

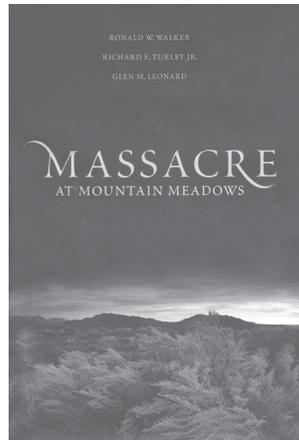
Book Reviews

RONALD W. WALKER, RICHARD E. TURLEY JR., and GLEN M. LEONARD. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008, xvi + 430 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, bibliography, index, \$29.95 hardback.)

Reviewed by Stephen C. Taysom

Mormonism, along with almost every other religious tradition in the history of the world, has a violent history. Most of the violence in the Mormon past was aimed at Mormons themselves in the nineteenth century, and that violence has been memorialized—even enshrined—in the collective consciousness of modern Mormons. Then, of course, we have the Mountain Meadows Massacre. On September 11, 1857, about 120 men, women, and children who were part of a wagon train of emigrants heading to California from Arkansas were surrounded, after surrendering their weapons, promised safe passage, and then murdered in cold blood. The killings were conducted by members of a Mormon militia unit in Southern Utah and members of the Paiute tribe of Native Americans. The largest act of violence ever perpetrated by Mormons against outsiders has always been a subject of interest to Mormons and non-Mormons alike. Part of this interests stems from the fact that, in the United States, religions tend to be the victims of violence, rather than the perpetrators. Also, the viciousness and sheer brutality of the massacre contrast so shockingly with the tone of modern Mormon culture that one is simply drawn to the subject.

For decades, Juanita Brooks's brave and meticulous treatment of the subject was the sole serious work to which interested readers could look. More recently, interest in the massacre has risen again, and several books on the subject have been published over the previous decade. Among these, and the one to which *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* responds most directly, is Will



Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets*. Bagley's most provocative argument in that book is that Brigham Young himself was directly responsible for the massacre and that it took place with his knowledge and approval. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* disputes this conclusion. Walker, Turley, and Leonard's volume is a long-awaited "official" statement on the subject. For years the authors presented elements of their research at packed sessions of the Mormon History Association's annual conferences, an indication of the very lively interest in the subject among historians of Mormonism. These well-respected and experienced historians were employed by the LDS Church and were availed of all the Church's historical resources in the process of preparing the book.

The basic argument of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* does not differ much from the conclusions reached by Brooks half a century ago: the Mountain Meadows Massacre was the act of a group of local LDS Church leaders who acted without the approval of Young or other high Church officials, but who were influenced by a broad confluence of factors, including the memory of past persecution, the murder of Parley Pratt, and the heated rhetoric of the Mormon Reformation. Although Young and others might have contributed to the turbid mental state of the murderers, Walker, Turley, and Leonard argue that in the case of the emigrants making their way through Mountain Meadows, Young preached "peace, patience, and reliance on God" (186). Specifically, and unsurprisingly, the authors lay the blame for the murders on Isaac Haight, William Dame, and John D. Lee.

This book is important and interesting for a variety of reasons. Most significantly, it represents a shift in the official LDS approach to the massacre. Since 1857, the Church has had very little to say about the events that occurred at Mountain Meadows, except to argue that the events themselves had nothing to do with the LDS Church as an institution. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* moves beyond that, although just slightly, to acknowledge the role that Mormon Reformation rhetoric played in creating an atmosphere conducive to violence. In general, the authors succeed in their effort to demonstrate the lack of evidence implicating Young, and they make a compelling case that, at Mountain Meadows, reasonable people committed unthinkable acts as a result of a "perfect storm" of factors. The book concludes with a brief chapter describing the execution of John D. Lee, but the authors do not spend much time addressing the role Young might have played in covering up the massacre and making it difficult for the U.S. government to investigate and prosecute the guilty parties. Apparently the authors plan to publish more on this subject in the future. On this point, I think Young is much more vulnerable, and it would have been useful to have seen the authors dedicate a chapter to the subject.

