

Book Reviews

GLEN M. LEONARD. *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002, xxiii + 828 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index, \$39.95 hardback).

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A consensus has existed for almost forty years (at least in Illinois) that Robert Bruce Flanders' *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (1965) is the single best history of Mormon Nauvoo. Now that Glen M. Leonard, director of the Museum of Church History and Art of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has published his much-anticipated volume, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise*, it is natural to consider whether Flanders' *Nauvoo* has been superseded.

In his eleven-chapter study, Flanders incorporated a sometimes topical approach within a generally chronological format. Leonard does roughly the same thing, dividing twenty-one chapters into four parts: "Establishing Nauvoo," "Life in Nauvoo," "Challenges," and "Removal." Both books cover what Richard Bushman once identified as certain basic topics that any writing on the Nauvoo period would be "likely to touch on."¹ They include—with reference to Leonard's book—the Mormon move from Missouri (pp. 30–40); their settlement at Commerce (47–61); missionary work in Britain and subsequent immigration (74–81); the development of Nauvoo, including land purchases (54–61), the Nauvoo House (235, 251, 476–78), the temple (242–55), the Nauvoo Charter (98–108), the Nauvoo Legion (112–19), and economic policies (141–72); the development of doctrine, including polygamy (346–56), baptism for the dead (238–39, 255–56), and temple cer-

emonies (256–65); relations to Masonry (313–21); conflict between the Church and the State of Missouri (275–89) and with Illinois residents—both non-Mormons (289–300, 303–13, 327–40) and Church dissidents (356–62); plans for the move to the West (321–27; 509–20); the *Expositor* affair (326–79); the martyrdom (380–98); the transmission of authority and splintering of the Church (chapters 15 and 20); and the Mormon exodus (chapters 18 and 19). Flanders approached these topics and events with a focus that was primarily economic and political. Moreover, he did it without relying on materials in the LDS Church Archives in Utah. Leonard has attempted a broader approach.

For several decades, Leonard has immersed himself in the primary materials of Nauvoo history—letters, diaries, newspapers, and imprints (including LDS Church Archive materials). He has made advantageous use of the research amassed by T. Edgar Lyon during the years Dr. Lyon served as historian for Nauvoo Restoration Incorporated. And he has kept abreast of the many articles and monographs published in the field of Mormon history since Flanders wrote. All this is reflected in the book's substantial treatment of many aspects of the Nauvoo story. Most pronounced is the greater attention Leonard gives to the events of 1845–46. Leonard's *Nauvoo* is, in this respect, much less "Joseph-centric" than Flanders' account. Joseph Smith is murdered at page 397; the remaining 267 pages (40 percent of the text) focus on succession issues within the Church and the accession of Brigham Young, ongoing conflict with non-Mormons, and evolving plans for relocation. By comparison, Flanders devoted only 31 out of 341 pages of text (9 percent) to post-martyrdom matters. This is not surprising given that Flanders originally came from the Midwestern RLDS tradition that rejected both Joseph's Nauvoo-era spiritual and temporal innovations and Brigham Young's leadership, whereas Leonard stems from the Utah LDS tradition that embraced both. Indeed, an important contribution of Leonard's book is that it provides, in a single, convenient place, an introduction to the varieties of Mormonism that emerged in the wake of the Prophet Joseph's death—all within the context of evolving doctrine and politics provided in earlier chapters that is necessary to better understand the schismatics. This will be especially helpful to non-Mormon readers (and perhaps to many Latter-day Saints, too) unfamiliar with divisions in the Mormon movement.

This book amplifies many topics relative to Flanders' initial treatment, reflecting the accumulated research of the past four decades. The in-depth planning by Brigham and the Twelve for the move to the West and the long chronology of decision making may surprise some readers. So, too, might the protracted nature of the 1846 exodus. Leonard incorporates some new details on such issues as the Nauvoo Charter, Nauvoo Legion, Freemasonry,

Council of Fifty, and state and local political developments, to name a few. Students of Illinois history will especially appreciate the latter, as well as Leonard's extended account of the "Mormon Wars" that continued in the years after the martyrdom. Still, neither Flanders nor Leonard satisfactorily examines conflict and differences within the non-Mormon community itself. Leonard's frequent references to non-Mormons sometimes lapses into the old dichotomy of "anti-Mormon" and "Jack Mormon"—obfuscating complex, nuanced, and deeply divisive differences of opinion that racked a non-Mormon community harboring sentiments running from those who were militantly anti-Mormon, to those whose opposition to corporate Mormonism was more passive or ran in more peaceful legalistic channels, to those who bordered on sympathy with aspects of the Mormons' plight.² Finally, the account in the last chapter regarding Nauvoo's development in the twentieth century reveals that more can be done in the area of evolving collective historical memory and meanings.

