, so I hope to be remembered as an honest historian.

DAVID: I think that will do it. I appreciate your time and your forthrightness.

TOM: Thanks.