

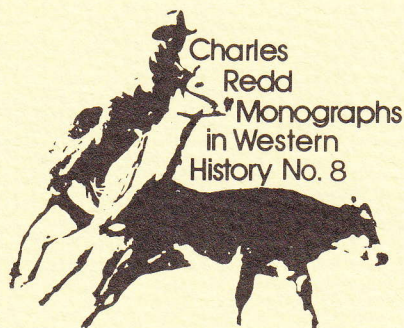
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# “Soul-Butter and Hog Wash”

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and Other Essays on  
the American West

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Thomas G. Alexander, editor

The Charles Redd Monographs in Western History are made possible by a grant from the late Charles Redd. This grant served as the basis for the establishment of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University.

Center editor: Thomas G. Alexander

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

"Soul-butter and hog wash."

(Charles Redd monographs in Western history; no. 8)

CONTENTS: Introduction.--Holland, J. R. Soul-butter and hog wash.--Lamar, H. R. Rites of passage.--Walker, D. D. Freedom and individualism. [etc.]

1. The West--History--Addresses, essays, lectures.

2. Frontier and pioneer life--The West--Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Alexander, Thomas G.

II. Series.

F591.S69 978 77-89974

ISBN 0-8425-1232-2

© 1978 by Brigham Young University Press. All rights reserved  
Printed in the United States of America  
Additional copies of this monograph or other numbers in this series may be purchased by writing to Brigham Young University, Business Office (University Press), 205 UPB, Provo, Utah 84602.  
78 .85m 30805

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## Introduction

During the 1975-76 academic year, the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies presented a lecture series on aspects of the American West which was supported in part by a grant from the Utah Endowment for the Humanities. The officers of the Redd Center express appreciation for the grant and present here the papers from the series edited for written presentation.

The importance of this collection cannot be overestimated by scholars of the American West. Each of the essays breaks new ground in the exploration of an aspect of the western experience. In the opening essay, Jeffrey Holland provides a view of the early years of Mark Twain's religious thought which reveals a much different person than we have found in the later writings. Howard Lamar has drawn on the insights of psychohistory and family history to investigate the lives of migrating families. The essay by Don Walker questions some of the widely held assumptions about the place of individualism in the cowboy's character. For the first time, Helen Papanikolas has provided a comparison of the cultures of Mormons and the ethnics. Finally, Keith Melville's essay on Utah politics demonstrates that although, as we have generally thought, Mormons have an advantage, non-Mormons do well in the political system provided they possess certain characteristics.

# Soul-Butter and Hog Wash: Mark Twain and Frontier Religion

Jeffrey R. Holland

In this essay, Jeffrey R. Holland, formerly dean of religious instruction at Brigham Young University and now LDS Church Commissioner of Education, argues persuasively that Mark Twain's work from Roughing It through Huckleberry Finn can be viewed as the journey of a seeker looking for a satisfactory religious philosophy. In the end, Twain concluded that the simplicity and basic Christianity of sincere frontier religion offered the only satisfactory answer to his search.

Holland's views provide an alternative to the general view of Twain's religious beliefs. Usually seen as cynical in the extreme, Twain's religious position has been characterized by reference to such late works as Mysterious Stranger, which views life as devoid of both substance and meaning. From these pages, another and somewhat more reflective Twain emerges, and the reader gains a greater appreciation for the basic religiosity of a sensitive young humorist.

When discussing Mark Twain's religious attitudes, his biographers have characteristically focused on the last decades of his life, those "damned human race" years in which Twain said going to church gave him dysentery. Nevertheless, the early years--the western years, as it were--are crucial to any real understanding of Twain's attitude toward religion, revealing moments of a remarkable religious experience and providing the backdrop against which those last decades so full of financial strife and personal tragedy must be seen.

In trying to highlight in a short paper nearly half a century of a man's life, I have knowingly and necessarily sacrificed most of the focus and much of the substance which a paper such as this really should have. Nevertheless I believe these glimpses contain some discernible continuities, and I can only hope the breadth will be some compensation for lack of compression and examination.

One word must be said of the sources. Mark Twain's own words have been used wherever possible, but there are at least two dangers in quoting from the man Andrew Carnegie fondly called "St. Mark."

The first is noted in Twain's confession that "when I was younger I could remember anything, whether it happened or not; but I'm getting old, and soon I shall remember only the latter."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is not surprising that a man who thought the past "so damned humiliating" would find it being altered slightly as it passed through the mechanism of his mind. As a slightly defensive nephew once said, Twain got his temperament and his red hair from his mother, his accuracy in his workmanship from his father, and his accuracy in facts from no one.

The second problem is that Mark Twain can be found on either side of almost any proposition--sometimes simultaneously. He once told his wife, "I never did a thing in all my life, virtuous or otherwise, that I didn't repent of within 24 hours."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Sam Clemens's nom de plume would appear to be the most appropriate in all literature.

As old Uncle Dan'l says to Master Clay in The Gilded Age, "Sometimes a body can't tell whedder you's a-sayin what you means or whedder you's a-sayin what you don't mean, cause you says 'em bofe de same way."<sup>3</sup>

One simply must concur with the critic who said rather wistfully, "Nothing is simple in Mark Twain, especially in matters of the spirit: everything is ambivalent, ambiguous, shot through with counter impulses."<sup>4</sup>

Twain frequently called his religious life "Presbyterianism," the faith of his mother's family; but that label became for him a kind of shoe-box repository into which he shoved everything from the faith John Knox espoused to the most nebulous sort of Christian belief. In fact Twain cared little for the nuances of

sectarian delineation and he could defame Christian, Jew, and Moslem in the same breath. While that did not necessarily make him the savage Bernard DeVoto suggests, it surely did preclude any Howellseanesque distress over the distinction between a Universalist and a Unitarian. Twain simply did not have that kind of mind. He once scribbled on the back of an envelope, "I like history, biography, travels, curious facts and science. And I detest novels, poetry, and theology."<sup>5</sup> He preferred experience to ideas and cared little for the more cerebral accomplishments of a Jane Austen or a Henry James or a Jonathan Edwards. In three responses that would have caught the eye of any circuit rider, Twain said that reading Pride and Prejudice made him feel "like a bar-keeper entering the kingdom of heaven,"<sup>6</sup> that he would "rather be damned to John Bunyan's heaven" than endure The Bostonians,<sup>7</sup> and that an examination of Freedom of the Will gave him a "strange haunting sense of having been on a three-days tear with a drunken lunatic."<sup>8</sup>

If the mature Twain did not have a mind tuned to fine theological distinctions, he nevertheless had a soul gripped by the Puritan fathers, a grip which relentlessly affected his moods and his metaphors. He named his cats, rather apocalyptically, Famine, Pestilence, Satan, and Sin; he thought the height of confidence was a Christian with four aces; smugness was an associate waiting for a vacancy in the trinity; and so on ad infinitum--or, for him, ad nauseum. Fear, punishment, conscience, duty, the hand of God, death--these were the staples in his moral pantry. His daughter Clara remembered that "self condemnation was the natural turn for his mind to take,"<sup>9</sup> and a friend remembered his life as one long apology. A compulsive guilt seeker, he blamed himself for at least the deaths of a brother, a son, and a daughter; and he finally despised the human race because it included men like himself. As his closest minister friend, Joseph Twitchell, once said, Sam Clemens was too orthodox on the doctrine of total human depravity.

This religious preoccupation and subsequent struggle was brilliantly if unwittingly posed in that earliest boyhood image of the ponderous word of God suffocating an already dying man. Twain wrote in his autobiography:

The shooting down of poor Smarr in the Main Street at noonday supplied me with dreams and in them I always saw again the grotesque closing picture--the great family Bible spread open upon the profane old man's breast by some thoughtful idiot, . . . rising and sinking to the labored breathings, and adding the torture of its leaden weight to the dying struggles. We are curiously made. In all that throng of gaping and sympathetic onlookers there was not one with common



sense enough to perceive that an anvil would have been in better taste there than the Bible, less open to sarcastic criticism and swifter in its atrocious work. In my nightmares I gasped and struggled for breath under the crush of that vast book for many a night.<sup>10</sup>

For the most part, he gasped and struggled under the crush of it all his life.

In 1835 Florida, Missouri, Sam Clemens's birthplace, had little to recommend it but it did have a church, the only structure which Sam would later remember with any degree of precision. It was a log church with a puncheon floor which stood on short sections of logs elevated two or three feet above the ground. If the service did not seem particularly appealing, young and old alike could gaze through the slats and envy the farm animals sleeping in the cool shade beneath. Huckleberry Finn would later observe that while people don't go to church except when they have to, hogs are different; they will be there every time in those breezy pews beneath the floor.

In 1839, John Clemens moved his family to nearby Hannibal, neither the jejune and tragic wasteland lamented by Van Wyck Brooks, nor a cultural oasis either. The best that can be claimed for it is a kind of boondock beaux-arts which was visible there.

As such it was not suffocating beneath "the cobblestones of Calvinism"; but the first city ordinance did make it a misdemeanor to keep "a boudy house," and later there would be legislation against nude bathing in public waters, billiards, tenpins, and liquor sales on Sunday. Puritanism may not have held Hannibal tightly in its grasp, as Brooks suggested, but it undoubtedly had the town clearly in hand.

The first Sunday School Sam attended in Hannibal was held in the then newly finished Methodist church on the public square. It was known as "the Old Ship of Zion," and the teacher of Sam's class there was a stonemason by the name of Richmond who won the boy's attention with a battered, beak-like thumbnail and won his loyalty with patience and compassion. "He was a very kindly and considerate Sunday School teacher," Sam recalled more than half a century later, "and he was never hard on me."<sup>11</sup> For the nearly three years he attended the Old Ship of Zion, Sam remained under Mr. Richmond's spiritual care, and out of those few years and fond memories came the seeds of a remarkable literature. As his literary advisor and most perceptive friend later observed, "There are no more vital passages in his fiction than those which embody character as it is affected for good as well as evil by the severity of the local Sunday schooling and church going."<sup>12</sup>

It was at the Old Ship of Zion that Sam Clemens first saw such things as the Bible tickets which thirty years later would win Tom Sawyer a Bible. In reality the tickets were only one

color--blue--and they were only good for borrowing books from the church library, but young Sam faithfully quoted by heart the only scripture he knew--the parable of the ten virgins--and repeatedly won his tickets.

Perhaps he was not unlike Tom Sawyer, who didn't really want the Bible he had won, but who had "for many a day longed for the glory and the éclat that came with it."<sup>13</sup> Of course one could go too far and end up like the German boy, little better than an idiot after the strain of a 3,000 verse recitation. Even showing off had its limits.

It is unlikely that Sam ever attended the Old Ship of Zion after his eighth year; yet perhaps because of the fondness with which he remembered his experience there, it remained in his imagination as the setting for episodes which took place well into his adolescent years.

In 1848 all the Clemens family but John formally joined the Presbyterian Church, much to the delight of Jane's grandmother Casey who always said her favorite doctrine was predestination. It was then that young Sam learned, in Howells's famous phrase, "to fear God and dread the Sunday School."<sup>14</sup>

As often as it seemed advisable, the boy would violate the Sabbath by rolling rocks down Holiday Hill or by swimming in the Mississippi River. Of course, providential displeasure with this latter sin was serious wrath to incur, and it was done at the very peril of one's soul. Sam said he was nearly drowned nine times as a boy, and he didn't need any sermons to read the divine warnings in those fateful moments. He once recalled a schoolmate who had fallen out of a flatboat in which the boys had been playing. "Being loaded with sin, he went to the bottom like an anvil," Twain remembered. That night the deceased was the only boy in the village who slept--the others were awake and repenting, a funeral sermon on special providence fresh in their ears. As if by appointment, there was the attendant electrical storm with its vicious window-rattling rain and silence-splitting thunder. The description of this youthful horror is so basic to Twain's work that it deserves to be quoted here at some length.

I sat up in bed quaking and shuddering, waiting for the destruction of the world and expecting it. . . . Every time the lightning glared I caught my breath, and judged I was gone. In my terror and misery I meanly began to suggest other boys, and mention acts of theirs which were wickeder than mine and peculiarly needed punishment--and I tried to pretend to myself that I was simply doing this in a casual way, and without intent to divert the heavenly attention to them for the purpose of getting rid of it myself.

It was a long night to me, and perhaps the most distressful one I ever spent. I endured agonies of remorse for sins which I knew I had committed, and for others which I was not certain about, yet was sure that they had been set down against me in a book by an angel who was wiser than I and did not trust such important matters to memory.

Things had become truly serious. I resolved to turn over a new leaf instantly; I also resolved to connect myself with the church next day, if I survived to see its sun appear. I resolved to cease from sin in all its forms, and to lead a high and blameless life forever after. I would be punctual at church and Sunday School; visit the sick; carry baskets of victuals to the poor (simply to fulfill the regulation conditions, although I knew we had none among us so poor but they would smash the basket over my head for my pains); I would instruct other boys in right ways, and take the resulting trouncings meekly; I would subsist entirely on tracts; I would invade the rum shop and warn the drunkard-- and finally, if I escaped the fate of those who early became too good to live, I would go for a missionary.<sup>15</sup>

Though a boyish view of fierce providence and fearful penitence, these sentiments appear in one form or another throughout Twain's life and literature. Indeed, Twain usually saw life, religious and otherwise, through the eyes of a child; his best books are about them and his wife called him "Youth" all of their married life.

Whether out of such fears or out of faith we can only guess, but Sam did occasionally attend the protracted camp meetings and revivals held near Hannibal, either at Camp Creek, five miles to the southwest, or in the clearing just outside of town on the north. It seems clear, from Huck Finn's vivid description of one, that these camp meetings had more effect on young Sam's imagination than they did upon his soul. One autobiographical note that was later expanded and included in Tom Sawyer has almost a Dickensian poignance in its brevity: "Campbellite revival. All converted but me."<sup>16</sup>

Although his mother may have attended such gatherings with him, it is unlikely that Sam's father did. Like Judge Driscoll in Puddn'head Wilson, for whom he was the living model, John Clemens was "fine and just," a "free thinker" whose only religion was to be a gentleman. But in addition to this legacy from his Virginian ancestry, there was also a strain of rigid Puritan probity in him. A member of the family who considered John to have the moral standards of the Roundheads from whom he had descended, said, "He was hard on himself, and perhaps hard on his children."<sup>17</sup>

John Clemens resisted formal religious activity of any kind and was never known in Hannibal to have worshipped in any church. In his own last years, Mark Twain recalled that his father attended no church, never spoke of religious matters, and had no part in the pious joys of his Presbyterian family.

What his notions about religion were, [Sam said,] no one ever knew. He never mentioned the matter; offered no remarks when others discussed it. Whoever tried to drag a remark out of him failed; got a courteous answer or a look which discouraged further effort, and that person understood, and never approached the matter again."<sup>18</sup>

After his father's death in the boy's twelfth year, Sam came even more fully under the supervision of Jane Clemens. He teased and tormented and exasperated his mother all his life, a devilry she both loved and dreaded. After the neighbors brought Sam to the doorstep to dry out after one more near-drowning, she assured them that "people born to be hanged are safe in the water."<sup>19</sup> Whenever Sam's conduct reached such exaggerated impropriety that extemporary punishments were inadequate, Jane saved the discipline for the weekend when she would make her son attend all three services on Sunday. If she failed to accompany him to his Presbyterian penitentiary, he would readily let the bitter cup pass, hoping a good story would sufficiently cover his tracks to the river or Holiday's Hill. But his mother usually countered by learning from the neighbors what the minister's text had been and then quizzing Sam a little on the fine points of the sermon.

Jane's religion was very important to her, but she was less than fanatical in her pursuit of orthodox Protestant piety. This woman whom VanWick Brooks had tearing down Missouri maypoles was in fact decidedly liberal in her approach to the things of the spirit. She was an intensely garrulous and social person all her life, particularly devoted to drama and dancing. Jane's granddaughter Annie Moffitt Webster remembered her as enjoying anything out of the ordinary in religious or mental phenomena, a quest which had her ranging from seance to synagogue with frequent stops in between. She loved red as a color and would have adorned everything with it, including herself, if she had not been constantly dissuaded. For a time she smoked a pipe because it was avant garde, and in her old age she took a worldly sort of pride in her frilly caps of fine lace and lavender ribbons. But she always maintained firm convictions. She would invariably close off her lectures to Sam just as Tom Sawyer's Aunt Polly did to him--with anything from a small scriptural flourish to "a full chapter as from Sinai."

After a fledgling career as a young printer, Sam ventured off to such distant places as St. Louis, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and New York, where he found Millerites trying to ascend and the Fox Sisters beginning to rap. But his heart belonged to the river that ran past his Hannibal home. Sam came home to hire on as a Mississippi cub pilot, finding the river to be even more beautiful than he had supposed. After nearly twenty years of a life that included mining, journalism, travel, and fiction, Sam told the readers of the Atlantic Monthly:

I loved the piloting profession far better than any I have followed since, and I took a measureless pride in it. The reason is plain: a pilot, in those days, was the only unfettered and entirely independent human being that lived on the earth.<sup>20</sup>

To a friend he once wrote that all men--kings and serfs alike--are slaves to other men and circumstances, "save, alone, the pilot--who comes at no man's beck or call, obeys no man's orders and scorns all men's suggestions." Indeed in later walks of life it would "gravel" him to have to express his wishes in the "weak shape of a request, instead of launching it in the crisp language of an order."<sup>21</sup> It seems clear that Mark Twain would never have quarreled with the gods if he only could have been one. On the river he came as close to that as he was able.

But the river experience could be treacherous, too; and in at least one instance it was fatal. Sam's younger brother Henry, a perfectly lovable and mannerly young man, died on a riverboat under freakish circumstances for which Sam always blamed himself. That experience, coupled with the onset of the Civil War, led Clemens to leave the pilot's cabin and join his older brother bound for the Nevada Territory.

Orion Clemens, one of the strangest fellows ever born, had been appointed secretary to the new territorial governor of Nevada, James W. Nye. When he offered Sam the nonpaying position of secretary to the secretary, "it appeared," said Sam, "that the heaven and earth passed away and the firmament was rolled together as a scroll."<sup>22</sup> Without his job on the river, Sam felt he had been drifting toward "the ministry or the penitentiary,"<sup>23</sup> and one or the other had seemed an inevitable destination. As a matter of fact, just prior to the Nevada appointment Sam had, on one layover in St. Louis, dabbled in a little formal religion and was initiated into the Polar Star Lodge #79 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Order of Masons, the largest lodge in the state. The new member was passed to the Fellow Craft degree on June 12, and on July 10, 1861, he was raised to Master Mason. This rapid and impressive rise was abruptly terminated, however, when Sam left

for Nevada on July 26, and his unexplained absence eventually brought him suspension by the lodge secretary. Though he would affiliate with the lodge again briefly, his Masonic experience was virtually complete in sixty days. Its influence would continue to be felt in his fiction, however, in a remarkable series of boyish ceremonies and incantations, the violation of which, as Tom Sawyer said, was sure to get the guilty one "chopped all to flinders."<sup>24</sup>

The trip to Carson City actually took nineteen days rather than the usual seventeen because the Clemens boys discovered they could not pass so hastily through that desert kingdom of Brigham Young, Salt Lake City.

From his earliest years Sam Clemens had heard of the Mormons. John Clemens had moved his family into Marion County in eastern Missouri just months after Jackson County on the western side had been declared the New Jerusalem of the Latter-day Saints. Joseph Smith later visited nearby Palmyra, Missouri, considering it as a possible town in which the beleaguered saints might gather. Sam Clemens would have been too young to be aware of such a visit to his neighborhood; but he was not too young to have heard tales of the Hannibal militia men who were alerted at the height of the Mormon conflict, and he may have seen the cannon that was ready to fire on Mormon immigrants if they steamed too near on their way to Nauvoo just forty miles up the river.

Twain's response to his Utah visit, including his encounter with Brigham Young, his playful opinions about polygamy, and his literary fun with the Book of Mormon are now part of Mormon folklore. His two-day stay in Salt Lake City left Sam generally impressed with what he called "the kingdom;" and though he was well fed and happy at the hands of "those homely Mormon women," he was not much wiser regarding the "Mormon Question." "I left Great Salt Lake a good deal confused as to what state of things existed there," he admitted, "sometimes even questioning in my own mind whether a state of things existed there at all or not."<sup>25</sup> Tautology notwithstanding, he determined that the Mormon issue could not be settled in forty-eight hours, though he admitted that some eastern journalists had been doing it regularly in twenty-four. As he started into the desert, he wrote:

Neither hunger, thirst, poverty, grief, hatred, contempt, nor persecution could drive the Mormons from their faith or their allegiance[sic]; and even the thirst for gold which gleaned the flower of youth and the strength of many nations, was not able to entice them! That was the final test. An experiment that can survive that is an experiment with some substance to it, somewhere.<sup>26</sup>

Sam and Orion went on to Carson City; but after two months in his nonprofit position as observer of affairs of state, Sam succumbed to the silver fever that was by then an epidemic in the Washoe country. Buying into a few holdings with painfully ironic names like "The Golden Fleece," Sam's mining efforts were a disaster by any standard. Most of the time he was destitute financially and depressed emotionally.

In the midst of anxious moments over his prospects, Sam Clemens's personal and professional life was altered forever. As he became more and more disillusioned with mining, he began contributing a few humorous pieces to the Virginia City Territorial Enterprise. The sketches caught the eye of the paper's editor and he offered Sam a position on the Enterprise staff. Reluctant to leave mining but weary of the disappointments, Sam accepted the offer. It was August of 1862, and Sam later recalled that he thus "stumbled into literature without intending it"<sup>27</sup> simply because he had failed in all of his other endeavors. In that month he said "I [was] never so near the ministry in my life."<sup>28</sup> Sam confided in his brother regarding such occupational joys and sorrows, revealing in a recently discovered letter that the two most powerful ambitions in his life had been to be a pilot on the Mississippi River and a Presbyterian minister.

I accomplished the one and failed in the other, because I could not supply myself with the necessary stock in trade--i.e., religion. I have given it up forever. I never had a "call" in that direction anyhow and my aspirations were the very ecstasy of presumption. But I have had a "call" to literature, of a low order, i.e., humorous. It is nothing to be proud of, but it is my strongest suit, and if I were to listen to that maxim of stern duty which says that to do right you must multiply the one or the two or the three talents which the Almighty entrusts to your keeping, I would long ago have ceased to meddle with things for which I was by nature unfitted and turn my attention to seriously scribbling [sic] to excite the laughter of God's creatures. . . . I wanted to be a pilot or a preacher, and was about as well calculated for either as is poor Emporer,<sup>29</sup> [sic] Norton for Chief Justice of the United States.

Let me digress into a rather lengthy aside. There is in fact considerable evidence that Clemens seriously considered becoming a minister several times in his life, almost always at times when he was out of work and desperate.

He joked that this "most earnest ambition" was not prompted so much by his piety as by the fact that it looked like a secure job. "It never occurred to me," he said, "that a preacher could be damned."<sup>30</sup>

When addressing a class of graduating seniors at the high school in Hannibal, Missouri, less than eight years before his death, Mark Twain told them of his Sunday School boyhood and said, "Often in those days I desired earnestly to stand in that Presbyterian pulpit and give instructions--but I was never asked until today. My ambition of two generations ago has been satisfied at last."<sup>31</sup>

More privately, Clemens was emphatic in his disappointment that in sixty years Hannibal had not "turned out a solitary preacher," and he was even more dismayed that there had not been at least one minister in the immediate family. Twain himself tried to fill the gap, always running with those he called "the fast nags of the cloth", and admitting that he himself was but "a moralist in disguise."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, he frequently felt he did a better job of preaching than did the ordained. At thirteen years of age, Susy Clemens wrote in her biography of her father:

He doesn't like to go to church at all, but why I never understood until just now. He told us the other day that he couldn't bear to hear anyone talk but himself, and that he could listen to himself talk for hours without getting tired, of course he said this is a joke, but I've not doubt [sic] it was founded on truth.<sup>33</sup>

But I return to the time of vocational crisis and decision. It was in those first difficult months in Nevada that Twain found in territorial Christianity one form of the only real religious stance that would appeal to him for any length of time. It was unorthodox, informal, free-wheeling, unfettered. To express it, he took the shooting death of Virginia City saloon owner Tom Peaseley and fictionalized it into the immensely popular "Buck Fanshaw" episode in Roughing It.

As Twain wrote it, a friend and fellow fireman named Scotty Briggs (Peaseley had been foreman of the Virginia Co. #1.) appointed himself as a committee of one to arrange for funeral services with the local minister, a young man fresh from an eastern theological seminary. The following is a condensation of that verbal encounter between New America and New England.

(Scotty): Are you the duck that runs the gospel-mill next door?



(Minister): Am I the--pardon me, I believe I do not understand.

(Scotty): The boys thought maybe you would give us a lift, if we'd tackle you--that is, if I've got the rights of it and you are the head clerk of the doxology-works next door.

(Minister): I am the shepherd in charge of the flock whose fold is next door.

(Scotty): The which?

(Minister): The spiritual adviser of the little company of believers whose sanctuary adjoins these premises.

(Scotty): You ruther hold over me, pard. I reckon I can't call that hand. Ante and pass the buck.

(Minister): How? I beg pardon. What did I understand you to say?

(Scotty): Well, you've ruther got the bulge on me. Or maybe we've both got the bulge, somehow. You don't smoke me and I don't smoke you. You see, one of the boys has passed in his decks, and we want to give him a good send-off, and so the thing I'm on now is to roust out somebody to jerk a little chin-music for us and waltz him through handsome.

(Minister): I seem to grow more and more bewildered. Your observations are wholly incomprehensible to me. Would it not expedite matters if you restricted yourself to categorical statements of fact unencumbered with obstructing accumulations of metaphor and allegory?

(Scotty): I'll have to pass, I judge. You've raised me out, pard. Why that last lead of yourn is too many for me. I can't neither trump nor follow suit. What we want is a gospel-sharp. See?

(Minister): A what?

(Scotty): Gospel Sharp. Parson.

(Minister): Oh! Why did you not say so before. I am a clergy-man--a parson.

(Scotty): Now you talk! You see my blind and straddle it like a man. Now we're all right, pard. Let's start fresh. You see, one of the boys has gone up the flume--

(Minister): Gone where?  
 (Scotty): Up the flume--threw up the sponge--  
 kicked the bucket--  
 (Minister): Ah--has departed to that mysterious  
 country from whose bourne no traveler  
 returns.  
 (Scotty): Return! I reckon not. Why, pard, he's  
dead!  
 (Minister): Yes, I understand.  
 (Scotty): Oh, you do? Well I thought maybe you  
 might be getting tangled some more.  
 Well, we've got to give him up. It's a  
 kind of a hard world, after all, ain't  
 it? But pard, he was a rustler! He was  
 the worst son of a thief that ever  
 drew breath. Pard, he was on it!  
 (Minister): On it? On what?  
 (Scotty): On the shoot. On the shoulder. On the  
 fight. He didn't give a continental for  
anybody. Beg your pardon, friend, for  
 coming so near saying a cuss-word--but  
 you see I'm on an awful strain, in this  
 palaver, on account of having to cramp  
 down and draw everything so mild.  
 (Minister): Had deceased any religious convictions?  
 That is to say, did he feel a dependence  
 upon, or acknowledge allegiance to a  
 higher power?  
 (Scotty): I reckon you've stumped me again, pard.  
 Could you say it over once more, and say  
 it slow?  
 (Minister): Well, to simplify it somewhat, was he,  
 or rather had he ever been connected  
 with any organization sequestered from  
 secular concerns and devoted to self-  
 sacrifice in the interests of morality?  
 (Scotty): All down but nine--set 'em up on the  
 other alley, pard. When you get in with  
 your left I hunt grass every time.  
 Every time you draw, you fill; but I  
 don't seem to have any luck. Let's have  
 a new deal.  
 (Minister): [What?] Begin again?<sup>34</sup>

The distinctiveness of each man's idiom in the dialogue (a dialogue which is, of course, two mutually exclusive monologues) is reinforced by other images in the sketch--Scotty's flaming red

flannel shirt against the colorless black of the ministerial cloth; Briggs's brawny paw with the priest's delicate hand; and so on. But the ultimate contrast is language, always the most sensitive index to cultural distinctions.

Twain is, in Henry Nash Smith's opinion, proposing "two ways of viewing the world"--one at the level of ideals and values, the other at the level of reality and facts. But Professor Smith seems to be deeply mistaken in asserting that Twain as narrator is "fully identified" with the upper class of the clergyman.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, it would appear that the identification is clearly with Briggs, who recognizes and admits that "it's a kind of a hard world after all, ain't it?" On the frontier there would seem to be little place for men or organizations "sequestered from secular concerns and devoted to self-sacrifices in the interests of morality." Twain is inviting this "fragile, gentle, spiritual new fledgling . . . as yet unacquainted with the ways of the mines,"<sup>36</sup> to come down from the summit of his Sinai and "dive," as Herman Melville would say.

By the same token, it is also a mistake to propose that Twain is here applying the coup de grace to traditional religious belief. He is, in fact, doing precisely the opposite: he is suggesting possibilities for its invigoration. The slang Scotty employs is (as slang always is) a source from which the decaying energies of more orthodox speech may be quickened. Twain is suggesting that religion, particularly in America, might likewise be renewed if it will put off the stultifyingly lofty language and empty social forms inherited from western Europe. Otherwise the missionary and his mission field will continually pass and forever "start again." That this vernacular mode is, to Twain's mind, the viable one is confirmed when the piece concludes, noting that Scotty Briggs was finally the only convert to religion ever gathered from the Virginia City roughs. "If his Sunday School class progressed faster than the other classes, was it matter for wonder?" Twain asked. "I think not. He, talked to his pioneer small-fry in a language they understood."<sup>37</sup>

From Nevada, Twain's nascent newspaper and lecturing career took him on to seances in California, "proselyting work" in the Hawaiian Islands, and ultimately to the midnight missions of New York. In the orthodox East, Sam found institutional religion to be very unlike Scotty Briggs's more preferable frontier variety; but it was booming business, and, as always, he threw himself into the midst of it. He made his way as quickly as possible to the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn Heights, where every Sunday the dominant Protestant voice and most widely listened to preacher in the nation's history was attracting hoards of people on ferries that quickly became known as Beecher's Boats. Inimitably able to sense the popular side of every public question,

Henry Ward Beecher was expounding an emotional liberalism that had New York papers reporting the pew-renting at Plymouth as if it were a transaction on the stock market. Jamming his way into the church, Twain sat in the congregation and was smitten not with Beecher's theology but with his mesmerizing platform performance, a style Twain could only describe with phrases like "rockets of poetry" and "mines of eloquence."<sup>38</sup> As he observed the effect it had on the crowd, Twain nearly suffocated with the desire to clap his hands and see if it would break the spell.

A short time after attending his first sermon at Brooklyn Heights, Sam presented his letter of introduction to the Reverend Mister Beecher and accepted an invitation to dinner. Perhaps it was from Beecher himself that he learned of the proposed pilgrimage to the Holy Land being sponsored by Plymouth Congregational. Sam agreed to go as a dignitary, and no less; though, as it turned out, Beecher himself eventually did not. Once on board the Quaker City Twain found sixty-seven passengers, including three ordained ministers. As the gong sounded that first Saturday evening for the first of an endless succession of prayer meetings, Twain thought he sensed "damaging premonitions of the future"--storm without, pilgrims within, and prayer meetings over all. This was obviously going to be pleasuring with a vengeance.