Some readers may pause at Leonard's subtitle denoting Nauvoo as "A Place of Peace." Mormon Nauvoo as a "place of peace" was a notion foreign to many of Joseph Smith's contemporaries. "Conflict" and "violence" (both to and by Mormons) were the usual themes reflected in newspapers of the time. Illinois histories—from Governor Thomas Ford's memoirs to recent monographs and documentary compilations—feature interpretations centered on conflict.³ This is true for the work of many Mormon writers as well. Most, like Flanders, have focused on developments centered around the activities of Joseph Smith and his associates. Leonard suggests in this new account, however, that many (if not most) rank-and-file Church members were not privy to the day-to-day issues and actions of the Church hierarchy and were probably happily oblivious to the growing concerns and rising resentment of nonmembers outside the orbit of ordinary Mormon society. For them, especially those who had experienced expulsion from Missouri or Ohio, Nauvoo may have indeed seemed, at least until the Prophet's death, a "place of peace."

This reorientation to include the perspective of ordinary folks reflects changes in the academic discipline of history that have taken root since Flanders was writing in the mid-1960s. Leonard's book most directly reflects these changes in Part II, "Life in Nauvoo." This quarter of the book is a social history depicting what life was like for ordinary residents. Housing conditions; agricultural practices; diet; available commodities; employment in merchandising, small-scale manufacturing, trades, and professions; and the challenges of a nearly moneyless economy in a time of economic depression (chapters 6 and 7)—all are covered from perspectives beyond that of just the leadership elite. Moreover, Leonard incorporates demographic stud-

ies to make enlightening comparisons between Nauvoo residents and neighboring nonresidents (178–80) and also among the residents of Nauvoo itself (180–87). It may surprise some, especially students of Illinois history, to discover that Nauvoo was not a monolithic, “centrally orchestrated community.” Rather, behind the “rhetoric of unity” and the acceptance of common objectives, there existed networks of “various self-defined clusters” of families and friends, relating to one another “in selective social groupings, each with its own subset of interests, each interacting in its way on the urban landscape” (174). Cultural activities—dining, dancing, theater, music, and education (190–99)—are also part of Leonard’s *Nauvoo*. Chapter 9 is devoted to the ordinary religious life of the people—conferences, Sabbath practices, the religious press, and the relation of family members to the Church and community through evolving understandings of such institutions as priesthood quorums, wards, and the female Relief Society. In short, Leonard brings to the Nauvoo story matters of social history that were not as central to the field when Flanders wrote.

Nevertheless, this book is not an academic, sociocultural case study of an Illinois community in the vein of Don Harrison Doyle’s book on Jacksonville, John Mack Faragher’s book on Sugar Creek, or Susan Session Rugh’s book on Fountain Green in rural Hancock County.⁴ Nor does it place Nauvoo within the regional social and cultural construct of antebellum Mississippi River Valley boomtowns developed in studies such as Timothy Mahoney’s *Provincial Lives*.⁵ Mahoney is concerned with the region’s Jacksonian entrepreneurs, merchants, and professionals who, motivated by self-interest and a desire for social mobility, sought to combine “good society” with booster activity and thereby succeeded in fusing self-interest with collective action to construct new urban communities on the frontier. Would Mahoney’s insights—particularly in connection with the development of Keokuk, Iowa, and the attendant boosterism and vigilantism—help Leonard draw even deeper distinctions among the Nauvoo-era settlers of Hancock County both within and without the Church? Or would frontier similarities identified by Mahoney outweigh Nauvoo’s distinctiveness? If the latter, then such constructions might bring us back full circle to Flanders, who almost four decades ago described Mormon Nauvoo as a western boomtown and Joseph Smith as a quintessential Jacksonian entrepreneur.

Unlike Flanders, however, Leonard definitely wishes to emphasize distinctions—chiefly the element of religious conviction. In a historiographical essay written in the wake of Flanders’ book, Richard Bushman suggested that “the whole story” of Nauvoo had not yet been told. He wondered whether it is possible to understand Nauvoo without grasping the centrality

of Mormon spiritual life to all that transpired there. "Belief powered the entire enterprise," he remarked.⁶ Leonard quotes Bushman's musings from thirty-three years ago and adopts them at the beginning of his preface (xvii) as the guiding theme in his own interpretation of Nauvoo. Accordingly, Leonard writes from the "perspective of revelations and doctrine" and expressly states that the "real story of the Church in Nauvoo is essentially one of a people of faith" (xviii, xix).

