

Book Reviews

RONALD O. BARNEY. *One Side by Himself: The Life and Times of Lewis Barney, 1808–1894*. (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2001, xxi + 402 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index, \$46.95 hardback, \$24.95 paperback.)

Donna T. Smart, ed., *Mormon Midwife: The 1846–1888 Diaries of Patty Bartlett Sessions*, which won the Evans Handcart Award; *Exemplary Elder: The Life and Missionary Diaries of Perrigrine Sessions, 1814–1893*; coeditor with William B. Smart, *Over the Rim: The Parley P. Pratt Exploring Expedition to Southern Utah, 1849–50*, winner of the Mormon History Association Award for best documentary; and technical writer for the seven-volume *Coptic Encyclopedia*.

Ronald O. Barney, a native of Ogden, Utah, obtained a B.A. in History from Weber State College and his M.A. in History at Utah State University. Presently, he is Senior Archivist in the Department of Family and Church History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where he has worked for twenty-six years. Lewis Barney, the subject of this well-written biography, is his great-great-grandfather. *One Side by Himself* won the prestigious Evans Biography Award as well as the Mormon History Association Best Biography Award.

The awards speak deservedly of the excellence of the book. To be really picky-picky, I could say that the print is too small to read the abundant details entirely comfortably. Whether that indicates there is too much detail, readers must determine for themselves. I felt the index was a little stingy, but that may be a result of the small typeface. Also, I abhor endnotes; footnotes are so much more reader-friendly. Undoubtedly, much interesting informa-

tion was in the notes, but I did not bother to check, except when I needed to determine whether Lewis Barney had written a statement in his journal or in his autobiography. The difference was not readily apparent.

That said, my overall opinion is that this book is rich for researchers—especially as it deals with the psychology and philosophy of those who constantly seek the outposts of society. Lewis Barney was a product of the times, the environment, and the circumstances in which he lived—and which Ronald O. Barney has placed in the larger historical and geographical context of nineteenth-century America. The result is a more focused and individualized treatment of the subject than we find in most studies of Mormon history and is an expansive view of the nineteenth century as lived by an obedient, albeit ordinary, member of the Church. Ronald O. Barney also manages to write about an ancestor with objective deliberation rather than with sentimental idealization.

Through maps and frequent references to the larger cultural, social, and historical context in which Barney lived, the author skillfully blends his protagonist into the early American landscape and shows how life on the western frontier influenced the Barney family. Discussing Barney's parents, for example, the author writes, "After nearly a decade in Knox County, Charles and Mercy pulled up stakes, probably in late 1819, and moved their six children and their belongings to Paint Creek in the vicinity of Mercy's family. . . . While Ohio was still young to settlement, the Barneys moved into a historic region. . . . Not only were they near the Indian villages on Paint Creek that had been the object of Daniel Boone's retribution against the Shawnee in August 1778, they were also only twenty miles from Chillicothe, one of the oldest inhabited sites in the American interior" (17).

Most significant for this volume, however, was Barney's conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At this juncture, although a discussion of the larger context is not abandoned, the central theme moves to Lewis Barney's relationship and reaction to his new-found faith.

At one point, he wrote: "The Methodist and Cumberland Presbyterians had been trying to convert me to their faith, and I had followed their instructions without receiving the promise they made to me. This set me to thinking. And I came to the conclusion that religion of every kind was a hoax and that none was right and that all preachers of religion were hypocrites and were preaching for money and popularity and cared nothing for the salvation or welfare of the human family" (53).

That statement is in stark contrast to his feelings after his conversion and baptism into Mormonism, as evidenced by a later experience when he offered Joseph Smith money because "he said he needed a little money and if [he] had it he could put it to a better use than any other person in the

world. I said nothing to him about it but went home, got 200 dollars, and went down to Joseph's store"(69). Joseph Smith had earlier confirmed Lewis a member of the Church.

From the time of his joining the young Mormon Church, Lewis Barney found his life entwined with the fortunes of those of other lay members and of Church leaders. The martyrdom of the Prophet and his brother, the flight from Nauvoo, and the trek to Zion with the Pioneer Company led by Brigham Young are recounted by the author in interesting detail, sprinkling his narrative with liberal doses of Lewis Barney's own words. On the pioneer trek, for example, Barney started out in the monotonous, dust-eating job of teamster for Stephen Markham. On the game-scarce plains of eastern Wyoming, he was given a chance to hunt; and he brought down a fat buck antelope. He wrote that "the eyes of the whole camp was on me as being as good a hunter if not the best in camp" (100). Porter Rockwell, however, smarting by being unfavorably compared with Barney as a hunter, boasted that he killed only fat bucks whereas Barney killed suckling does. The next evening, Barney wrote, Rockwell brought in a dressed-out antelope, saying, "See here, what a nice buck I have got." Barney examined the discarded skin, found it to be that of a suckling doe, and called out, "See here, boys, what nice tits Port's buck has." The camp hooted Porter for his "nice buck," and Porter scratched around for a while in a terrible rage (101).

Arrival in Zion placed no damper on the Barneys' urge to leave one area behind and move to another in the Utah territory. These moves placed them, at times, on the fringes of Mormon occupation in the West—they lived for a time in New Mexico and Arizona, for example. Yet they were still square in the center of the Mormon experience. Being a polygamist, Lewis Barney faced problems and difficulties similar to those suffered by other men in the Church. The family was also called upon to live the United Order, and they were well aware of the Mountain Meadows Massacre—although the author gently rejects Juanita Brooks' contention that one of Lewis' brothers was in the thick of the killings (341, n.17).

Ronald O. Barney wrote in his last chapter:

The life of Lewis Barney, one of the eighth generation of Barneys in America, spanned the first to the last decades of the nineteenth century. From the time that the flesh of adolescent America was still soft until his demise just before the turn of the new century, Barney witnessed both America and Mormonism from the geographical periphery. . . . Technological innovations as diverse as the automobile and motion picture camera were made just prior to his death, but he never witnessed the curious machines. . . . Even over a century later most of the climes to which Barney gravitated remain rural, isolated, and sparsely populated. Living life in its simplest form, with its rudimentary tools and rewards, was enough for him. (284–85)

The awards earned by this book are well-deserved, I say. The research seems to me to be meticulous, the writing extraordinarily good, and the bibliography impressive. Pictures and illustrations are interesting and helpful. The words quoted from Lewis Barney's autobiography add life, drama, and sometimes humor to the well-studied, well-written, albeit sometimes tedious recitations of the family's migrations from place to place.