Although the basic argument may be expressed briefly, the book itself is intensely detailed. This level detail is a necessary element in the authors' attempt to provide deep context for the event. However, the detail becomes so thick that it proves to be a weakness. The narrative forest becomes lost in the trees of names, dates, and quotes. Given the time and resources spent researching this book (the mind boggles to count the hours logged not only by the authors but by the numerous research assistants assigned by the Church to work on the project), the temptation to cram as much specific information as possible into the book is understandable. The difficulty is that most of the specific detail is banal, while other, potentially more interesting material is left undeveloped. To cite one example of a subject that deserved elaboration, the authors mention that John D. Lee was reportedly prone to charismatic experiences such as dreams, visions, and revelations that "he used for his own purposes" (65). The authors make no comment about the possible influence such a mindset would have had on Lee with respect to the massacre. A lighter and more discerning hand would have improved the readability of the book a great deal, without sacrificing the strength of the argument.

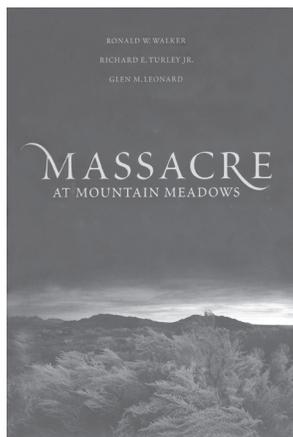
While the book itself is well-written and persuasively argued, a review of the book would be incomplete without some mention of the cultural subtext that has led to the production of respectable books like this one and Bagley's, as well as sensationalistic dreck like Jon Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven* and Sally Denton's *American Massacre*. The conversation about Mountain Meadows is not really about Mountain Meadows at all. It is about the nature, character, and viability of the LDS Church. This is the main, albeit unspoken, engine that drives Bagley's work and the work of Walker, Turley, and Leonard. In fact, the subject of Mountain Meadows is largely a proxy in a broader war about the dangers of religion in general and Mormonism in particular. How one views the LDS Church is more likely to influence one's opinion of historical works on the subject of the massacre than anything the historians themselves may write.

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RONALD W. WALKER, RICHARD E. TURLEY JR., and GLEN M. LEONARD. *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008, xvi + 430 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, bibliography, index, \$29.95 hardback.)

Reviewed by Scott K. Thomas

Examination of the killing of more than one hundred emigrants in Southern Utah in September 1857 will continue to draw controversy and criticism. In general there are two schools of thought: those believing the events were inspired, directed, and condoned by Church leadership; and those who consider the Mormon hierarchy innocent. Because there is no smoking gun, it is difficult to ascertain a clear picture of the motives, intentions, and reasons that propelled this mass killing. With unprecedented access to records, two trained historians and one lawyer, all closely affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, have attempted to write the most comprehensive work based on all available evidence. Although not officially commissioned by the Church, the work bears quasi-authoritative status, since its authors are currently employed by the Church, as is Richard Turley, Assistant Church Historian; or had been previously employed—Ronald Walker and Glen Leonard worked respectively as a professor of history at Brigham Young University and director of the LDS Museum of Church History and Art. The result is the most open and detailed description of the massacre supported by Church authorities to date.



Although the authors largely “avoided the temptation to argue with previous authors” (xii), they must have been greatly motivated by recent publications. The tragedy at Mountain Meadows has been at the center of books by award-winning author Jon Krakauer and literary icon Larry McMurtry.¹ While the latter afforded a simple overview of the catastrophe in its western setting, the former made bizarre connections in order to argue that the event was indicative of the violence inherent in the Mormon faith. The most historically plausible and thorough investigation came from Will Bagley’s *Blood of the Prophets*, which challenged Juanita Brooks’ 1950 pioneering work.² According to Bagley, enough has come forth since Brooks to indict Brigham Young as the individual responsible for the murders.³

The authors of *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, like Bagley, do not agree with all of Brooks' conclusions, but they do maintain that the Mormon hierarchy neither conspired nor directed the decimation of the emigrants. Although "thoroughness and candor" were at the center of their research (x), Walker, Turley, and Leonard were stuck with the same challenge that has beset all researchers of the calamity—lack of primary evidence. In piecing together the barrage of meetings between militia leaders William Dame, Isaac Haight, and John Lee, the authors admit that they were dealing with "cryptic and partially incomplete" records (154). To compensate, they dug into census records, family histories, and other extant sources in order to detail the lives of the emigrants. For example, the early life of John Twitty Baker, commonly referred to as Captain Jack, is narrated, along with evidence that he was an important leader among the emigrant train. The many other biographies of the emigrants found in the body of the work or in the appendix lead readers to view them as more than fatal statistics.