This theme may perhaps be a necessary corrective to Flanders and others who have partially slighted spiritual dimensions of the Nauvoo experience. It may suggest to some, however, that Leonard's *Nauvoo* is yet another "sacred morality play"—a charge leveled by some historians regarding the traditional perspective of Mormon accounts of Nauvoo. Critics such as John Hallwas and Roger Launius have urged historians to "replace the notion of a sacred drama with one that is more complex, multifaceted, and well supported."⁷ It is doubtful that Nauvoo will ever be anything but "sacred history" to Latter-day Saints. But because Leonard asks that Joseph Smith and the Mormons of Nauvoo be granted the sincerity of their religious convictions, Latter-day Saint readers may still accept Leonard's account as "faithful history," even though he also presents the perspectives of those outside the Church and broaches issues that can be construed as unflattering to the Church or some of its leaders. Leonard candidly observes, for instance, that "even though all Latter-day Saints were expected to live a minimum standard . . . some did not" (86).

Whether Leonard has achieved "functional objectivity in [his] writing" sufficient to satisfy scholars like Hallwas and Launius,⁸ it seems clear that his book reflects what they had predicted would be an evolving "shift toward a more contextual understanding" of Nauvoo.⁹ Leonard moves away from reliance on traditional assumptions of total Mormon innocence and religious persecution and retreats to more modest assumptions of Mormon religious sincerity. Such assumptions refurbish images of personal integrity for many of the Mormons involved. But they fail to provide a rationale, as the old assumptions did, for rejecting related assumptions that members of the opposition were equally sincere in their fears of becoming victims of a surging Mormon theocracy. In fact, Leonard accepts this assumption.¹⁰ Assumptions of sincerity, however, do little to assuage the potential discomfort to those among today's American Latter-day Saints who, after a century of Church accommodation to American notions of liberal democratic individualism, may now be unaccustomed to considering the full political and social implications of the "sincere religion" that was revealed in Nauvoo and transported to the Great Basin. Dissenting Midwestern Mormons, after

all, never questioned the sincerity of their Utah cousins while rejecting their theocracy.¹¹

The publisher should be commended for allowing 112 illustrations and 29 maps to underscore Leonard's text. In particular, the maps, most of them created in collaboration with Robert Spencer, constitute helpful contributions in their own right to Mormon and Illinois history. In a work of this magnitude, however, mistakes are inevitable.¹² Examples include the misidentification of Jacob B. Backenstos as a Whig (605) (Backenstos was an associate of Stephen Douglas and a devoted Democrat); the perpetuation of the *History of the Church's* misreading of Springfield's Democratic newspaper, the *Illinois State Register*, that takes at face value the paper's tongue-in-cheek jab at Whigs in its sarcastic praise of the Prophet's supposed Whig proclivities and the sly suggestion that he supplant Henry Clay as the Whig candidate for president (338); the unintentional suggestion that an upright angel adorned the temple tower in 1846 (656) (a drawing of the horizontal angel appears at 253); the misspelling Sidney Rigdon's name "Sydney" (37); the transposing of numbers in source citations; and faulty index citations.¹³ Perhaps deadlines dictated by the dedication of the new Nauvoo Temple in June 2002 account for errors of this nature.

Readers desiring a smooth-flowing, compelling narrative in the vein of historical fiction like Gerald Lund's *The Work and the Glory* series will likely be disappointed. Some readers may unconsciously long for a "faithful history" version of Samuel Taylor's *Nightfall at Nauvoo*. Perhaps such a history is possible, but Leonard's book is not it. The text could be less tedious and redundant in some places. Its occasionally didactic tone can weary readers eager to get on with the drama of the story. For instance, before readers ever reach Nauvoo, they must first plow through forty pages explicating Mormon theological concepts of Zion and the failure in Missouri to transform those concepts into reality. Though these first two chapters may seem excessive to those eager to get to Nauvoo, they are understandable given Leonard's larger purpose in establishing the spiritual foundation and the religious Mormon state of mind underlying the subsequent Nauvoo experience. Readers must constantly remind themselves of this as they encounter minidisquisitions on the likes of consecration, covenant making, and the sometimes convoluted development of priesthood offices and hierarchy.¹⁴

