

ment of the new American republic. Onuf believes that colonial fears of power encroaching upon liberty may explain the outbreak of the American Revolution but not its conclusion.

Onuf's work is careful, detailed, insightful, and particularly useful for students of state history who are interested in the definition, development, and behavior of a state. For instance, American states "did not act like true states" (p. 3) because their sovereignty—especially control of territorial jurisdiction—was best secured by increasing the powers of Congress. In short, "the states collectively guaranteed each state's particular claims" (p. 321) even though such recognition also diminished a state's theoretical independence. In addition, jurisdiction of a territory, as recognized by other states, did not always coincide with the wishes of the governed in that territory. Consequently, a Constitution protecting inhabitants increasingly seemed necessary as a means to protect the states themselves and even to permit them to function as "political communities" (p. 73).

Onuf concludes his argument by explaining the "miracle" of the Constitution. In his view "the Constitution would not have been possible without prior development of concepts of statehood and union" (p. 209). In addition, a new union, in the Federalist vision, could be "dynamic" in expanding through the creation of new states. Paradoxically, too, the Constitution emerged in part out of sectional conflict because a division of larger states could increase a section's voting power.

Onuf's work is at its best in treating state adjudication problems and their resolution. He thoughtfully examines an abundance of sources to infer the nature of political community both between and within states. In contrast, he fails to show how states came to a recognition that union, especially the Constitution, would serve sectional interests. The answer to that question might explain much about the sectional sources of disunion only a few decades later.

Earlham College, Richmond, Ind.

Randall Shrock

Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism. By Richard L. Bushman. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984. Pp. 262. Illustration, maps, note on sources and authorities, notes, index. \$17.95.)

Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804-1879. By Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984. Pp. xiii, 394. Charts, illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$19.95.)

Both of these meticulously researched biographies make valuable contributions to the study of the early history of the

Latter-Day Saints; they will command the attention not only of professional historians but also of the many general readers, Mormon and non-Mormon alike, who share an interest in the origins of Mormonism.

Bushman leads the reader through only the first two thirds of Joseph Smith's short life, to the publication of *The Book of Mormon* and the migration to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831. He deliberately chooses "to relate events as the participants themselves experienced them" (p. 3). The result is a Mormon "inner history": the story of the gradually unfolding revelation of God's purpose for his saints as it gave identity and meaning to the experiences of a believing community. As a twentieth century member of that same community, Bushman is convinced that the story is also firmly grounded in historical fact; thus, he is not afraid to turn it inside out and subject its factual basis to the judgment of professional historians.

Such an approach inevitably directs attention to Smith's role as a conduit for divine revelation. Bushman rejects "environmental" explanations, which account for Smith's visions, revelations, and translations as products of the culture in which they arose. He demonstrates how Smith grew up shaped by a "family culture" that owed little to organized religion, more to Enlightenment scepticism, and a great deal to the yearnings of common farmers for "contact with powers beyond this world" (p. 79). These yearnings led not only to visions but also to experiments with magic, particularly hunting for buried treasure with the use of "seerstones." But Smith "outgrew his culture" (p. 7) after a series of angelic revelations taught him to see the demonic character of magical treasure hunting; the same revelations bestowed upon him the divine gifts that would enable him to satisfy his neighbors' need for immediate manifestations of divine power.

Only this ability, argues Bushman, can account for the remarkable growth of the Latter-Day Saints. Smith succeeded in bringing upstate New Yorkers into contact with the world of the Old Testament prophets and patriarchs, a wondrous world where miracles could happen at any time. The excitement that Jesus' own disciples felt when Jesus fed the multitude with five loaves and two fishes—"the same power that fed our forefathers in the wilderness is among us today"—gripped those who responded to Joseph the prophet.