Unlike previous histories, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* attempts to tell the story from a local perspective. Details are area-specific, focusing on the southern settlements as semi-autonomous regions. This work does not look at the issues from a broad angle; rather it addresses the events from a much more defined perspective. This localized vantage gives *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* a narrow scope that does not concentrate or take into account broader concerns, such as the strained relationship between Mormons and the United States. By minimizing this aspect, the authors were able to give full attention to reconstructing the atmosphere that culminated in the "horror of the massacre" (210). This limited scope allowed the authors to scrutinize the event in great detail, the result being a much needed clarification of a handful of events and people that have been shrouded in myth and legend. The authors debunk the accusations of conspiracy on the emigrants' part to poison the Mormons; and show that there is no evidence that a large number of Missouri Wild-cats traveled with the emigrants and hence were among the victims at Mountain Meadows. Further, they cast the net of culpability much wider than the usual suspects John Lee and Isaac Haight.

At the same time, this constricted approach leads to inevitable omissions and improper assumptions. For example, the authors claim that guns and ammunition were "scarce" in the Utah Territory (91). In reality, many early observers were astonished by how well armed the Utah Mormons actually were. Eyewitness accounts attest to the large number of weapons among the Saints, as well as their skill to use them. One critic went so far as to claim that, "a person cannot be a mormon without having a gun, nor can he have religion without using it. . . . A gun is a necessary appendage to a mormon . . . Moreover, he cannot have religion without knowing how to use a gun."⁴ Although

this statement is full of hyperbole, the fundamental premise is confirmed by others.⁵ In fact, the issue of armed strength continued to trouble the inhabitants long after 1857. By the 1860s officials from the federal government attempted to diminish the strength of the Mormon militias by restricting their movements and curtailing “the right to bear arms among the saints.”⁶

Massacre at Mountain Meadows paints a portrait of “normal” people committing unspeakable crimes (128) that would “linger far beyond what anyone imagined on the night of September 11, 1857” (209). The compartmentalized approach sacrifices broad interpretation for area-specific details. Readers will be fully educated on the daily decisions and activities of the citizens and militia members in the southern regions of Utah, but will not fully comprehend the motives, intentions and reasons for the aberration in behavior on the part of the participants. However, this is likely the one aspect of the story that is impossible to fully detail and understand.

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Notes

1. See Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2003); Larry McMurtry, *Oh What a Slaughter: Massacres in the American West, 1846–1890* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2005).

2. See Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002); Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

3. Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets*, 380.

4. Nathaniel Slater, *Fruits of Mormonism or A Fair and Candid Statement of Facts Illustrative of Mormon Principles, Mormon Policy, and Mormon Character* (Coloma, CA: Harmon and Springer, 1851), 73–74.

5. See Sir Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1862), 152, 201, 226; William Chandless, *A Visit to Salt Lake; Being a Journey Across the Plains and a Residence in the Mormon Settlements at Utah* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1857), 234; Jesse A. Gove, *The Utah Expedition, 1857–1858: Letters of Captain Jesse A. Gove, 10th Inf., U.S.A. . . To Mrs. Gove, and Special Correspondence of the New York Herald* (Concord, NH: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1928), 246, 297.

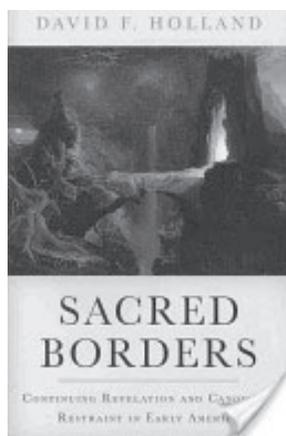
6. Jonathan Moyer, “Dancing with the Devil: The Making of the Mormon-Republican Pact” (PhD diss., University of Utah, 2009), 35.

DAVID F. HOLLAND. *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011, 286 pp., index, \$65.00 hardback.)