Still, on many levels, this book represents the best of "faithful history." Latter-day Saint readers impatient with what may sometimes seem a ponderous pace and a penchant for esoteric digressions should try to appreciate the author's painstaking care in grounding the Nauvoo story in a context of scripture and Church doctrine. Leonard does well, considering the challenge of compressing theological concepts into brief, comprehensible statements

(all the while striving to conform to standard orthodoxy) and then weaving them into a broader historical scheme. His explanations are usually lucid and instructive. His endnotes are replete with citations to the Utah Church's Doctrine and Covenants,¹⁵ which should make the book a useful commentary for integration into faithful Latter-day Saints' personal scripture study and convenient for Church lesson and talk preparation. Patient non-Mormons, too, can benefit from looking at an important aspect of Illinois and American history from a perspective that assumes sincere religious faith, thereby making more comprehensible what sometimes seems inexplicable to outsiders about the Mormons and their story.

It is unfortunate that Leonard did not conclude with an updated version of the historiographical essay he published thirteen years ago. There he wrote that historians are "interpreters" seeking understanding beyond the biases in their historical sources. "Nevertheless," he observed, "in their attempts to understand Nauvoo, [historians] assume, in part, the perspective of a Resident, a Visitor, or a Celebrant."¹⁶ How then would Leonard classify his own work? He classified Flanders as a "Visiting Pilgrim son of Joseph" returning "as it were to an ancestral home to re-examine what [he] had come to know vicariously." In secularizing and humanizing Nauvoo's story, Flanders removed it from the "celebratory aura of sanctioned interpretations."¹⁷ If so, does this make Leonard a "Visiting Pilgrim son of Brigham" by his inserting back into Nauvoo's story religious meanings that have been overshadowed to the detriment of a fuller understanding of Nauvoo? Though published under the auspices of a Church-owned institution, this book surely constitutes more than celebratory "pages of officially encouraged remembering."¹⁸ But how far does it go beyond the perspective of "Old Nauvooers" whose "reminiscent collection of facts about temple-building and apostolic succession" portrayed Nauvoo mainly "as the gateway to the Mormon West"?¹⁹

So we return to the original question—does this new *Nauvoo* supersede the old? Flanders' *Nauvoo* has stood the test of time. It is well-reasoned and well-written history. As such, it is still valuable. It will continue to be consulted by those who wish to study the economic and political development of Nauvoo. What Leonard provides is a complementary supplement to Flanders. Leonard's *Nauvoo* is an ambitious and needed update. It will serve as an important first reference. Moreover, Leonard succeeds in reminding us that Nauvoo was first and foremost a religious experience; that much of what is distinctive about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is traced to that experience; and that we should not let the well-known stories of conflict and turmoil involving those in the leadership (and our knowledge of how things ultimately played out) obscure the reality that for much of the

time and for many people, Nauvoo was indeed a “place of peace.” T. Edgar Lyon would be pleased.²⁰

Notes

1. Richard L. Bushman, “The Historians and Mormon Nauvoo,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5 (spring 1970): 51–61, at 53–54.

2. Scholars have similar difficulty in satisfactorily classifying varying sentiments articulated by American antebellum Northerners regarding slavery—sentiments that ran the gamut from militant abolitionism, to passive dislike, to benign acquiescence.

3. Book examples include Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois: From Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs, 1854); Thomas Gregg, *History of Hancock County, Illinois* (Chicago: Charles C. Chapman, 1880); John Moses, *Illinois—Historical and Statistical, Volume I* (Chicago: Fergus Printing, 1889); Theodore Calvin Pease, *The Frontier State, 1818–1848* (Vol. 2 of the *Centennial History of Illinois*) (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1918); Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965); Annette P. Hampshire, *Mormonism In Conflict: The Nauvoo Years* (Vol. 11 of *Studies in Religion and Society*) (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985); and John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius, *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1995). An interesting exception is James E. Davis’s important recent book, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998). Davis virtually ignores the Mormon experience, perhaps because it conflicts with his “consensus” thesis of relative “frontier tranquility” in Illinois before the 1850s. For a concise listing of Nauvoo-related Illinois historical writings, including articles, see Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas, “Introduction,” in Launius and Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), note 18 at 15–1.

4. Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825–70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978); John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1986); and Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

5. Timothy R. Mahoney, *Provincial Lives: Middle-class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

6. Bushman, “The Historians and Mormon Nauvoo,” 60–61.

7. Launius and Hallwas, *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited*, 13.

8. Launius and Hallwas, “Bibliographical Essay,” 251.

9. Launius and Hallwas, “Introduction,” 13. In this respect, Leonard follows the pattern reflected in work by other Mormons, such as Marvin S. Hill’s influential *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

10. For instance, Leonard observes: “The old settlers lived in a society of individuals who represented diverse backgrounds, religions, and political leanings. . . . From a perspective outside the church, the cohesive Latter-day Saint community seemed closed and clannish, dominated by a charismatic leader who used his religious position to influence elections. Nauvoo’s growth made the old settlers the new minority in Hancock County. They saw only one way to reverse the trend: challenge Joseph Smith’s dominant politi-

cal influence as a threat to American individualism and democracy” (303–4).

11. Leonard’s *Nauvoo* will almost certainly not have the same institutional impact as did Flanders’ *Nauvoo*. Flanders called into question underlying assumptions of his faith tradition—among them, that Utah “Brighamite” accounts of Nauvoo and Joseph’s role in the innovations that occurred there were fundamentally deceitful. Such perspectives precipitated a gradual unwinding of history-based faith claims as witnessed in the RLDS evolution into the Community of Christ. If anything, Leonard’s interpretation will be seen as faith-sustaining or apologia.

12. Historians in the field of Abraham Lincoln and the American Civil War can especially appreciate the minefield into which historians wade when writing in a field—such as Mormon History—that encompasses a broad audience of enthusiastic and well-informed readers, many of whom harbor intense emotional interest in the field.

13. Examples include transposing numbers in the date for Annette Hampshire’s article in *Western Illinois Regional Studies*—“1892” should be “1982” (775); misnumbering map source from Brown, et. al., *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*—“23” should be “21” (788, p. 24 reference); index citation for “Salvation” (819) directing readers to a page with no text (266); neglecting to update the sources bibliography to reflect the publication of Susan Sessions Rugh’s monograph, *Our Common Country* (783) or to list Michael Quinn’s *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994) (782); and failing to include the original words for “Up, Awake Ye Defenders of Zion” in note 22 (766).

14. Perhaps if this volume had been published as part of a larger series of Mormon history as originally envisioned by Leonard Arrington in the 1970s, Leonard would have felt less pressure to be all-inclusive. A series editor could have overseen theme continuity between volumes to provide much of the context that Leonard feels compelled to provide. Arrington’s series was scuttled. Some of the authors assigned to the project, however, have published their individual volumes. Leonard’s *Nauvoo* (which was originally assigned to T. Edgar Lyon) is almost twice as long as most other volumes in the abandoned series. Others include Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1983); Eugene E. Campbell, *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West, 1847–69* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988); Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985, recently updated and republished as *The Latter-day Saint Century* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1999]); R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986); F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1987). Unfinished volumes deal with the Missouri experience, crossing the plains, the later pioneer period, the contemporary Church, Latter-day Saints in Europe, expansion of the faith, and social and cultural histories covering the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively.

15. Unlike Flanders—who came from the RLDS tradition—nowhere does Leonard explain the differing RLDS version of the Doctrine and Covenants.

16. Glen M. Leonard, “Remembering Nauvoo: Historiographical Considerations,” *Journal of Mormon History* 16 (1990): 25–39; quote from 35.

17. Leonard, “Remembering Nauvoo,” 33.

18. Leonard, “Remembering Nauvoo,” 34.

19. Leonard, “Remembering Nauvoo,” 32, 33.

20. Some of this book's themes were foreshadowed in Glen M. Leonard and T. Edgar Lyon, "The Nauvoo Years," *Ensign* 9, no. 9 (September 1979): 10–15.

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SUSAN EASTON BLACK and HARVEY BISCHOFF BLACK. ***Annotated Record of Baptisms for the Dead, 1840–1845: Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois.*** 7 vols. (Provo, Utah: Center for Family History and Genealogy, Brigham Young University, 2002, xi + 3981 pp., index, \$450.00 hardback.).

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Susan Easton Black has compiled genealogical databases on early Church members for many years, her most comprehensive being *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1848*, consisting of fifty volumes published 1984–1988. *Annotated Record of Baptisms* extends that effort with a compilation of genealogical data on those who were joined to the Church by proxy during the Nauvoo period. In this publication, she and Harvey Bischoff Black have built an expansive genealogical compilation founded on the spare original lists of baptismal ordinance providers and deceased recipients and the relationship between them. Information from the Nauvoo baptismal records constitutes only a small fraction of the data in these volumes. Genealogical data compiled from other sources constitute the bulk of the content, making these volumes less an annotation of the records than compiled genealogical data on the names in the records.