With every mile travelled and every day spent, relationships among the Quaker City travellers degenerated until somewhere on the plains of Syria, Twain announced to them all that then and forever Balaam's Ass was to be the patron saint of the entire group. He was incensed at such things as scrupulous Sabbatarianism and hymn singing set against their incessant backbiting and insufferable pettiness. Yet there were private, reflective moments when Sam was touched by what he saw.

Night is the time to see Galilee. . . . When the day is done even the most unimpressible must yield to the dreamy influences of this tranquil starlight. . . . [At night] Galilee is a theatre meet for great events; meet for the birth of a religion able to save the world; and meet for the stately Figure appointed to stand upon its stage and proclaim its high decrees. But in the sunlight one says: is it for the deeds which were done and the words which were spoken in this little acre of rocks and sand 18 centuries gone that the bells are ringing today in the remote islands of the sea and far and wide over continents that clasp the circumference of the huge globe? One can comprehend it only when night has hidden all incongruities and created a theatre proper for so grand a drama.<sup>39</sup>

In a sense this passage is as revealing as any Twain ever wrote about the real contours of his religious imagination. Not unlike Scotty Briggs's language, it was only a fresh, fanciful, imaginative Christianity he would ever be able to entertain. The harshness of life's sunlit immediacy would conspire to forbid any extended periods of such spiritual contemplation. But he did, however briefly, have his moonlight moments.

The return trip from Palestine went from bad to worse. "The pleasure trip was a synagogue . . . a funeral excursion without a corpse," Twain wrote for the New York Herald as soon as they landed. "That a party more ill-fitted by age and awful solemnity for scurrying around the world on a giddy picnic, ever went to sea . . . since the world began, I deny most fervently."<sup>40</sup>

Like the difficulty of the mines, however, that discouraging trip was to lead to another monumental turning point in his life and again to a period of intense religious interest. Through the youngest passenger on board the Quaker City, eighteen-year-old Charles Langdon of Elmira, New York, Mark Twain met and fell immediately in love with the boy's older sister, Olivia.

As it turned out, falling in love with Livy Langdon was the closest thing to an orthodox religious conversion Sam Clemens ever experienced. On the first anniversary of their meeting Sam would write, "I did have such a struggle the first day I saw you. . . . . . . . . to keep from loving you with all my heart. You seemed to my bewildered vision a visiting Spirit from the upper air. A something to worship, reverently and at a distance."<sup>41</sup> Indeed she came to be his Goddess, the only one in which he ever fully believed.

He immediately tried to press his relationship beyond the genteel brother-and-sister language Livy insisted upon, and, grimly earnest, proposed marriage. Stunned by his abruptness, Livy recovered only to say something about his being her brother for as long as he liked. Byronically, he fled Elmira and wrote back, "I do not regret that I have loved you, still love you and shall always love you." Pleadingly he wrote:

Write me something from time to time--texts from the New Testament if nothing else occurs to you--or dissertations on [the sin of] smoking--or extracts from your book of sermons--anything whatever--the reflection that my matchless sister wrote will be sufficient. If it be a suggestion I will entertain it. If it be an injunction, I will honor it. If it be a<sup>2</sup> command I will obey it, or exhaust my energies trying.

When a reply arrived with a small picture enclosed, Sam rushed off a letter worthy of any nineteenth-century tract.

You say to me "I shall pray for you daily." Not any words that have ever been spoken to me have touched me like these . . . . I beg that you will continue to pray for me--for I have a vague, far-away sort of idea that it may not be wholly in vain. In one respect, at least, it shall not be in vain--for I will so mend my conduct that I shall grow worthier of your prayers and of your good-will and sisterly solicitude as the days go by. Furthermore, (It has taken me long to make up my mind to say these grave words which once said cannot be recalled). I will "pray with you" as you ask; and with such faith and such encouragement withall as are in me though feeble and of little worth I feel they must be. It seems strange enough to me--this reverence, this solemnity, this supplication--and yet you must surely have some faith that it will not necessarily be useless else you would not have suggested it. <sup>43</sup>

Sam rushed to Elmira and arrived almost as soon as his letter. Within twenty-four hours he had again proposed marriage. Again he was refused. A carriage accident as he was leaving the house kept him with the Langdons for two more weeks, at the end of which he proposed marriage a third time. A third time the answer was no. Nevertheless, such determination over the following months was finally successful. Ready to leap over church steeples at Livy's acceptance, Sam writes from "Paradise" to a friend:

I touch no more spirituous liquors after this day (though I have made no promises) I shall do no act that . . . Livy might be pained to hear of and shall seek the society of the good--I shall be a Christian. I shall climb--climb--climb--towards this bright sun that is shining in the heaven of my happiness until all that is gross and unworthy is hidden in the mists of darkness of that lower earth. . . . I shall be worthy--yet. Livy believes in me . . . I believe in myself. . . . I believe in God--and through the breaking clouds I see the star of hope rising in the placid blue beyond. I bow my reverent head. <sup>44</sup>

Sam began to pray for Livy. Livy, of course, prayed for him. It appears, however, that Mr. and Mrs. Langdon prayed for themselves. They were not entirely taken with this young humorist and in fact would not give their permission for the marriage. Mr. Langdon wrote a frank letter to his daughter's suitor, rebuking him for some of his drawing-room indiscretions and asking him to

relax the pace of the courtship until some reliable character references could be obtained. Unfortunately, there were none to obtain, and a shaken Sam wrote his prospective father-in-law that while his life had not been entirely unblameworthy on the Pacific coast, nevertheless: "Men as lost as I have found a Savior, and why not I?"<sup>45</sup> He wrote to Livy and reassured her that he was reading not once but several times the sermons of Henry Ward Beecher contained in the Plymouth Pulpit pamphlets she regularly sent him. With painful candor he confessed, "You know the child must crawl before it walks--and I must do right for love of you while I am in the infancy of Christianity; but then I can do right for love of the Savior when I shall have gotten my growth"<sup>46</sup>--a growth he never obtained and yet one more way in which he was always a "youth." His earlier zeal was simply not sustaining him in such difficult times, and he confessed to her that religion seemed "well nigh unattainable" and he felt like "giving up in despair." Yet at that very moment both of Livy's parents wrote to express their confidence in him. In a burst of ecstasy he penned to his new minister friend in Hartford: "Lo, the world is very beautiful--very beautiful--and there is a God."<sup>47</sup>

His religious quest may indeed have begun as a lover's gambit, but many of these later letters are simply too painful to suggest he was not trying to believe--if, granted, only to please. Now less than a month away from formal engagement, Sam wrote a letter which probably indicates the summit of his Christian journey, however modest the mountain.

Livy--

Let us believe that God has destined us for each other. . . . Let us hope and believe that we shall walk hand in hand in love and worship of Him . . . and so journeying, pass at last the shadowed boundaries of Time and stand redeemed and saved, beyond the threshold and within the light of that land whose Prince is the Lord of rest eternal. God will bless you in it--will bless us both, I fervently believe.

I bless you for your religious counsel, Livy--and more and more every day, for with every passing day I understand it better and appreciate it more. I am 'dark' yet--I see I am still depending on my own strength to lift myself up, and upon my own sense of what is right to guide me in the Way--but not always, Livy, not always. I see the Savior dimly at times, and at intervals, very near--would that the intervals were not so sad a length apart! Sometimes it is a pleasure to me to pray, night and morning, in cars and everywhere, twenty times a day--and then again the whole spirit of

religion is motionless within me from the rising clear to the setting of the sun . . . . But I have hope . . . I fear I would distrust a religious faith that came upon me suddenly--that came upon me otherwise than deliberately, and proven, step by step as it came. You will blame me for this, Livy--but be lenient with me, for you know I grope blindly as yet.

As a matter of fact, Twain would never again have intervals "so very near," nor would he ever again grope less blindly.

Soon successfully married to the only person he ever truly revered, human or divine, he began his retreat from such a limited epiphany. Settling into solid Hartford society, Twain found that the "straight walking" in his "sterling old Puritan community" took a great deal out of the religious freedom he had felt in his earlier days.

He faithfully rented a pew at Joseph Twitchell's Hartford church, which he called the "Church of the Holy Speculators;" but he never formally joined the congregation, and all the Beechers living around them at Nook Farm made him very skittish. Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose father had said in her earliest years that she was as odd as she was intelligent, had gotten increasingly odder. In the last years of her life she would, "[all] slipped and full of animal spirits," dash up behind people, as Sam said, to "fetch a war hoop that would jump a person out of his clothes."<sup>49</sup> Isabella Beecher had become deeply entrenched in the National Women's Suffrage Association, regularly receiving divine manifestations on that matter, and Henry Ward Beecher was immersed in a lawsuit over an affair with the wife of his close friend and Plymouth church associate, Theodore Tilton. Twain attended parts of Beecher's sensational trial and by then was so deeply disenchanting with the whole family that he agreed with the editor of The Nation who thought that the lining of the courtroom with white carnations by the Plymouth congregation was a little like placing wreaths around the open manhole of a sewer. Through this period Sam was still maintaining some semblance of an orthodox religious life, continuing to say grace at meals, for example; but even that ritual was becoming so malapropos that houseguest Thomas Wentworth Higginson equated it to asking a blessing over European minstrels.

With Livy threatening to miscarry, Sam got them all away from Hartford in the spring and summer of 1873. It was a refreshing stay in Elmira, where a specially constructed study had been built for Twain atop the hill on the family farm. Overlooking the valley 500 feet below, Sam Clemens was again the sovereign, the riverboat pilot, the master of all he surveyed. Enthusiastically he wrote to Twitchell, telling him how he would luxuriate in the lightning flashes and the beat of rain overhead, and on less



inclement days how he would simply open the seven windows and one door, anchor his paper with brickbats, and write in the midst of hurricanes. It was a happy and productive time. He began a manuscript on which he averaged fifty pages a day. The book was to be entitled The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and in the mind of the author was, at least in the early stages of the manuscript, a kind of religious reverie, the first act in a proposed Divinia Tragoedia set in a celestial St. Petersburg but concluding in hellish Calvinistic reality.

The book had been initially prompted by a visit from an old Hannibal Sunday School superintendent, whose voice had brought back trooping phantoms of the past. A church service Twain attended while on the lecture circuit a short time later had then reinforced those haunting images. He wrote with evangelical fervor, frequently never moving from his desk for hours. When the book was finished he considered it "a sermon, . . . a hymn put into prose form to give it a worldly air."<sup>50</sup> But The Adventures of Tom Sawyer was in several ways a flawed work, and Twain sensed that (though he was never a good judge of his own effort). He had not plumbed the real depths of his religious concerns.

Some time later Sam made another attempt at a religious expression, this time before the Hartford Monday Evening Club, a group of eighteen or twenty which Twain remembered as always having had more clergymen in it than good people. On an evening in January of 1876 when Sam and Livy hosted the group, he read them a story he had written called "The Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut." The sketch deals with a man thoroughly happy and content who, in the dark of the night, is approached by a shriveled, moldy dwarf--his conscience. Twain attempted to say in that piece how he felt about debilitating and largely needless Puritanical guilt. However, he could not sustain that conviction and, through hyperbole, appears by the end of the story to be insistently orthodox on the role of moral conscience in acceptable society. His minister friends loved it and wanted copies before next Sunday. Twain was sick at heart with his compromise.

In the meantime, his life, particularly his business life, was becoming unbearable; and after trying to find relief up and down the eastern seaboard, he went to Bermuda and to Europe. Twain ultimately got away from it all by returning to Hannibal to write a book about his river. He enjoyed much of the venture, but for the most part he was deeply disappointed. He wrote to his wife:

That world which I knew in its blossoming youth is old and bowed and melancholy now. Its soft cheeks are leathery and wrinkled; the fire is gone out of its eyes and the spring from its step. It will be dust and

ashes when I come again. I have been clasping hands with the moribund--and usually they say "It is for the last time."<sup>51</sup>

The Clemenses had already lost their only son, Langdon, and more recently Livy and the girls were suffering diseases ranging from scarlet fever to diphtheria. Sam, drained economically and emotionally, struggled with the bite of an annual \$100,000 in expenses, and knew less real peace than he had ever felt in his life. Largely disenchanted with the river book and the scenes he put into it, he immediately began what he had wanted to do in the first place: to make a purely imaginative return to his Hannibal home, to get a truer, if less factual, account of a boy's life on the river. Researching Life on the Mississippi had triggered a number of ideas, and by midsummer of that year, 1883, he was back at work on the epic that had been on his mind through (and had informed parts of) Tom Sawyer, "The Recent Carnival of Crime," A Tramp Abroad, "What Is Happiness," and Life on the Mississippi. Twain now hoped to pull together these piecemeal statements he had been making for over a decade; his view of man, religion, and civilization were coming into clearer, if nevertheless darker, focus. Thus at the height of his creative powers (and farther away than ever from any kind of orthodox religious sympathies), Mark Twain settled down to write The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. He worked more feverishly than at any other time in his life. In August of 1883 he wrote to Howells, "I've done two season's work in one. I've written eight or nine-hundred manuscript pages in such a brief space of time that I mustn't name the number of days; I shouldn't believe it myself and of course I couldn't expect you to."<sup>52</sup> A month earlier he had written to his mother, "I haven't had such booming work days for many years. I'm piling up manuscripts in a really astonishing way."<sup>53</sup>

From the beginning Twain clearly conceived Huck's quest as an escape from the fetters of Protestant American civilization. In Tom Sawyer, Huck had painted in somber tones the orthodox life he was subjected to at Widow Douglas's home. As he explained to Tom, "I got to go to church and sweat and sweat--I hate them ornry sermons! I can't catch a fly in there, I can't chaw, I got to wear shoes all Sunday. . . . The wider won't let me smoke; she [won't] let me yell, she [won't] let me gape or stretch, nor scratch before folks--and dad fetch it, she [prays] all the time. I never see such a woman. I had to shove Tom. I just had to."<sup>54</sup>

So both Twain and Huck moved away from "the bars and shackles of civilization" and toward the river, that stream of freedom which symbolized "the heaven pictured by priest and prophet." Part of what rankled Huck was the repeated moral compromise of Tom. Huck thought Tom a great one for talking about killing, but

when it came right down to it, Tom had never been able to go through with anything. One had to be respectable in his gang, for as Tom had told the innocent Ben Rogers, "The books say 'Thou shalt not.' Now Ben Rogers, do you want to do things regular or don't you? That's the idea. Don't you reckon that the people who made the books knows what's the correct thing to do? Do you reckon you can learn 'em anything? Not by a good deal."<sup>55</sup>

Huck listened to that sermon, ultimately agreeing with Tom that in society, at least, if you "go to doing different from what's in the books" you're bound to get things "muddled up." Unable to live according to the books, particularly the good books, the only alternative was to live outside the society that required it. So he "shoved." In addition to fleeing institutional respectability, Huck was also fleeing prayers that didn't work, exotic adventures which proved to be but Sunday School picnics, and a thoroughly "muddled up" deity himself.

Once on the river, Huck worked out his own salvation, moving in an Adamic peacefulness back to a state before sin and civilization. "We was always naked, day and night," Huck said, "whenever the mosquitoes would let us."<sup>56</sup> From this mosquito-blemished Eden, Huck would occasionally venture into the World; but the men he found there were fallen indeed. The Grangerfords could read their Pilgrim's Progress and "Presbyterian Observer," listen to Sunday sermons fit for printing in either, and still continue a senseless feud that would take the life of their young son. In what is still the most chilling and understated description of death I know, Huck described the horror of seeing his helpless friend shot down like a duck on a pond. In addition to being "mighty good" to Huck, Buck Grangerford was a civilized alter ego for him: same age, nearly same size, nearly same name. Buck's death was a brutal vicarious reminder of life in that "civilized" world. "I wish I hadn't ever come ashore that night to see such things," Huck confessed. "I ain't never going to get shut of them. Lots of times I dream about them [still]."<sup>57</sup> Less personal but still repugnant reminders of traditional evangelical Protestantism are portrayed in the camp meeting and in the string of charades performed by the Duke and the Dauphin. The moral apex of the book is, of course, on the raft in the much explicated battle between Huck's sound heart and deformed conscience, a battle in which Huck successfully resists the sins of society even if it would mean going to hell. Huck simply will not take Jim back into civilization, for he himself has suffered bondage there and he cannot wish that on anyone in good--that is, bad--conscience. In their flight, Huck and Jim are quite literal soul brothers.

But the brackets of civilization which encase this story inexorably begin to close in when Huck is quite literally born

again into the society of the Phelps farm (Huck becomes Tom; Tom becomes Sid; etc.). The much-discussed conclusion of this book is, it seems to me, infinitely stronger than most critics have understood. It does, among other things, remind Huck and the reader of how cruel, or at the very least how capricious, Miss Watson's Presbyterian providence really is. After making a black-faced fool out of Jim, Tom/Sid smugly reveals that Miss Watson, whom Leo Marx calls "the enemy,"<sup>58</sup> had already set him free. It was precisely this kind of unaccountable and unaccounting God that Sam Clemens was never able to understand. With that reminder of such Calvinistic victimization reawaiting him, Huck heads out "for the territory"--a land of religious and cultural heterodoxy. Life would be much more attractive, certainly freer and safer, out beyond the demarcated boundaries of civilization where pale theology students from the East had very little to teach fellows like Scotty Briggs and Huckleberry Finn.

With the publication of that book and Huck's intended, though undoubtedly never realized, return to the frontier, Mark Twain passed over a threshold as decisively as a double-minded man was able. When he put down his pen at the close of that manuscript, he was just three months away from his forty-eighth birthday. A half-dozen years before his death he jotted in his notebook, "The man who is a pessimist before he's 48 knows too much; the man who is an optimist after he is 48 knows too little."<sup>59</sup>

Paul Tillich has suggested in his examination of history that the substance of culture is religion, and the form of religion is culture.<sup>60</sup> With only a modest shift of Tillich's meaning, that proposition was axiomatic for Mark Twain. Wearing shoes and going to church meant the same thing to Huck Finn, and this child who was father to the man struggled to be rid of both. The man succeeded, or, perhaps more accurately, acceded, only a few times--in the cabin of a riverboat, around the mining camps on the western frontier, under the moonlight of Galilee, with the love of a wife and children, and, finally, full circle, on a raft floating down that first powerful river.

In spite of the genuinely bitter pessimism ahead, that is somehow where Sam Clemens ultimately remained--on the river, on the line, in between, divided and doubtful. He could not live with traditional American Protestantism, but he could not live without feelings of innate religious hunger, either. East or west, so much was, in Huck's phrase, simply hog-wash; but occasionally there was that genuine soul-butter, too, and an almost desperate need for it. As Huck said about this lifelong anxiety that seemed always to be marking Twain:

Sometimes the widow would take me to one side and talk about providence in a way to make a body's mouth water;

but maybe the next day Miss Watson would take hold and knock it all down again. I judged I could see that there was two providences, and a chap would stand considerable show with the widow's providence, but if Miss Watson's got him there wasn't no help for him anymore. I thought it all out, and reckoned I would belong to the widow's if he wanted me, though I couldn't make out how he was a going to be any better off than what he was before, <sup>61</sup> seeing I was ignorant, and so kind of low down and awnry.

\* \* \*

Sitting one evening in the darkened Hartford home of their friends, the Charles Dudley Warners, Sam and Livy Clemens watched a beautiful full moon rising outside the large bay window. The faithful Clemens housekeeper, Katy Leary, later reported:

Suddenly Mr. Clemens got right up without any warning and began singing one of them Negro spirituals. A lady that was there told me he just stood up with both his eyes shut and began to sing kind of soft like--a faint sound, just as if there was a wind in the trees, she said; and he kept right on singin' kind of low and sweet, and it was beautiful and made your heart ache somehow. And he kept on singin' and singin' and became kind of lost in it, and he was all lit up--his face was. 'Twas somethin' from another world, she said, and when he got through, he put his hands up to his head, just as though all the sorrow of them Negroes was upon 'im; and then he begun to sing, "Nobody Knows the Trouble I Got, Nobody Knows but Jesus" . . . When he came to the end, to the glory hallelujah, he gave a great shout--just like the Negroes do--he shouted out the "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah." They said it was wonderful <sup>62</sup> and none of them would forget it as long as they lived.

And we will never forget him.

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60. See Paul Tillich, The Interpretation of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 50.
61. Writings, 8:16.
62. Katy Leary (with Mary Lawton), A Lifetime With Mark Twain (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1925), p. 213.

# Rites of Passage: Young Men and Their Families in the Overland Trails Experience, 1843-69

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In recent years students of the American West have begun to move from the study of the atavistic and unique to a consideration of the relationship of the West to the larger patterns of American and human development. Perhaps nothing in western studies offers more hope of illuminating human experience than psychohistory and family history. Because of the large number of diaries and journals produced, the overland migration offers the prospect of reconstructing life and family patterns where other events might be less helpful.

In this study, Howard Lamar, professor of history at Yale University, has drawn on both family and psychohistorical insights to interpret the experiences of Victorian families and young men. Showing clearly that not only were the "individual and the wagon train" not "outside the bounds of society," Lamar has demonstrated that migrants mirrored the traditional attitudes of Victorian America in such matters as religion, sense of propriety, and need for order. Furthermore, he has shown that young men usually followed a life pattern in their development which transcended frontier conditions and in some ways approximated that of young men today. Here is a seminal article, the insights of which should draw the attention of historians and other scholars interested not only in the West but also in the study of personal and family patterns.

The frontier image that always catches the imagination is one of the pioneer family in a covered wagon moving westward across a vast and dangerous landscape. It is the ark of Manifest Destiny lost in a sea of grass. Somehow the family must escape the Indians and make it to the wagon train ahead, to the fort, to water, to Oregon, or to Golden California. The image is a stereotype and therefore misleading, but it is an enduring symbol of one of the most common mass frontier experiences in the history of the United States. The overlanders themselves were so convinced of "the uniqueness and the historical significance of their travels," writes John D. Unruh, ". . . that in the entire American experience probably only the Civil War has called forth a commensurate cornucopia of letters, journals, diaries, memoirs, and reminiscent accounts; a veritable folk literature of one of the nation's greatest achievements."<sup>1</sup>

In describing the trek over the three main routes--the trail to Oregon, the central trail to California, and the so-called Gila Trail across the Southwest to southern California--only a few of the nearly eight hundred diarists or memoirists whose accounts we have could write with the thoroughness of J. Goldsborough Bruff or with the charm of Jesse Applegate in his "A Day with the Cow Column."<sup>2</sup> But the fact is that whether the accounts were good or bad, they all told the same story: a saga of incredible physical hardships, of loneliness, and of the danger of death from accident, disease, and Indians.<sup>3</sup>

If every diary or journal records the common problems of men and women in small groups as they confronted the exigencies of nature over a period of from three to six months, what can be found that adds new substance and meaning to a fascinating but twice-told tale which has already been summarized in a score of excellent histories?<sup>4</sup> On the surface the bulk of the diaries and journals often make for dull reading, for most were written by ordinary men and women who filled them with such exciting statements as "traveled sixteen miles today. Water and grass good. Dead tired." Few experienced Indian attacks, though the constant fear of the red man adds drama to an otherwise straightforward narrative. Only those things that penetrated a tired mind got through to the page.

Most wrote their journals not for private contemplation or as a Protestant confessional, but as a memorandum of distances and trail information. Others saw their journal as a record of activities to be sent to relatives in case they died--a practical precaution, for it has been estimated that more emigrants died on the California trail than did soldiers in the Mexican War. Some wrote with the intention of reading it aloud to friends; others for publication in their home-town paper or as advice to future migrants.<sup>5</sup>

Thus most of the accounts are singularly devoid of deep personal secrets or sexual exploits. To do a sexual history of the overland trails, one must read California and Oregon birth statistics between 1849 and 1869, although one can extrapolate from remarks such as William R. Goulding's in 1849, when he reported that a fandango held at an Arkansas River trading post was characterized by "beastly intoxication and shameless indecency."<sup>6</sup> Helen Marnie Stewart gives us a glimpse when she commented on her pretty teen-age sister in her diary: "sometimes I think our Agnes is made of lodestone for she draws to her wonder powerful."<sup>7</sup> There are, of course, a few vivid exceptions. J. Goldsborough Bruff reported that members of his party violated Indian women in a village near their camp, and several diarists on the southern trail referred to the prostitutes of El Paso and especially to a formidable lady called "The Great Western."<sup>8</sup> Young men and women met on the trail, fell in love, and even married, but most diaries fail to suggest anything other than a proper Victorian courtship.

How then can one get beyond the surface meaning of the record and see larger patterns? Obviously one way would be to question some of the common themes and assumptions of the general histories and of the journals themselves. In The Great Platte River Road, for example, Merrill Mattes questions the assumption that a spirit of Manifest Destiny motivated the overlanders. To him the primary motive appears to have been economic.

One of the most persistent themes has been that both the individual and the wagon train were outside the bounds of society; that when the trains left the western settlements the social contract was dissolved. The late David M. Potter went far to correct this older image in 1945 when he published the Overland Journal of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly. In a brilliant introduction Potter pointed out that gold rush companies usually wrote a constitution or a code of laws to govern the behavior of an individual train. These rules, often published and passed out to the company, ranged from agreements about sharing expenses to camp and guard duties.<sup>10</sup> They delegated certain powers to the leader of the train, provided guidelines for the trail, punishment of criminals, and usually included provisions for amendments.

Solomon Tetherow, leader of a Missouri train to Oregon in 1845 which included 293 persons--fifteen of them his own children--not only insisted on a constitution but on an executive committee as well. The rules provided for fines for misconduct, punishment for murder and manslaughter, and gave Tetherow the privilege of shooting loose dogs at his discretion. Rapists were to receive thirty-nine lashes for three successive days, adulterers thirty-nine lashes, and larcenists were to pay double the amount of theft to the injured party and receive thirty-nine lashes on the back.<sup>11</sup>

While David J. Langum has demonstrated that the rules for formal trials on the trail were, contrary to popular tradition, seldom obeyed and full trials seldom carried out, the fact is that the emigrant trains created a new social contract to replace the one they had left behind.<sup>12</sup> Although the accounts are full of decisions to banish rather than try, and of everyday violations of the rules to such an extent that captains of trains resigned right and left, John Phillip Reid has found that the sense of property rights on the overland trails was so deeply rooted that property crimes were virtually nonexistent there.<sup>13</sup> The rules governing an emigrant train of Mormons were, if anything, even more complete.<sup>14</sup>

Potter's findings naturally raise questions about other social institutions that affected the overland trails experience. In a recent article Dr. Daniel Levinson has observed that there are certain central components in a life structure that have "the greatest significance for the self. . . . Occupation and family are usually most central in a man's life; other important components include ethnicity, religion, peer relations, and leisure."<sup>15</sup>

My own reading of approximately one hundred overland journals covering the years 1843 to 1869, suggests that religious, regional, and family ties and family organization were far stronger social institutions than the company constitutions.<sup>16</sup> The presence of family raises questions both about the prevalence of rugged individualism and the impact of the trek on families as opposed to the impact on individuals. We know that persons often left one train and joined another because the new train included citizens from their home state or town, or citizens who came from the same religious denomination. If local loyalty and religious convictions were stronger than overland constitutions, how much stronger family ties must have been.

As Tamara K. Hareven has observed:

Prior to the "affluent" society and the assumption of important familial functions by the welfare state, the family had mainly itself to rely on to meet its economic needs, to stave off dependency, and to cope with insecurities and disaster. Mutual help by family members was essential for survival. The modern notion of independent autonomous careers, linearly directed toward individual success and an almost exclusive investment in one's conjugal family is dissonant with conceptions of family obligations in the past.<sup>17</sup>

Even in the gold-rush years 1849-50, during which the migrants were largely single men or married men without their families, the overland trails experience is inexplicable without including the history of the family in that saga.

The first question to be asked is: What kinds of families went on the overland trails? Were they nuclear or extended; frontier, rural, small town, or metropolitan; lower, middle, or upper class; educated or illiterate; secular or religious; old American or recent immigrant? If the sampling of a hundred diaries, journals, and memoirs is at all representative, it would appear that the majority of the overlanders came from an extended family situation. They were middle class and--for the central trails--middlewestern, but yet "frontier" in some respects. They tended to be prudish, religious, sentimental, family-oriented Anglo-Americans of old stock. These adjectives suggest they were "Victorian," but frontier or middlewestern Victorian might be more precise. Though few had attended college, many had gone to academies and all had a regional self-consciousness if not a class sense as well. Most social historians or demographers would call them rural, but many were from small towns or at least oriented toward the amenities of town life.<sup>18</sup> Philip A. M. Taylor, after analyzing some ninety overland accounts, has concluded that not only were they middle class, but they also succeeded in "imposing on that Western environment the practices and institutions which made up the civilization of the settled districts of the United States from which they had come."<sup>19</sup>

The prevalence and sincerity of the religious beliefs were most often expressed in the form of Sabbatarianism, for many a wagon train refused to travel on Sunday. "O dear," wrote Helen Marnie Stewart on her way to Oregon, "I did not think we would abuse the Sabbath so."<sup>20</sup> Some migrants took along ministers to tend to their spiritual needs, while others formed prohibitionist trains. Some immigrants moved from train to train on the central trail until they found the right bunch of fellow Methodists or Presbyterians.<sup>21</sup> The more secular made sure they got into a whiskey-drinking company, or one that allowed swearing, for the latter was a habit that seemed to produce as much disruption in trains as any other issue.<sup>22</sup> The diaries tell us, in short, that the migrants sought to surround themselves with what was familiar and comforting as they marched toward the unknown Eldorado or that 640-acre homestead in Oregon.

Middle-class values come through with a vengeance when the diarists encounter persons from other ethnic groups. The presence of half-breeds evoked strong shock and disgust. "Mexicans, indians and half-breeds mixed up together," wrote Helen Marnie Stewart, ". . . are the most deceitful [sic] ugly set ever was--there [they are] so filthy."<sup>23</sup> Mixed marriages worried the overlanders almost as much. As they passed through Bridger's Fort they never failed to note that Mrs. Bridger was Indian while Mrs. Vasquez, the wife of Louis Vasquez, Bridger's partner, was white. They considered Vasquez "Mexican," which he was not, and therefore not white.<sup>24</sup>

John D. Unruh, in his excellent recent study, The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860, has pointed out that the Mormons and the Indians played a far more vital and positive role in assisting the overlanders than is usually assumed.<sup>25</sup> Yet the diarists persisted in seeing the Mormons with hostile eyes. Randall Hewitt recalled that Mormons were sinister, brawling, profane, and sensual.<sup>26</sup> Margaret Hecox was mistaken for a Mormon on the trail and treated hostilely.<sup>27</sup> Adam Zumwalt's company, on the way to Oregon in 1850, held religious debates with the Mormons and felt so alienated that the train held a celebration once they were out of Mormon country.<sup>28</sup>

The migrants' views of the Indians went through an intriguing cycle. At the outset of the journey both men and women were overcome with fear of the Indian. The theft of goods, horses, and cattle by Pawnee tribesmen reinforced an existing hatred. But the fact was that Indians also traded with the whites, acted as guides, ran ferries and toll bridges, and often deliberately stayed out of the way.<sup>29</sup> By the time they had reached Fort Laramie on the central trail the older image had given way to a more favorable one. One and all commented on the Sioux as fine specimens of manhood. George Willis Read, scarcely a friend of the red man, remarked while at a stopover at Ash Hollow that these Indians (Sioux) are "fine looking men. One in particular was the best specimen of an Indian I ever saw."<sup>30</sup> Mrs. Margaret Haun recalled that "at one time a good-looking friendly Indian--as Indians go--followed us several days."<sup>31</sup> Just as the "noble savage" image began to gain ascendancy, emigrants on the California Trail encountered the Great Basin tribes. Already worn down by the journey, their mules and oxen dying, the overlanders were infuriated by Indian raids on their dwindling stock, and the image of the red man as a treacherous animal returned.