Reviewed by Christopher C. Jones

When Mormonism burst onto the scene in 1830, it claimed divine revelation and new scripture as distinguishing features that separated the upstart sect from its evangelical neighbors. That separation, embraced for different reasons by Latter-day Saints and their more orthodox Christian counterparts alike, persists to the present. But just how unique are Mormonism's claims to revelatory pronouncements from deity? What precedents are there in the American past for such beliefs and how do Mormon prophets, the *Book of Mormon*, and claims to continuing revelation fit within the larger history of the debates surrounding such issues?

David Holland's *Sacred Borders* goes a long way toward answering those questions. Echoing Mormonism's earliest critics, Holland explains that Mormonism was tapping into a deeply contested and highly controversial conversation: Joseph Smith takes his place alongside other religiously inspired social critics and prophets who "overtly punched holes in the traditional boundaries of the biblical canon in order to make room for new truths that they considered worthy of canonization." These individuals (as Mormons well know from their own history) were almost always opposed by "those who expressly viewed the rise of new moral or religious imperatives as a sinister threat to the sanctity and unity of the closed canon" (9). Complicating simplistic insider versus outsider dichotomies, though, *Sacred Borders* demonstrates that debates of this sort occurred not only between these two broad groups at any given time, but also within them, as prophetic visionaries offered competing claims of God's will and those defenders of the "traditional canon" endlessly debated the meanings and authority of that canon. The book incorporates a group of wildly diverse early Americans, including "elite theologians and slave prophets, liberalizing intellectuals and tub-thumping revivalists." Holland argues that by analyzing the debates over the scriptural canon among and between this varied cast of characters, "the interplay of the clashing impulses that shaped early American life"—conservatism and innovation, primitivism and millennialism, orthodoxy and plurality—comes into sharper focus and



forces us “to reconsider much of early American intellectual history” (11-12).

Despite their “wild divers[ity],” the cast of historical characters in Holland’s narrative will be mostly familiar to readers. Puritan divines and dissenters, Revolutionary-era deists, New England Transcendentalists, and antebellum Shakers find their place alongside Mormons, Swedenborgians, and African-American prophets. In fact, one of the book’s signal successes is its ability to treat those well-known historical subjects in new and refreshing ways, uncovering previously overlooked intellectual debates and connecting them to larger historical developments.

What space, then, does Mormonism actually occupy in such a wide-ranging volume? And what remains unique about its prophetic tradition and claims to ongoing revelation and an open canon when placed within these larger debates? In one sense, Joseph Smith and his followers come across as significantly less distinct than we may have previously thought. As others before Holland have shown, prophets and claims to new revelation were not altogether uncommon in early America. Moreover, Holland reveals that other extra-biblical books of scripture—ranging from the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* to “the spate of biblical parodies” penned by deists throughout the eighteenth century to the Shaker’s *Sacred Roll*—appeared both before and after the 1830 publication of the Book of Mormon. Arguments over biblical passages like Revelation 22:18–19 occupied the efforts of Protestant reformers and Puritan theologians centuries before Mormon missionaries took up such debates with evangelical critics. Still others challenged the accuracy of biblical translations, accusing others of distorting the original authors’ intent and specific verses’ true meanings and using such as evidence of an apostasy. Just as Mormons today sometimes find themselves agreeing with secular scholars of biblical criticism, so these same debates brought together unlikely allies in the early American republic (Quakers and biblical skeptics of the eighteenth century, for example).

More specifically, Holland argues that two prevailing challenges to the biblical canon shaped Joseph Smith and other early Mormons’ response to these questions: the first, evangelical enthusiasm (particularly that of the Methodist variety), with its emphasis on personal experience with the divine “ran the risk of blowing holes in the canonical threshold” (129); the second, “deistical criticisms” articulated by popular writers like Thomas Paine. “Early Mormons” were thus “clearly touched by the revelatory factors of their time.” “They recognized, for instance, that all around them raged a battle over biblical translation. The possibilities of textual corruption played a very important role in Mormons’ sense of their own movement, and Smith’s status as inspired translator formed an early and prominent part of his prophetic identity. . . . It

was not,” Holland concludes, “as if these early Mormon converts somehow existed outside their canonical culture” (147–48).