The names of the deceased for whom the baptism was performed are listed alphabetically after each proxy, with an index in volume seven that provides access by name of the deceased. This arrangement provides a context for seeing what ancestors were most prominent in the eyes of the proxy, a reflection of feelings in the hearts of the descendants. This context adds value to the mere recording of names and associated data. Learning about the feelings of our ancestors is an enriching part of our life experience and a prelude, in Latter-day Saint belief, to relationships that will exist for the eternities.

Another important aspect of these relationship data is that they restore

the knowledge of kin known by early Church members but not passed on to their descendants. Inasmuch as no endowment proxy work was done until 1877, there was over a thirty-year period (1846–77) in which much Church memory of the ancestors was lost as people died or forgot. The proxy baptismal records preserve a piece of that lost heritage. The remnant records also provide clues to the modern researcher, who is in a position to extend these lineages using records not available to the ancestors.

An introductory essay provides an interesting and informative context in which to understand and appreciate the practice of proxy baptisms in Nauvoo. A little-known aspect of the practice noted here is that baptisms were performed in bodies of water outside the temple even after the font was built and the Prophet had stated this was the proper place for the ordinance.<sup>1</sup> Similarly obscure is the history of constructing a replacement font for the wooden one carved by Elijah Fordham, completed only in time for the Saints to leave Nauvoo.

I have a few observations about the work's limitations. The volumes would have benefited by more commentary on the nature of the documentation and transcription rules. The originals consist of four volumes and a collection of loose sheets. The entries in the loose sheets are mostly, but not completely, duplicated in the first volume. I found two entries—Isaac Cleveland proxy for Vier (aunt) and William I. Appleby proxy for “mother's mother name not recolect [sic]”—in the loose sheets that were not transcribed. Either they were missed or the absence of a surname precluded them from inclusion in the book. A more complete discussion of the documentation and transcription rules may have clarified this issue.

In addition to the above two entries, I reviewed a random selection of ten other entries in the original to check the accuracy and completeness of the transcription. I found two transcription issues: (1) the middle initial of Fanny M. Huntington (proxy) in the original was dropped in the transcription and (2) the transcription for Abigail Abbott's baptism of Micajah Harding has two proxy baptism dates. In the original, there is only one entry. The entry cited as coming from volume D, page 3 does not exist. The authors caution readers in the introduction to validate the information, and my observation confirms this advice. Also, some of the baptismal entries in the transcription have no date for the baptism. This limitation reflects the fact that the original entry was undated. It would have been well to explain this so that a casual user would not assume that data were missed during compilation.

There are three anomalies to the modern observer in the practice of Nauvoo proxy baptisms that might have been explained. First, not knowing the name of an ancestor was not a limiting factor because ordinances were

permitted for ancestors known, for instance, only as second great-grandmother Comer. Second, a high number of proxies were not of the same gender as the deceased, a practice that was not dropped until 1845. Third, ordinances were not limited to one's own ancestors, which later became policy. Thus, George Washington was baptized thrice by proxy in Nauvoo.

The market for these volumes will probably be quite limited because of their expense. Several space-saving measures could have reduced the size of entries and made the publication more economical, perhaps making it attractive to a larger audience. Double spacing unnecessarily increases the length of entries. Some fields seem redundant, such as listing given name and surname when this information is already apparent in the name listed at the beginning of the entry. I realize that these fields contained information from other sources that supplement or differ from the transcribed information. Still, using a single field for discrepancies would have saved space. Citations could have been abbreviated or even numbered, with all the sources listed once in a single place. Listing officiators was unnecessary, as they have little genealogical or historical significance.

Most of my criticisms are around the edges of the extensive data and effort represented by this compilation. It will be a valuable reference work reflecting countless hours of painstaking effort needed to track down the seeming infinitude of minutia that is the fare of the genealogist—best done once and published so that it need not be done again.

### Note

1. For a more complete examination of the initial beginnings of the doctrine and practice of baptism for the dead, see Alexander L. Baugh, "For This Ordinance Belongeth to My House': The Practice of Baptism for the Dead Outside the Nauvoo Temple," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (spring 2002): 47–58.