

good testimony meeting where “expressions of faith” lead to a spiritually motivating and intellectually stimulating sharing of that which Latter-day Saints hold most precious.

—Patricia Mann Alto

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*Hearts Knit Together: Talks from the 1995 Women's Conference*, edited by Susette Fletcher Green, Dawn Hall Anderson, and Dloria Hall Dalton (Deseret Book, 1995)

Another resounding volume in the Women's Conference Series, this compilation was selected from the essays and poems presented at the 1995 Women's Conference sponsored by Brigham Young University and the Relief Society. Women from different backgrounds, occupations, and countries discuss topics common to all such as unity, compassion, patience, acceptance, and change. The words of Virginia H. Pearce establish a recurring theme of this book: we are all “trying to arrange [things] into a predictable pattern as [we adapt] to all sorts of change” (130).

The authors draw the subject of their presentations from their own personal experiences. Pam Kazmaier, having been a hospital nurse for twenty years, relates her difficult decision to leave her nursing career to stay at home with her young children. Bonnie Muirbrook Blair, a homemaker and mother of four, conveys the challenges she faced in the eight years she cared for her aging mother-in-law. And Aileen H. Clyde, former counselor in the General Relief Society presi-

dency, reminds us that as sisters in the gospel “we must cherish one another” (172). In *Hearts Knit Together*, every woman will be able to find a common thread.

The words in this collection strengthen testimonies as, once again, we realize we are not alone—others are experiencing, are enduring, or have overcome similar circumstances. The purpose of the Relief Society is realized as all sisters “look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21). This volume reaffirms the unity we find through the gospel and reminds us that we save souls by meeting human needs.

—NiCole M. Barzee

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*Utah, the Right Place: The Official Centennial History*, by Thomas G. Alexander, 2d ed. (Gibbs Smith, 1996)

Identified as “The Official Centennial History” of Utah, this outstanding volume is well worth reading for anyone interested in Utah or Mormon history. Officially commissioned as a Utah Statehood Centennial Project of the Utah State Historical Society, *Utah, the Right Place* should be welcomed by every student and teacher of Utah history for its remarkable combination of comprehensiveness, conciseness, balance, and literary quality. Not often does a one-volume survey combine all these qualities so effectively.



The book consists of sixteen chapters. The first chapter provides a fine summary of the geological history of Utah; the second, a look at Native Americans, who inhabited the Beehive State as early as 11,000 B.C. Aspects of their lives are discussed in such a way that the reader should never forget their essential role in Utah's history. The third chapter covers the activities and influence of the explorers, entrepreneurs (trappers and traders), and immigrants who preceded the Mormon migration into the area.

Readers interested primarily in LDS Church history will, no doubt, pay closest attention to chapters four through eight, which cover the period from the foundation of the Church to the achievement of Utah statehood in 1896. This was the period in which the affairs of church and state were most closely tied together, making Utah's history highly distinctive.

Half of the book, chapters nine through fifteen, deals with the twentieth century. This section is particularly welcome, for it provides the most comprehensive coverage of this period yet to appear in print.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of *Utah, the Right Place* is the fact that Alexander has admirably fulfilled his goal of writing a history in which the lives of Utahns are seen as "a single piece" (8). He incorporates all of the elements of Utah life into every part of the book: religion, economics, politics, ethnic groups, family life, literature, the arts, architecture, sports and recreation, and the environment.

Each chapter covers a particular chronological period, but Alexander skillfully weaves the myriad pieces into a comprehensive larger picture that will make even those who are generally familiar with Utah history feel that they have a new and more complete understanding of everything that went on in that period. Utah's artists, politicians, musicians, educators, religious leaders (including Mormon, Catholic, Protestant, and non-Christian), and ethnic groups are all there, but as part of a larger picture that both supersedes and includes each of them. In addition, Alexander has done a commendable job of integrating the contributions of women in Utah history.

One of Alexander's persistent themes is the fact that Utah was not isolated from the rest of the nation. Rather, he constantly reminds the reader, its history was always part of the larger scene and always influenced by what was happening outside its borders. Utah also had some influence on the world around it.

Chapter sixteen, "Reflections on Utah's Kingdom, Colony, and Commonwealth," provides an insightful summary of the entire book and makes especially clear another central theme: the evolution of Utah from a Mormon kingdom to a capitalist colony (where outside capital provided the major stimulus to the economy), to a colony of Washington (a period of time in which the state's economy was largely dependent upon defense spending and other forms of federal aid), and then to an American commonwealth when, beginning in the 1980s, Utahns generated their own capital and managed their own large business



enterprises. He concludes with a hint of pride that "Utah's people no longer have to work in an economy in which its major enterprises are owned and operated from outside the state" (459).

Capping, for now (but certainly not concluding), a distinguished professional career of teaching and writing Utah history, *Utah, the Right Place* should be an essential addition to the library of anyone concerned with the Beehive State. Mormons will find Alexander's approach to their history both thorough and refreshing. It will be especially appreciated in light of some modern efforts to diminish, if not eliminate, any discussion of religion in history classes. As Alexander himself observes (taking a cue from one of his early mentors), "studying Utah history without talking about the Mormons would be like discussing the discovery of America without mentioning Columbus" (9). At the same time, Mormon history itself is not the focus of the book. The Mormon majority and their contributions are well served, but so, too, are the contributions of others. Alexander has succeeded in creating a well-integrated, well-balanced history of a state that, in his view, is still "the right place" for all.

—J. B. Allen, book review editor

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*Great and Peculiar Beauty: A Utah Reader*, edited by Thomas Lyon and Terry Tempest Williams (Gibbs Smith, 1995)

Here is a welcome buffet of Utah literature spread out in celebration

of the centennial of Utah's hard-won statehood. Editors Thomas Lyon, of Utah State University, and Terry Tempest Williams, of the University of Utah, serve up nearly 150 personal and imaginative writings and poems by more than 130 Utah writers in a big, splendid anthology destined to be a literary landmark in the cultural history of Utah.

Eschewing familiar and well-worn organizing metaphors, the editors have gathered their selections under a fresh and utile organizing principle that transforms Utah's five topographically distinct terrains, each of which possesses an inherent "great and peculiar beauty" (ii), into five "literary provinces": "The Great Basin," "Urban Terrace," "Mountains," "Colorado Plateau," and "Dixie" (1). Introducing each section in brief, lyrical essays centered in the natural history of the province, the editors present a judicious selection of some familiar but mostly less accessible or virtually unknown works of poetry, fiction, history, personal narratives, interviews (with earlier inhabitants), and accounts of present-day life in the five provinces. All of this gathers to a satisfying cultural, historical, and literary feast.

Lyon and Williams have measured each selection against four criteria: every reading "should illuminate its region; it should have literary value; it should suggest ideas or dimensions of feeling that transcend time; and it should tell a story" (2). Their unstated fifth criterion is, of course, that every reading reflect the editors' own world views as professing naturalists, writers, scholars, and sympathetic