Mormonism, though, did not simply present a radical challenge to the biblical canon, offering “an other revelation” in place of the biblical canon. Rather, the Book of Mormon and the revelations received by Joseph Smith and his prophetic successors claimed to simultaneously prove the Bible’s truth and clarify its controversial particulars. New revelation was not simply the pathway to creating a new church; it was the blueprint for restoring the ancient church. Yet even while the Book of Mormon purportedly backed the Bible, subsequent revelations given through Mormon prophets ran the risk of contradicting former revelations. Such were the dangers of an open canon, and as Holland points out, those dangers have borne tension and division throughout Mormon history. “On issues from polygamy to racial equality,” he explains, “such commands and revocations drove a wedge between an evolving church and those who held a fast and fundamentalist commitment to the earlier revelations. . . . Neither rigidity nor irresolution could survive a God who spoke both authoritatively and frequently” (157).

Mormonism, then, stands both as part of and apart from much longer traditions of prophetic claims and biblical criticism. Yet in spite of what it may or may not share in common with others—or perhaps because of it—Mormonism remains in many respects a quintessentially American religion. Not only because it was born here and because it sacralized the American landscape, but also because it seems to encapsulate in miniature the very competing claims and contradictions that shaped America—conservatism and innovation, primitivism and millennialism, authority and freedom.

My critiques of the book are few. Holland’s brief analysis of the African-American prophetic tradition seems much too limited, and Native Americans receive even less attention (and virtually none beyond colonial New England). These are unfortunate omissions, as the experience of both African American and Native American religious traditions speak so poignantly to the discussion of prophetic figures and biblical translations in American history. Additionally, and in spite of his thoughtful justification for doing so in the book’s introduction, there are obvious shortcomings to the national framework Holland employs. This limitation does affect his treatment of Mormonism. While Mormonism is indeed uniquely American in many respects, we are left wondering how the experience and influence of the movements’ many early converts from Canada, Britain, and continental Europe speak to the complex questions of canonical borderlands and continuing revelation.

In spite of these critiques, I strongly recommend *Sacred Borders*. It is provocative, persuasively argued, and ultimately successful in its aim to “reconsider much of early American intellectual history.” For students of Mor-

mon history, it offers an exemplary model of how to both situate Mormonism in larger narratives and use Mormonism to speak to broader themes in particular ways.

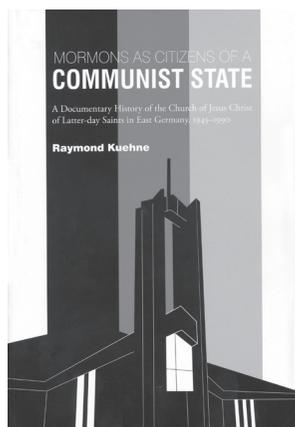
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RAYMOND KUEHNE. *Mormons as Citizens of a Communist State: A Documentary History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in East Germany, 1945–1990*. (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 2010, xvii + 450 pp., photographs, bibliography, \$39.95 paperback.)

Reviewed by Roger P. Minert

The predicament in which Latter-days Saints lived for nearly one-half century in a society whose government was expressly communistic and atheistic was one that has awaited scholarly description since that government came to a sudden and unexpected end in 1990. Admired by their counterparts in West Germany and to a degree among Mormons worldwide, the Saints in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) tolerated a variety of inroads on their agency and saw their faithfulness to God and His commandments (principally the Twelfth Article of Faith) tried with great frequency. Their story has now been told by Raymond Kuehne, who has watched it unfold in several phases since he served as a missionary for the Church in Northern Germany from 1958 to 1960.