Migrants on the southern trail felt that the Mexican-American men they encountered were lazy and ignorant but that the women were vigorous and beautiful and had a natural attraction to American men. While in Tucson, William Goulding, after seeing the Mexican troops there, wrote: "There was not a man in the whole of our party, but what could frown down at least a squad of those fellows with a look."<sup>32</sup> Often the sheer graciousness and hospitality of Mexican-Americans overcame the preconceived stereotype. Margaret Hecox's praise<sup>33</sup> of her Mexican neighbors in California was without reservation.

However proper and Victorian the diarists may have been, a curious sexual connotation pervades their remarks about the various western ethnic groups they met. They disapproved of mixed marriages between Indians and whites and saw the half-breed as the monstrous result. The male view of the Mexican woman as the quintessential sensual female was more than matched by a belief

that the Indians were so masculine in their manner, their horsemanship, and their ability at sports and games that they were seen as a threat to both white male and white female.<sup>34</sup> H. M. T. Powell noted that Mrs. Harrison, a member of his party, "offered an Indian a shawl for the robe he wore. He accepted it and taking off his robe stood with easy negligence before us for a considerable time admiring his purchase, with nothing on but his moccasins and a strip of blue cloth six inches wide passed between his legs and held up to his waist by a thong. This was taking things cool with a vengeance, I thought. I looked at Mrs. Harrison but she seemed to be quite easy about it, as did all the rest; so I suppose it was all good Indian manners."<sup>35</sup> Randall Hewitt observed that a "dusky Adonis" tried to buy his fiancée on the Oregon trail and then noted, perhaps with envy, that Miss Ellen "enjoyed reference to her conquest for years after."<sup>36</sup> This encounter with the exotic and the forbidden created an exciting tension between the sense of romantic adventure and Victorian prudery in the migrants.

There were, of course, families who were neither Victorian nor totally frontier who went west. Although able, they had failed to achieve much of this world's goods and wanted to keep looking; that is to say, their condition was frontier but their outlook was entrepreneurial. Their potential for success had been curbed by isolation. The world of this group has been described in a recent study by John M. Faragher.<sup>37</sup>

Undoubtedly the most dramatic exception to the types of overland families described above were those hailing from Missouri. Bayard Taylor and others thought frontier Missourians were Anglo-Saxons "relapsed into semi-barbarians."<sup>38</sup> And Clarence King has left us an unforgettable description of the wild Newty family in California.<sup>39</sup> Many a traveler commented on the Missouri trains as being full of ignorant, brawling frontiersmen. "The more I see of them," wrote one Indiana youth, "the more I think they are hogs personified."<sup>40</sup> John A. Johnson recalled that the Missourians in his 1849 train were such "a wicked, rough set of fellows," and so "jealous of the Buckeye or Northern Boys" that "we resolved to Dissolve the Union of North and South."<sup>41</sup> The story is told that when some teen-aged children from an Illinois train were playing a word game and got stumped for the definition of a word, they walked over to a Missouri train bedded down for the night. "Are there any grammarians here?" they shouted. The answer came back: "No, only Missourians."<sup>42</sup> The Missouri description also seemed to fit the "crackers" from North Carolina and Tennessee. "Their home was a wagon, their recreation ground the universe; their only pathway through life the great public highway," wrote Randall Hewitt on his way to Oregon in 1862.<sup>43</sup>

The migrants themselves spelled out their own definition of various regional and class groups. Yankees were seen as snobbish and impossible, Missourians ignorant and violent, and Southerners



were distinguished from Texans. Southerners might fit either the stereotype of southern gentry or backwoods frontier, while Texans were seen as fearless, fun-loving, and often violent.<sup>44</sup> Southerners and Texans on the Gila Trail seemed much more at home on the frontier, generally less well-educated, and dramatically less religious.

It seems worth reiterating, however, that the migrants on the trails tended to be middle-western and middle class. In a random sampling of the regional origins of fifty-one migrants who kept diaries on the central trail, it was found that two came from England, none from New England, five from New York state, five from the Atlantic states, twenty-four from the Midwest, five from the South, three from Texas, and six from parts unknown.<sup>45</sup> In a survey of fifty-six diarists whose occupations are clearly revealed, sixteen, or 28 percent were in nonfarming occupations that ranged from steamboat captain to lawyer, doctor, surveyor,<sup>46</sup> dentist, pharmacist, schoolteacher, draughtsman, and artist.

Persons with middle-class views or aspirations, then, would engage in the last mass migration of Anglo-Americans that was totally dependent upon beasts of burden, natural forage, and the weather. Since they were to undergo a true frontier experience, they argued loud and long about the virtues and faults of mules as opposed to oxen or horses. But whatever draft animals they chose, most were determined to go "first-class" and overplanned and overpacked. Favorite pieces of furniture, iron cookstoves, and tons of jam, jellies, spices, and medicines were crammed into the wagons.<sup>47</sup> Many migrants, as we shall see, hired young men to herd their cattle, tend camp,<sup>48</sup> or cook.<sup>49</sup> Southerners often took along slaves to assist them.

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So far we have not determined whether the overland families were nuclear or extended. Social historians have argued that the extended family in the United States was on its way out by 1820. If that is the case, families on the overland trail were a very peculiar bunch both before and after the gold-rush years of 1849-51 (during which time the migration to California was largely male), for it looks as if thousands of extended families went west together. A typical family train might include a husband and a wife and two or more children, the wife's brother and his wife and family, and perhaps another brother of the wife.<sup>50</sup> Older aunts and uncles might come along, so that some family groups included as many as thirty persons. When Catherine Amanda Stansbury Washburn went to Oregon in 1853 with her husband, they were accompanied by Washburn's two brothers and their families,<sup>51</sup> by his sister and her family, and by Mrs. Washburn's brother.

Another family migration pattern<sup>52</sup> operated on what one might call the extended scout-relay system. A young man might go west to California, not so much on his own but as a scout for the folks back home. If he returned singing the praises of the coast, his parents and siblings would return west with him. Often a cousin would accompany this group and then return for his parental family. This relay system created an "extended family" in both the physical and psychological sense, for its members would be stretched out over thousands of miles for two or more years.

The story of the McCowen-Carpenter family<sup>53</sup> of Indiana is a classic illustration of the scout-relay system. In 1849 George McCowen's maternal uncle, John Leonard, joined the gold rush to California. He returned a year later to guide a cousin, John A. Swartz, and his family to California. Then in 1853 school friends and neighbors of young George McCowen went west, and in 1854 George himself, having worried the life out of his parents for permission to go, hired out as a helper to someone who had returned from California to remove his own family there. At Council Bluffs, George quit his job, which consisted of driving 300 sheep across the continent, but he quickly found a surrogate family in the Calhouns who were going west. He must have sent back glowing reports, for in 1857 George's parents, his younger siblings, his Uncle Sam and Aunt Sis McWhinney and their two children, his married<sup>54</sup> sister, Mrs. Margaret Carpenter, and her husband also migrated.

The relay form of migration seems significant, for those coming after the "scout" must have felt they knew where they were going and that there was someone at the end of the trail to welcome them. When George McCowen reached California in 1854, he ended his diary with the notation that he had found his relatives. And then, said he, "I felt at home."<sup>55</sup> The scout-relay approach must have limited the size of the "unknown" in the migrants' minds as they started out. Certainly Mormon immigrants must have felt less nervous because they knew they were to be welcomed by an entire community.

In the last decade the rise of women's studies in universities has led to a rediscovery of the value of overland diaries as a major source of information about the history of women and the family. One of the conclusions social historians have reached about nineteenth century American husband-wife relationships was that by the 1840s they were Victorian even for relatively rural families. That is to say that the wife had ceased to be an equal helpmeet or breadwinning partner on the farm and had made the home her special domain. As her outside chores decreased she was elevated to mother and household manager of a special interior bailiwick in one sense. In another sense she was demoted to being the weaker, more protected sex whose legal and

civil rights were limited.<sup>56</sup> Once on the trail, however, she had to become a partner again, working at physical tasks from dawn to dusk. As Lillian Schlissel has noted, she not only had to work like a man<sup>57</sup> but had to endure pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare as well. She also had to face the fact that if her child was born on the trip there was a good chance that both she and the child would not survive.

Some families sought to avoid turning the wife into a drudge by hiring young men to help drive the animals or collect wood and water. Mrs. Margaret Haun of Clinton, Iowa, confessed that when they started for California she had never cooked before, having been born in a slave state. But the cook they had engaged for the journey quit after her first night on the plains, and Mrs. Haun had to assume her duties.<sup>58</sup> Helen McCowen Carpenter and her husband also hired three young men to assist them, while her father took along his "man," an English yeoman named John Fossett.<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Haun recalled that one helper read as he walked, the second was a college dropout, and the third was in love with a girl in the train with the symbolic name of Miss America West.<sup>60</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Harris on the southern trail took along a husband and wife, both slaves, to drive and cook and wash.<sup>61</sup> The diaries also suggest regional attitudes toward domestic work. Yankee men sometimes shared the domestic chores with their wives; the impression was that the Missouri men never did. Indeed, the abuse Missouri men and male children gave their wives and mothers provoked universal disgust.<sup>62</sup>

At this point traditional ways of categorizing women by region, class, and occupational functions prove insufficient to get at their own perceptions of themselves, their family role, and their overland experiences. A close reading of women's diaries suggests that age had a great deal to do with their conception of the overland trek. Girls in their teens saw the trip as a great adventure. It was both a release from routine chores and a chance to do things normally forbidden them, such as riding horses and herding cattle and mingling intimately with a sizable community the entire way.<sup>63</sup> As John D. Unruh noted, newspapers felt that the overland trip was a perfect honeymoon for newlyweds; and that, indeed, is how many young couples saw it.<sup>64</sup> That did not mean, however, that teen-aged girls or young married women had any real voice in the decision to go west. That decision was almost always a male one. Women with children and older women saw the trip in a far different light, and their presence on the trail did not stem from a sense of adventure but a sense of duty.<sup>65</sup> As John Faragher and Lillian Schlissel have demonstrated, the woman's sphere in the mid-nineteenth century Midwest was confined to a family circle and a small community. Her world was one of relations and friends, mostly female. Inevitably these women mourned the loss of the

extended family environment that they had left behind them far more than the men did, for in a significant number of cases the overland woman had a family confidant who was neither her husband nor her mother. Most often it was a sister-in-law, an aunt, a neighbor's wife, a brother, a cousin, an uncle, or even a father. The strength of this connection, or of the cult of "sisterhood," became evident when some women consented to go only after a close female relative had joined the party or had already gone west.<sup>66</sup>

Yet once the women had adjusted to the realities of the trail, they set up intelligent routines, planned from day to day, insisted on regular meals, tried to keep their families healthy, and sometimes managed to protect the draft animals from abuse. Their presence forced men to think twice about picking fights with Indians or dashing off to chastise Indian raiders. Mrs. Haun saw women as the stabilizing influence in her wagon train.<sup>67</sup>

American women in California and Oregon came to display exceptional independence on occasion. Indeed, the supreme irony sometimes occurred when the wife became the breadwinner by making money as a laundress or by running a boarding house while her unemployed husband searched vainly for gold.<sup>68</sup> In both states, however, the limited Victorian status of women was quickly re-established both in a practical and a legal sense. The women themselves were often so determined to restore the level of life and culture they had left behind that they campaigned for schools or demanded that the family move into town so that the children could go to school. This crusade to restore the old life--and especially the advantages of schooling--was certainly one of the reasons women went into politics and demanded the vote.<sup>69</sup>

Parental journals have less to say about children than one might expect. While the parents were concerned about them, they found their way into the diaries when they had an accident or became ill. The diaries of younger children on the trail suggest that it was a three- to six-month picnic in which they played, roamed, rode ponies, helped drive the cattle, and did chores for their parents. Understandably, the events of childbirth and the death of an infant were covered more thoroughly.<sup>70</sup>

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With the family context in mind as a major institutional factor in the overland trails experience, and assuming that it is significant that not only were the women's responses to the trip different from those of the men, but also that they responded differently at different ages, let us turn to the experiences of men between the ages of sixteen and forty-five on the overland trail. An explanation seems in order as to why they are the main subject of this paper and are being treated in greater detail than women and children.

First, it seems worthy of investigation that such a large percentage of men who went west in the years 1843-69, whether married or unmarried, were young men. It seems probable that a majority of them were in their late teens or twenties. A sampling of fifty-six diaries or journals in which ages are given indicated that two were between six and ten (these were memoirs), eight were between ten and twenty, and ten were between the ages of twenty and thirty. Internal evidence suggests that twenty-three more were also in their twenties, so that actually fifty-eight percent of the sample were in their twenties. Of the remaining thirteen, eight were between thirty and forty, four between forty and fifty, and one was between fifty and sixty. Seventy-six percent of the total sample were under age forty.<sup>71</sup>

Second, since the decision to go west was largely determined by males, it becomes important to inquire into the motives for taking the trip and to see if their own perceptions of the trails experience can be fathomed.

A third reason for pursuing the story of young men on the overland trail is that it provides an opportunity to test a recent hypothesis posed by Dr. Daniel J. Levinson of the Department of Psychology, Yale University, about the way adolescent men mature into adulthood. In 1968, Dr. Levinson and his assistants began a study of forty men of middle age to determine phases and periods of the development of "the individual life" in the broadest sense of that term. The men came from four occupational groups: hourly wage workers, business executives, academic biologists, and novelists. They represented various origins, income groups, and social values. Each was interviewed extensively as to his occupation, love relationships, marriage, and family life.<sup>72</sup>

Dr. Levinson's findings suggest that the adult life structure goes through a "sequence of alternating stable periods and transition periods," the stable periods lasting<sup>73</sup> six to eight years and the transitional ones four to five years. "The meaningful event and its imprint on the person will depend on the<sup>74</sup> developmental period and the life structure in which it occurs."

Since there were such large numbers of young men on the overland trail, Dr. Levinson's model becomes useful with the period of "Early Adult Transition," ages seventeen to twenty-two, which represents the years of transition into early<sup>75</sup> adulthood when a youth is "half in and half out" of his family. Young George McCowen immediately springs to mind as an example.

The second stage, that of "Entering the Adult World," comes between twenty-two and twenty-eight, during which one tries "to test out a structure that provides a viable link between the valued self and the adult society."<sup>76</sup> In this stage the young man has escaped from the family and formed a new "home base of his own." He now has a "mentor," someone other than his father, whom

he can look up to or take advice from. At the same time he has probably settled on an occupation, chosen a mate, and developed a life style.<sup>77</sup> During this stage, observes Dr. Levinson, he is torn by a sense of adventure--of keeping open his options--and a desire to settle down.

There follows a questioning of these earlier desires during the next transition period, the "Age Thirty Crisis," lasting from age twenty-eight to thirty-three.<sup>78</sup> Finally a second adult life structure is evolved between the ages of thirty-two and thirty-nine or forty in which the young adult tries to become established in the world. Still the crises are not ended, for there is yet another period of self-doubt and questioning in the late thirties, and a "Mid-Life Transition" occurs between ages forty and forty-five in which the man assesses his past life and tries to sort out his real values.<sup>79</sup>

It would be absurd to suggest that values and attitudes associated with age-drives in men living in the second half of the twentieth century could be applied to men who found themselves on the overland trails in the middle of the last century. But the broad categories outlined by Dr. Levinson seem an extraordinarily useful device for exploring more fully the attitudes and responses of men of various ages who did go west.<sup>80</sup> Categorization by age might also help explain the relation of certain men to their families.

It should be clear from the outset that there are not sufficient materials in the diaries to construct any model of male adult behavior; but if one reads the diaries by age category, it appears that those migrating in their teens or twenties, even though they might be married with children, tended to do so for reasons of exploration and adventure rather than to settle or to mine gold.<sup>81</sup> Of course, few persons, no matter what age, went to California in 1849-51 with the intention of settling. They thought they would "See the Elephant," make their pile, and return home in triumph. But those going to Oregon and those going to California before 1849 and after 1851 usually had exploration or settlement in mind if they were in their twenties. Even that is too simple an explanation. If we look more closely at the McCowen-Carpenter family we find that young George McCowen went for excitement and adventure. Mr. and Mrs. Carpenter, his brother-in-law and his sister, had begun their married life in Bleeding, Kansas (where they lived near an aunt and an uncle), but had decided it was the wrong place for them. Carpenter was settling down a second time. The senior McCowens were obviously making a final decision to settle down.<sup>82</sup>

Although the motives and careers of scores of male migrants seem to agree with Dr. Levinson's model in a general way, the careers of three diarists seem to follow the model with startling precision.

George W. B. Evans was a young Ohio lawyer in his twenty-ninth year when the gold-rush fever struck him in 1849.<sup>83</sup> Four years earlier he had been a pioneer of sorts when he helped organize Defiance County in the extreme northwest corner of Ohio. He probably did so in connection with an older cousin or uncle, Pierce Evans, who may have been his "mentor." George Evans married, had a son, and in 1844, at age twenty-four, was elected Mayor of Defiance. To all appearances he had settled down. But in 1849 he and fourteen of his neighbors and friends went to California by an absurdly difficult route across northern Mexico. One of his cousins, Rinaldo Evans, started out with him but turned back with half the company rather than continue over the harrowing Mexican route.<sup>84</sup> But Evans persisted, explaining in his diary that "California, the land of my search, still lies many leagues in advance, but with the blessings of a just and righteous God I expect to reach its limits and be enabled to reap its benefits and assist in attenuating the wants of misery consequent upon the misfortune of my fellow beings."<sup>85</sup>

These were noble sentiments; but if one reads between the lines, it appears that Evans had had a bitter dispute with someone back home, possibly his wife, for his sense of guilt over leaving his family was overpowering. Evans suffered from migraine headaches, and by the time he arrived in California he was also seriously ill from a number of ailments. In his thirtieth year he suddenly began to see the value of time. Man has free will, he wrote, "but if we neglect to use the time given to or set apart for the discharge of those duties, we are but spendthrifts and squanderers of an important part of our patrimony, and when lost it can never be regained. Time is money, and we are bound to economize it."<sup>86</sup> However one wishes to describe it, Evans was experiencing self-doubts about his career. Liver trouble, colic, scurvy, and ennui took over and he died in December 1850. Ridden with anxiety about his wife and child, whom he feared had died from a cholera epidemic, Evans learned just before he died that although his wife and child had survived, he had lost an uncle and two cousins from the disease.<sup>87</sup>

Meanwhile his cousin Rinaldo moved from Ohio to Iowa, where he lived for eight years before moving to California where he had brothers living. But after a time he returned to Defiance to live. Rinaldo, too, had explored, but unlike George Evans he had come home to settle down.<sup>88</sup>

Another Ohio man, John A. Johnson of Lower Sandusky,<sup>89</sup> also left his wife and children to go to California in 1849. His stated and undoubtedly sincere purpose was "health and money," for he had a wretched pair of lungs.<sup>90</sup> Throughout his sojourn, Johnson was certainly one of the most homesick men ever to go to California. References to his family appear as a refrain throughout his diary and letters. "Indeed," he wrote, "I never knew

before how much my interest and affection was wrapped up in theirs. But I find I can always live and learn."<sup>91</sup> Johnson, like Evans, also became ill and in 1850 came home via Panama and New Orleans, suffering from colds, kidney stones, and diarrhea. "Indeed, I think I should almost be willing to be thrown into fits to get rid of the diarrhea, as the fits might be cured in this country."<sup>92</sup> Yet his was still a wandering spirit. While in California he dreamed of moving on to Hawaii to raise farm products for the California miners. Besides health and money, Johnson had another reason for going to California;<sup>93</sup> in one of his letters he confessed that he hated Lower Sandusky.

Theodore E. Potter was born on the Michigan frontier, the son of a Pennsylvania tailor who had turned surveyor and frontiersman and had himself gone "west" to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois at age nineteen as a surveyor.<sup>94</sup> Wherever Potter senior moved, incidentally, there were relatives who had preceded him, and others came along soon to join him.<sup>95</sup> When Potter senior died, Mrs. Potter's relatives from New York state appeared on the scene to take her and her brood back with them. But she announced that after all that moving she wished to put down roots in Michigan.<sup>96</sup>

Young Theodore grew up with an older brother acting as surrogate father. He resented his brother's authority and, while a teenager of seventeen, begged to be allowed to go to California, but his mother refused permission until he was twenty. In 1852 he and two young companions from his township joined a wagon train in Missouri in which they found an older Michigan man, William Sherman, who was an expert frontiersman. He soon became Potter's "mentor." Sherman, aged fifty, came to be known as Uncle Billy.<sup>97</sup> Young Potter desperately wanted to be known as a "man" on the trip, but at the end of the journey, the ladies in the party insisted that they be allowed to give him a farewell kiss since he had been the youngest in the group and therefore was "the boy."<sup>98</sup>

Trained in woodsmanship in Michigan, Potter went into sawmilling in California and made money. Then he made more cash as a miner--enough to come home and buy a farm.<sup>99</sup> But he experimented with other jobs, made bad investments, went filibustering south of the border, and finally, after four years' absence, returned to Michigan. Shortly thereafter, while in process of taking his "favorite" sister to school in New York state, Potter struck out for California; but the Mormon War of 1857 delayed his journey and he returned home instead. This time his mother gave him a tongue-lashing, saying, in effect, that he was twenty-five and it was time to settle down.<sup>100</sup> Potter married and moved to the Minnesota frontier where he lived for ten years. There he took part in the Sioux War of the Outbreak and in the Civil War. But in the end he returned to Michigan where he became a very successful lumberman, a variation of his first job in California.<sup>101</sup> It seems safe to



say that Potter did not really settle until he was almost forty. His trip to California was for adventure, not gold, and his Minnesota years certainly coincided with a transitional period in his early thirties.

Certain Oregon diaries appear to support Dr. Levinson's argument that between ages twenty-two and twenty-nine, one is affected by a mentor and a "special woman." John L. Johnson, aged twenty-one, went to Oregon with his parents, the Reverend Neil Johnson and his wife, and family in 1851.<sup>102</sup> Although it was John who kept the account, the behavior of his father is fully as revealing. The Reverend Johnson had homesteaded in Illinois as a young man and had been elected probate judge of his county, but in 1847, after being defeated for reelection, he moved to Iowa. When the gold rush came the Reverend Johnson wanted to go, but with ten children in his household, all under twenty years of age, he dared not leave. Instead he fretted for two years and went to Oregon in 1851.<sup>103</sup> (Since going to California was considered a materialistic act, and Oregon represented stability and homesteads, some faint hearts on the trail to California actually switched to the Oregon trail once they had reached the dividing point at Fort Hall. One is reminded of Vance Packard's observation in The Hidden Persuaders that a family man out to buy a car looks longingly at the sports car in the showroom window but winds up buying the four-door sedan out on the back lot.)

Throughout the trip young John Johnson was half at war with his father--in Levinson's words, "half in and half out of the family." He found a mentor of his own in one Mr. Jones, a Missourian in the train who was the age of his father. Unlike his own father, Mr. Jones was easygoing and good-natured. The Jones family sang and joked as they marched along, and Mr. Jones's daughter, Jane, became John Johnson's "special woman." After much resistance from his own father, John eventually married Jane Jones.<sup>104</sup>

One of the most extraordinary examples of a young man with an extended family, a mentor, and a special woman can be found in the career of Randall Hewitt, who went to Oregon in 1862.<sup>105</sup> Hewitt was born in New York state where he was trained as a printer and machinist. He settled in Michigan as a printer but remained in close touch with relatives in Illinois and Missouri. Although Randall's father was alive and appears to have been a successful man, Randall was greatly attracted to an uncle in Dundee, Illinois, Christopher Hewitt, who had been appointed to the supreme court of Washington Territory in 1862.<sup>106</sup> Young Randall decided to go west with the judge and his family. The party also included the judge's niece and her husband. During the trip Randall fell in love with "Miss Ellen," a cousin whom he married in 1865.<sup>107</sup> Randall's own recollection of the trip was that he

had gone because of the "weird glamour" of the West, "a longing for adventure and exciting experiences" and a boyhood fascination with Lewis and Clark.<sup>108</sup>

Those who traveled overland had such a common mass experience that it provides an opportunity to test the impact of the frontier experience on both the individual and on the family. From the foregoing discussion it would appear that the presence of the family cushioned and limited the effect of the frontier on the individual. Further, it looks as if women in particular arrived in Oregon or California determined to restore the life they had left behind. Mrs. Carpenter spoke for many when she wrote during one of the more gruelling parts of the trip that she was fearful "that what we are obliged to endure each day is robbing us of all sentiment--it is to be hoped that we will not be permanently changed."<sup>109</sup> For some women the overland experience was an aberration, not an adventure or an education. Schlüssel calls it a time of "social dislocation" for the women.<sup>110</sup> The response of young people, both male and female, on the other hand, was to see it as great adventure.

In the case of male adolescents and men between the ages of sixteen and forty, it appears that the maturing process was inextricably mixed up with the frontier experience. That dual process or interaction had gone on long before Oregon lands and California gold had been discovered, for if we look at the parents of the persons who went to California or Oregon we begin to see that they themselves moved once or twice--usually twice--over a twenty-year period.<sup>111</sup> If they were adults, the first move was usually made when they were in their twenties, the second when they were in their thirties or early forties. It seems possible, therefore, that the coincidence of physical moves from the parental home or community toward the West combined the frontier experience with the rite of passage to manhood.

In the second move (or moves) the mature man made what he hoped was his permanent and final settlement. But the act of achieving full maturity was once again tied to physical movement across a frontier region and mastery of a new environment. It is no wonder, then, that the term "frontier" carries such masculine connotations, for the frontier experience coincided with the years in which young men were, with or without a nuclear or extended family, becoming true adults.

Obviously many parts of Dr. Levinson's model pose problems for the historian. Not only are we unable to interview the overland migrants, contemporary attitudes towards family and occupation are notably different from those of the nineteenth century as well. The contemporary pressures to choose a profession or a particular job is far greater today than it was then. As James S. Coleman has observed:

When ours was an agrarian society the needs of youth were necessarily subordinate to the economic struggle, and the rudimentary occupational requisites permitted them to be brought quickly into adult productivity. . . . In short, the task of socialization was resolved by early and continual interaction with the parents and nearby adults.<sup>112</sup>

One could start life at eighteen or twenty, writes Coleman, and be a success by twenty-four or twenty-five in the nineteenth century. That is certainly not the dominant pattern today.<sup>113</sup> There also seems to be an implied determinism in Dr. Levinson's model which most historians would be reluctant to accept as a premise.

Still, the study of the different responses of men of different ages to a common experience seems useful and promising. Indeed, on one level the Levinson model seems timeless. Georges Duby, writing about the young in the aristocratic society of twelfth century France, has found that "youth" lasted from the time a man was dubbed a knight to the time he became a father.<sup>114</sup> The time in between, often lasting from his teens to age forty-five, was one of "non-attachment" and "errantry," and "the life to be most desired was to travel through many lands seeking prizes and adventure." Nor did the youth set out alone, for he would be "escorted by a counselor chosen by his father." The counselor (mentor) was also a youthful person but "one with more experience, and his task would be to advise and restrain the companion, complete his education, and see that the route they followed took in all the most profitable tournaments."<sup>115</sup> The counselor and his companion often joined bands of friends who loved one another like brothers and toured together. Again it is dangerous to draw any extended comparisons between twelfth-century knights errant and overland youth--though the careers of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly and even Theodore Potter as soldiers of fortune seem remarkably similar to that of the aging knight. But the study of age categories and relationships remains promising for any period.<sup>116</sup>

Reaching beyond any model, it seems apparent that by analyzing a larger number of overland diaries and journals written by ordinary persons under stress, we can not only draw conclusions about nineteenth-century family relations and values, but also about the social attitudes of the writers towards Indians, Mexicans, half-breeds, Mormons, Blacks, and other ethnic or regional groups whom they encountered. On the whole their brush with foreigners and minorities made them more patriotic and prejudiced than before. But most importantly, the diaries tell us that the pioneers were pushing back and molding the frontier rather

than succumbing to it. For young men, that was a dramatic rite of passage to mastery and adulthood, and it took place at a time when middle-class values were creating the concept of adolescence.<sup>117</sup> It should be remembered, however, that the cutting edge of the frontier process was not a mere individual but often a family. "We are," wrote one diarist of his train, "thirteen families of about eighty persons."<sup>118</sup> His dual definition is a key to understanding the psychology and sociology of the overland trails experience.

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3. A convenient list of the most available diaries for the central trail is to be found in Merrill J. Mattes, The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline Via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie, Nebraska State Historical Society Publications, vol. 25, (Lincoln, 1969), pp. 523-71.

4. The best general accounts of the central trails are Unruh, The Plains Across; Mattes, The Great Platte River Road; W. J. Ghent, The Road to Oregon: A Chronicle of the Great Emigrant Trail (New York, 1934); Archer B. Hulbert, ed., The Call of the Columbia: Iron Men and Saints Take the Oregon Trail, vol. 4 of Overland to the Pacific (Denver, 1934), as well as his Forty-Niners, The Chronicles of the California Trail; Jay Monaghan, The Overland Trail (Indianapolis, 1947); George R. Stewart, The California Trail: An Epic With Many Heroes (New York, 1962); Dale M. Morgan, ed., Overland in 1846: Diaries and Letters of the California-Oregon Trail, 2 vols. (Georgetown, Calif., 1963); Irene D. Paden, The Wake of the Prairie Schooner (New York, 1943); David Lavender, Westward Vision: The Story of the Oregon Trail (New York, 1963); Gregory M. Franzwa, The Oregon Trail Revisited (St. Louis, 1972). For the so-called Gila Trail, see Ralph P. Bieber, Southern Trails to California in 1849, in Southwest Historical Series, 5 (Glendale, Calif., 1937).

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7. Helen Marnie Stewart, Diary--1853 (Eugene, Oregon, 1961), p. 17.
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16. The term journals here embraces diaries, dictated and printed memoirs, and letters or reports written on the trail.

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24. Gray, Journal, 1849, p. 69.
25. Unruh, The Plains Across, see Volume 1, Chapter 7, and Volume 2, Chapter 11. Unruh also describes the crucial aid provided the emigrants by the federal government and the West Coast assistance societies.
26. Randall Hewitt, Across the Plains and Over the Divide. A Mule Train Journey from East to West in 1862 (New York, 1964--reprinted from 1906 edition), p. 88.
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29. Goulding, "Journal," 1849, p. 15. Goulding went to California on the southern trail, but his experience of Indians operating ferries across streams was more than matched on the central trail. See also Unruh, The Plains Across, 1, Ch. 7.

30. Read, A Pioneer of 1850, pp. 51-52. Read's remarks pale in comparison with the effusions of Charles Gray, "Journal of an Overland Passage from Independence, Mo., to San Francisco, Calif., in 1849," Vol. 2, p. 2, who wrote of a California tribe: "Some of them I could not keep my eyes off of, so finely were they made from neck to heels, no statue I ever beheld (and I have seen a few I reckon) was finer than the men, the markings of the chest, fine arms and legs, slender hips and elegant form were certainly equal to anything I ever saw in the 'Stone ideal' as Byron calls it." Gray was equally taken with the squaws of another tribe who, he believed, had uncommonly well-developed breasts.

31. Mrs. Catherine Margaret Haun, "A Woman's Trip Across the Plains in 1849" (Typescript in HEH), p. 17.

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41. John A. Johnson, 1849 Manuscript (MS in Yale University Western Americana Collections), entry for May 20.

