

Reviews

Kidnapped from That Land: The Government Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists.

MARTHA SONTAG BRADLEY

Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1993; pref., 195 p. appendices, notes, bibliography, index; \$29.95 hardcover.

Dr. Bradley introduces us to one of the oldest, largest (over 4500), fastest growing, but, amazingly, least known communitarian enterprises in America today—the Mormon fundamentalist community of Short Creek on the Utah/Arizona border. She begins her book by reviewing the governmentally-coerced abandonment of polygamy by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the late 1800s and chronicles Mormon fundamentalism's subsequent emergence within, and expulsion from, mainstream Mormonism in the early twentieth century. Short Creek (now known as Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah) became a gathering place for many of these excommunicated Mormons still committed to the 19th century Mormon practices of plural marriage and communitarian living.

Bradley's main topics are the 1935, 1944, and 1953 government raids on Short Creek. As in the 19th century war on Mormonism, the instigators of these 20th century after-claps justified their efforts not only in the name of safeguarding public morality against the "debauchery" of plural marriage, but also as the suppression of theocratic rebellion against the United States. In the last and largest raid of 1953, Arizona's zealous governor ordered virtually all the adult male population of Short Creek incarcerated, and placed their wives and children in far-away foster homes. Public sentiment, which had initially favored the raid, turned sharply against it as costs rose and

when plans were announced to separate children from their mothers. After several months of embarrassed indecision, the captives were discreetly released. Virtually all of them returned to Short Creek and their cherished lifestyle. Since 1953, Mormon fundamentalists have largely been left unmolested despite the continued illegality of their marriages.

While Bradley's book is primarily a history of the Short Creek community's persistent and overwhelming legal troubles, readers interested in understanding community dynamics in Short Creek will find a few intriguing insights. In a chapter entitled "The Women of Fundamentalism," Bradley employs feminist insights to understand rather than criticize why Short Creek women choose to be plural wives, and she examines how work is divided and shared in polygamous households. We also read of efforts to ensure inter-generational mixing at community recreational events, and we learn that Short Creek Mormons often raise new buildings in a communal manner similar to the Amish. We glimpse some of the workings of the "United Effort Plan"—the trust under which most of Short Creek's real estate and much of its capital is held to maintain economic security and a semblance of equality for all. We learn that Short Creek's Mormons do not live communally out of an optimistic hope for a better society, but out of obedience to the word of the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith.

Drawing on newspaper accounts, court records, beautifully stark police photographs, and extensive interviews with Short Creek residents, Bradley has produced a well-researched, ethnographically sensitive, and very readable book that invites further inquiry into Mormon fundamentalist communitarianism. There is much of Short Creek's communal life and culture that has yet to be explored, and there are many other Mormon fundamentalist communities in the West.

An irony of this book is that if it succeeds in generating more tolerance toward Mormon fundamentalists, it may contribute to their undoing. Despite their consistent appeals for civil rights, Short Creek's Mormons define themselves through their persecutions; they see opposition as a sign that they practice true religion. A few years ago, I spoke with Colorado City's mayor. He told me that tolerance and Southern Utah's economic boom are already doing more than brutal government persecutions ever did to entice some Short Creek Mormons to abandon their way of life for mainstream American capitalist culture.

Shaker Songs: Come To Zion (recording)

NORUMBEGA HARMONY AND THE SINGERS OF HANCOCK SHAKER VILLAGE

Pittsfield, Massachusetts: Hancock Shaker Village. Recording, notes. \$17.95 compact disc, \$10.95 cassette.

"Shaker Songs: Come to Zion" presents thirty-five selections that provide unique insight into the unusual repertoire of the Shakers. The dates of these works span the complete history of the Society, from their early hymns of the late seventeenth century to a contemporary occasional song of the twentieth century to a contemporary occasional song of the twentieth century. However, the bulk of material in this recording deals with nineteenth-century Shaker music.

Norumbega Harmony (a New England choral ensemble specializing in early American hymnody with Stephen Marini, Singing-Master) and singers from Hancock Shaker Village combine to present the works *a capella*, in the original, unarranged style of the Shakers. The chorus frequently breaks into smaller ensembles and solos.