Kuehne proposed to write a book “featuring a wide range of documents that show how the Church functioned in the GDR and how its members were able to live both as active Christians and as respected citizens in that country” (xv). The book indeed provides complete presentations of or extensive quotations from a vast array of historical documents. He located those documents in the archive of the LDS Church and in a significant archive of the defunct political organizations of the GDR. To that literary base he added thirty interviews he conducted with LDS Church members who lived in the GDR and



forty more conducted by LDS Church archivists among GDR eyewitnesses from 1991 to 1993.¹

The common perception by the West German Saints of their GDR brethren and sisters was generally that of martyrs. They were not free to travel to the temple in Switzerland, to send or receive missionaries internationally, or to construct meeting houses and print literature. Nevertheless, Kuehne demonstrates that the GDR Saints enjoyed official state protection in exercising their religious convictions; they even boldly quoted the GRD constitution in their own defense on specific issues, such as the right to hold conferences. That defense was led faithfully and fearlessly from 1952 to 1990 by Henry Burkhardt, the unofficial (and later official) mission president. Kuehne is right in suggesting that Burkhardt's life and mission were keys to the survival of the Saints in that communistic environment and need to be treated in a biography.

This book consists of twenty chapters treating themes such as the church-state relationship in the GDR, the legal status of the LDS Church, the life of the Saints before, during, and after the Berlin Wall (the total separation of East and West Germany), missionary work, youth programs, occupations, old and new meeting houses, and Church literature and finances. Laden with original documents and eyewitness testimony, these chapters are not a quick or entertaining read, but are nevertheless fascinating to the student of the era.

Twelve appendices provide more documents on such topics as the status of the Church in that territory at the end of World War II, post-war LDS refugee centers, the remarkable recovery of hidden (and almost lost forever) genealogical records, mission and youth conferences, mission choirs, and the dedicatory prayers for the GDR and the Freiberg Temple.

Perhaps the best chapters are the last, dealing with great successes of the Saints in the GDR: the construction of the Freiberg Temple, the historic meeting between LDS Apostle Thomas S. Monson and GDR leader Erich Honecker, the arrival of foreign missionaries in the GDR, and the end of the nation in 1990 with the resulting restoration of individual freedoms. Kuehne's short but excellent history of the Freiberg Temple is supported by documents that show conclusively that the GDR government provided the impetus for the idea of a local temple; this would relieve the Saints of their frustrated dreams of traveling to Switzerland (where there had been a temple since 1955), allow them to participate in their most sacred rituals close to home, and invite citizens from other eastern European nations to the GDR for that purpose.

Although Kuhne suggests in the introduction that he adds "short comments [only] as needed to introduce the relevant documentary evidence" (xiv), the reader expects an expert such as Kuehne to interpret historical events and tendencies and to take a stand on significant questions. Fortunately, he does

that now and then, such as in his excellent description of the site selection for the temple: he specifically discounts myths that circulated as explanations of the choice of the city of Freiberg by the Church, when it was in fact the government that selected that location. He also rightly points out several significant weaknesses in the temple design, conceived by westerners who had little confidence that the temple would not be disturbed by government forces.

A point of serious contention among the GDR Saints was the meeting of Apostle Monson with party secretary Honecker in 1988. Many members (and their friends and colleagues) felt that the Church was currying favor with the government or cow-towing to political leaders and was thus doing more damage than good for the cause. Kuehne offers this opinion on the hotly contested topic: "Whether the Church compromised its principles by meeting with Chairman Honecker is ultimately a subjective judgment based on one's own values, priorities, and willingness to 'compromise' on political, as opposed to religious principles" (326). He concludes that the matter became essentially a moot issue just a year later when the Wall and the government collapsed.–

Mormons as Citizens of a Communist State is not a comprehensive treatment of the topic, and Kuehne would be the first to admit that. Whereas he succeeds in his presentation of dozens of original documents not available in other publications and the interviews are most enlightening, some omissions should be noted. An index of personal names would have been helpful to the reader who wishes to locate references to specific players in this fascinating story. A glossary of terms used in the literature would also be valuable, given the proclivity of the GDR government to invent new terms and abbreviations that even befuddled speakers of German on the other side of the Wall. Kuehne extols time and again the abilities of the GDR Saints to live and work as model citizens, but fails to mention whether any of them attempted to escape to the West, as did tens of thousands of their friends and neighbors over the forty-five years of the nation's existence. Since many political scientists believe that the ability of the eastern Germans to view (illegally) television programs broadcast from West Germany contributed to the downfall of the GDR, it would be interesting to know whether East German Saints also watched West German television.² Although Kuehne admits that some Church members spied on others for the Stasi, he could have provided details of the reports; several Saints who have seen the files kept on them by the secret police are willing to discuss what they learned about the informants.