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44. These images can be found in Harris, The Gila Trail; Cox, "From Texas to California in 1849;" Weed, "Narrative . . . 1849;" and Read, A Pioneer of 1850.

45. See Bibliography at end of article for diaries and journals used in this sampling.

46. See Bibliography. The samplings cited here could vary considerably if one concentrated on a particular decade. Reuben Cole Shaw's remark that in 1849 "lawyers, doctors, preachers, teachers, students, merchants, clerks and mechanics . . . in the prime of manhood" went West would not hold for less exciting years, but the assumption that all migrants were farmers is equally misleading. See Shaw, Across the Plains in Forty-Nine (Farmland, Indiana, 1896), p. 13.

47. Haun, "A Woman's Trip . . . 1849," p. 3, recalls that they had flour, bacon, and alcohol in one wagon, a wagon of merchandise to sell, and a third wagon with household effects. Besides dry meats, vegetables, and fruits, they carried a gallon each of wild plum and crab apple preserves and blackberry jam. "Our groceries were wrapped in India rubber covers and we did not lose any of them--in fact still had some when we reached Sacramento."

48. Haun, "A Woman's Trip . . . 1849," p. 2; Carpenter, Diary, 1857, p. 2; John L. Johnson, "Overland to Oregon in 1851" (MS in Yale University Western Americana Collection).

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57. Lillian Schlissel, "Women's Diaries on the Western Frontier," American Studies, 18 (Spring 1977), 87-100.

58. Haun, "A Woman's Trip . . . 1849," pp. 2-3.
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67. Haun, "A Woman's Trip . . . 1849," p. 9.
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69. See T. A. Larson, "Dolls, Vassals, and Drudges--Pioneer Women in the West," Western Historical Quarterly, 3(January, 1972):5-16.

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71. See Bibliography for accounts used in sample.
72. Daniel J. Levinson, "The Mid-life Transition: A Period in Adult Psychosocial Development," Psychiatry 40(May 1977): 99-112. Some implications of Dr. Levinson's study for historians were explored in the spring of 1975 in a series of meetings between Dr. Levinson, Dr. David Musto, Professor David Brion Davis, and the author at Yale University.
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74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., p. 103.
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77. Ibid.
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79. Ibid., pp. 104-5.
80. Levinson's stages of life are not in conflict with the "Eight Ages of Man" described in Erik H. Erikson's Childhood and Society (New York, 1963), pp. 263-64.
81. Maxwell, Crossing the Plains, p. 178, exclaimed that "Memory presents it to me as an itinerary of almost continuous excitement and wholesome enjoyment; a panorama that never grows stale."
82. Carpenter, Diary, 1857, p. 5.
83. George W. B. Evans, Mexican Gold Trail: Journal of a Forty-Niner, ed. by Glenn S. Dumke (San Marino, Calif., 1945).
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# Freedom and Individualism: The Historian's Conception of the Cowboy and the Cattleman

Don D. Walker

Since the time of Crèvecoeur and Tocqueville, the question of American character traits has been a paramount concern to commentators on the American people. With the work of David Riesman and others, we have assumed that a basic shift took place in the American character from individualism to conformity (inner-directed to other-directed). Perhaps nowhere has the image of a basically individualistic character been more pronounced than in the characterization of the nineteenth-century frontiersman--particularly the cowboy.

In this groundbreaking essay, Don D. Walker, professor of English and director of the American Studies program at the University of Utah, questions the assumptions of the place of individualism in the character traits of cowboys. Through the use of textual criticism, he has found that, far from relying on the primary sources to document cowboy individualism, historians have interpreted statements and writings by cowboys from a preconception which made it impossible to achieve anything approaching balance in their analysis.

This essay has most certainly opened an area for research which should lead to further questioning of widely held assumptions about the character traits of frontiersmen in particular and the American people in general. If our image of the character of cowboys is wrong, perhaps the same may be true of the mythology which has developed around mountain men, farmers, and prospectors. It may be that Americans were never really inner-directed in Riesman's sense and that our contemporary attitudes have brought about the creation of an image of the past American character which never existed.

In The Range Cattle Industry, one of the basic works in the historiography of the cattle trade, Edward Everett Dale observes that fiction, poetry, and painting have in many cases given "an entirely false conception of the industry and the region in which it was carried on."<sup>1</sup> One supposes the historian also means here a false conception of the cattlemen and cowboys. Although The Range Cattle Industry is an economic history of the industry and thus concerned primarily with acres grazed, cattle counted, and prices or losses ensuing, it does nevertheless suggest some features of the men involved. Indeed, the final paragraph of the history, with its perorative emphasis upon the men "who met hardship and danger and financial reverses" in an inspirational fashion, clearly implies a certain conception of the cattlemen.<sup>2</sup> One supposes that this conception should be regarded as a true conception.<sup>3</sup>

Although Dale at no point defines the cattlemen's philosophy as individualism, one nevertheless supposes that he shares with other historians a conviction about the central aptness of this value-charged term. "It was quite natural," he writes at one point, "that the ranchman should cling closely to the old idea that 'a government governs best which governs least,' and should even at the present time be somewhat chary of government efforts to help the range cattle interests . . . ."<sup>4</sup> Beyond this view, usually labeled rugged individualism, is the textual possibility of yet other kinds and degrees of individualism.<sup>5</sup>

One historical conception of the cattleman, then, is that he was an individualist, that he was a believer in individualism. Is this a true conception?

While academic historians of the cattle trade have said little about the cowboy's freedom, the traditional historical view has tended to see him as "fascinated with the free untrammelled life of the west."<sup>6</sup> Economic or geographical historians like Osgood, Dale, Webb, and Pelzer might well have trouble fitting a personal freedom into their sometimes deterministic western worlds. Furthermore, since this freedom was often guaranteed by nature, the modern scientific historian might well shy away from the mythic ground of romantic primitivism. Yet other historians, or at least other writers purporting to deal with historical reality rather than with myth or fiction, have persisted in defining the cowboy as a lover of freedom.

A handful of statements, over three-quarters of a century, will illustrate this conception of the cowboy. "The charm of ranch life," wrote Theodore Roosevelt in 1885, "comes in its freedom and the vigorous open-air existence it forces a man to lead."<sup>8</sup> According to William MacLeod Raine and Will C. Barnes, the cowboys with a trail herd from western Texas had "a wild, free life, far from most of the restrictions that residents of towns

and cities accept without question."<sup>9</sup> And finally, in 1965 Ramon F. Adams observed of Bob Kennon: "A typical cowboy, he did not marry until late in life because of his love for the freedom of his profession: that right to wander as he pleased, see new country, and make new friends."<sup>10</sup> Freedom from town restrictions may not of course be exactly the freedom that Roosevelt valued; freedom to wander may not be the same as freedom from a city's legal restraints. But all of these observations seem to recognize in the cowboy a personal sense of impulse unconditioned by close social pressures. Maybe he wanted to ride up one grass-covered hill instead of another grass-covered hill; maybe he wanted to see if the boss and biscuits at the next ranch were better; or maybe he merely wanted to fire his six-shooter at the moon.<sup>11</sup> Supposedly, being a cowboy opened and increased his options. And supposedly this mattered to him to the point that whatever the low pay and the many hardships cowboying was the best of all possible lives.

Another historical conception, then, is that the cowboy was free, that he valued freedom in the cowboy way of life. Is this a true conception?

## I

Although the claim that the cattleman was an individualist has been made by many historians, for economy of discussion the conception can be critically examined in the writings of two major scholars of the cattle trade, Ernest Staples Osgood and Lewis Atherton. Furthermore, although references to individualism are many in these writings, especially in Atherton's, the textual focus can be reduced to brief passages in The Day of the Cattleman and The Cattle Kings.

In Osgood's work, the individualism of the cattleman is an assumption rather than an argued proposition. The historian's study of organization indicated a slow formation of social groups, a fundamental change of circumstances necessitating a fundamental change in frontier character. In his first isolated location, the cattleman was "perforce unsocial,"<sup>12</sup> but with changed conditions "the characteristic frontier individualism" succumbed "to the equally characteristic need for group effort."<sup>13</sup>

That the frontier individualism was characteristic of the cattleman apparently needed no proof here. At least Osgood offers none, as if proof is unnecessary. But while the claim that the cattleman was unsocial may perhaps be accepted easily, at least in the sense that isolation made organized society difficult if not impossible,<sup>14</sup> the individualism is another matter. Frontier isolation does not necessarily make individualism. On the contrary, as sociologists, psychiatrists, and novelists will testify,

it may indeed diminish the sense of self and intensify the human need for a group identity.<sup>15</sup>

Apparently Osgood could start with the assumption of individualism because he accepted the thesis of history's great philosopher of frontier character.<sup>16</sup> Although he does not cite Turner at this specific point in The Day of the Cattleman, it is safe, I believe, to call Osgood a practicing, if not devout, Turnerian.<sup>17</sup>

Frederick Jackson Turner's classic formulation came of course in the essay of 1893, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History": "To the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics." Among these is "that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy which comes with freedom."<sup>18</sup> That it works for more good than evil is perhaps suggested in an earlier passage: "The frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy."<sup>19</sup> What was the historical evidence to justify such a claim? The documentation is sketchy here, to say the least.

One turns, then, to another historian, this time for a history of the historian himself. Following Turner through the genesis of the frontier thesis, Ray Allen Billington has written what seems to me an earnest but curious piece of history--although Billington himself obviously does not see it in this way. Where did Turner find the characteristic individualism? He may have read an essay by E. L. Godkin, editor<sup>20</sup> of The Nation, noting that frontier life fostered individualism. He may have read William Graham Sumner's articles crediting vacant lands and underpeopled territories with stimulating individualism.<sup>21</sup> He may have absorbed the ideal of individualism from the agrarian myth of the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> He took note of some conclusions in Herbert L. Osgood's "England and the Colonies." "No conditions are so favorable to the growth of individualism as frontier life . . . . Society is atomized."<sup>23</sup> He was pleased, says Billington, with Robert Baird's View of the Valley of the Mississippi, or the Emigrant's and Traveller's Guide to the West with its gallery of traits, including "independence of thought and action."<sup>24</sup> And he probably found support in Achille Loria's claims that free land "infused a conscience [sic] of liberty," that it fostered an antisocial tendency.<sup>25</sup>

It is curious that in all of this source material there is not one piece of firsthand historical evidence, not one scrap of proof that Turner knew frontier individualism in any immediate form, not one instance of grounding his generalization in the individualisms of concrete historical persons. One cannot say that Turner demonstrated that the frontier engendered individualism; one cannot say that Billington demonstrates that Turner demonstrated it.<sup>26</sup> Yet clearly there are conceptions here. There is indeed a compelling logic in the views of Godkin, Sumner, and



others, and there is a compelling logic in the thesis of Turner. The conceptions, however, are ideological, not historical. They are perhaps true conceptions in the sense that they are coherent within the structure of the American democratic ideology, but this is a quite different proposition from saying that they are true to the concrete nature of historical persons.

This is not of course to say that individualism was not a frontier characteristic. The evidence so far considered does not justify that sort of negative historical proposition. It is to say that in writing history we need to know individualism inductively from concrete evidence, not deductively from ideological principles. In the instance of the cattlemen, we need to know from the cattlemen themselves. Where better to make a start?

As historian, Atherton seems at first reading a good bit closer to these cattlemen. "Ranchers and cowboys alike," he writes, ". . . expressed allegiance to individualism from the earliest days of the cattle kingdom. In describing ranchers and drovers, Joseph G. McCoy used word after word that correlated nicely with that concept. Such men were hardy, self-reliant, free, independent, and acknowledged no superior or master in the whole wide universe. Possessed as they were with a strong innate sense of right and wrong, they quickly resented any infringement on their freedoms."<sup>27</sup>

The burden of evidence here falls entirely upon McCoy's Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade. But historically is that work the solid ground Atherton apparently takes it to be? The importance of Historic Sketches is beyond dispute. Published in 1874, it provided contemporary observations by a leader in the cattle trade. It does, as its author intended, give much "practical and correct information."<sup>28</sup> However, to suppose that it is thus a compendium of objective fact and interpretation would be naive indeed. In style and manner, it is often humorous and satirical.<sup>29</sup> Clearly it is touched with the sometimes fierce prejudices of its author.

Undoubtedly McCoy knew a good many cattlemen. Yet how objective was his conception of them? Consider three observations in the passage cited by Atherton. "They are disposed to measure every man's<sup>30</sup> action and prompting motives by the rule of selfishness." One may suppose that McCoy as a business man empirically knew this selfish characteristic of many cattlemen. Atherton, it should be noted, does not include this negative side to the individualism of the rancher. "With a strong innate [sic] sense of right and wrong . . . they [Southwestern cattlemen] are, as would naturally be supposed, when the manner of their life is considered, a hardy, self-reliant, free and independent class,<sup>31</sup> acknowledging no superior or masters in the wide universe." Whether or not this says anything reliable about the existential nature of individual cattlemen, it does epitomize a basic notion

in what I would call the frontier ideology of the nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> But surely, in any kind of rigor and sophistication of historical anthropology, one cannot in the twentieth century attribute a strong innate sense of right and wrong to anybody. That conception is simply too transcendental to be other than an archaic faith from a time past.

The most striking, indeed the most radical, proposition in McCoy's formulation of the cattleman's individualism is the following: "Each man seems to feel himself an independent sovereign, and as such capable of conducting his affairs in his own way, subject to nobody or nothing save the wishes, tastes and necessities of himself."<sup>33</sup> To match the first clause of this sentence, one must go to the writings of the philosophical anarchists, Warren, Andrews, and Tucker. But did McCoy mean what they meant, that the individual self is sovereign and thus not only entitled to its own unique identity but also respectful of the sovereignty of other individual selves? It is, I submit, difficult, if not impossible, to find this kind of philosophical individualism in the documents close to the concrete cattlemen.

As historians, we do not know that the frontier life of the cattlemen "atomized" his society. While society was "highly rarefied," to use the metaphor of Webb in The Great Plains, we do not illuminate their human and social condition by adding that "the human particles were far apart, and they oscilated over wide spaces."<sup>34</sup> Even if the image could be validated historically, it would be a strange vehicle to represent the heroic individualism valued by Turner, Webb, Dale, and almost every other frontier historian. If it has an aptness in the historical writings of Henry Adams, it seems incongruous when related to the persons of John Chisum or Shanghai Pierce or Charles Goodnight. To this society is not to atomize it. To force men to become self-reliant does not force them to regard their selves as sovereign. There is no evidence so far as I know that Goodnight, however independent and self-reliant he may have seemed to be, regarded himself as sovereign. And certainly there is no evidence that he regarded all other men as having a unique value in their individual persons.<sup>35</sup>

Historiographically there are two sorts of difficulties in the conception that the cattleman was a believer in individualism. There is, first of all, the problem of knowing what the term signifies, and then there is the problem of knowing that the signification truly rises from the concrete thoughts and actions of historic persons.

It seems reasonable to suppose that R. H. Williams was making a verifiable observation when he wrote, "The range problem of management is more individualistic than any other system of agriculture."<sup>36</sup> In the sense that management decisions and the tasks of implementing these decisions fall upon a man alone on his

own ranges, the management function is individualistic. And this would have been more generally true a hundred years ago than today. It would have been particularly true of trail driving, for even several years' experience, the emergence of routine practices, and the structuring of the long event into a plan could not eliminate the chanciness and the consequent need for urgent decisions and impromptu actions. Trail driving must have developed self-reliance.<sup>37</sup> Isolated responsibility must have developed self-sufficiency.<sup>38</sup> The cattleman may indeed have grown accustomed to having his own way.<sup>39</sup> And when organized society crowded in and began trying to solve his problems for him, he may well have resented this governmental interference. When he spoke politically, he spoke in tones of self-reliance. Even his organizations ironically advocated a rugged individualism.<sup>40</sup>

But this, it seems to me, is about as far as one can go. When Sumner wrote about individualism, he probably meant a laissez-faire doctrine seemingly sanctioned by social Darwinism. Individuals in this natural competitive environment must indeed be rugged. With its emphasis upon natural rights and power, this individualism was of course a new kind of primitivism. But whatever the pride in ruggedness, it had little to do with the philosophy that gives a metaphysical and moral sanctity to the individual person. If the frontier fostered only a rugged individualism, it did little to engender democracy.<sup>41</sup>

Yet the frontier ideology was democratic. It put value upon individualism, upon the unselfish as well as the selfish kind. And in a later time, as individualism has continued to be valued, perhaps in the context of what Graham Wallas called the Great Society to be valued even more, there has consequently been a kind of cultural pressure upon history to give a historical as well as moral validation of individualism.

Perhaps this ideological pressure can help explain the curious gap which sometimes seems to exist between the reluctant personal evidence and the earnest historical interpretation of it. A case in point: In his introduction to James C. Shaw, North from Texas, Herbert O. Brayer notes that "the cattleman and his family were wedded to the concept of unlimited time and space, freedom of movement, and individualistic action characteristic of the West."<sup>42</sup> To this observation he adds that "though militantly independent and individualistic throughout his entire life, he was a firm believer in the efficacy of cooperative action within the cattle industry."<sup>43</sup> However, Shaw's text, which follows does nothing whatsoever to support these claims.<sup>44</sup>

Is, then, the conception that the cattleman believed in individualism a true conception? True, we must answer, only in a limited sense of that term and only in particular instances. The grand generalizations we have been accustomed to reading must be regarded with continuing doubt.

## II

The passing of the unfenced range brought many changes to the cattle trade, and many of these have been dealt with in fullness and authority by the economic historians. But for reasons which I have already suggested, one aspect of the fenced world has been left to other writers. I mean the absence of freedom and the sense of loss that supposedly went with that absence. A cowboy maker of verses spoke the lament: "We've been too used to Freedom on the Ranges Nature grewed."<sup>45</sup>

Whatever the objective reality a hardheaded historian might seek to know, a prevailing view of the frontier ranges has valued their freedom, not merely because they were there to be used without ownership but also because they were presumably the invigorating setting of personal liberty. Certainly this was what might be called the official view at the close of the nineteenth century and in the decades following. A free frontier was basic, one might say, in the ideology of western ranges. It can be called the official view because it was called forth so frequently on ritualistic occasions when the cattlemen idealized himself and his world. For example, speaking to the American National Live Stock Association in 1906, Governor Alva Adams of Colorado, himself a stockman, described the ranges before fences and ditches as "a vast territory of freedom." Cattlemen, he added, "have never discarded the brave and manly traits that were theirs in the wild, free life of the open range."<sup>46</sup> From somewhat different perspectives, others would sound a similar note. Walter Farwell, of the wealthy family that owned the gigantic XIT Ranch in Texas, reminisced: "It is a compensation to have known the Panhandle at the turn of the century, when the frontier was free and unregenerate, with civilization and decorum still in the future."<sup>47</sup> And the historian of the XIT wrote in one of his books: "There was the freedom of the frontier, and a breaking of many of the bonds of propriety that cramped some men in a settled land."<sup>48</sup>

These three claims about the frontier leave us with no clear idea about its freedom. If freedom is wildness, we may seem to have the untamed behavior of a cowboy shooting up a cowtown. This letting loose, as we shall see, was indeed one way in which the cowboy defined his freedom. The good governor, however, probably meant wildness in a gentler sense. The freedom of the wilderness is of course a wild freedom involving no necessary image of violent and erratic behavior.<sup>49</sup> The wilderness freedom mentioned by Turner in his famous essay enticed Americans westward not so they could raise hell but because it supposedly opened their spiritual possibilities. If one conceives the frontier as free and unregenerate while civilization is decorum and propriety, one has, of course, a form of primitivism.

It is useful to establish this ideological base before considering the cowboy and his freedom. More than any other man he became the embodiment of frontier freedom. He seemed, as John Clay wrote of the Texan, "like a bird of the wilderness, accustomed to freedom."<sup>50</sup> "The basic reason for the differences between the cowboy and other men," wrote Stewart Edward White, "rests finally on an individual liberty, a freedom from restraint either of society or convention, a lawlessness, and accepting of his own standard alone."<sup>51</sup>

But if the cowboy is to be defined in terms of his work--many historians and historical literary critics insist on this<sup>52</sup>--then cowboying was primarily a matter of riding horses, driving cows, and roping and branding calves. And if the cowboy was free, the freedom should have been in his cowboying. If his work was a function of the free range, his freedom should have been a function of his range life.

However, consider some observations by men close to the concrete life of the cowboy. "If I could go up the trail," thought young Billie Timmons, "I'd have a freer life."<sup>53</sup> The young cowboy worked for Goodnight on his Cross J Ranch, and Goodnight could have told him that the trip up the trail was "a rough, hard, adventurous life, but was not without its sunny side; . . . when everything moved smoothly the trip was an agreeable diversion from the monotony of the range."<sup>54</sup> McCoy could have added that when the herd was sold, a day of rejoicing came to the cowboy, for then he could "go free and have a jolly time."<sup>55</sup> Or as one cowboy remembered in his autobiography, when the drive had reached Miles City and the cowboys were to be paid off, "We were wild to have our freedom, and now, at least, we were one happy bunch of cow-punchers."<sup>56</sup> So the cowboy escaped the monotony of the range by going up the trail and then escaped the monotony of the trail by getting wildly drunk in the cowtown. What kind of freedom was this?

It is a curious fact, or at least a considered impression, that freedom, like individualism, has been a much more active word in the vocabulary of historians than in the vocabulary of cattlemen and cowboys. Almost anybody writing an introduction to a cowboy book cannot seem to get along without it. One suspects again the ideological need to affirm a frontier value. A case in point: In 1957, Will Tom Carpenter's Lucky 7, A Cowman's Autobiography was published with an introduction by Elton Miles. On one page of the introduction the following bits of frontier rhetoric are gathered: "a man's love of the freedom of the cattle trail," "half a continent of unfenced prairies that seduced a man and held him jealously," "the unfettered life of the cattle-driver," "the free and flat grasslands," "his joyful independence," "limitless freedom of movement," "his freedom-loving spirit."<sup>57</sup> The text of the autobiography, while it does

speak of "the wide, wide world," shows nothing and says nothing about freedom. On the contrary, it says a lot about the hard, hard work. A similar absence of the experience and idea of freedom can be noted in other diaries and so-called autobiographies. For example: In 1876, seventeen-year-old William Emsley Jackson helped drive a herd of cattle from Oregon to Wyoming. His diary gives no sense whatsoever of a cowboy living a life of freedom. In fact the word free is used only once, and that use is unconsciously ironical. When he has been paid off and his chores have been turned over to someone else, he says, "I am like that little darky now, 'I'se [a] free nigger."<sup>58</sup> E. C. Abbott, in the classic autobiography We Pointed Them North, tells of the cowboy's independence, wildness, and love of fun,<sup>59</sup> but says almost nothing about freedom. The two instances, as I shall point out, are revealing. He does, I should add, say a good bit about the long hours and the hard work.

That many of the supposedly historical claims made about the cowboy are ideological can, I think, be suggested by a critical consideration of two of the western conceits associated with Will Tom Carpenter: limitless freedom of movement and freedom-loving spirit. The historical experience of Americans "proved" to them that in movement lay freedom, that distance and extended space were essential to the geography of freedom. Go west across the Atlantic. Go west across the Appalachian Mountains. Go west across the rolling prairies. Westward, said Thoreau, is the direction of freedom. If you can move, you are free.

Americans moved, however, not because they were sucked into the great vacuum of the West but because, as Turner said, they loved freedom. Love of freedom was natural, inherent in the makeup of human nature. If the cattlemen, as McCoy said, had an innate sense of right and wrong, the cowboy, others could point out, had an innate love of freedom.

Applied to Will Tom Carpenter, then, these notions have been deduced from the democratic frontier ideology, not induced from the concrete existential feelings, thoughts, and actions of a historical cowboy.

In historical retrospect, we should have seen, as Jefferson did see, that physical liberty is not moral liberty. And had we as historians looked closely at the supposed geography of freedom, had we mapped it in its concrete details, we would have seen that movement was never limitless, that a cowboy did not even have the full measure of physical liberty attributed to him.

Was the cowboy, then, free? Was he a lover of freedom? I assume when we ask these questions that we mean something more, or other than, the freedom to leave the ranch or the herd in order to have a wild time in Dodge City. Our answers here will depend upon our data and the metahistorical assumptions we use to interpret and organize these data. From the Marxist point of view the

cowboy was not free. The socioeconomic data may be thin, to say the least, but this thinness did not prevent Marx's daughter and her husband from asserting that the cowboy's "supposed 'freedom' is no more of a reality" than is the factory worker's.<sup>60</sup> But this conception of the cowboy is of course another ideological version. In the context of the social Darwinism of the late nineteenth century, the man of the range should have been seen as a product of environmental forces acting to make the new social species cowboy.<sup>61</sup> And if the ranges were included in the block universe, the pervasive determinism should have left the cowboy a mere pawn of an impersonal biological destiny. This, too, would have been another ideological conception. The historian could not possibly demonstrate empirically the causes and effects of a Darwinistic development. He could only speak, as some did, the key words natural selection and trust that this somehow explained something.

If one started not from a covering principle of some kind but from what the concrete evidence might tell, what answers were possible? As already mentioned, E. C. Abbott mentions free or freedom twice in his recollections. Speaking of the Cheyennes and their desperate return to their homelands, he says "you couldn't blame them for that because they were only savages and were fighting for their freedom like savages."<sup>62</sup> This, it seems to me, is little more than a primitivistic cliché, doing little to illuminate the concrete motivations of the Indians and throwing even less light on the cowboys' sense of themselves.

The other reference, though seemingly slight and casual, is nevertheless revealing. "When I was eighteen or nineteen," the cowboy remembers, "I was so full of that shooting business, I couldn't be free to enjoy myself, anyway not like I did later."<sup>63</sup> In one popular version of the cowboy, what is sometimes called the mythic version, he is free to arm himself with a six-shooter, free to engage in random shoot-outs, dying if he dies in an act of total responsibility. The version is humanistically false, not because it leads to more gunfire than history warrants but because it is psychologically superficial. It says nothing about the anxiety that goes with a lonely and potentially violent responsibility. The cowboy in such circumstances may not have felt free at all, but if he did believe he acted freely, his freedom at best was probably an anxious freedom.

Is, then, the conception that the cowboy believed in freedom a true conception? True, if true at all, we must answer again, only in a limited sense and only in particular instances. We really know so little about the cowboy, about historical persons who were cowboys, about the concrete sense in which they knew themselves or by which others could perceptively know them, that we should only with caution and reluctance make generalizations about them.

### III

Beyond this inconclusive conclusion, the critic of history can, I believe, draw some useful observations. Obviously a major problem in the historiography of the cattle trade at the point of better understanding the men involved is the scarcity of reliable concrete data. We have an abundance of statistical materials on such things as numbers of cows driven, sold, and slaughtered, acres fenced, miles of wire strung; we have an abundance of detail about kinds of saddles, numbers of cinches, diameters of spur rowels, designs of chaps. But we do not have adequate personal information, the inside concrete particulars by which the nature of the person can be known. Yet even if our study tables were heaped with notes bearing a richness of such detail, that richness would be a pedantic chaos unless we also had reliable ways to sort and organize the detail into true conceptions.

At the risk of a too tidy simplification, I suggest three revisions or additions toward a better historical philosophy and methodology. At the point of some historical concerns, particularly such conceptions as individualism and freedom, we need a more adequate anthropology. By adequate I mean a doctrine of man that not only holds the human facts in what I would call human coherence but is ever conditioned by the facts themselves. The anthropological model must always be a tentative construct, what the pragmatists called a finder, an idea used to bring particular human phenomena into a meaningful, but perhaps temporary, unity. For the <sup>64</sup>historian it should never be hypostasized into reality itself.

As historians we need new historical sociologies. To say that isolated ranchers were unsocial, that lonely line-riding cowboys existed wholly outside any kind of cultural tissue, is a reductive evasion. We have so long celebrated the independence of range people, seeing them as reluctantly, begrudgingly brought together in association, that we have tended to believe that vacant space <sup>65</sup>is necessarily as empty of society as it is empty of smoky cities.

Finally we need new ideologies, or better still <sup>66</sup>ideologies, if freedom from ideology is indeed possible. Ideologies do provide a sustaining tradition of concepts, a context of values important to the sense of purpose of a people or a nation. But if history means getting back to the way things were, not the way we prefer that they be, if the ideological principles substitute their meanings for the meanings that we ought to dare to derive empirically, then we are getting tradition or the treasured past rather than history. Thus history must be radical in the sense that it insist on going back to a maximum concreteness, that it be willing, if necessary, to throw aside the conceptual baggage it has gathered so far. For what historians



seek after all is truth, not time-honored conceptions, truth about concrete persons in historical times and places. The cowboys and cattlemen were such persons. Surely they, as much as presidents and kings, deserve our best efforts to understand them.

## REFERENCES

1. The Range Cattle Industry (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1930), p. 73. Earlier, Dale mentions "numerous writers who in many cases have had little conception of the real conditions of ranch life" (p. xv). The difference between "little conception" and "false conception" is of course not clear.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 186. Between the first paragraph of Dale's work and the final paragraph, there is a philosophical antithesis deserving careful study. It reveals, it seems to me, an ideological feature of much frontier historiography. The economic and geographical histories of Dale, Osgood, Webb, and Pelzer share a consequent tension which I plan to examine elsewhere.

3. The concept true conception is of course a difficult one. When the novelist speaks of a true conception, he means only that the many pieces of his idea of a man (or whatever else he may be conceiving) hold together in a convincing way. Thus the true conception of a cowboy has finally little to do with the authenticity of his pants, the length of his rope, or even the closeness of his cows. Historians, however, have rarely trusted the literary imagination as a maker of truth. They don't want to make truth; they want to find it. They suppose their conception is true when it is validated not by their own subjective enterprises but by the objective evidence of their sources. The pieces of their idea of a man, say a cowboy or a cattleman, must derive from authenticated historical persons. That the pieces taken together have logical human coherence may perhaps seem less important, at least to some historians, than the "factualness" of the pieces. But obviously historians as well as novelists need to be concerned with the problems of putting the pieces together.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

5. By textual possibility I mean simply that Dale's work is open to further inference. It says nothing that explicitly precludes some of the other individualisms I shall introduce.

6. As Granville Stuart described the sons of eastern capitalists who invested in the western cattle business. Forty Years on the Frontier, vol. 2 (Glendale: The Arthur Clark Co., 1957), p. 238.

7. Louis Pelzer might be a case in point. The Cattlemen's Frontier (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936) is a work curiously shaped by its sources. One might even say sometimes curiously at odds with its sources. One of these sources was John Clay, My Life on the Range, published in 1922 and 1924. Describing the prospects for the young Hubert Teschemacher, Clay wrote: "There was before him the wild free life of the cowboy, the morning cup of coffee, the long rides to circle around the cattle . . . and at night sweet sleep under clear skies, breathing refreshing air" (p. 77; italics mine). In Pelzer this becomes, "Before him was the life of the cowboy, the morning cup of coffee, the long rides to circle around the cattle . . . and then sleep under clear Wyoming skies" (p. 107). Describing the cowboy from Texas, Clay wrote: "The Texan, like a bird of the wilderness, accustomed to freedom, not trained to be interfered with, a child of the frontier handy with his gun . . ." (p. 108; italics mine). In Pelzer this becomes, "The youth of Texas who had come to Dodge City in their saddles were, like birds of the plains, unaccustomed to the restraints of the invading grangers" (p. 69). Changing Clay's simile like birds of the wilderness to like birds of the plains may well be a movement away from terms with an aura of romantic primitivism.