Liner notes for the cassette include a succinct introduction to Shaker music by Cheryl Anderson (who also provided an introduction to the reprinted 1908 *Shaker Hymnal* of Canterbury¹), a list of the performers' names by ensemble, and contents listing each song by title, citing the type of song, published source (if appropriate), author, community of origin, and date.

The album groups the thirty-five works under seven headings, four periods and three related sets. The periods are "Early Hymns and Songs," "Songs from the Classic Period," "Songs from 'Mother Ann's Work,'" and "Songs from the Middle Period." The three additional sets are "Shaker Gospel Hymns," "Late Choral Anthems," and a set of three "Occasional Songs" that close the album. Five to eight compositions are performed in each period group, carefully giving a variety of the available music of the time, including hymns, laboring songs, anthems, extra songs, and marches.

The first section on "Early Hymns and Songs" contains some of the oldest documented Shaker music, dating from Father James' song "In Yonder's Valley" (1786) to "Mount Zion," an anthem by Issachar Bates (1819). "Holy Order Tune" provides an example of the early use of vocables within the Society.

Songs from the "Classic Period" presents laboring songs and extra songs from the 1820s and 1830s, including "Great I Little i," and "Come Life Shaker Life."

1. *Shaker Hymnal* (1908; reprinted Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 1990), iii-ix.

"Songs from 'Mother Ann's Work' " contains the largest number of works, including "Simple Gifts" and "O Ho the Pretty Chain." All eight items of this section date from the 1840s. The Middle Period contains six examples of marches, extra songs, and a hymn. Five of these works date between 1849 and the 1870s; one march was published in the 1908 *Canterbury Hymnal*.

"Gospel Hymns" and "Late Choral Anthems" both present four-part vocal works, which are performed unaltered from Shaker hymnals published at Canterbury in 1892 or 1908. This is a unique portion of the tape, giving an insight into how much the Shakers learned from other Christian sects in writing part music.

The album closes with a set of "Occasional Songs," including "Farewell Song" that provides suitable closure for this recording.

The two combined ensembles have a sound that strikes one as very "Shaker," with a combination of trained voices and others that one can easily imagine in a Shaker meeting. The list of personnel includes an asterisk used to denote "members of the Small Chorus (Numbers 25 through 32)." However, the cassette renumbers the selections on each side, requiring a few moments to realize that the small chorus refers to the performers for the sections of gospel hymns and choral anthems.

A glance at Patterson's *The Shaker Spiritual*² quickly confirmed liner information and provided additional information on about half of the repertoire contained on the album. Seven of the items not referred to in Patterson were the late four-part gospel hymns and choral anthems, which are outside of his study. A few other works are also clearly outside, such as "All at Home," which was "learned from the singing of Mildred Barker." However, five selections could not be found within *The Shaker Spiritual*. These could easily be simply variant titles, examples from other sources, or additions beyond Patterson's work. It would be nice to have that information on the liner.

A double check on information in the liner note found no problems, except for the affectation of using "Isaachar" for Issachar Bates' name.³ The gospel hymns and anthems were difficult to locate in the original hymnals because first lines (used in the original hymnal indexes) were not included.

Good recordings of communal music are, in general, few and far

2. *The Shaker Spiritual*, Daniel Patterson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

3. *Ibid.*, 93-94. (Note. In fact, Stephen's own book *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England*, give two different spellings for "Issachar.")

between. "Shaker Songs" is an excellent recording of an interesting repertoire, presenting the rich variety of Shaker music.

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Utopian Episodes: Daily Life in Experimental Colonies Dedicated to Changing the World

SEYMOUR R. KESTEN

Syracuse. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993; 346 pp.; illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index; \$39.95 hardcover.

Kesten compares and contrasts selected nineteenth-century Utopian communities and then reflects on their successes or failures. The first goal is admirable, since comparative studies are needed in today's literature on intentional communities; the second objective is dangerous and fraught with historical potholes.