It is useful to have the case for the historicity of the Mormon story stated so persuasively by such a distinguished historian. Even while respecting the validity of Bushman's approach, however, this reviewer is left with unanswered questions. Had Smith completely outgrown the culture of magic by the time of

the publication of *The Book of Mormon*? He made a treasure-hunting trip to Salem, Massachusetts, in 1836 and spoke approvingly of seerstones as late as 1841. Cannot more be said about the complex process by which Smith received and interpreted revelation? From the beginning critics and followers alike were struck with how he would hold divine messages in his head for long periods of time before making them public at opportune moments. Bushman's interpretive options—the revelations must either be fraudulent or valid exactly as claimed—are too narrow. How much did Smith's own remarkable personality shape the character of the messages that he received? The question cries out for a comparative study of revelatory phenomena along the lines suggested by Lawrence Foster in *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (1981).

Newell and Avery hope to avoid pitfalls of historical method by simply allowing the evidence to speak for itself; they propose “to frankly state events as they occurred, in full consideration of all related circumstances” (p. vii). Drawing upon every surviving source, they tell the remarkable story of Emma Hale from her birth in Harmony, Pennsylvania, to her death in Nauvoo, Illinois, including not only her marriage to Joseph Smith but also her subsequent thirty-two-year marriage to the non-Mormon Lewis Bidamon. Since most of the sources that they follow are Mormon, their account generally takes for granted the supernatural character of Smith's divine messages—a remarkably innocent approach given the challenges of interpreting this material.

The book's most important contribution is its detailed account of Emma's reaction to her husband's revelation and gradual implementation of the doctrine of plural marriage. Smith conventionally used code words to keep knowledge of his polygamous practices (which began in the mid-1830s) secret from the public, and it was not until 1843 that he shared the revelation with his own wife. Newell and Avery convey Emma's sense of outrage and betrayal. Even in his most contrite moments Smith never revealed to Emma the full extent of his polygamous attachments. Since several of his plural wives were among Emma's closest friends, they, too, had to share in the duplicity and betrayal. Only after a revelation forced her to choose between submission and destruction did Emma grudgingly accept polygamy, but she soon repented of her acquiescence. Her relations with Smith became so strained that she threatened to divorce him; he in turn suspected her of poisoning him. Through Em-

ma's eyes we see a far more fallible Joseph Smith and sense the tension that gripped the prophet in his own country.

Central Michigan University,
Mount Pleasant

Baird Tipson

The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr. By Gary Scharnhorst, with Jack Bales. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985. Pp. xxii, 199. Illustrations, notes, index. \$17.95.)

The name Horatio Alger readily evokes images of the rags-to-riches story in United States culture. The substance of Alger's fictional heroes and Alger's own life up to now have been clouded by myth, distortion, and deliberate falsification. The historian will have an easier time in understanding Alger's work and life after reading this biography by Gary Scharnhorst and Jack Bales.

For the most part Alger led an uneventful life (1832-1899) as a writer of fiction and poetry. Even so, his biographical record was all but systematically destroyed by himself and his family. In his thirties, while employed as a Unitarian minister in Brewster, Massachusetts, there was public outcry over Alger's acts of pedophilia with young boys in his parish. Alger's father and the Unitarian church joined forces to limit the extent of public exposure in order to protect the reputations of both family and church by an agreement that Alger would never again use his clerical title or take a post as pastor. The authors claim that Alger atoned for his perfidy all his life by working on behalf of homeless children and street urchins through the Children's Aid Society and the Newsboys' Lodging House as well as depicting the hard lot of the New York "street Arabs" in his fiction.

As they unfold an interesting story, the authors nonetheless treat the ambiguities in Alger's life very gingerly. They are energetic, however, in their denouncement of those historians and journalists who continue to cite a spurious life of Alger written in 1928 by Herbert R. Mayes and later admitted to be a hoax based on fabricated sources. They demonstrate that twentieth century scholars have made no effort to consult the purported sources and simply relied on Mayes's "interpretation" of them. The authors, by rigorous research, provide a useful introduction to students of the falsehoods that can masquerade as the art and craft of history.

There are several psychological questions that remain unresolved. For example, between 1869 and 1879 the financier Joseph Seligman employed Alger to tutor his five sons. Between 1872 and 1878 Alger also contributed serials to *Young Israel* that included the publication of the first three Luck and Pluck