8. Hunting Trips of a Ranchman, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906; first copyright in 1885), p. 17. Even the spring roundup provided "exultant pleasure in the boldness and freedom of the life" the riders were leading. Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. 91. It may be that Roosevelt was more cattleman than cowboy, yet there is no clear distinction in his writings between the man who owns the cows and the men who work them. When Roosevelt wrote about his own ranch experiences and values, he clearly assumed that the ordinary cowboy shared them.

9. Cattle, Cowboys and Rangers (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1930), p. 287. While Raine, in the judgment of some historians, may have seemed to add to the false conceptions in fiction, his novels should not be confused with his history. Even in a somewhat popular work like Cattle, one supposes he is not working with novelistic conceptions. So far as I know, Will Barnes has seemed matter-of-fact enough to satisfy most historians.

10. Preface to Bob Kennon, From the Pecos to the Powder, A Cowboy's Autobiography (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. vii.

11. But as any cowboy would know, one doesn't have the freedom to shoot at the moon. The shot might cause the cattle to stam-pede.

12. The Day of the Cattleman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; copyright 1929 University of Minnesota Press), p. 115.

13. Ibid., p. 117.

14. Sociologists, Karl Kraenzel and others, have empirically demonstrated this. The form of their proposition would of course be isolation makes.

15. In an interesting speculation Charles Neider speaks of the cowboy's "ego exhaustion." Psychologists, particularly existential psychologists, recognize that the psychic encounter with vast space will have very different consequences depending upon the psychic structures brought to the encounter. Even behaviorists, I suspect, must question the simplifications involved in Turner's notion of the plasticity of pioneer life.

16. Surely one must here call Turner a philosopher rather than a historian.

17. Early in the chapter called "Organization," Osgood did cite the final essay in The Frontier in American History. The introduction to his course "History of the American Frontier" at the University of Minnesota was, as I personally remember it, pure Turner.

18. The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1958), p. 37.

19. Ibid., p. 30. There are of course other references to individualism in The Frontier. See, for example, pp. 78, 107, 140, 153, 165, 183, and 203.

20. The Genesis of the Frontier Thesis, A Study in Historical Creativity (San Marino, Cal.: The Huntington Library, 1971), pp. 69-70.

21. Ibid., p. 71.

22. Ibid., p. 72.

23. Ibid., pp. 122-23.

24. Ibid., p. 126.

25. Ibid., pp. 139, 141.

26. At one point Billington says, "Walter Bagehot had demonstrated that the West was a 'breaker of custom,' and that it made the people more restless, more high-strung, more prone to move and to experiment" (Ibid., p. 142). Bagehot's reasoning may be good, but his demonstration is scarcely an instance of rigorously inductive historical proof.

27. The Cattle Kings (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), p. 108.

28. "Preface," Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest (Kansas City, Mo., 1874).

29. See, for example, McCoy's description of the dancing cowboy, p. 139, and his account of the "experts" trying to solve the problem of the Texas fever, pp. 153-56.

30. Ibid., p. 145.

31. Ibid., p. 146.

32. Implicit here is the primitivistic assumption common in the late nineteenth century that a man is good because he is a son of nature. Since nature is good, her children are endowed with a natural moral sense.

33. Ibid., p. 146. McCoy repeated the idea on p. 254.

34. The Great Plains (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1930), p. 245.

35. "To treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." Immanuel Kant, as quoted by James MacGregor Burns and Jack Walter Peltason, Government by the People (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1957), p. 9.

36. "The Live Stock Ranges of Texas," The Cattleman 17 (March, 1931):35.

37. Thus one tends to accept the testimonies in The Trail Drivers of Texas, ed. by J. Marvin Hunter (Nashville, 1925). "Men depended upon themselves" (p. 28). "Men have been solving problems that required courage, self-reliance, willingness to assume responsibility" (p. 208). "John R. Blocker, being a hardy, self-reliant young man . . . was especially fitted for trail life" (p. 319).

38. "Jim [Redfern] was 'sufficient unto himself.'" John K. Rollinson, Wyoming Cattle Trails (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, 1948), p. 160.

39. J. Frank Dobie wrote a chapter in his Cow People (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964) called "Having His Own Way."

40. See Charles A. Burmeister, "Six Decades of Rugged Individualism: The American National Cattlemen's Association," Agricultural History, 30(October, 1956):143-50.

41. Some writers have played what seem to me rhetorical tricks at the point of individualism. Philip Ashton Rollins, for example, asserted that "every Westerner was an intense individualist," letting other people "do as they liked, provided they neither improperly interfered with his rights nor contravened such of the tenets of the Cattle Country's code of ethics as the West deemed to be vital and fundamental both to the maintenance of life and liberty and to the pursuit of happiness." The Cowboy (New York, 1922), p. 302. To imply that the cattleman's code of ethics continued the democratic ideals of the Declaration of Independence is a bit of Cow Country idealism, to say the least. The implication has no solid foundation in empirical history.

42. James C. Shaw, North from Texas, Incidents in the Early Life of a Range Cowman in Texas, Dakota and Wyoming 1852-1883 (Evanston, Ill.: The Branding Iron Press, 1952), p. vi.

43. *Ibid.*, p. x.

44. It can be argued, of course, that the evidence of Shaw's individualism is to be found in other documents. Such an argument, however, would not make Brayer's claims relevant to Shaw's text. If there is other evidence, it certainly would be critically relevant to the introduction, for that as a piece of history does not float free of the need for substantiation.

45. Ordinarily one would not quote verse in a study of this kind, particularly bad verse, but the line in this case is quoted from Verne Lawson's "The Passing of the Range," reprinted in Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Convention of the National Live Stock Association (1904), pp. 410-12.

46. Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the American National Live Stock Association (Denver, 1906), p. 18.

47. Quoted in Cordia Sloan Duke and Joe B. Frantz, 6,000 Miles of Fence, Life on the XII Ranch of Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p. 179. There is a beautiful irony here. The cowboys of the XII say nothing about the freedom of the frontier. That notion thus comes solely from a ranchman whose big interest was playing polo and whose wife cruised the Mediterranean on a yacht.

48. J. Evetts Haley, George W. Littlefield, Texan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), p. 91.

49. Turner, The Frontier in American History, p. 22.

50. John Clay, My Life on the Range (New York: Antiquarian Press, Ltd., 1961), p. 108.

51. "On Cowboys," The Outlook 78(September 3, 1904):83.

52. By historical literary critics I mean those critics who seem to believe that the truth of fiction should be the truth of history. Included here are Devoto, Branch, Dobie, Frantz and Choate, and a good many others. For a literary criticism of these critics, see my article "Criticism of the Cowboy Novel: Retrospect and Reflections," Western American Literature, 11 (February, 1977):275-96.

53. Even Billie's hopes were much more modest than those of the cowboy of traditional conception. Freedom meant the right to keep a horse even if it threw him several times. One suspects that Billie didn't have the faintest notion that there might somewhere be a vague condition of spiritual openness.

54. Quoted in Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry of the United States (New York, 1959), p. 533.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 552.

56. Kennon, From the Pecos to the Powder, pp. 61-62. In the cowtowns, the cowboys "were no longer the reserved, self-repressed men of the range, but threw off all restraint, and measured their 'enjoyment' of their few days of freedom and revelry by the degree of uproar with which they proclaimed their presence." Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry, pp. 551-52.

57. Elton Miles, "Introduction" to Will Carpenter, Lucky 7, A Cowman's Autobiography (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1957), p. ix.

58. J. Orin Oliphant and C. S. Kingston, eds., "William Emsley Jackson's Diary of a Cattle Drive from La Grande, Oregon, to Cheyenne, Wyoming, in 1876," Agricultural History 23(October, 1949):273.

59. E. C. Abbott and Helena Huntington Smith, We Pointed Them North, Recollections of a Cowpuncher (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955). "Texas cowpunchers, the most independent class of people on earth" (p. 13). "Another thing about cowpunchers, they were the most independent people on earth" (p. 212). It can, of course, be argued that independence is freedom. But without knowing concretely the nature of the Texan independence--the rhetorical quality of the assertions here and elsewhere makes one doubt the objective signification--we cannot easily substitute one term for the other. I once knew an old hermit miner who lived alone with his cats in a dirty dugout. He was independent, but I think one could also say that he was a slave to his independence. Abbott's wildness and fun seemed to come almost entirely in the "cowboying" done in the saloons and whorehouses. There is, one can say, nothing primitivistic in We Pointed Them North. Note Abbott's attitude toward nature, pp. 28-29.

60. Edward and Eleanor Marx Aveling, The Working-Class Movement in America (New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969), p. 155.

61. I say should have, believing that, as a matter of textual fact, the full consequences of social Darwinism were not presented. There are Darwinistic assumptions in the structure and substance of Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry, but there is also a philosophy of nature of a quite different kind. This intellectual mixture I have examined in "History and Imagination: Prose and Poetry of the Cattle Industry, 1895-1905," Pacific Historical Review 45(August, 1976):379-97. Theodore Roosevelt liked to use Darwinistic language, as for example, "the struggle for existence is very keen in the far West" (Ranch Life



and the Hunting Trail, p. 16), but it cannot be argued that Roosevelt examined ranch life as a biological complex. Webb wrote in The Great Plains, p. 246, "A process of natural selection went on in the cattle country as it probably did nowhere else on the frontier," but he didn't really validate this assertion. If the cowboy had been generally seen as a pawn of biological circumstances, we would perhaps have had a naturalistic novel with a cowboy hero (victim). While there are cowboys in the fiction of Frank Norris and Stephen Crane, at least one cowboy in the writings of Jack London, and naturalistic forces in Dorothy Scarborough's The Wind, there has never been, so far as I know, a thoroughly naturalistic cowboy novel.

62. Abbott, We Pointed Them North, p. 154.

63. Ibid., p. 89.

64. For the novelist the situation is different. He supposes that there is a literary species of man called cowboy. Drawing from history, personal observation, a writer's reservoir of insights into human nature, he creates a character who is a cowboy. While the cowboy may ride a horse, wear chaps, brand calves, the important thing about him ultimately is that he is a man, an imaginative figure fraught with human significance. We do not ask, is he true to the cowboys on the Powder River ranges in 1885? We ask, is he true to life? We do not ask, does he help us understand what happened when the herd crossed the Red River in 1874? We ask, does he help us understand what happens when a man is alone in a vast world, or when he commits himself to possible violence by wearing a gun? The novelist's model may be modified as his insight deepens, but he hopes nevertheless that his sense of man is universal and enduring if not eternal. He at least trusts that his model is not ever at the mercy of newly discovered historical data.

65. Some sociologists are of course reluctant to engage in historical sociology. The kinds of data they need are too often simply not available. Still there are those who are trying to develop valid social generalizations from historical records. See, for example, Roy Sylvan Dunn, "Drouth, History and Sociology," West Texas Historical Association Year Book (1972). My point is that historians cannot do their difficult job without the special insights provided by the sociologists. See also Allan G. Bogue, "Social Theory and the Pioneer," Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier, edited by Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 73-99. Two of Bogue's observations are particularly to the point here, one an

assumption, the other a warning. "The individual finds primary and secondary relationships essential to satisfactory living. Few individuals are really content to be hermits. Taken from their accustomed web of social relationships they may suffer from what is termed anomie or normlessness" (p. 90). "Each westward settler was a unique individual and if many in a pioneer neighborhood reacted similarly and made similar decisions some did not. Knowing that this was so, we cannot be too rigorously deterministic in explaining the behavior of the pioneers" (p. 92).

66. This may depend upon whether one considers ideology "a total system of interpretation of the historic-political world" or "the formulation of a historical attitude or scale of values." See Raymond Aron, The Industrial Society, Three Essays on Ideology and Development (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 164. We may be able to escape such total systems as the Marxian or the liberal system which seems to support the so-called Whig interpretation of history. Scales of value, however, may be always with us, even in our most rigorous and objective historiography.

# Ethnicity in Mormondom: A Comparison of Immigrant and Mormon Cultures

Helen Papanikolas

Using the concepts of cultural and religious conflict, Helen Papanikolas has here investigated the sources of strain between the indigenous Mormon culture and the new immigrants who came from southern and eastern Europe around the turn of the century. She finds the source of the conflict not primarily in political or economic differences. Rather, the strains developed principally because of cultural patterns and religious practices and beliefs.

Significantly, she argues that the principal source of conflict came in the differing attitudes toward familial relationships. In this context, Mrs. Papanikolas shatters some stereotypes which Americans of northern European background have often held about the new immigrants. Though adhering in principal to a patriarchal family, their families were really centered on the mother, who served as the glue which held the extended family together. Far from being sexually promiscuous, as the common mythology would dictate, ethnic families tended to be extremely conservative in their attitudes toward even such commonplaces as hand-holding before marriage.

Beyond this, perhaps the most important conflict came because of differing religious views. With their liturgical traditions, the ethnics' attitudes toward religion seemed lacking in substance to the Mormons while Mormon's lay religion seemed informal and cold to the immigrants. Under these conditions, conflicts were inevitable, and only intermarriage, acculturation, and increasing business contacts have helped to mitigate the conflict.

Here, in an important piece of historical-cultural analysis, Helen Papanikolas has added much to our knowledge of the interaction of varying cultural traditions in Utah.

There was no common meeting ground for Mormons and the new immigrants who came to Utah at the turn of the century: Italians, Greeks, Yugoslavs, Syro-Lebanese, Japanese, and the few Spanish speaking. Only Armenians, like earlier Mormon converts, came in family groups, for religious convictions, and to stay.<sup>1</sup> The others arrived singly or in illegal contract-labor gangs, "to earn the daily bread" for a short time, drawn by labor agents, mainly Leonidas Skliris, a Greek, and Daigoro Hashimoto, a Japanese.<sup>2</sup>

By the time the Japanese reached Utah, they had overcome their amazement at people with big eyes.<sup>3</sup> The Serbian Yugoslavs, whose folklore gave blue eyes the power of evil-eye bewitchment, found a plentitude of blue-eyed Mormons in the state; and the Cretan Greeks, for whom the combination of blue eyes and red hair spoke of the devil, saw such people walking around with no shame at all.

Mormons watched as increasing numbers of trains slowed to water tipplles in alkali deserts or passed through hamlets. Inside the coaches and box cars were the strange-looking men who, Mormons told each other, "If God had dipped them in once more, they'd have come out black." Soon thousands of these men were working in newly opened mines and laying rails over sagebrush plains. Because Mormons stayed on the land as Brigham Young had counseled decades earlier, poverty-spurred immigrants provided the unskilled labor needs for the state's industrialization. To have the security of their own kind, they lived in neighborhoods the Mormons called Greek Towns, Bohunk Towns, Little Italies and Wop Towns, Lebanese Towns, and Jap Towns.

By the time of this invasion at the end of the nineteenth century, the Latter-day Saints had very nearly consolidated their theological positions; the foundations of the Church were strong enough to withstand outward attacks and inward controversies over illegal plural marriage and interpretations of the Word of Wisdom. Dissidents had been dispelled: Morrisites, Godbeites, and other apostates who either left the state or remained but no longer worked overtly against their former church. The national origins, customs, and folklore of immigrant converts were fast vanishing; the Church had become an almost homogeneous institution. Mormon philosophies had metamorphosed.<sup>4</sup> Mormons had forgotten the marching convert unionists of the 1861 Fourth of July parade: printers, blacksmiths, carpenters, joiners, painters, boot and shoe makers, and stone cutters.<sup>5</sup> The socialistic United Orders were experiments of the past, and "They [Church leaders] . . . denounce socialism and trade unionism as anarchism when those become active in opposing the interests of business corporations."<sup>6</sup>

The strangers inundated the arid Mormon land where a "peculiar people" had gnarled their hands, suffered hunger, fought Indians, seen their crops in small plots dwarfed in plains of sagebrush, greasewood, and rabbitbrush destroyed again and again

by floods, drouth, sandstorms, and crickets, and watched young mothers and children die. The strangers had a violent propensity for joining labor strikes and, even more sinister, they were a horde of single men, constantly moving from coal to metal mines, from mills to smelters, and from railyard crews to section gangs on deserts and mountains. Mormons learned quickly the uneasiness of a settled people at the influx of invaders, soldiers, or workers they feared capable of "taking over" and of seducing and raping their women. Two near lynchings during the first World War and the Ku Klux Klan marchings, and cross burnings of 1924 and 1925 were catalyzed by these fears.

Yet just as Mormons had a code, obedience to the priesthood, each group of immigrants had a code of honor that embodied the highest principles of behavior to one's family and oneself. The Greeks called their code filotimo; the Yugoslavs dostojanstvo (the Monteneggins choystvo); the Syro-Lebanese sharaf; the Japanese bushido; and the Mexicans orgulla y machismo (not to be confused with the well-known, sadistic machismo). The code for South Italians, Utah's greater number of Italian immigrants, included omertà, the conspiratorial silence of an entire community toward the commission of a crime.

Mormons and immigrants, however, saw only the veneer of each others' lives and used stereotyped words to describe one another: "greasy," "gun-carrying," and "unassimilable" (a favorite of newspapers) by Mormons; and "unsalted," "faces would crack if they smiled," and "water in their veins" by the immigrants, to whom the words Mormons and Americans were interchangeable.

Mormons were unwilling to assimilate the newcomers who were "not of the blood of Israel," and the immigrants were uninterested in being assimilated: they were sojourners who were working and biding their time until they could return to their native countries with savings, small in America, large in the old country. Their bank drafts and postal orders, sent back to pay dowries for sisters and mortgages on family land, incensed Mormons. During labor troubles and the First World War, especially, they were decried as examples of un-Americanism.<sup>10</sup>

United States nationalism flared and spread. Free and expansive, it had grown with an ever-advancing frontier and was unattached to any one religion or sect, consistent with the colonizing of New England by various faiths. In contrast, the nationalism of the immigrants had been forged by the powerful negative stimulus of subjugation to conquerors and feudal lords. For each people it was rooted to an ancient land and to one religion, giving it an intensity that made American nationalism seem pale. As young Mormons grew up expecting to fulfill missions for their church, immigrants, as boys, had chanted in time to the ruler-batons of schoolteachers: "I will be a soldier and fight for my country," or "I will be a soldier and die for my Emperor."

America had never had the history of invaders on her soil; except for the Japanese, immigrants had never known any other historical experience for their countries. Pure, stark folk poetry erupted from the roots of this nationalism: birds flying and swooping in limitless freedom were to the ancestors of immigrants--themselves.

For Japanese, whose country "has never once felt the shame of foreign conquest,"<sup>11</sup> nationalism centered on the Emperor and was untouched by restriction to one religion. Christian missionaries from Saint Francis Xavier to centuries-later Mormon proselyters converted Buddhists to many faiths.

For Italians, ethnocentrism was confined not only to one's province but narrower still to one's village. Italians listed on Utah mine, mill, and railroad rolls as either "South Italians" or "North Italians" for the convenience of officials actually considered themselves Venetians, Genoese, Neapolitans, Calabrese, Calabrians, citizens from whichever province they came. The unification of the provinces into the nation of Italy occurred in 1870, only ten years before the beginning of mass migration from that country. At that historic moment it was said, "We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians." Loyalty to villages was expressed in the mandate of campanilismo: everything alien beyond the sound of the village bell.<sup>12</sup> This included marriage only within the village and kept many American-born Italian youths from joining the Civilian Conservation Corps in the economically depressed years of the 1930s. Parents feared their sons might marry girls whose parents came from other parts of Italy "or worse, some non-Italian."<sup>13</sup>

The Mormons of Utah reflected the nationalism of the country. Even though they had been driven from one sanctuary to another and their polygamy-statehood struggles in Zion were long and bitter, Mormons never seriously rejected their Americanism. They saw the nationalism of the new immigrants as a dangerous aberration.

There were degrees of nationalism among the immigrants; the Japanese and the Greeks were most nationalistic of all. As soon as they began raising families in Utah, they founded schools to teach their children their native languages. At every ethnic celebration leaders exhorted avid listeners to remember the greatness of their native history and culture and to teach their "unequaled" language to the American-born generation. Both groups began publishing newspapers in their parent tongue in the first decade of the century. (The Japanese Utah Nippo is still being published in 1978.) Denied citizenship until 1952, Japanese immigrants returned the ashes of their dead for burial in their sacred family shrines and celebrated Emperor's Day. American-born children were sent to Japan to be educated and were numerous enough to have earned a special name, kibei.

The Greeks continued to think of return to Greece until the Great Depression of the 1930s. Approximately two hundred Utah

Greeks returned to fight for Greece in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, and others chose to fight under the Greek flag during the First World War. Greek nationalism knows neither time nor boundaries. Recently a member of the Greek parliament in Athens rose to denounce the second and third generation of Greek ethnics in the United States<sup>14</sup> for losing their Hellenism--as if they were Greek, not American.

This fervent love of immigrants for their native countries went hand in hand with cultures either close to the rudimentary life of subsistence farming or, as for the rocky, mountainous Balkans, to a seminomadic life in which the pastoral, warring ways of the Old Testament never completely evolved into the settled farming life of the New Testament. Three Balkan tribes today still subsist under the stoic life of transhumance, driving their sheep and goats to distant mountains in summer and to plains in winter. They carry with them a<sup>15</sup> few pots, a sparse amount of bedding, and their burial clothes.

Life on the subsistence level is rich in oral tradition, and the new immigrants had learned their histories and the tragic conflicts of human beings through songs and stories. The harvest of Mormon journals and diaries to which historians gratefully turn is missing for ethnic scholars; only one journal has been found among the many thousand later immigrants<sup>16</sup> who came to Utah to work, some to stay, many more to leave.

The contrast was great between the new immigrants and the children and grandchildren of the Mormon pioneers, whose illiteracy and rusticity had been reversed in their progeny by the opportunities for education, for homestead laws, and for classless democracy in wide America.

Like the Mormons, these nationalistic and religious immigrants were paternalistic and patriarchal; yet they differed profoundly from the Mormons in their attitudes toward authority, family, women, and church. Toward authority Mormons reflected the founding fathers' adherence to law and order. The merging of secular with religious power in Utah increased Church authority with a corresponding submission by members to it.<sup>17</sup>

Obedience of adults to church authority, expounded by both Mormon officials and laymen, has never been an ethnic concern. Immigrants had inherited an historical ambivalence to authority, both fear and respect, and a reaction to it of splitting into factions. Immigrant life was in constant turmoil over lodge activities and elections, South Italian Black Hand threats, hiring and firing of priests, ministers, and foreign-language teachers, and an alacrity for going to court. They were ordinary incidents when a Serbian priest sued his Midvale parish for back pay and a board member was sued for the disappearance of the church which had stood next to the cemetery: without consulting other board members, he had sold the building to a Mormon farmer who hauled it to Union for use as a barn.<sup>18</sup>

An analogous state of disorder in southern Arizona's Saint Thomas Stake of the Mormon Church is described in the book Take Up Your Mission.<sup>19</sup> The president's counsel was consistently disregarded; and in Snowflake, nepotism in Church affairs based on strong intermarriage ties caused factions to form, with followers of Bishop John Hunt, the Flake family, and Jesse N. Smith united against those supporting Joseph Fish and John R. Hulet. If all stakes in an area had been in similar chaos, one would have an idea of what immigrant life was like. Only the Japanese had come to Utah with a strong tradition of the importance of hierarchy and what they called one's "proper station" in life.<sup>20</sup> Yet they too became infected with the momentous forces of change in America, and when other immigrants joined strikes, they followed.

The Japanese also encircled a smaller number of relatives for whom they were responsible than did other immigrants; otherwise their meticulous code of indebtedness would have paralyzed daily life. Mexican families of parents and children were nuclei with strong filaments radiating to all kin; first cousins were regarded as brothers and sisters. All other immigrants came from extended families that included paternal kin to distant degrees, marriage sponsors, and godparents. Godfathers had a sacred kinship to a family. In anticipation of the precariousness of life, Catholic and Orthodox godfathers took oaths at baptisms to raise children as their own if parents died. They were greatly respected. It was common in early immigrant days in Utah to see Greek children running to their godfathers wherever they saw them, in church, in Greek school, on the street, to kiss their hands.

The banding together of the extended family gave strength and protection. This ancient practice was continued in Utah by the immigrants. The most distinctive form was the Yugoslavian zagruda, in which parents and several sons with their families lived under one roof; the common form was that of brothers and cousins living with a male relative, his wife, and their children.<sup>21</sup>

Keeping the family name free of stain was a lifelong concern of immigrant peoples as it had been in their fatherlands. Evolving out of historical and traditional forces, the greatest of which was poverty, the honor of each member and the chastity of daughters to insure good marriages decided a family's prestige. To this end the will of the family was supreme both in native countries and later in the new land. In these countries the oldest males decided whom each son and daughter would marry (among the South Italians the mother often did the choosing), dowries, which sons should receive the ultimate sacrifice and be sent to be educated, which sons should go to America, and punishment for defying codes of honor. Breaking the rules of the code did not result in ostracism; the chastened offender was still part of the family and played his role. (The bushido code of the Japanese was



far less lenient in this respect.) Disturbing the smooth flow of family life was cause for censure in all immigrant cultures, no matter the justification.

Disturbance often became tragedy, as ethnic folk songs and legends testify. One did not always submit to family demands without resistance. Girls forced to marry men they did not want mourned their fate over the centuries; kin feuded to the death; and sons killed their fathers.

Children were always intensely aware that they owed their parents for their life and their sacrificial nurture. Parents did everything possible for their children and in return expected strict obedience. Children showed respect to elders, officials, and clergy; but obedience was to the family.

Children, boys especially, were indulged in infancy. Around the age of three, and nine for the Japanese, their people's codes were weighted on them. Suddenly they had to learn through shame, family displeasure, and beatings how they should address elders, that they must uphold their families against the faintest suggestion of criticism, never give the slightest cause for gossip, show neither by word nor look anger and frustration at a parent's just or unjust command, and if a student, be at the top of the class.

Additional restraints were placed on girls to be more submissive, to be excessively modest in dress, speech, and actions. There were ways to sit and ways to stand--Japanese girls had to sleep with their legs straight, close together, and their arms against their sides. Mexican girls did not venture beyond the confines of the house without their fathers or brothers. Boys in the Balkans and Mediterranean learned from childhood that they had to protect their sisters at all times from men who might chance upon them while the girls were herding goats or while on their way to fill water jugs at streams. In turn sisters waited on brothers with willing servility.

With such harsh codes that could easily spill into paranoia, it is no surprise that when young immigrant men came to Utah, some of them became exhilarated at being free from their families and broke their nations' codes.

In their native countries the consuming concern of each man and his wife was to keep their children from being hungry, then to hoard pittances that would furnish daughters with dowries and safeguard a portion of the family land for their sons. "Amoral familists" is the term sociologist Edward Banfield gave to these people.<sup>22</sup> These amoral familists would have considered men immoral who left their families to fend for themselves while they traveled the world to spread a new religion. For family need, laws would be broken. The transference of this singular concentration on the family to Utah was graphically seen in the depression years of the early 1930s when immigrants saw no moral wrong in selling bootleg liquor to provide food for their

families. A third-generation Yugoslavian historian in Utah recalls his grandmother asking a Kansas City judge if he would allow her to serve her husband's sentence for bootlegging because he would be better able to provide for their eight children. The judge agreed and she served a year in prison.<sup>23</sup> A Greek woman kept a still going for eighteen months while her husband languished in McNeil Island prison.

The pervasive element in immigrant conduct of family life was what people would think if they broke their codes. "What will people say?" and "The eyes of the world are upon us" were everyday warnings. The grief or misery of an individual member was unimportant. In these shame-centered cultures, learning is carried on by admonitions and constant criticism. Praise is rare because children are expected to do well. A fifth-grade reader used in a Helper, Carbon County, Greek school in the 1920s, lectures: "I don't see you going to school with that determined desire and the shining face that is wished. You still go without desire."

Although ethnic weddings, baptisms, and religious celebrations were joyously exuberant, a negativism permeated all of immigrant life. Immigrants had triumphed over poverty through industrial work in Utah, but unconsciously they carried with them the old-country fatalism learned from the realization that all one's toil could not change one's life. Their nations' folk poetry was tinged with this sadness. Realism precluded the contemplation of heaven and what awaited one after death. "The Japanese have always been uninterested in fantasies of a world of the hereafter. Their mythology tells of Gods but not of the life of the dead. They have even rejected [Indian] Buddhist ideas of differential rewards and punishments after death."<sup>24</sup> For them death was return to the past, to the country of one's ancestors, but "where is not known."<sup>25</sup> "Paradise was a state of eternal bliss in complete unity with the Essence of all things." Attempts to further describe it as an "eternal spring of sweet sounds and lovely colours" was rejected as "clumsy."<sup>26</sup> For Catholics, death was followed by the soul's being carried to heaven, purgatory, or hell, with a state of blessedness assigned to those entering heaven, and little more said of it. The Orthodox saw afterlife as one spent either in heaven or hell, with no description of the former, considerable fear of the latter. The rites of mourning for all were filled with lamentations and unwillingness to be passive and uncomplaining at loss.<sup>27</sup>

The immigrant family could not remain long in the new country as it had been in native lands. Regular employment and routine industrial work ended the observance of centuries-old customs such as the week-long marriage festivities of the Balkans and Middle East. The beautiful Mexican ceremony to celebrate the reaching of womanhood on a girl's fifteenth birthday, when she and fifteen friends, dressed in white, were honored in a religious ceremony, lasted but a short time in Utah.<sup>28</sup> The traditional New Year's Eve

card playing among Greek men was dispensed with after a few coffeehouse raids.

The immigrant family tried but was unable to force acceptance of all its customs, traditions, and values on American-born children. For the first decade of their lives, children followed their parents' ways compliantly, but during school recesses they pulled hair and threw rocks while screaming--to convince themselves as much as their enemies--"I'm just as much American as you!" and "Only Indians are real Americans!"

School experience was fraught with insecurity. Many children left their safe ethnic "towns" and began school without knowing English. During the twenties and thirties, their grade-school and high-school years, anti-immigrant hostility was at its height. On the school ground ethnic children fought children of other nationalities, and all of them together fought the Mormons. Teachers were most often enemies. In the twenties a teacher blamed an Italian girl for disturbing the class and sent her to the Helper school principal, who beat her with a rubber hose kept handy on his rolltop desk. The girl's mother stormed into the classroom, pulled the teacher by the hair to the schoolyard, and beat her with her fists. Immigrant parents, living in the frame houses surrounding the school, lined the fence and cheered her on. The mother shouted for the principal to come out for his beating, but he remained hidden.<sup>29</sup> How ambivalent were the feelings of the immigrants' children. They wanted the teacher to "get it," but were also miserable at having attention focused on them.

Nor was ability a certain means to advancement. Eugene E. Campbell, professor of history at Brigham Young University, recalls an incident in Tooele, Utah, during the late 1920s. "American" townspeople tried to prevent George Melinkovich, Joe Rinaldi, and Dan Savich, sons of immigrants, from playing on the high school football team. The coach, Sterling Harris, was adamant and threatened to resign if the students were kept off the team. After brilliant records, the three continued their education on football scholarships. Melinkovich from Notre Dame became an All-American and played professional football, as did Rinaldi and Savich.

In the second decade of their lives, children began to be ashamed of their parents' foreignness and to resent their old-country ideas of propriety. Old customs, which once had a reason for being, lost their relevance in Utah yet continued to be followed by habit. In Utah, second-generation ethnic girls did not herd goats on mountainsides or walk miles to fill water jugs. Still, mothers imbued a sense of responsibility in their sons for sisters--for what, the boys did not know--and sisters catered to brothers. The perpetuation of customs when there was no longer need kept families tightly bound in neurotic relationships.