After defining the differences between religious Utopias and "social reorganization colonies" of "gentle revolutionaries," Kesten details life at New Harmony, Brook Farm, and Icaria. These societies, he believes, "yield insights into what took place elsewhere." (10) Common themes permeate the three examples. They banned alcohol and tobacco, had a physically exhausting and rigorously organized workday, and their members dressed differently than contemporary Americans. They stressed freedom, tolerance, equality and fraternity. Women joined to gain full social partnership with men, to escape prevailing prejudices against their sex, and to achieve economic independence, legal equality and greater freedom in recreation. The Utopias pioneered new definitions and objectives for education. They developed an astonishingly fertile cultural life. They all failed.

Kesten's excursion into primary historical sources reveals a texture of communal life that is fascinating and informative. I especially enjoyed the ironies he discovered. For example, the communities "fostered democracy, one of their principle attractions, yet they allowed the democratic process itself to make colony life unattractive." (81) They advocated enhanced personal freedom but demanded submission to extensive rules on admission and conduct, particularly in Icaria. They embraced equality but allowed class distinctions to develop early. His chapters on education and the "Life of the Mind" are the strongest parts of the book. He deftly covers the radical innova-

tion of providing education from cradle to grave. He summarizes clearly the vibrant intellectual activity at Brook Farm and Icaria. He correctly emphasizes that communal newspapers did not provide "news" of the outside world but rather were propaganda sheets that explained goals, exaggerated strengths, and, hopefully, attracted new members.

Kesten has some problems, however. He fails to explore the impact of flawed leadership on the three communities. Frequently his focus blurs as he wanders off to glance at La Reunion, Equality, Alphadelphia, the Sylvania Association, the Industrial Association, and the Wisconsin Phalanx. His assertion that the communities "pushed into the American mind" ideas about the status of women "that had never entered that provincial precinct before" (112) is overdrawn. Non-utopians such as Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had more impact on such attitudes than did the Utopian episodes examined in this study. He sets up a false dichotomy in the final chapter, "After Life: Failure and Success," and concludes that a number of "fatal errors" "remorselessly dragged every experiment of social reorganization down to a tragic end." (286) If the author had taken into account Donald Pitzer's writings on the dangers of the success-failure question (which are not cited in the bibliography) he would have avoided the issue altogether. There are other worrisome omissions. In researching materials for the Icarians Kesten neglected the Center for Icarian Studies, the largest repository of primary and secondary materials on the subject in the country. In the chapter "Life for Women" no citation appears for Lawrence Foster's fine analyses of women and sexuality or for Leslie J. Roberts' discussion of Cabet's views of women that appeared in the 1991 issue of *Utopian Studies*. Carl Guarneri's excellent work on Fourierism is listed in the bibliography under "Some Recent Books," but it is never cited in the text. As a rule, scholars *first* immerse themselves in the standard literature and historical interpretations of their chosen topic and *then* delve into the primary sources. Kesten has not done the first step and only partially completed the second one.

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The Concept of Utopia

RUTH LEVITAS

Syracuse New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990; 200 pp.; notes, bibliography, index; \$34.95 hardcover, \$14.95 paperback.

Levitas has given us the most careful comprehensive account to date of how the concept of Utopia has been used in academic and intellectual circles. In the course of surveying major usages in political, social, economic, and literary theory over the past one hundred and fifty years, she lays the ground for her own definition and recommendation for verbal/conceptual care in doing Utopian studies.

The Concept of Utopia has four parts. Part one surveys eight early studies of literary Utopias to see how authors such as Mumford, Negley and Patrick, and Berneri identified typical Utopian works and attempted to classify and interpret them. These authors define Utopia mainly as a distinctive form of cultural expression, one describing ideal societies. Part two surveys concepts of Utopia in social philosophy from Marx through Mannheim, Bloch, and Marcuse. Here, Utopia is defined mainly in terms of the function of ideas in relation to social change—either to frustrate it by unrealistic dreaming (on the Marx-Engels view) or stimulating it (on the Mannheim-Bloch view). Part three is called "A Hundred Flowers: Contemporary Utopian Studies" and describes an intellectual scene in which there is "a flourishing variety of approach" but one with "a conceptual plurality which is anarchic to the point of confusion." (7) A brief concluding part looks at why Utopian studies need a shared but broad and theoretically grounded concept of Utopia. Utopia should not be defined in terms of content, form or function, for these unduly narrow the range of inquiry and mislead it. Levitas sees the essence of Utopia as "the desire for a better way of being and living." This concept allows for diverse approaches to the study of widely various forms of Utopian expression (e.g., dreams, intentional communities, novels, films, fantasy) without conceptual chaos.