This is an excellent book that fills a significant gap in the history of the international Church. It deserves the scrutiny of any reader who wishes to know what it was really like to live in the German Democratic Republic and remain true and faithful to God and the faith.

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Notes

1. Kuehne's book was originally published in German in 2007 by the Leipzig University Press under the title *Mormonen und Staatsbürger: Eine dokumentierte Geschichte der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage in der DDR*.

2. A few days after the famous national television interview given by Frankfurt Stake President Dieter F. Uchtdorf in August 1987, I attended church meetings in the Karl-Marx-Stadt [Chemnitz] Branch. Members there quoted from the interview, but insisted that they had not seen the program (they had "heard about it from others"). I was impressed by the fact that they could not even admit in the presence of their fellow Saints (or was it my presence?) that they had viewed the program illegally.

R. Jean Addams. *Upon the Temple Lot: The Church of Christ's Quest to Build the House of the Lord*. (Independence, MO: John Whitmer Books, 2010, v + 167 pp., photographs, maps, notes, index, \$14.95, paperback.)

Reviewed by H. Michael Marquardt

This important book on the effort to build the temple in Independence, Missouri, by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) is a welcome work on the history relating to the progress and circumstances toward this project. The author, R. Jean Addams has devoted many years in gathering hard to find sources in understanding the history behind this attempt.

The "spot for the temple" in Zion was designated by Joseph Smith in 1831 (see D&C 57). The author provides a brief history of emergence of what became the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), which is nicely presented (7–17). Some members had been associated with the original Church as early as 1831–1833. After a few families gathered to Independence in 1867, they

commenced purchasing city lots where they anticipated the temple was to be located.

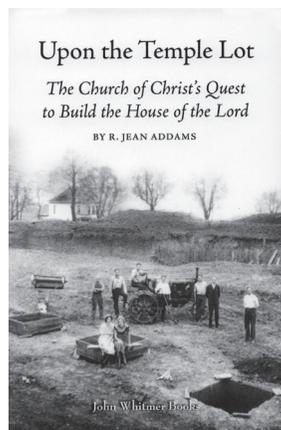
George D. Cole, who had been baptized in April 1870, said he received a dream or vision regarding the location where the temple would be built. Addams indicates that the vision included the construction of the temple, which is incorrect (18, 46). A court case, known as the Temple Lot Case, is discussed between the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) during the 1890s. The outcome was in favor of the latter group.

After the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) firmly gained possession of the property, it was only a matter of time before an attempt was undertaken to build the Independence Temple of Zion. An apostle in the church, Otto Fetting, proclaimed that he had been given instructions concerning its construction. The messages were accepted, including the dimension of the structure, which would be 90 feet by 180 feet. Plans were produced on how the exterior and interior of the temple would appear when completed. During the years 1929–1934 the ground was excavated and a foundation was prepared upon which the temple would be constructed. However, no further progress beyond this point was ever completed.

One interesting idea regarding the temple basement, not mentioned in the book, was that of church member Willard J. Smith, who explained the original concept:

In closing I may also observe that in the basement of the Temple now in process of building by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), there is to be a baptismal font placed on the backs of Twelve oxen, the oxen to be bronzed, or overlaid with gold; three of the oxen facing the east, three to the south, three to the west, and three to the north, beautifully symbolizing the great Apostolic commission to Go into all the world preaching to and baptizing the nations.¹

Construction on the temple came to a halt due to lack of funding; thereafter “the excavation site continued to deteriorate and became overgrown with weeds and, apparently, an eyesore and potential safety hazard to the citizens of Independence” (155). Because of this problem, in 1946 the site was filled in. Since then the site for the temple has been beautified and a portion of the land includes a church building (the third constructed on the site) with a worship area for the local congregation and a visitors’ center. Visitors are shown the two stones excavated in 1929 which church members believe were placed



to mark the location for the temple. In more recent years, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) leaders and members have shifted their emphasis from building the temple to proclaiming the latter-day gospel.

For those interested in the history of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) centered in Independence, Missouri, I recommend this book.

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Notes

1. Willard J. Smith, "The Pattern of Heavenly Things," *Zion's Advocate* 7 (November 1, 1930): 174.