Other customs were anomalous in Mormon country. Immigrants refused to allow their daughters to date, an immoral practice to them; in their cultures girls and boys did not speak to each other. The custom of young Mormon women attending social activities with men exemplified to immigrants unconcern of parents for their daughters' honor and therefore their families' prestige. To the immigrants the Mormons were heedless of the family; with awe they would say, "Sometimes they don't know their first cousins' names." (The identical words were used by the poet James Dickey, a southerner, about Americans outside the South.) To counteract the influence of Mormon-American customs on their children, the immigrants idealized their native cultures even more and harangued on the impossibility of marriage outside their people.

As they grew older, ethnic men rebelled against their upbringing and began to take Mormon girls to movies and dances. The rebellion was grudgingly tolerated because, unlike Mormons, immigrants had different standards of behavior for unmarried men and women. Parents placidly believed their sons would enjoy their freedom with the "immoral" girls who were allowed out of the house unescorted, but when it was time to marry, they would choose a "nice" girl of their own ethnic background. Instead, some of the men married the women they were seeing--and a few had red hair and blue eyes. So began the first intermarriages in the second generation. Even while wailing, each immigrant mother was setting the stage for a proper wedding in her own church.

It was that proud nationalism, though, that was a constant cause of dissension in immigrant family life. Few children enjoyed attending Greek school or Japanese school, except girls who would otherwise have been at home tending babies and helping with household tasks. The schools were held from four to six o'clock after regular school or on Saturdays, often in cold church basements or emptied "American" school buildings. Hunched over Greek script or Japanese characters and tired from a full day of regular school, where they were taunted for their foreign-language books unsuccessfully hidden in desks, children had to learn or suffer shame and worse. It was easy for a Mormon boy to be obedient to the traditions of his people because the majority he knew had those traditions; it was difficult for a boy born in Utah of immigrant parents to attend Greek school dutifully when his Mormon schoolmates were outside playing. There was a social value for children being with others of their ethnic stock, but they lost much of their learning soon after schooling ended. Japanese teachers were <sup>30</sup>at least competent; though they included one exceptional woman, they generally came from the ranks of Buddhist priests or Christian ministers. Greek teachers were often inadequately educated.

Other aspects of nationalism brought conflicting feelings to children of immigrants. When parents spoke of "our country," they

did not mean America but their native lands. When seven hundred Greeks walked behind the casket of a striker, killed by a deputy sheriff in the Carbon County strike of 1922, many held small blue and white Greek flags.<sup>31</sup> A child watching from a window did not know who was in the casket or why he was dead, but that there was something ominous about the day--about the Greek flags.

Except for Mexicans, who suffered greater prejudice and had fewer economic opportunities, the immigrants began to move out of their neighborhoods during the prosperity of the twenties. Their children were then dispersed in Mormon neighborhoods where parents' old-country ways and ideas were even more noticeably different.<sup>32</sup> Although the children were fortunate in leaving industrial neighborhoods behind, they lost the companionship of their ethnic peers. Wherever they lived, they were the marginal man of sociology, the second-generation children who stand on the boundary separating their parents' culture from American culture.

Immigrant family life came from old, long-melded roots; Mormon family life came from many discernible roots. It was old; it was new. It came from ancient Anglo-Saxon mores; it came from the frontier. It was of Puritanism; it was of a new religion. Unlike immigrant peoples, the Mormons who settled the Salt Lake Valley came from cultures where the nuclear family had long replaced the extended family. Although students of the family disagree as to the time when this took place, most believe that it came just before or during the Industrial Revolution.<sup>33</sup> In Utah the early family often became several scattered nuclear families with one father; although in doctrine supreme, this collective institution had to be subjugated to the Church to strengthen it and to disseminate the religion of the Book of Mormon.

Polygamy quickened the assimilation of immigrant converts into Mormon culture. Inter-marriage was common between national groups as well as between immigrant converts and American Mormons, both high and low in Church hierarchy. Heber C. Kimball counted a Norwegian woman among his wives, as did Senator Reed Smoot's father. President Lorenzo Snow married a Danish convert. John T. Dorcheus, an immigrant from Denmark, married Danish, English, and Scottish wives.<sup>34</sup>

More important than polygamy in hastening assimilation (a development that requires three generations) was the purposeful sacrifice of immigrant-convert culture to build a strong church. Dissension among Scandinavians was answered with an epistle from the First Presidency:

The counsel of the Church to all Saints of foreign birth who come here is that they should learn to speak English as soon as possible, adopt the manners and customs of the American people, fit themselves to become good and loyal citizens of this country, and by their good works show that they are true and faithful Latter-day Saints.<sup>35</sup>

The logic of submerging national origins, languages, and customs to give strength to the new Church, reverence for English as the language in which the Book of Mormon had been translated, and the wholehearted acceptance of Utah's Zion as the immigrants' permanent home kept resistance low. Nostalgia there was and wrenching difficulty for many, especially the Welsh, who were the most reluctant of converts to give up their customs and their ancient language, Cymric.<sup>36</sup> Yet foreign-language newspapers and organizations were found to be a means of transmitting Latter-day Saint principles to converts and of helping them bridge over to Mormon life. As a result the newspapers, the German Beobachter, the Swedish Utah Posten, and the Dutch Utah Nederlander were subsidized by the Mormon Church until publication ceased in 1935.<sup>37</sup>

The determined diminution of immigrant cultures that was further dissipated by polygamy caused a phenomenon in convert family life: the second generation skipped over the marginal-man boundary, almost with one jump.

This remarkable influence by the Church on immigrant families was part of a broader jurisdiction. In the early years, Church leaders, not the family, made decisions. They chastised, sent families to colonize sagebrush outposts, told men how many wives they should have, and very often whom they should marry. Their religious code of the priesthood gave the family an other-world importance that no other religion held. The father, bearer of the priesthood, was bound to uphold its principles for his family's celestial reunion and glory. This entailed his obedience to higher Church authority, and, in turn, his family's obedience to him. Obedience to the father was synonymous with obedience to the Church.

The combination of Mormon nuclear family life that was free of the many duties and responsibilities inherent in the extended family and the tradition of independence that had come down from pioneer life made for looser familial relationships than for ethnics. Mormons would borrow from their fathers to get a start in homesteading or in business and, in later times, for long years of professional training, repay the loan, and remain free of family obligation. Such repayment is unknown among ethnics, for whom the attainment of educational or business success by one member is honor for the entire family.

Rejecting the dogma of original sin, taking to heart the Book of Mormon's "men are, that they might have joy,"<sup>38</sup> Mormons viewed life with affirmation from the earliest days. Burials on the plains and suppers of thistles in the valley did not keep them from singing and dancing. Their mourning was seldom uncontrolled. Their well-defined beliefs of afterlife gave solace and led to platitudes, puzzling for immigrants: "God needed his help up there."

From their children, Mormons expected strict obedience and were harsh in punishment, meted out by fathers. Yet they were more likely to encourage the young with praise and show of affection. Children had an added significance, which increased parental responsibility, of adding to one's worthiness in celestial glory by their numbers and faith.

Just as the immigrant family modified in its Utah environment, the Mormon family had also altered with changing conditions. It began with self-sufficiency in which every member's full contribution was necessary for survival. Men and boys, even women in polygamous times, cut trees for winter fires. Young men herded cattle that would provide milk, butter, meat, and hides for shoes; they raised sheep, whose wool women carded, spun, and wove for clothing. Women grew produce for their families and fodder for animals. Nothing was wasted: pigs' bladders were stretched to cover windows in the first dugouts and adobe huts; animal bones were boiled and made into glue by the women, who traded it for the "necessaries of life." When the "necessaries" became accessible, survival was not directly dependent on each family member, and a father's authority did not have to be evoked so often and so harshly.

Yet the priesthood principle gave a greater potential than mere patriarchalism for men's becoming minor despots. Marriage is necessary for exaltation; men and wives are bound together, working toward godhood; and men are to rule with kindness. Yet Mormon Church authorities have had to caution against an easy debasement of the priesthood. President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said, "You husbands be kind and considerate to your wives. They are not your property; they are not mere conveniences; they are your partners for time and eternity."<sup>39</sup> "I fear," President Harold B. Lee said, "some husbands have interpreted erroneously the statement that the husband is to be head of the house and that his wife is to obey the law of the husband."<sup>40</sup>

Still, because Mormons did not have burdensome nationalistic codes as did immigrants, did not have to defend and live foreign cultures, and were optimistic about existence and death, their family life was more peaceful than that of the ethnic people among them. But the symbiotic relationship of the family to the open Mormon religion, in which one's failures to live its principles was brightly evident to all, also brought heavy penalties of undiscarded Puritan guilt. There were sons who refused their mission calls, estranged family members who would not follow the Word of Wisdom, and there was occasional apostasy--like "a death in the family," Obert C. Tanner described it.<sup>41</sup> There began also the inevitable, but unexpected for parents, marriages with third-generation ethnics. After initial grief and anger, Mormons reacted as ethnics did and began campaigns to convert the new family member to the Latter-day Saint faith.

We can speak about the Mormon family with a few generalizations beyond which we cannot go, because we are unaware of how that unique institution, polygamy, has affected the Mormon family today and Mormon life as a whole. We read of two sister wives baking a cake<sup>42</sup> for their husband to celebrate his marriage the following day. We hear from Charles S. Peterson that his polygamous forebears lived in harmony on the Arizona Mormon frontier. We read in an autobiography that a husband on his death bed asks his daughter to "get Ma and Aggie [his two wives] together." Ma says, "You never will. It is over now. I don't have to put up with her anymore."<sup>44</sup>

This is the kind of poignancy we know about polygamy. Critical evaluation until recent beginnings has been restricted to a short, twenty-year-old article by Stanley S. Ivins, entitled "Notes on Mormon Polygamy."<sup>45</sup> In a paper delivered at Brigham Young University in 1974, "The Mormon Family System: The Known and the Unknown," Clark S. Knowlton pointed out over fifty areas that need scholarly investigation. He said:

Polygamy is one of those areas of Mormon experience that we have tended to shy away from; but as our own modern Mormon family system evolved out of this period, and it is still shadowed by the values and scars of the polygamous system, it may be difficult for us to understand ourselves until we understand the values, the structure, and the processes of the Mormon polygamous family system.<sup>46</sup>

The same observation could be made of the ethnic family system: by understanding it, ethnics can understand themselves and perhaps mitigate the difficulties and tragedies of Mormon-ethnic marriages. Leaving one's culture, whether sorrowfully or with hostility, carries life-long griefs. Theodore Reik says, "But being ashamed of one's parents is, psychologically, not identical with being ashamed of one's people. . . . Being ashamed of our people must have another psychological meaning. It must be the expression of a tendency to disavow the most essential part of oneself."<sup>47</sup> Jung reminds us that one's first duty is to "his own culture, place, and moment in time."<sup>48</sup> "Culture is not a matter of choice, like the brand of a hat," Samuel Ramos wrote.<sup>49</sup> The tenacious hold of culture is seen in Japanese- and Spanish-speaking Mormons who continue to retain much of their peoples' legacy within a religious environment alien to their heritage.

Many ethnics effortlessly accommodate themselves as heirs of an immigrant culture in an American environment by becoming indifferent to their religion but by observing with traditional food and drink the ceremonies associated with it--earning the widely heard appellation "gastronomic ethnics."



The differences, then, in the Mormon and ethnic family systems are significant. The Mormon nuclear family is primarily a religious entity that looks beyond to its eminence in afterlife; the extended ethnic family is basically a predominately secular entity with strong social ties, oriented to the present. To these differences is added the role of the mother in both cultures.

Sociological investigations into the distinguishing features of ethnic families graphically reveal the central position of the mother in each: "It is not possible to fully understand the Italian family in America until one has understood the Italian mother"; "It is not possible to understand the Irish family until one has understood the special place of the Irish mother"; "It is impossible to fully comprehend the complexities and special qualities of Jewish family life without understanding the Jewish mother."<sup>50</sup> The role of the immigrant mother was one of such strength, duty to husband, and devotion to children that the emotional life of the family was concentrated on her. A mother's illness, whether slight or serious, disoriented the family. The father was helpless. Women relatives and neighbors had to take charge of his household. He did have "a feeling of respect toward woman, but it refer[red] to the maternal function in general rather than to one's own wife in particular."<sup>51</sup>

The immigrant mother was usually uneducated and her mind cluttered with cultural rules and taboos; yet her children loved her inordinately. The mother's death, even at an advanced age, devastated the family. It appears paradoxical that the supposedly submissive, unworldly mother would have been given, as with the South Italians, her husband's and son's wages to use as she saw fit. Folk proverbs attest to her importance. The Japanese say, "The foundation of the house is the woman"; the Lebanese, "The woman can destroy the house or exalt it." "Woman rules the house," a Serbian proverb says, "man is a guest in it." The Croatians give man one-fourth credit: "Woman holds up three corners of the house, man the fourth corner." "Woman is the column of the house," the Greeks say; and the Mexicans, "The mother is queen of the house."

To reach this supremacy in households, women since antiquity had given themselves worth by taking over the entire responsibilities of home, children and the discipline of them, and religious duties. They continued in their Utah immigrant "towns" to be carriers of cultures and the mainstays of their churches: men seldom attended services except on the great feast days. Roles were still sharply defined: man's was circumscribed within the sphere of providing for the family, woman's the affairs of the house. Neither interfered with the other's province. When men asserted their authority it was in a negative way by "keeping a person from doing what he wants."<sup>52</sup> Although they spent more time at home in the "towns" than they would have in their fatherlands, where evenings were passed in coffeehouses and other meeting

places while wives gathered in neighboring yards, companionship was not affected. "My child," "golden one," and pet names like "pigeon" the women called each other over cups of coffee during afternoon respites; terms of endearment were never heard between husbands and wives.

The supremacy of women in their households--a decision-making position, not to be misconstrued as dominance--was won at enormous emotional costs: the mother became the scapegoat for the inevitable crags in family life; the illness of a child was vaguely her fault; the struggle of children against old-country values exposed a lack in her; and on her was laid the fault for the failure of her husband to progress. Fantasies of self-fulfillment could only bring guilt; and as women were bound with husbands for the ultimate responsibility, the welfare of their children, these unvoiced, unconscious wishes were channeled into unrealistic expectations for their children. For the welfare of her children a mother guarded carefully the family's small resources and would not bring attention to herself by loud and forward behavior that would jeopardize the family prestige and prevent suitable marriages for sons and daughters. Infractions of children were rarely brought to a father's notice. If in an old-country village or in a Utah coal mine or coffeehouse the father heard of a child's transgression--becoming the object of gossip was almost as bad as committing the mischief--he would inflict punishment himself and his wife would be made to feel that she had been negligent in her duties.

With marriage an arrangement, with men's and women's lives lived almost apart, there was little exchange of ideas and communication between husbands and wives. Only in old age did most men come to discuss their personal affairs with their wives. By then a lifetime of mutual, thinly veiled hostility was often a natural state. Neither the immigrant generation of women nor their daughters' generation could have written Mormon-authored books like Fascinating Womanhood that teach seductive submission to men.

The unusual position of both strength and inferiority for immigrant women was dictated by religion and more so by culture. Buddhism makes plain woman's eternal submissiveness. Orthodox and Catholic wedding services include didactic readings from the Old and New Testaments and the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, which admonishes wives to be "subject . . . to their own husbands in every thing."<sup>54</sup> With the absence of doctrine making their future life contingent on husbands, women from these cultures did not take Saint Paul's admonitions seriously. They came from oral traditions and knew full well from folk song and folklore of man's exaltation and woman's lowliness; yet their realism gave them a sense of worth. They bequeathed culture to the succeeding generations, whether it was in their favor or not; it was not fear of God's punishment but the censure of people that guided their social conduct.

Courtship and romance were alien to women of immigrant cultures. In their countries, dowry payments and the prestige of the family had been the basis for marriage negotiations. The real issue in folk literature and song celebrating clans feuding over the abduction of their women was not unrequited love but humiliation at rejection. Tradition compelled retribution to clear the family name.

Immigrant "picture brides" often came to Utah without a picture in hand to recognize whom they were to marry. Every culture has its stories of brides who balked at marrying the men chosen for them, and men who also "cried their fate," because engagements were as permanent as marriages. To avoid such an arranged marriage, one Italian woman used the wile that she had dreamed of a large black bird circling her head; and because a black bird was an evil omen, the wedding could not take place.<sup>55</sup> The anxiety of coming to a new country was compounded for these women by their being without families, especially brothers, to champion them if need be against husbands.

Folk culture which was demeaning to women, and which was brought from Europe and the Middle East to Utah by immigrant Catholics and Orthodox, had been influenced more by close contact with or subjugation to Moslems than by biblical scriptures. Chastity was the paramount concern; remarriage only in extreme necessity. The Greek Orthodox juxtaposed Moslem tradition on God's instruction to Aaron and his sons, making it applicable for all men: "And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman . . . these shall he not take."<sup>56</sup>

Industrial accidents, the dearth of women, and immigration restrictions of the early twenties altered remarriage views somewhat, notably among Yugoslavians, negligibly for Greeks. A man, however, who married a woman previously the wife of another was congratulated for performing a magnanimous deed "for the good of his soul."

In these cultures men were allowed near the altar, women never. In Greek immigrant days, boy babies were taken into the altar area for a blessing at the conclusion of the baptismal services; girl babies were held before the ikon of the Virgin on the altar screen, which separates altar from nave. Women were required to remain in their houses for forty days after the birth of a child; then, after the example of the Virgin Mary, they attended church for the blessing of their newborn and for the ritual dispelling of their biblical uncleanness. Their physiology added additional times of uncleanness<sup>57</sup> that made them unworthy to take part in religious services. As earlier Jews and Mormons had once practiced, women sat on the left side of the church in the Judaic tradition and men on the right: the right was for the worthy.

Among immigrants, however, women who had the "manly" traits of showing courage and cunning were extolled. In Utah the Italian

women who marched down muddy streets to support their husbands in the Carbon County strike of 1903 were admired by all immigrants.<sup>58</sup> Yugoslavian women became leaders in the Carbon County strike of 1933 with innovating tactics that frustrated guards and deputies. One of them<sup>59</sup> is remembered for having rescued a sheriff from a mob of strikers.

Several Greek sheepmen's wives drove trucks to bring supplies to herders and helped in shearing and lambing. They were accorded respect by their men as were Lebanese women who sold notions, laces, embroidered linens, and bright woven bedspreads in mining and mill towns. But the thousands of immigrant women who ran boardinghouses while raising large families, washed the men's clothes by hand, filled countless lunch buckets, and prepared innumerable breakfasts and dinners earned no respect: they were doing women's work.

This scorn for women's work, marriage as a contract, the extreme, self-conscious attention to chastity and ritual uncleanness, and the equating of sex with shame prepared immigrant wives to endure the procreation act with distaste: a duty for women, a right for men. Much nonsense on the "earthiness" of southern European women has been propagated by Hemingway's work, especially in For Whom the Bell Tolls, by Tennessee Williams in the play The Rose Tattoo, and in popular movies like Never on Sunday. John Steinbeck has done the same injustice to Mexicans; and Japanese customs, such as geisha girl entertainment and communal bathing, have given distorted views of them. Catholic, Orthodox, and Japanese immigrants were extremely prudish in their views on sex and wives. There was no kissing at the end of the wedding ceremony for brides and grooms, and ostensibly none ever. During the Serbian Orthodox marriage liturgy, one of the mothers-in-law would cover the bride's and groom's clasped hands with a scarf because "It would be shameful if everyone saw."<sup>60</sup>

The patriarchal life of immigrants changed for their American-born children to a pseudopatriarchal form that in reality gave women more authority than their mothers had. The American-born women had no feelings of guilt in defying the patriarchal system: their conception of men's and women's roles in life were much like their mothers'. Many of them married ethnic men of their same stock, not through arrangements so openly made as their mothers' had been, but through contrived ones. Parents with marriageable daughters busily attended lodge picnics and conventions, sardonically called "meat markets" by second-generation men. Because the young had come to maturity during the depression of the 1930s, American-born men often postponed marriage until they could better afford it and some married Mormon women, leaving a surfeit of ethnic women without prospects. Of these, the oldest had matches made for them with their parents' compatriots who had

diligently saved to return to their native countries, voyages that had never materialized. This was cheaper for the men than bringing "picture brides" to Cuba and Canada to marry, then to cross into the United States, thereby circumventing the restrictive immigration laws of 1921 and 1924. Japanese men could not resort to this subterfuge because the Japanese exclusion law of 1924 prevented all Japanese from entering the country. These marriages between two generations brought additional discontent for the women: besides wide age difference and the American school background of the brides, the women had acquired American ideas of romantic love--ideas that were lost on immigrant husbands.

None of the women expected to work outside their houses or their family-owned stores. Their parents' cultures did not allow this; widows of earlier industrial accidents in Utah lived off the charity of relatives. Yet during the Great Depression, second-generation daughters worked as clerks and secretaries to help their parents and to send brothers through universities. When World War II provided opportunities, and later especially, when inflation required more money to run households, ethnic women easily slipped into the role of working mothers. Although uninterested in politics and in joining women's liberation groups, they favored passage of the 1975 Equal Rights Amendment. A few second-generation women received college educations and many more graduated from the Holy Cross School of Nursing in Salt Lake City. If it had not been for the presence of Catholic nuns, who immigrant parents thought would run the school somewhat like a nunnery, even fewer women would have had an opportunity for advanced education.

Unconscious impressions reach down: third-generation ethnic women attend colleges and universities in large numbers, yet are content with bachelor's degrees, as if their education is a passing phase before marriage. Third-generation marriages are more often outside of the ethnic group than within it. For many second-generation parents, this brings grief and bitterness in place of the rage and shame of immigrants when their sons rejected women of their heritage for "American" brides. Because of her central position in the family, the mother exerts pressure on the couple to baptize the children in the ethnic church.

In turning to Mormon mothers, surely one must say that they were, and are, as well loved as ethnic mothers, but that their importance as the primary force in family life remains unacknowledged. Is it the priesthood principle that diminishes her role even though she has great responsibilities placed upon her by Church teachings? Would recognizing her full worth be seen as a lessening of the prestige of the priesthood? She follows, never leads. "And so we plead with the fathers," said the President of the Church, "to return to their little kingdoms and, with kindness, justice, and proper discipline to inspire--and we appeal to mothers to help to create that happy family relationship."<sup>61</sup>

Because of the importance of men in church and family through their holding of the priesthood, they have become as important as women in being carriers of culture--the heretofore feminine role. The sealing of wives further reinforces the traditional role of female submission to husbands. When men are indifferent to their priesthood responsibilities, wives see the elusiveness of full glory for themselves and their children and take on the heavy responsibility of attempting to influence their husbands to fulfill these religious duties. Nor can women ask diligent husbands, who give the great amount of time expected of them for church work, to provide emotional support in the stresses of everyday living; they would feel guilty to interfere with what is called the "Lord's work" for their own needs and subsequently can experience deep frustration.

Religious pronouncements add to women's burdens: "Long delayed marriages are certainly not approved by the Lord."<sup>62</sup> In the Doctrine and Covenants, when God reproves Emma Smith, to instruction is added the threat of punishment: "Then shall she believe, and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God, for I will destroy her."<sup>63</sup> Church leaders have exhorted women continually in speech and print to submit to their husbands; immigrant women and their daughters have been spared this counsel.

Mormon women, though, had a choice in choosing their husbands. Even in polygamous times when courtship patterns were disrupted and young girls often married men as old as their fathers (and men sometimes married older women "for the good of their [the women's] souls"), they held the right to accept or reject a suitor. Although sex was a duty, romantic love and the Age of Chivalry were their heritage.

Ellis Shipp, who would become a renowned Mormon doctor, wrote in her diary at the approach of her wedding to twice-married Milford Shipp:

But oh I was confident I would be happy for was not my future felicity depending on Milford, that truly noble man who to me was so endeared. He was to me all that the enlivened fancy of girlhood or the matured judgment of woman could picture in her imagination.<sup>64</sup>

Romantic feelings--sentimental, the immigrants would have said--did not release Mormon women from their husband's authority. Ellis Shipp, pregnant with her sixth child, whose sister wives would provide her tuition, agonized all summer and fall, waiting for her husband to decide whether he would allow her to return to finish her studies at the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

If Mormon women had continued to keep journals as did their pioneer ancestors, their role could be traced from the days of colonization to the present. It would be known if women had more

freedom and authority then, as is postulated. In his later years, Brigham Young encouraged women to enter business and to become midwives and doctors. Was this to utilize woman's full potential for self-fulfillment? There was no room for the self in the early days of building up the Kingdom. Women had to take over traditionally masculine work to free men for missionary work, for heavy construction, and because of polygamy. Medical careers for women were made necessary by the high birthrate and the repugnance of the times for male doctors attending women. Was Utah's early fight for women's suffrage indicative of their high status, or was it a strategy in the polygamy-statehood controversy?<sup>65</sup>

That plural wives reared and supported large families, often under nearly unbearable conditions, are family folk legacies; yet official histories hardly mention their monumental contribution. The "faces under the sunbonnet" are at last being looked into by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and other Mormon writers.<sup>66</sup> Individually, men on proselyting and work missions suffered over the hunger and deprivation of their sunbonnetted wives and their young children, but collectively they had to place the needs of the fledgling Church above them. They were of the Anglo-Saxon tradition that saw women as helpless and requiring protection; and though they returned to find it otherwise, they reverted to their patriarchal authority unquestioningly.

In the first years of Mormonism these pioneer women had the authority to bless and to lay on hands for ministering to the sick. As Zion became more secure, these prerogatives became masculine rights only. Woman's worth through history has been judged by her economic contribution. A striking example is seen in the Northern Shoshoni who were dependent for survival on their women as principal seed gatherers. After acquiring the horse from other Indians, making possible the hunting of large animals, the tribe's diet was no longer primarily one of seeds. Women's value decreased and mass rape became common.<sup>67</sup> When women are looked upon mainly as vessels of propagation, as in the cultures from which the new immigrants came, they have little status.<sup>68</sup>

In both Mormon and ethnic cultures, women have had to work harder for recognition; men, because of being male, acquire superior status with birth. This often produces strong women and passive men. A study of Japanese relocation camps during World War II showed that Nisei women fared better than Nisei men because they had not been so cherished and shielded.<sup>69</sup>

Since those first years when intellectual pursuits by women were often discouraged, Mormon women have become increasingly better educated. (Although favoring education for women, Brigham Young forced his wife Eliza R. Snow to retract her views on the literal resurrection of the body with a notice in the Deseret Weekly News, and pressure from the Church hierarchy succeeded in disbanding the Polysophical Society.)<sup>70</sup> The Church views education, however, as a prelude to raising families, because procreation and nurturing children are women's main purpose in life.

Although a restiveness is apparent among some younger Mormon women on this circumscribing of their lives, many more actively worked for the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment. Their role in the Utah Women's Meeting for the International Women's Year Conference brought tumultuous ramifications.

In comparing ethnic and Mormon women, a sharp difference appears in their authority over what are usually considered personal affairs: dress, demeanor, aspects of child raising, and attitudes toward public issues. Mormon women are advised from the conference podium, and husbands give them counsel on all matters, including those of the household. This seems to run deeper than the reprimands once deemed necessary to stop the bickering of plural wives. It could well be a proliferation of the principle of the priesthood into all areas of life. Women cannot resent, without guilt, their role in relation to the priesthood because it is in the religious not the secular scope.

The precept of the priesthood, with its many emotional rewards restricted to males, precludes Mormon women ever expecting to become bishops. Neither Mormon nor ethnic churches in Utah are concerned over women's attempts in other parts of the United States to serve congregations. Both Catholic and Orthodox authorities have consistently voiced disapproval of women's ordination to the priesthood. The Orthodox church has threatened the Episcopal church with breaking their traditional ties if it ordains women.<sup>72</sup> The Japanese Christian Church ordains women in Japan but not in the United States.

Women's roles change far more slowly in religious observances than in secular ones. Several years ago the author was one of three women, along with eight men, of Greek stock, being honored by the Greek Orthodox archbishop for services to their Salt Lake City churches. Each woman was called before the archbishop, who pinned the medal of Saint Andrew on her collar and shook her hand. Then each man was called up. The archbishop pinned the Saint Andrew medal on his coat lapel, gave him the Christian kiss on both cheeks, and had him face the congregation. "Worthy!" he called out, and the congregation answered, "Worthy!" The Christian kiss could be dispensed with, but that women were deemed unequal to hear the old Christian cry of "Worthy!" gave second thoughts.

Still, the Catholic and Orthodox churches are less patriarchal than the Latter-day Saints because of the absence of the priesthood principle and the presence of the matriarchal elements of the Virgin and of the Mother Church. The Mormon doctrine of the mother in heaven is seldom heard, except in Eliza R. Snow's song O My Father, and is devoid of the impassioned feelings associated with the Virgin. These are most extreme in Mexican Catholics, whose Virgin of Guadalupe and other local Virgins are worshipped above God and Christ.<sup>73</sup> The Japanese also have the matriarchal element present in their culture; they trace their race to the figure called Mother.



It is in religion that the deep essence of a people lies. When their religions were uprooted to a Utah environment, immigrant groups responded in different ways. Armenian converts, sprinkled among Mormon wards, intermarried with Mormons in the first generation. Catholic Yugoslavians and Italians found themselves in a multiethnic church and married out of their national group in noticeable numbers during the second generation. Greeks in an almost completely Greek church kept their customs longer; their intermarriage with Mormons was sporadic until the third generation, when more of them have been marrying Mormons than their own stock. Lebanese, Mexicans, and Japanese also began marrying outside their nationality in the third generation.<sup>74</sup> The Serbian Yugoslavs did not have their own Orthodox Church in Utah except for a short time in Midvale. Services for weddings, baptisms, and deaths were performed in Greek churches. The language barrier kept Serbs from attending liturgies regularly; and it can be said that they are a people without a church. Loss of ethnic culture came quickly and intermarriage with Mormons occurred earlier and more often than with other immigrant progeny.

Here in religion is the extreme antithesis between Mormons and immigrants, from superficialities to doctrine. Ethnics find the informality of ward services--Mormon reaction to the formalism of old churches--unnatural and ward etiquette evidence of a lack of piety: crossing of legs, talking, arms draped on the top of pews, even around a wife's shoulders, and children in the aisles. In the American Catholic Church, the oldest Christian religion in America, and in Buddhist shrines, services have always been held with great decorum. This was not true of immigrant Greek Orthodox liturgies where churchgoing was a religious and a social function. Chanting priests contended with noisy congregations. Women whispered as they nursed babies, with clean handkerchiefs placed strategically over their bosoms as did Mormon women until fifty or so years ago. Yet woe to a Greek child who crossed its legs. Boys were cuffed by whoever was closest to them, and girls were humiliated by any woman who glimpsed their sacrilege, rising, walking over to them, and administering a twisted pinch. Only visitors in ethnic churches display informal manners. When they do not stand or kneel, parishoners say, "They must be Mormons." Sitting during sacred moments is for ethnics a sign of disrespect, and repeating the Creed and Lord's Prayer while seated is regarded as irreverent.

Yet in ethnic churches today, all of them conducted in solemn propriety (for the Greek churches this began during the early forties when American-born priests put a stop to the old sociability), where legs are not crossed and hands are folded on laps, an odd note is struck by an occasional woman dressed as if for a wedding reception or by a man wearing a turtleneck shirt under his suit coat.

The formality of the ethnics and the informality of the Mormons were more noticeable in the religious structures of each group. Nothing in Utah made the immigrants feel the strangeness of the new country more than the plain meetinghouse style of Mormon wards, devoid of religious art. For inevitably, immigrants and Mormons began to know each other on the boundaries where ethnic neighborhoods joined with the larger Mormon neighborhoods, when immigrants left labor to become storekeepers, met Mormon businessmen and public officials, and joined civic organizations. Mormon and ethnic sheepmen moving their flocks across the range, contesting water rights, and joining to form wool pools came close to being friends. They attended each other's funerals. In the rites of burial, the ethnics saw for the first time the inside of Mormon wards and were amazed that the cross of Jesus was missing. The informal burial services were like "sending a man to his grave unsung," and "the dead was forgotten in his casket while men spoke about Joseph Smith."

Mormons were offended by incense burning, chanting, votive candles glowing in red glasses, silk and brocade vestments in the Catholic Church, and even more with the ornamentation of the Orthodox ikon screen of long-faced saints and martyrs and of Christ at various stages in his life, ornate brass standards, and the enclosed altar with each article a symbol for an event in the life of the Savior. This ornamentation was superfluous, even decadent, to Mormons. But for immigrants who had come from old-country houses that had often been no more than huts, where meat was eaten on Christmas and Easter, their village church had been not only the house of God but its ikons "the Bible of the unlettered," although often crude; and the patten and cup for the Transubstantiation, although of only trifling market value, had given symbolic richness to their lives.

To the immigrants it was also inconceivable that in the plain Mormon churches laymen acted as priests. That these laymen could bless, conduct services, and rise in the hierarchy of their church added to the strangeness of the unadorned churches. More strange was the respect and obedience accorded Mormon bishops. As with their ambivalence to authority, ethnic men, except for Japanese, had no respect for priests and a great love for their religions. As soon as they came to Utah, they built churches so that if they married, had children who needed baptism, or were killed in the numerous industrial accidents of the time, priests would be present to perform the mysteries or sacraments. Anticlericalism still exists in the Balkans and the Mediterranean and among post-World War II immigrants, although priests are no longer the illiterates they were when the immigrants had been children. This comes from long histories of struggle against poverty and oppression when church hierarchies aligned themselves--often under duress--with wealthy ruling classes and invaders. Though often courageous leaders in revolts both in the Balkans and in Mexico, village priests were frequently ignorant and superstitious.

Another perplexity for the immigrants was the Mormon practice of giving testimony that Christ lives, that Latter-day Saint principles are true, and that Joseph Smith was a prophet. Catholic and Orthodox churches, together the one Christian Church until the Great Schism of 1054, were the ancient commemoration of Christ's life. Every Sunday in Catholic Masses and Orthodox liturgies the life and passion of Christ was relived through ritual and symbols. How could one doubt that Christ lived? Testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that the Book of Mormon was further word from God appeared odd to them. If people believed, why the need for informal testimony? Immigrants reiterated their testimony in the short, stylized, never-varying creeds of their churches, which had become necessary as sects sprang out of the parent tree in the early centuries of Christendom.

Testimony was of minor interest to the immigrants compared with the exaltation of Joseph Smith, polygamy (still fresh in the memory of the nation when the new aliens first came to Utah), and revelation. The awesomeness of God speaking to mortals! For Orthodox and Catholics, God spoke to holy men in the days of the Old Testament. At times, Christ, his mother, and saints had revealed themselves to the half-starved monks and nuns behind thick walls of monasteries and nunneries, a condition of life the Catholics described as holiness, the Orthodox as martyrdom. But that era passed quickly, and anyone among the Orthodox daring to say he had seen, or been spoken to, by the Deity was ridiculed and punished for his blasphemy. We can recall the years of investigation by Catholics that followed accounts of revelation.

The author's father, now ninety-two years of age, remembers a spring day in 1910 when he was foreman of a rail gang of twenty-five Greeks putting in a branch line from Montpelier to Paris, Idaho. A Mormon bishop from Montpelier drove out in a buggy and said he had had a revelation from God directing him to visit the gang. After her father looked up the word revelation in his pocket-sized Greek-American dictionary and translated it to his men, they all stared at the bishop dumbfounded. Over the years whenever the men chanced to see each other, they recalled the "bishop who said he talked with God."

God was easily approachable, personally involved with the affairs of human beings for Mormons. "I want you all to know God, to be familiar with him," Joseph Smith said in the King Follett discourse. God is still evolving toward perfection for the Latter-day Saints. God was perfect, unutterably magnificent, and unknowable for the immigrants.

These characteristics of the Mormon Church were known to the immigrants: Joseph Smith, a prophet, who they thought had replaced Jesus in worship; the Word of Wisdom, an incongruity to them; testimony; revelation; tithing; and its banished polygamy. (Most post-World War II immigrants have not heard of Mormon polygamy.) Other precepts were generally unknown to them until

third-generation ethnics began marrying Mormons in surprising numbers. It was then that such terms as restored gospel, three glories of heaven, spirit world, priesthood, sealing, and baptism for the dead began to be heard in conversations. It was then that ethnics realized the full commitment and obedience required of Mormons to remain in good standing with their church. Little more than financial support is asked in ethnic religions, and never the 10 percent tithing of Mormons. An ethnic can participate in church affairs or not; a Latter-day Saint must. "The LDS Church is for extroverts," is an observation made by some Mormons.

All of these religious differences, however, eventually rest on the historicity of the churches: the Buddhist, Orthodox, and Catholic churches are ancient and participation is passive; the Mormon is new and a "working" church. Through the centuries, Christian church ritual became stereotyped and dogma evolved out of the various synods. In the early centuries after Christ, liturgies were a confusion of many priests reading every word of scripture, as it was thought necessary that not one sacred word be left unsaid. In other rituals the same evolution took place: the marriage ceremony used in the Orthodox Church today reached its final form after the twelfth century.

With the passing centuries the Christian religion became as much a part of people's lives as did the physical acts of eating and sleeping. A shepherd made the sign of the cross before he set off for a journey or slaughtered a lamb--that he would not cause unnecessary suffering to the animal. Religion was not questioned; fine, esoteric points were debated in monasteries and did not touch the ordinary man. The paganism of ancient Rome and Greece had been transformed without difficulty into the new religion: the rites of spring became Easter; the sea god Poseidon (the Roman Neptune) became Saint Nicholas; Hermes (the Roman Mercury) became the Archangel Michael. Realistic and practical, the new Christians formulated proverbs such as that of the Greeks: "Religion is like a fish. Eat the flesh and leave the bones."

The "flesh" that sustained them was the ancient mystical ceremonialism, each ritual having symbols representing events in the Old and New Testaments or historical events in the establishment of the Church. In the Eastern Orthodox Church priests still hand out daffodils on the Day of the Cross, which celebrates Empress Helen's finding of the True Cross; brides and grooms wear flowered crowns, united by a white ribbon, to symbolize their sacred sanction as king and queen of a new household. Boiled, sweetened wheat mixed with pomegranate seeds (both symbols of immortality), parsley, nuts, and raisins are eaten by friends and relatives forty days after a person's death; the act signifies mutual forgiveness for any wrong done by the dead and the living to each other and commemorates Christ's wandering the earth for forty days before meeting God.

Beyond keeping the Ten Commandments and remembering the Sermon on the Mount, confession, and taking communion, demands were few for Orthodox and Catholics. The most rigorous rules governed the forty-day fasting periods before the great days of Christmas, Easter, and the Dormition of the Virgin. For the Orthodox this was more severe than for Catholics and meant abstinence from all fish and meat because the blood in them was a reminder of Christ's shedding of his blood. All products made from animals were also excluded: eggs, milk, butter, yogurt, and cheese. Buddhism, of all ethnic churches, is completely without austerity.

Rules were followed more closely in the Roman Catholic Church, often described as legalistic in comparison to mystical for the Orthodox. A philosophy called *oconomia*, 'a judgment according to circumstances,' has been part of Orthodox religion from its beginnings. *Oconomia* is the opposite of Puritan moralism; humaneness is the criterion for judgment. The church prohibits marriages between first cousins, between second cousins, and disapproves of those between third cousins; but rare marriages have been allowed to prevent a greater tragedy, that is, the birth of a fatherless child. Ostensibly one who has committed suicide cannot be taken to church for the liturgy of the dead, but the few suicides in Utah have had this ritual performed in Greek churches. Since the Second Vatican Council was called by Pope John XXIII in 1962, many rules for Catholics have been modified; restriction against meat on Fridays has been abolished, those who have killed themselves are given church burials, and remarriage after divorce is possible in certain cases.

What touched Orthodox and Catholics deeply were the great rituals connected with Jesus: his birth, Mother, Transfiguration, ministry, and the supreme event of the year to which everything led, the journey to Calvary, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. Beginning with his birth the year proceeded, following the Evangelists' recounting the events, each one bringing him ever closer to his Passion. Forty days before Easter, fasting began; marriages and baptisms were not performed, and parishoners tempered their greetings on entering and leaving church. When Holy Week arrived, churches were darkened, a pall hung in them, and parishoners dressed in black. Each service heightened the grief of the people, for they were not hearing the life of Christ chanted but were reliving it. The Saturday midnight Resurrection was one of great joy. The absence of Mormon commemoration of Christ's Passion is severely criticized by ethnics, who are offended at sports contests and dinner parties held on these days. This is not exclusively a Mormon characteristic; President Lincoln was assassinated in the Ford Theater on Good Friday.

So it happened that here in religion, the profession of man's highest aspirations, ethnics and Mormons showed their sharpest hostility by ridiculing each other's religious symbols. The

Christian cross given to ethnics at baptism was called "wearing their religion around their necks" by Mormons. The garments of Mormons were even more pejoratively described by ethnics.

Time has changed all these church groups. The portraits of Latter-day Saint presidents no longer hang on the walls of ward chapels; symbolism appears in Church art; gathering to Zion is no longer mentioned; family size is smaller; and the Word of Wisdom is stressed far more than it was at the turn of the century.

Buddhist, Orthodox, and Catholic services have altered to accommodate American-born generations. The necessary substitution of English in Catholic Masses and its partial use in Orthodox liturgies has been accompanied by a loss of beauty. The importance of godfatherhood has diminished, and for the Orthodox, the forty-day periods of fasting have decreased to a week's duration each. (The first sign of assimilation, the disappearance of native languages, is almost complete by the third generation, including the Greek and Japanese ethnics who still support their language schools. Grandchildren speak with grandparents in English and a scattering of foreign words.)

Emulating Mormons, ethnic churches are attempting to force more active participation from parishoners. "We're getting to be like Mormon wards," is a half-humorous complaint often heard. Women's church auxiliaries are replicas of Latter-day Saint Relief Societies before their fund-raising activities were discontinued, and proposals are being made to imitate Mormon family home evenings. A Catholic priest credits the conservatism of Mormons for the absence of folk Masses, "liberated" nuns, and other innovations found among Catholics elsewhere in the United States.

Although religious beliefs present the largest arena for differences in ethnic and Mormon peoples, one cultural tradition has had almost equal importance: the rites of hospitality among immigrants. The proper extending of hospitality was an ancient practice for immigrant cultures; the lack of it in one family member stigmatized an entire clan. No matter how poor a household, the mother had to be prepared at all times, her house clean, and liqueurs, sweets, and coffee (or tea for Japanese) on hand. One of the important duties of girls was learning the proper etiquette for serving guests. On Boys and Girls Day, Japanese in Utah continued the custom of bringing out their treasured family tea sets for the instruction of girls in the ceremony of proper hospitality.<sup>81</sup>

These rites were burdens on women in the early days of immigration. There were few women and many unmarried young men, and culture required that mothers cook an endless series of dinners no matter how overworked they were or if their children were sick or well. The tradition was carried intact to the second generation and survives among the third generation in nostalgia for the food and conviviality of their parents' and grandparents' homes. Although they still meet and celebrate together, they have

loosed themselves of the extended-family responsibilities of the immigrant culture. Festive, bountiful Sunday dinners served with wines brought three generations together. American holidays and ethnic feast days were memorable with the singing and dancing of native cultures. In their rites of mourning, food was of first importance. It was through food that mothers showed their love; sending children to bed without food as punishment was inhuman to them. Immigrant and ethnic mothers are inextricably connected with the special place food has in the family.

The frugality of Mormons in food was strange to ethnics. All Mormons, of course, did not respond to food and keep the Word of Wisdom in the same manner. For example, it was easier for the British to keep the Word of Wisdom than for Swedish converts, who, William Mulder says, thought they had a special dispensation toward it and drank coffee and homemade beer freely with an abundance of food.<sup>82</sup>

Religious leaders, social workers, and psychiatrists interviewed for this paper agreed that religion becomes the focus for problems between ethnics married to Mormons--one added, "as much as between Jack Mormons and orthodox Mormons"--but cultural factors not readily apparent, such as the tradition of hospitality, have deep effects on relationships between people.

The Mormon view that immigrant hospitality was inordinately lavish and unnecessary and the immigrant view that Mormon lack of it was a coldness made for unbridgeable chasms. One of the most common remarks the author heard while growing up was: "Mormons wouldn't give you a glass of water if you were choking to death."

The immigrant experience of the first quarter of this century came to an end for Japanese, Balkan, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern people with World War II when their children reached adulthood. Its wane began with the immigration restriction laws of the early twenties that cut off a continual arrival of old-country people with their cultures yet to be pitted against Mormondom. The altering of quotas after World War II brought increased numbers of immigrants, but not enough to make them readily distinguishable. However, Utah's largest minority, the Spanish-speaking, are still living the immigrant experience, still in the low-paying jobs relegated to the "alien" poor--"alien" although many families have lived in America since before the landing of the Pilgrims. Their children find themselves trapped between two cultures, discriminated against in schools and clashing with parents, for whom the old culture remains vivid. Irving Howe's portrayal of the dispossession and shame of Jewish immigrant fathers of seventy to one hundred years ago could be applied to Mexican men. The mother, never having known prestige, does not "suffer so wrenching a drop in status and self-regard as her husband."<sup>83</sup>

Yet the two peoples, the ethnics influenced most by cultural forces and the Mormons influenced most by religious culture in

which the priesthood principle stamps itself on all Latter-day Saint life with a far-reaching distinctiveness, do meet on the plains of humor. Anticlericalism is a favorite subject for folk humor. Brigham Young University Professor William A. Wilson tells a story of a bishop who gave

a sermon one Sunday evening concerning the blessings in store for those who contributed to the Building Fund. "Bishop, that was a damn fine sermon," a member said. "Brother," the bishop said, "you had better watch that swearing." The member continued, "Yes, sir, Bishop, that was such a damn fine sermon that I gave an extra six hundred fifty dollars for the Building Fund." The bishop put his arm around the man and said, "Yes, Brother, it takes a hell of a lot of money to build a church."

A story from Greek immigrant days tells of a village priest whose sow was rooting in the garden and dug up an ancient jar filled with gold coins. Soon after, the sow died and the priest prepared a church funeral for her. Scandalized villagers hurried off to the bishop in the next town and told him of the sacrilege. In full robes, the bishop got on his donkey and rode to the village. He arrived as the funeral was in progress. The village priest, however, saw him coming and cut off his chanting. "This sow," he intoned, "was not just an ordinary sow. Oh, no, she was almost human. Before she died she made out a will. She left one hundred drachmas to the church; one hundred to me, the priest; and she didn't forget our good bishop. To him she left two hundred drachmas." "Oh, the blessed sow!" the bishop cried out.<sup>84</sup>



## FOOTNOTES

The author gratefully acknowledges the following for their assistance with the questionnaire used in her research: Dr. Ramona Adams, Dr. Maureen Urnsenbach Beecher, Emily Sharp Chipman, Mary Pappas Lines, and Dr. Louis G. Moench.

Sixty-two respondents were selected from representative Mormons and from each ethnic group under discussion. These included religious leaders, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers, and others in whose families Mormon-ethnic marriages have occurred.

The Spanish-speaking persons discussed in this paper refer to the Mexican immigrants and their children; their characteristics do not necessarily apply to Chicanos who have been in this country for several or more generations.

1. See Helen Z. Papanikolas, ed., The Peoples of Utah (Salt Lake City, 1976) for chapters on the "old" immigrants--the British, Scandinavians, and North Europeans--and the "new" immigrants who arrived at the turn of the century--Japanese, Greeks, Italians, Yugoslavs, Middle Easterners, and Mexicans.

2. The Lebanese had several labor agents, the most influential of whom was George Katter. See Robert F. Zeidner, "From Babylon to Babylon: Immigration from the Middle East," in *Ibid.*, pp. 393-94. Philip F. Notarianni, "Italianita in Utah," in *Ibid.*, p. 307 n20, says the Italian padrone system in Utah is obscure, although a document reveals the partnership of Mose Paggi and Leonidas Skliris. See Helen Z. Papanikolas, "The Exiled Greeks," in *Ibid.*, pp. 411-13, 418, 419, 435 for Skliris; and Helen Z. Papanikolas and Alice Kasai, "Japanese Life in Utah," in *Ibid.*, pp. 336-39, 341-42, 353 for Daigoro Hashimoto.

3. Tape-recorded interview, Joe Toraji Koseki, American West Center, University of Utah.

4. Ephraim Edward Ericksen, The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life (1922; reprinted, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1975), p. 55; chap. 8.

5. Frederick S. Buchanan, "Imperial Zion: The British Occupation of Utah," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, p. 70.

6. Ericksen, The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life, p. 72.

7. Helen Z. Papanikolas, Toil and Rage in a New Land: The Greek Immigrants in Utah, 2d ed., rev., reprinted from Utah Historical Quarterly 38, no. 2 (1970):155, 177-81; Papanikolas, "The Greeks of Carbon County," Utah Historical Quarterly 21(April 1954):143-64.

8. Ruth Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture (New York, 1946), p. 175, says: "Bushido is a modern official term which has not the deep folk feeling behind it. . . . It is a publicist's inspiration." She prefers the old word giri.

9. F. G. Friedman, "The World of 'La Miseria,'" Partisan Review (March-April 1953):221, 224-25, gives a fresh look at omerta.

10. See Emily Greene Balch, Our Slavic Fellow Citizens (New York, 1969), passim, for money remittances and Appendix, p. 472, for a comparison of money orders to native countries between 1900 and 1906. Italian immigrants bought \$50,716,668.45 in that period; immigrants from Austria-Hungary and Russia, \$69,041,227.41. Southern European immigrants consistently sent larger money orders than Northern Europeans; the Greeks led with an average of \$42.52 per money order. For nativist reactions, see Philip Frank Notarianni, "The Italian Immigrant in Utah: Nativism (1900-1925)" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1972), p. 33; and Helen Zeese Papanikolas, "Life and Labor Among the Immigrants of Bingham Canyon," Utah Historical Quarterly 33(Fall 1965):300 n45. These remittances continued throughout the lives of immigrants and for many of their children. Philip K. Hitti, Lebanon in History: From Earliest Times to the Present (London, 1957), p. 475, reports that for the years 1951 and 1952 the amount to Lebanon totaled eighteen million and twenty-two million respectively. Disasters of nature and political upheavals brought quick and generous response.

11. From an address given in Salt Lake City, February 11, 1933, by prominent Issei Henry Kasai on the commemoration of the founding of the Nippon Empire by Emperor Jimmu, February 11, 660 B.C.

12. Francesco Cordasco and Eugene Bucchioni, eds., The Italians: Social Background of an American Group (Clifton, N. J., 1974), p. 124.

13. Phyllis H. Williams, South Italian Folkways in Europe and America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 35.

14. Orthodox Observer, November 26, 1975.
15. The Greek Sarakatsani (completely nomadic), the Koutsovlachs, believed to be of Rumanian origin, and the Arvanitovlachs, of Albanian origin, are described by Patrick Leigh Fermor in Roumeli: Adventures in Northern Greece (New York, 1962), chap. 2. The Sarakatsani are the subject of J. K. Campbell, Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962). Jacob Bronowski, The Ascent of Man (Boston, 1973), pp. 60-64, describes the nomadic life of the Persian Bakhtiari.
16. Only one journal has been found among the new immigrants: Harry K. Kambouris, Greek Archives, Western Americana, University of Utah.
17. Ericksen, The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life, chap. 9.
18. Serbian immigrants give several versions of this incident. See also Joseph Stipanovich, "Falcons in Flight: The Yugoslavs," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, p. 161.
19. Charles S. Peterson, Take up Your Mission: Mormon Colonizing along the Little Colorado River, 1870-1900 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1973), pp. 247-48.
20. Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, pp. 369-70.
21. Stipanovich, "Falcons in Flight," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, pp. 369-70.
22. Edward Banfield, Moral Basis of a Backward Society (New York, 1958), uses the words "amoral familists" to describe the complete absorption of the southern Italian family. Balkan, Mediterranean, and Middle East people follow this pattern. Banfield proposed a cultural factor responsible for it. A challenge was made by William Muraskin, "The Moral Basis of a Backward Sociologist: Edward Banfield, the Italians, and the Italian Americans," American Journal of Sociology 79(1974):1484-96. Muraskin substitutes poverty for the cultural factor.
23. Told by Joseph Stipanovich about his paternal grandmother.
24. Masatoshi Gensen Mori, Buddhism and Faith (Tokyo, 1928), p. 20.

25. Hajime Hoshi, "A Country Founded by 'Mother': An Outline of History," in Japanese Culture, eds. Robert J. Smith and Richard K. Beardsley (Chicago, 1962), p. 301.

26. Masatoshi, Buddhism and Faith, p. 20.

27. See Rae Dalven, Modern Greek Poetry, 2d ed. rev., (New York, 1971), pp. 43-47; and Patrick Leigh Fermor, Mani: Travels in the Southern Peloponnese (New York, 1958), chap. 5, for the keening of the mirologia ("words of Fate") at death. The Lebanese, Serbian Yugoslavs, and South Italians share this ritual, stylized lamentation. See Joel M. Halpern and Barbara Kerewsky Halpern, A Serbian Village in Historical Perspective (New York, 1972), pp. 108-10; and Phyllis H. Williams, South Italian Folkways in Europe and America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 207.

28. Interview with Amelia Munoz Bourne, May 21, 1976.

29. Interview with Rev. Francis B. Pellegrino, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Salt Lake City, December 1975; and author's reminiscence.

30. Mrs. Taki Uchida, who taught in northern Utah and in Idaho. As a leading Issei, she and her husband were interned in a succession of camps during World War II. See Papanikolas and Kasai, "Japanese Life in Utah," in The Peoples of Utah, pp. 338-39, 355, 359.

31. Papanikolas, Toil and Rage in a New Land, pp. 167-75.

32. This second-generation experience was a general one in the United States. See also Joseph W. Tait, "Some Aspects of the Effect of the Dominant American Culture upon Children of Italian Born Parents," in Cordasco and Bucchioni, The Italians, p. 504. These children, he writes, "experience a somewhat higher degree of inferiority feeling, the more they associate with American children."

33. See Christopher Lasch, "The Family and History," New York Review of Books (November 13, 1975). An overview of the family is completed in "The Emotions of Family Life," Ibid., (November 27, 1975).

34. William Mulder, "Scandinavian Saga," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, p. 172.

35. Ibid., p. 180.

36. Buchanan, "Imperial Zion," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, pp. 99, 101, 103-4.
37. Mulder, "Scandinavian Saga," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, p. 183.
38. Book of Mormon: 2 Nephi 2:25.
39. Quoted in President Spencer W. Kimball, "The Marriage Decision: First Presidency Message," Ensign (February 1975), p. 4.
40. President Harold B. Lee, "Maintain Your Place as a Woman," Ensign (February 1972), p. 50.
41. Obert C. Tanner, "Does Philosophy Destroy Religious Faith?" (Paper delivered at the Great Issues Forum, Series 2: Religion, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, November 24, 1954), p. 16.
42. Ellis Reynolds Shipp, M. D., The Early Autobiography and Diary of Ellis Reynolds Shipp, comp. Ellis Shipp Musser (Salt Lake City, 1962), p. 114.
43. Informal group discussion, summer 1974.
44. "Memoirs of Agatha Walker McAllister" (Typescript, Utah Historical Society Library), p. 15.
45. Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," Western Humanities Review 10(Summer 1956):229-39.
46. Clark S. Knowlton, "The Mormon Family System: The Known and the Unknown" (Paper delivered at the Fourth Annual Family Research Conference, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, February 6-7, 1975).
47. Theodore Reik, Listening with the Third Ear: The Inner Experience of a Psychoanalyst (New York, 1948), p. 66.
48. Laurens van der Post, Jung and the Story of Our Time (New York, 1976), p. 51.
49. Samuel Ramos, Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico, trans. Peter G. Earle (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), p. 75.
50. David M. Schneider, American Kinship: A Cultural Account (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1968), p. 15.

51. A characteristic of all new immigrant groups under discussion. See F. G. Friedman, "The World of 'La Miseria,'" Partisan Review, p. 221.

52. William J. Goode, The Family (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964), p. 75.

53. Helen B. Andelin, Fascinating Womanhood (New York, 1975).

54. See Ephesians 5:22-24.

55. The author's mother was often consulted by Greek and Italian women during the 1920s in Helper, Carbon County, Utah, to read from her dream book. She recalls this incident and similar ones centered around black birds.

56. Leviticus 21:13-14.

57. See Leviticus 12:2-4; 15:19, 25; Deuteronomy 22:13-17; Luke 2:21.

58. For an account of the strike see Allan Kent Powell, "The 'Foreign Element' and the 1903-4 Carbon County Coal Miners' Strike," Utah Historical Quarterly 43 (1975):124-54; and Notarianni, "Italianita in Utah," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, pp. 310-12.

59. See Helen Z. Papanikolas, "Unionism, Communism, and the Great Depression: The Carbon County Coal Strike of 1933," Utah Historical Quarterly 41(1973):254-300.

60. Halpern and Halpern, A Serbian Village in Historical Perspective, p. 98.

61. President Spencer W. Kimball in an address given in Stockholm, Sweden, August 1974, published in Ensign (January 1975):3.

62. Kimball, "The Marriage Decision," Ensign (February 1975), pp. 2, 4.

63. Doctrine and Covenants 132:54.

64. Shipp, The Early Autobiography and Diary of Ellis Reynolds Shipp, p. 37.

65. For Utah's first woman-suffrage legislation, see Thomas G. Alexander, "An Experiment in Progressive Legislation: The Granting of Woman Suffrage in Utah in 1870," Utah Historical Quarterly 38(1970):20-30. See also Jean Bickmore White, "Gentle Persuaders: Utah's First Women Legislators," *Ibid.*, pp. 31-47.

66. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "Under the Sunbonnets: Mormon Women with Faces," Brigham Young University Studies 16(1976): 471-84. Mormon women have fared better in fiction. See Maurine Whipple, The Giant Joshua (Boston, 1941); Virginia Sorensen, A Little Lower Than the Angels (New York, 1942) and others; and Claire Noall, Surely the Night (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1972).

67. Julian H. Steward, Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1938; reprint 1970, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press), pp. 244-45.

68. See Rebecca West, Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia, vol. 2, (New York, 1940), pp. 677-80, for a perceptive view of men-women relationships in the Balkans.

69. Charlotte G. Babcock, "Reflections on Dependency Phenomena As Seen in Nisei in the United States," in Japanese Culture, eds. Robert J. Smith and Richard K. Beardsley (Chicago, 1962), p. 180.

70. Maureen Ursenbach, "Three Women and the Life of the Mind," Utah Historical Quarterly 43(1975):39, 28-32, 40.

71. For attitudes toward the ERA see "Letters to the Editor," Salt Lake Tribune, December 11, 14, 15, 1974; January 14, 15, 1975; February 8, 9, 1975; November 21, 1975. Linda Sillitoe, "Inside the IWY Conference: Women Scorned," Utah Holiday (August 1977): 26-28, 63-69.

72. Orthodox Observer, July 11, 1973; March 17, 1976. A December 24, 1975, article reported on the Orthodox church in America's (Russian Metropolia) refusing the first woman president of a Russian Orthodox church in America permission to attend the Fourth All-American Council of the church.

73. Erich Fromm and Michael Maccoby, Social Character in a Mexican Village: A Sociopschoanalytic Study (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970), p. 115, 115 n9.

74. Because ethnic background and religious affiliation are not recorded on marriage licenses, there are no statistics available on the incidence of ethnic-Mormon marriages, but the prevalence is attested to by religious and ethnic leaders interviewed for this paper and also acknowledged during a Community Services-sponsored ethnic program under the direction of Dr. Lowell L. Bennion, autumn 1975, YWCA, Salt Lake City, with funds from the Utah Endowment for the Humanities.

75. Timothy Ware, The Orthodox Church (1963; reprint ed., Penguin Books, Bungay, Suffolk, England, 1975), p. 72, says: "As Gregory of Nyssa put it: 'The true knowledge and vision of God consists in this--in seeing that He is invisible, because what we see lies beyond all knowledge, being wholly separated by the darkness of incomprehensibility.'" On page 73 he quotes John of Damascus: "God is infinite and incomprehensible. . . . God does not belong to the class of existing things . . . He is above all existing things, nay even above existence itself."

76. Demetrios J. Constantelos, Marriage, Sexuality and Celibacy: A Greek Orthodox Perspective (Minneapolis, Minn., 1975), p. 53.

77. John Cuthbert Lawson, Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals (New Hyde Park, N.Y., 1964), pp. 45, 75.

78. Ibid., pp. 535-36, traces this custom to antiquity.

79. See John Meyendorff, Orthodoxy and Catholicity (New York, 1966), chap. 8, for Vatican II.

80. Interview with Rev. Francis Pellegrino.

81. In Marie Karam Khayat and Margaret Clark Keatinge, Lebanon: Land of the Cedars, 2d ed., rev. (Beirut, 1960), five pages are devoted to the making and serving of coffee for guests, pp. 78-82.

82. Mulder, "Scandinavian Saga," in Papanikolas, The Peoples of Utah, pp. 182-83.

83. Irving Howe, World of Our Fathers (New York, 1976), p. 173.

84. Told by the author's father.



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## Political Conflict and Accommodation in Utah since Statehood

J. Keith Melville

The conventional wisdom in Utah politics has been that only Mormon-approved candidates need apply. In the following paper, J. Keith Melville, professor of political science at Brigham Young University, questions that assumption. After considerable empirical research, he concludes that though it is a powerful myth, the necessity of being a Mormon is probably overrated.

After reviewing the development of political accommodation and the formulation of the two-party system in the state, Professor Melville reports and interprets the results of empirical research into the candidates for state and local offices in the 1972 and 1974 Utah elections. Questionnaires were sent to all candidates, and a reasonable return allowed statistical analysis of the candidates' perceptions of the reasons for their success or failure. Though the results show that being a Mormon in an overwhelmingly Mormon population is an advantage, they also show that male, native-born, long-time residents and well-to-do males from politically prominent families tend to succeed as well.

Perhaps the most significant generalization about Utah politics which seems implicit in the study is the tenacity of the party system. It seems that while party identification is declining in other areas of the United States, the two major parties are alive and well and flourishing in Utah.



## Territorial Political Conflict

Mormon experiences in Missouri and Illinois were costly lessons in the realities of political processes. The Mormons learned the hard way that, even in a democracy, politics is a struggle for power. The majority or the powerful rule, and they are not always sensitive to the rights of the minority or the weak. Memorials and petitions for redress of grievances, lobbying activities, and a variety of other protective political stratagems pursued by the Mormons failed to achieve the political rights and protections they sought. Forced to leave the states following the death of their prophet, Joseph Smith, the Saints secured a temporary sanctuary and self-government in the Great Salt Lake valley.

Though the establishment of the ideal political system, the Kingdom of God, might have been tempting for the Mormons, temporal developments dictated other political measures. The Saints established civil government with the organization of the State of Deseret, and applied for admission to the Union. They wanted statehood and its self-governing power, but when this became impossible, they instructed John M. Bernhisel, their lobbyist in Washington, to settle for a territorial form of government with as much autonomy as possible and to secure the appointments of Mormons to the territorial executive and judicial offices. Bernhisel only partly succeeded in this attempt. The appointment of Brigham Young as territorial governor, and a majority of Mormons to other executive positions, was offset by the appointment of a majority of non-Mormons to the territorial court. This arrangement placed the Mormons in dominant positions in the executive and legislative branches, since the legislature was elective; the non-Mormons (Gentiles) in control of the judiciary; and the territory in turmoil.

Many factors were involved in the long period of conflict in the territory. The overt bone of contention was the Mormons' practice of plural marriage, but the real reasons for conflict were more basic. When one reads the bottom line of a whole catalog of Gentile complaints, it becomes clear that the fundamental conflict was religion. The united economic, social, and political practices of the Mormons which irritated the Gentiles were all rooted in Mormon doctrine--the taproot being Brigham Young's application of the Law of Consecration and Stewardship, which he called the United Order of Enoch. When President Young quoted the Savior's statements on "oneness," and specifically the Doctrine and Covenants 38:27, "Unless ye are one ye are not mine," he applied this concept to all facets of life. Brigham Young maintained that the complete "oneness" Christ talked about was ultimately to be "concentrated in the kingdom of God on earth"; hence it was the total unity of the Saints and the Kingdom of God that the opposition wanted to destroy.<sup>1</sup>

The Saints expressed their political unity through the People's party, which they organized in the early 1870s when faced with an opposition group known as the Liberal party. The appointive offices were beyond the control of the Mormons, but the People's party won every seat in the legislature from 1870 until 1885. In spite of the discriminatory policies of the Utah Commission, created by the Edmunds Act of 1882 to supervise the elections, this political dominance continued until the early 1890s when the abolition of the People's party was one of several social, economic, and political concessions the Mormons made to appease their antagonists, to mellow the conflict, to gain admission into the Union, and most importantly, to preserve the core of the Kingdom which faced destruction by federal legislation.

### Mormon Political Concessions

Joseph F. Smith, in a letter dated September 14, 1891, to his cousin Jesse N. Smith in Snowflake, Arizona, candidly stated the reasons for this division of the People's party into Republicans and Democrats along national party lines:

Of late I have heard more or less of politics. Until recently I was in favor of the Peoples Party politics in Utah, and knew neither Democrats nor Republicans; then, wisdom demanded that our people should unite in one party against a combination of all parties who had resolved themselves into the common foe of the Mormon people. Our political life and freedom in Utah depended upon our union in politics, all issues being of a local character. When, by intrigue, fraud and corruption, the "Libs" (a combination of all parties against the Mormons) gained the ascendancy, and threatened the destruction of the last vestige of our liberties, it became wise--and therefore necessary for us to divide in politics, on National Party lines. Therefore now, for the same reason that we have heretofore been united in local politics we deem it necessary to divide in order to save and protect our civil and political rights.

He explained that the Saints in Idaho were staunch Democrats, but both parties united to disfranchise them. In Wyoming the Mormons were both Democrats and Republicans and were "esteemed as good citizens." In Colorado, "a Republican state, our people are largely republican, and have all enjoyed fully their political liberties. In Utah, we have been considered overwhelmingly democratic, and hence, voluminous inimical legislation against us

by Congress." Assessing the realities of politics and the expedient thing for the Mormons to do, Joseph F. Smith went on to offer the following advice:

In Arizona, you are regarded as almost unanimously democratic, and therefore a menace and a dangerous element to the body politic. Although you are enjoying comparative peace now, it will only be a question of time, if you keep united, when you will be a common prey to both parties, and you will find, as our people have found in Idaho, that your only safety will lie in division in politics on national party lines; and if possible leaning just a little to the winning side, but always true to the principles of right and the greatest number. It seems to me that the commonest good sense, and the plainest wisdom demands of our people that they should not, and must not combine against superior opposing numbers, and political majorities. When they do, they become a disturbing element, a menace, and a prey to the common enemy. If we cannot always be found on the winning side, we can at least have a respectable minority there, who will help to even up and allay the fears of opponents. Our lot is cast in the world, and we must cope with it, according to the best wisdom we possess. It is evident to me that the best judgment requires the people of Utah, at least, to agree and unite on a proper division in the politics of the day. We have nothing to look for--nothing to hope for from the Dem's for the next two years. The Repubs. are in power, and can help and have helped us. And if we had more Repubs. among us, they would help us still more. And that they have not helped us before, was because they believed we were hopelessly democratic.<sup>3</sup>

Jesse N. Smith had previously worked closely with the leaders of the Democratic party in Arizona because their "offers are fair," and it seemed to be the best policy for the Mormons to pursue. A Republican party convention in Arizona in 1888 was reported by Joseph Fish that "they appear a little anti-Mormon in their actions, and some speak out quite plain. This is making all Mormons Democrats for self protection." On November 6, 1888, the election was held in Holbrook. About 90 votes were polled. In the Mormon precincts the Democratic ticket received a large majority, and the entire Democratic ticket was elected.<sup>4</sup>

Jesse explained his position as a Democrat in his journal, recording a meeting called by President Wilford Woodruff: "The Presidency recommended the Saints in Arizona, so far as practicable, to affiliate with the Republican party. I excused my self personally on the ground of intimate relations with the Democratic

leaders and benefits received from them, especially from Governor Zulick, I having been advised to enter into these relations by the late President Taylor, though I preferred the Republican party to the Democratic to judge between the two."<sup>5</sup>

Jesse N. Smith recorded in his journal for September 23, 1891, the receipt of Joseph F. Smith's letter "in which he strongly endorsed the Republican party as against the Democratic party. Agreed with him in the main." Soon thereafter Jesse's journal entries document his political activities in behalf of the Republican party. Anthon H. Lund recorded in his journal on September 30, 1892: "The Republicans in this county (Woodruff, Arizona) have put up a man for council by the name of Hubble. He is not liked by the Mormons; but Brother Smith thinks he is just the man." Hubble on one occasion had said to Jesse N. Smith, "I will fight you till hell freezes over and then I will take a turn with you on the ice!"<sup>6</sup> In spite of this and the fact that Hubble's opponent was Bishop Hunt of Snowflake, a Democrat, Jesse worked for the election of Hubble.

This "political conversion" of Jesse N. Smith is but a specific example, though minutely documented, of a general situation that occurred in Utah. The "call" to be Republicans was difficult for many democratically inclined Mormons to accept. James H. Moyle expressed it this way: "What a bitter pill this proved for many of the Mormons to swallow."

#### Electoral Factors in Early Statehood

With the establishment of the two-party system along national lines, the political complexion of Utah began to change. Religion began to take a secondary position among the factors affecting political attitudes and voting behavior. Partisan divisions even among the General Authorities of the Church developed, and in the elections of 1895 party affiliation seemed to be more important than the religious factor. Three Republican candidates for the state supreme court, Charles S. Zane, James A. Miner, and George W. Bartch (all non-Mormons), defeated three Democrats, R. W. Young, S. R. Thurman, and Thomas Maloney, two of whom were Mormons.

Although the political conflict over religion was defused with the creation of Democratic and Republican parties and with party affiliation becoming a predominant factor in the first state elections, the role of Church leaders in partisan elections remained significant. Church willingness to let non-Mormon candidates represent them appears to have been a deliberate policy of the Church in the quest for statehood during the late territorial period.<sup>9</sup> This policy was continued in the early statehood period. Utah's first U.S. Senators were Frank Cannon (Mormon) and Arthur Brown (non-Mormon). In the senatorial election of 1897, when

Brown was to be replaced, the Church supported Joseph L. Rawlins, a lapsed Mormon who was considered the Gentile candidate, in preference to an ex-member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Moses Thatcher. Thatcher had come into disfavor with Church officials when he refused to sign the "political manifesto" making it necessary for all Church authorities to receive the permission of those above them in the priesthood before seeking any political nomination.<sup>10</sup> Considering that fifty-six out of sixty-three members of the state legislature were Democrats, it should have been an easy matter for Thatcher, a Democrat, to have received the thirty-two votes he needed to be elected. Evidence suggests that Church influence divided the Democrats and Rawlins was elected.

Over the years, the deliberate Church policy of supporting non-Mormons for major public offices melted away, and Church support was given or withheld on a selective basis. Significantly, for nearly a half-century now, no non-Mormons have been elected to the Congress of the United States from Utah. And of the eleven governors of Utah, only three have been non-Mormons: Simon Bamberger (1917-21), a Jew who was a friend of the Mormons and whose ethnic background is not a limiting factor in the Mormon culture; George Henry Dern (1925-33), who had the strong backing of a prominent Mormon, Senator William H. King; and J. Bracken Lee (1949-57), who was supported by the Mormon Church leadership (albeit unofficially) and the Church-owned Deseret News.<sup>11</sup>

Women voted in territorial politics from 1870 until disfranchised by the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887. They were enfranchised again by Article IV, Section I, of the state constitution, and were allowed to vote in the 1896 election. The voting results for the state legislature support the partisan patterns indicated in the 1895 election, but an additional factor of women candidates was injected into the campaign when both parties nominated women for legislative races. Four women were nominated for four house seats, two from each party. In keeping with the Democratic trend of the 1896 election, the Democratic women were elected while their Republican counterparts were defeated. To be elected to the first state legislature in which women could vote and run for office was an impressive victory for women, but it also suggests that sex was a subordinate factor to party affiliation in the outcome of the election.

Another interesting contest developed in a race in Salt Lake County for five at-large seats in the state senate. Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, a Democrat, became the first woman in the United States to be elected to a state senate. Not only was her victory won with a comfortable majority, but one of her defeated Republican opponents was Angus M. Cannon, her husband!<sup>12</sup> In nearly every session of the state legislature since statehood, there have been women; but it is just a token of their numbers in the state, suggesting cultural restrictions on their political participation.

The ethnic factor also appears to have been secondary to the party affiliation factor in the early statehood period when W. W. Taylor, a black Republican candidate, ran for the state legislature on a platform calling for equal opportunity for blacks. Taylor, a relative newcomer to Salt Lake City, ran last on the ticket and was defeated along with other Republicans; but he polled a remarkable 6,512 votes, which was a respectable showing for a person who represented such a small minority group. This suggests<sup>13</sup> that the ethnic factor was not a major cause of his defeat.

Emphasis during the early statehood period on making the two-party system work seems to have subordinated religious and other factors to that of party affiliation. As Professor Jean B. White of Weber State College concludes: "At the end of the decade it was clear that if the two-party system was not working perfectly in Utah, it was at least working. Election contests were between Democrats and Republicans, not between Mormons and Gentiles, although statewide tickets were balanced to assure representation of the non-Mormon minority."<sup>14</sup> But it was obvious that religion as a factor influencing elections was still significant, though channeled through the parties. The emphasis on parties also seems to have eclipsed sex and ethnic factors in elections during this early period. Though more obscure than that of religion, evidences then and since these early statehood days suggest that sex, ethnic, and other factors play a significant role in the success a person may have in winning an elective office in Utah.

### Contemporary Factors In Electoral Success

The purposeful compromises of the 1890s pushed the overt political conflicts between Mormons and non-Mormons of the territorial period into the background. During the intervening years since statehood, has the religious issue been unimportant in Utah politics? Is participatory democracy a current reality, and do all Utahns have equal chance to get involved in the political processes? Or do cultural factors, social mores, bigotry, and discriminatory attitudes or actions limit some in our society from equal opportunity to seek and win elective office and exercise political power?

In an attempt to collect data which would answer these questions, a questionnaire was sent to all candidates for the Utah House of Representatives in the 1972 election. Fifty-six percent of the candidates responded. The data generated from the questionnaire suggested a modest advantage of native-born candidates over newcomers to the state; offered little help in determining elective opportunity of different ethnic groupings; indicated a near-Mormon monopoly of candidates for office, which in turn

prevented definitive conclusions about the viability of non-Mormon candidates, since the sample was too small to be reliable; reinforced hunches about the importance of education, occupation, and affluence of candidates in winning elections; confirmed the obvious fact that few women seek elective office in Utah and fewer still are elected; and revealed the interesting existence of a possible "political elite," that is, political families who have higher-than-average success in elections.

This 1972 study clearly suggested the need for continued data collection in order to draw more definitive conclusions about Utah politics. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to 332 candidates seeking legislative offices in Utah in the 1974 elections: all house, senate, and county commission candidates throughout the state. This enlarged survey represents all of the legislative or policy-making candidates on the state and county levels. Two hundred and one, or 61 percent, responded, with the returns being demographically representative of all the candidates.

### Data Analysis of the 1974 Election

#### Candidate Perceptions on Factors of Electoral Success

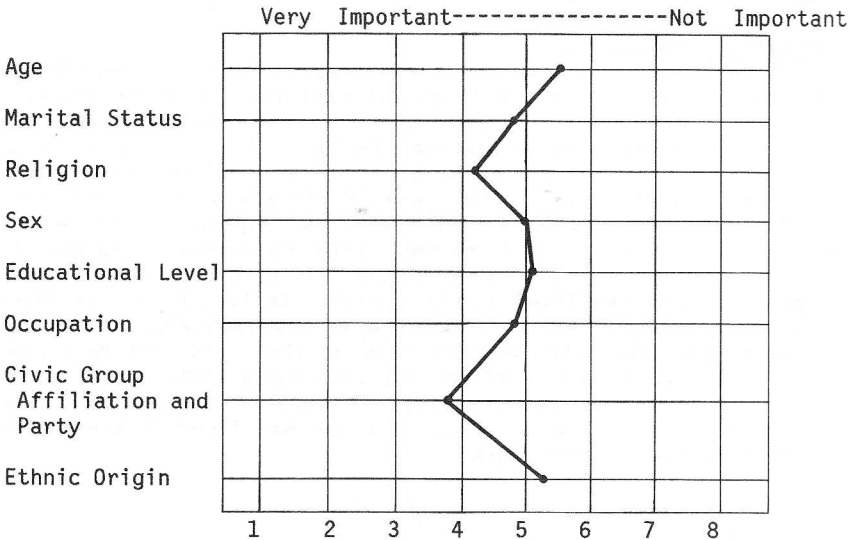
Each candidate in the 1974 election survey was asked to name the most important factors for success in his campaign. Eight items were drawn from this open-ended question. Sixty percent of the candidates responding to this question reported door-to-door campaigning and a good reputation as the most important factors contributing to their success. The significance of each factor and the ranking given in percentages are as follows: (1) door-to-door campaigning, 32 percent; (2) good reputation, 28 percent; (3) issues, 17 percent; (4) organization, 8 percent; (5) family and friends, 7 percent; (6) opponent, 5 percent; (7) party affiliation, 2 percent; and (8) religion, one percent. In the candidates' assessment of their own campaigns, religion was perceived as essentially insignificant, and party affiliation was nearly in the same category.

Responding to the question of what was the greatest obstacle in their campaigns, the candidates listed party affiliation first and a strong opponent second. Looking at these two responses, one's first inclination might be to say that the answers are inconsistent; but the following explanation may have some validity. What "party affiliation" usually meant, as determined by the comments on the questionnaire, was a "safe district" for the opposite party. The candidates perceived that they received little help from their own respective parties; but in districts with a solid bloc of voters of the opposition party, that became the biggest obstacle to overcome. The personal qualifications and campaign capabilities of the candidates were both significant in the candidates' success, or major obstacles if the opponents were strong in these attributes.

The actual issues in a campaign stood third in importance from both the success and obstacles point of view. Occupation and sex were rated as the least significant obstacles, with religion almost as unimportant.

When the candidates were asked to rank eight variables as to the significance of each in their campaigns, a composite picture somewhat different from that developed out of the "important factor of success" and the "biggest obstacle" questions unfolded. The picture came into focus with the factors ranked in the following manner: (1) civic group (and party) affiliation, (2) religion, (3) marital status, (4) occupation, (5) sex, (6) educational level, (7) ethnic origin, and (8) age.

Figure 1  
Perceived Significance of Survey Variables



A second question in this area of inquiry asked the candidates if they were aware of any specific cases where the above variables "played a decisive role in determining the outcome of the nomination, election, or appointment to public office." Sixty-two percent of 101 responding to this question replied that they were not aware of any specific cases where the variables had played a decisive role in the quest for public office. Only thirty-eight examples were listed. Religion was most frequently



mentioned with sixteen cases; party affiliation was listed next with seven cases; sex was mentioned by only four respondents; and ethnic background and age were mentioned only two times each. Another sixty-six candidates did not respond to this question, indicating that they also had no instances to cite.

An analysis of these data on perceived factors promoting success or failure in seeking public office suggests the candidates hold varied views as to the importance of different factors in electoral success. This can be explained partially from the variation of campaign conditions across the state. Even the composite picture, however, appears inconsistent when different questions seeking the same data concerning electoral success produce varying conclusions about the importance of different variables in electoral success. What may be of most significance is that the perceived importance of different variables may not square with the realities of electoral success. The data analysis which follows suggests that certain political beliefs relative to Utah politics may indeed be more mythical than actual.

#### The Native/Newcomer Factor

Questions one and two on the survey produced information on the place of birth and the length of residence of these individuals in their present communities. These variables may be referred to as the native/newcomer factor. The survey pointed up the advantage of being native born. Nearly 76 percent of the respondents were born in Utah, and 59 percent of them were successful in their elections. Of the forty respondents not native born, only seven or 17.5 percent were successful. Length of residence was also an advantage in the 1974 election. All sixteen respondents who had lived in their districts less than five years were unsuccessful. At the other end of the residence continuum, of twenty-one candidates who had lived in their district more than fifty years, seventeen or 81 percent were successful. More candidates lost than won who had lived in their districts less than twenty years, and more won than lost who had lived in their districts more than twenty years.

Table 1

Length of Residence in District  
in Relation to Electoral Success

<u>Length of Residence</u>	<u>Candidates Responding</u>	<u>Unsuccessful</u>		<u>Successful</u>	
		No.	%	No.	%
Less than 5 years	16	16	100	0	0
5-9	24	17	70.8	7	29.2
10-14	13	8	61.5	5	38.5
15-19	19	10	52.6	9	47.4
20-24	16	7	43.8	9	56.3
25-49	57	23	40.4	34	59.6
50+	<u>21</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>19.0</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>81.0</u>
	<u>166</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>51.2</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>48.8</u>

Ethnic Background

The survey was not particularly helpful in determining the degree of elective opportunity of the different major ethnic groupings, because the 1974 election was basically a contest between Caucasians. Ninety-six percent of the respondents were Caucasian, and 87 percent of these had ancestral roots in the United Kingdom or Scandinavia. This is understandable, since the 1970 census lists the white population of Utah at 93 percent. This picture is modified in certain pockets of southern European populations, such as in Carbon County, where candidates of Italian and Greek ancestry have been quite successful politically. And for the local races for county and city offices there are modest exceptions to the white and northern European dominance of elective offices, with the occasional election of an ethnic candidate.

The concentrations of Chicanos, Blacks, Asians, or registered American Indians in electoral districts are not strong enough to have the advantage of a solid ethnic vote. This condition seems to have resulted in these ethnic groups being swallowed up in the larger white society. Because ethnic minority candidates must fight against greater odds, white candidates are usually elected simply because they are in the majority.

When the candidates in the 1974 election were asked how important they felt ethnic background was in winning elections, they ranked it very low at seventh among eight factors listed, probably because the overwhelming majority came from northern European stock.

## Religion

Ninety percent of the respondents were Mormons, while Utah's actual Mormon population was calculated by Douglas S. Foxley in 1973 to be about 72 percent. In light of these data it is understandable that Mormons dominate Utah politics.

Table 2  
Religious Affiliation in Utah

Church	Percent of Population
Mormon	72.4
Protestant	9.2
Catholic	7.0
Other	5.0
None	5.0

Source: Douglas S. Foxley, "Mormon Myth or Monopoly: A Contemporary Study to Determine the Perceived Influence of the Mormon Church on Utah Politics" (Masters thesis, Utah State University, 1973), p. 28.

It should be noted, however, that among the near Mormon monopoly of candidates for these offices, approximately 50 percent of the Mormon respondents won and 50 percent lost. The same was true of the other religious groupings with the exception of the Protestants, who were only 33 percent successful.

What is suggested here is that all religious groups have about the same chance of winning elections once they become candidates, but non-Mormons do not field their percentage of candidates, possibly because of the belief that Mormons have a marked advantage in the election. When the respondents were asked what they perceived to be the most important factor for electoral success, religion was ranked as second out of eight factors listed, supporting the common misconception that you have to be a Mormon to be elected in Utah.

Since religious activity is commonly thought to be an important factor in political success, nearly all religiously active candidates point out their church activity in their campaign literature. The survey, however, did not support this

position, since 82 percent of the candidates who perceived themselves as "members in name only" of their religious organizations were elected. This constituted only 7 percent of all candidates, however, because 78 percent considered themselves active members of their respective churches. Religious activity, like religion, as a factor in political success does seem to be important based on the high percentage of religiously active individuals who throw their hats into the political ring. Its importance, however, may lie in the perceived electoral importance of church activity, deterring those who are inactive in their religions from entering the contest.

There are also areas where the myth of Mormon political dominance of politics is not accepted. An example of this would be in Grand County, where a successful respondent wrote on his questionnaire: "You don't have to be a Mormon to be elected in Grand County."

#### Education

There seems to be no evident discrimination against people of various educational attainments in Utah; yet 83 percent of the candidates who ran for these policy-making posts in 1974 had some post-high-school education, and 46 percent were college graduates. The candidates ranked education sixth out of the eight factors of importance in electoral success, perceiving it to be of little significance. But there is obviously a high value placed on education as a necessary qualification for elective office in Utah, considering the educational level of the candidates.

#### Annual Family Income

Politics in Utah, even for the senate, house, and commission seats, is a sport of the affluent. Reported annual family income of the 1974 candidates surveyed was as follows: 13 percent had incomes of less than \$10,000; 29 percent listed incomes from \$10,000 to \$15,000; 20.5 percent checked their income in the bracket of \$15,000 to \$20,000; 18 percent marked the \$20,000 to \$25,000 bracket; and 19 percent reported incomes of over \$25,000. Nearly 80 percent reported incomes above the median average of Utahns of \$9,320 as listed in the 1970 census. Election success was substantially higher among those candidates with incomes over \$15,000 than those under \$15,000. Fifty-one candidates in the income bracket over \$15,000 won elections, and forty-two lost. But in the category below \$15,000, forty candidates lost and only twenty-eight candidates won elections.

#### Political Party Affiliation

The respondents to the 1974 election survey included 46 percent Republicans; 44 percent Democrats; 8 percent American Party members; and 2 percent independents. Among these candidates, 56 percent claimed that they were strong party members, and

one third of the respondents listed party affiliation as the biggest obstacle to winning elections. This indicates that parties still play an important role in Utah elections. In certain electoral districts there is essentially a one-party system, and a candidate of the opposite party, regardless of other redeeming factors, will find it difficult to win.

When the candidates responded to a question asking them to rank the importance of eight different variables in their campaigns, civic group affiliation was selected as number one in significance. The open-ended responses indicated that the respondents included parties in their interpretation of civic groups; hence, parties and other civic group support were perceived to be most important to the candidates.

### Political Families

An interesting discovery of the 1972 survey was the large number of candidates who had close relatives who had also been candidates for office. The candidates were asked if any of the members of their immediate family (grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins) had ever run for office. Two-thirds of all house members indicated that they had relatives that had run for office. Having a relative who had run for office could well have acted either as the impetus for starting a political career or as the means of achieving success in that career, or both.

In the survey of the 1974 campaign, 48 percent of the respondents indicated that they had relatives who had run for office. Though smaller than in the 1972 survey, it is still a significant percentage. Both surveys pointed to the electoral advantage of having relatives who had been involved politically. Such a high correlation between these candidates and relatives who had also run for political office might be evidence that a political elite exists in the state. On the other hand, it could also indicate that these individuals simply are able to benefit from the experience and name identification of a successful relative.

### Sex

Traditionally in Utah, as in politics generally throughout America, few women seek political office, and the success rate of those who do is much smaller than that of men. Women, of course, do not consciously or empirically bloc vote any more than men, which leaves politics largely to the men. The race for state senate seats in 1974 was an all-male contest, and all of the holdover senators were men--making the Utah senate an exclusive men's club today. In the commission races throughout the twenty-nine counties, only two women sought commission seats: Vivian Little, a Republican in Iron County, and Betty Bates, an American Party candidate in Salt Lake County. Neither woman was elected, resulting in all-male county commissions throughout the state.

Of twenty-three women candidates for the house in the final election, eight were elected, or 35 percent. However, seven women were defeated in Democratic primaries, reducing the percentage of successful women candidates to 27 percent. The eight women constituted 11 percent of the house membership.

One of the defeated Mormon women candidates, in an effort to offset the possible drag of the "women's place is in the home" notion, used the slogan: "This woman's place is in the House." Though unsuccessful, she did not attribute her defeat to the fact that she was a woman. She had limited time to campaign and was a Republican candidate in a strong Democratic district. An unsuccessful Roman Catholic woman seeking a house seat assessed the cause of her defeat as resulting from being a Democrat in a Republican district, and that her opponent had an "outstanding historic name in this culture [which] gave him a decided advantage"--not the fact that she was a woman. Another unsuccessful woman candidate, a Methodist on the Democratic ticket, listed as the major obstacle in her campaign the Republican majority in her district, but added the fact that "I am a non-Mormon, [and] some women believe that women should not participate in politics," suggesting that some women in the Mormon culture would not support another woman for office.

Even though all of the candidates ranked sex as fifth out of eight variables in importance to election success, it appears as though Susa Young Gates's assessment of the role of women in Utah politics in 1913 is applicable to today's political process: "Most women in this state," she wrote, "are domestic in their habits and lives, they prize the franchise and use it independently, but their attention to politics consists chiefly in their desire, nay their determination, to see that good and honorable men are put in office."<sup>15</sup> American mores have traditionally limited women's roles in politics; Mormon culture today reinforces the limitations on the candidacy and election of women to policy-making positions.

### Conclusion

The survey of candidates who ran for the policy-making posts of the state legislature and the county commissions in 1974 is a composite political picture of Utah as it relates to these candidates, their campaigns, and their perceptions of Utah politics. What results is a moderation of the extremes of individual circumstances and experiences. For example, in the area of religion as a factor in the degree of openness of Utah's political scene, the extreme is expressed by the Mormon, Democratic candidate who said, "In this county you're a shoo-in if you're a white, male bishop or stake president and make the fact known. Nothing else is required." The data of the survey suggests a more moderate picture for Utah as a whole. And even in his home county which

has districts which traditionally vote Republican, a candidate with few of the criteria he listed for success, and a Democrat as well, was successful. This suggests strongly that religion as either a restrictive or advantageous factor in Utah politics is believed to be greater than it actually is. This belief, however, may in itself be restrictive or advantageous, as is evidenced by the higher percentage of Mormons and the lower percentage of non-Mormons who become candidates compared with actual population statistics on religious affiliation. Nevertheless, the nature of politics being what it is, even if proportional percentages of candidates were fielded, the Mormons would still dominate the Utah political scene on the basis of majority rule.

It should also be noted that the state is not as homogeneous or uniform as the means or averages of the survey might indicate. Religion is a stronger factor in some rural counties than it is in the urban counties. Proportionally, women candidates are clearly in the minority, but there appears to be more likelihood of success for women along the urbanized Wasatch Front and in the Democratic party. All of those who were elected are from Salt Lake, Davis, or Tooele counties, and 75 percent of these women are Democrats. The northern European candidate dominance throughout the state does not hold in Carbon County and is modified elsewhere.

The role of the political party across America has been weakening since World War II, according to the Gallup polls, with an increasing number of voters identifying themselves as independents. Walter Dean Burnham claims that there has been an onward march of party decomposition in America since 1900.<sup>16</sup> But the survey in this study indicates a healthy condition of the two-party system throughout the state of Utah. American or independent candidates were not successful in 1974. Even though many candidates found the party machinery not as helpful as they would have liked it to be, the large response from candidates indicating that party voting in certain districts was their greatest obstacle shows that party loyalties still exist and are strong in some areas. Even though Utah voters pride themselves in being selective, party is one of the bases of selectivity. This also indicates, however, areas of one-party dominance, which restricts the electability of candidates of the minor party--Democrat or Republican. Possibly the "division" of the People's party has continued impact. A number of years ago, it is told, an old-timer was asked why he was a Republican. He replied, "Sonny, I was 'called' to be a Republican and I've never been released." It would appear that subsequent generations feel the political "call," whether to the Republican or the Democratic party, is hereditary!

The survey attempted to isolate factors in order to evaluate their significance in the political process. This procedure, however, may give some miscues as to the importance of each independently of the other important factors in an election. Women

candidates, for example, are less likely to be elected than men, but the chances improve if the woman is of the dominant ethnic grouping in the district and the man is of the minority. The chances are also enhanced if the right combination of other variables are personal attributes of the woman--for her particular electoral district.

This survey does imply that unofficial restrictions do exist in Utah politics which generally favor (1) Mormons, (2) males, (3) native-born or long-time residents, (4) college-trained candidates, (5) the affluent, (6) those from "political families," and (7) the two major party candidates. Much of this, of course, is to be expected, considering the nature of politics in democratic societies. In fact, these conditions are perfectly consistent with what you would find in Colorado if Protestant were substituted for Mormon.

Political evolution since statehood has not marched evenly on toward opening up the Utah system along all fronts. It appears that non-Mormons, women, and ethnic minority candidates may have no more, or possibly even less, chance of being elected today than when Utah first became a state. The survey does indicate, however, that these restrictions may result more from the belief in than the actuality of discrimination. The ideals of democracy and the Mormon heritage, however, suggest the need for sensitive consideration of the disadvantaged groups and the continued need for accommodating devices to open the political system to all, based on personal merit and the contribution an individual candidate can make to the society as a whole.



#### FOOTNOTES

1. Brigham Young, "Discourse by President Brigham Young," in Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1854-86), 17(April 18, 1874):40-43.
2. Stewart Grow, "A Study of the Utah Commission, 1882-1896" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1954), p. 15.
3. Jesse N. Smith Papers, MS 503, Box 1, Folder 1, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
4. Diaries of Joseph Fish, entries for October 10, 1886, and October 17, 1888, MS in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, p. 187.
5. Jesse N. Smith, Journal of Jesse N. Smith, 1834-1906. Jesse Nathaniel Smith, the Life Story of a Mormon Pioneer (Salt Lake City: Jesse N. Smith Family Association, 1953), p. 379.
6. Journal of Anthon H. Lund, MS in Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, September 30, 1892.
7. James H. Moyle Papers, MS F508, Box 18, Folder 1, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 220.
8. Jean B. White, "Utah State Elections, 1895-1899" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1968), p. 25.
9. Howard R. Lamar, "Statehood for Utah: A Different Path," in Mormonism and American Culture, eds. Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen (New York; Harper & Row Co., 1972), p. 133.
10. Orson F. Whitney, Popular History of Utah (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1969), p. 510.
11. See Kendall R. Wright, Jr., "A Study to Determine the Effect of Unofficial Criteria Upon the Election of Officials in Utah" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974), pp. 27-29.
12. Jean B. White, "Gentle Persuaders: Utah's First Women Legislators," Utah Historical Quarterly 38(Winter 1970):35.

13. White, "Utah State Elections, 1895-1899," p. 160.
14. Ibid., p. 240.
15. White, "Gentle Persuaders, Utah's First Women Legislators," p. 37.
16. Walter Dean Burnham, Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), pp. 91-134.