There is no doubt about the timeliness and importance of Levitas' work. Although there are no academic departments of Utopian or communal studies, there are scholars and teachers in many disciplines working in those areas, with professional organizations for scholars in both fields. Two moving forces in promoting such organizations and work, Lyman Surgont and Donald Pitzer, have both emphasized the need for clarifying basic concepts and developing widely shared theoretical frameworks at the same time that teachers

and scholars use quite different methods and pursue diverse objectives. Levitas' surveys have already stimulated high level discussions of conceptual and methodological issues in the Society for Utopian Studies and should be helpful in parallel ways in communal studies.

For Utopian scholarship Levitas' work provides a wonderful overview and interpretation. There is none better. However, her own analytical definition has problems. It is excessively broad, since surely not all desires for a better way of being constitute a Utopia. Plans for a new kitchen or daydreams about a mistress would, on Levitas' definition, be examples of Utopias, or at least Utopian thinking. To adequately narrow her definition would require at least considerations of the scope of desire (how much of life and human being would need to be improved? for whom? how integrated and feasible would a vision have to be to leave the realms of random fantasies or prayerful hopes? etc.)

Scholars and students of intentional communities will find *The Concept of Utopia* to be a fine introduction to both the literature of Utopian studies and to key conceptual issues in this emerging field of interdisciplinary study. It challenges us to strive for greater conceptual clarity and consistency. And it suggests the need for a comparable work on the central concepts and assumptions of communal studies.

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George Rapp's Years of Glory: Economy on the Ohio 1834-1847

KARL J.R. ARNDT

New York: Peter Land, 1987; xxxi, 1163 p.; index; English and German; \$193 hardcover.

This is the seventh and largest volume of the *Documentary History* published by Karl Arndt since 1980 to supplement his two earlier narrative monographs on the Harmony Society. The richly illustrated book covers the Society's history from the death of Friedrich Rapp, its brilliant financial manager, to the decease of George Rapp, its founder and spiritual head. Major milestones in this period of the Society include the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Schreiber case ruling in its favor; its profitable venture into silk production; its

1835 decision to admit no new members; its immunity to the depression of 1837; the recognition of its influence in Pennsylvania politics; its successful though morally questionable measures to secure a share of the Huber estate; and its continuing success by litigation and other means of dismissing dissenters' claims for reasonable compensation. More than ever before the Harmonists' affairs were decided by George Rapp, who had risen from a humble Swabian weaver to an autocratic patriarch Americans addressed as Esquire, venerated by many and hated by others. Distrusting the U.S. banking system after the advent of Jacksonian democracy, Rapp hoarded half a million dollars worth of British sovereigns. In the last decade of his life he kept everything in readiness that the Harmony Society would need for the journey to witness the Second Coming in Jerusalem.

Arndt has spared no efforts in collecting these archival materials, most of them previously unpublished, from all over the world, and has edited them with evident enthusiasm. Time and again he emphasizes that many of the German texts he has transcribed (mostly from originals in a script that few modern scholars can fluently read) cannot be adequately translated. Nevertheless, he provides English versions of many, along with various combinations of summaries and selective renditions of entire or partial original texts. The reasons for this procedure are not always clear. Why, for instance, is a highly significant religious statement (582) by Rapp not translated in its entirety, while a considerable number of bland business letters are so rendered? The book would have benefitted from an explicit definition of editorial principles and consistent adherence to them. As it is, omissions, intentional or due to illegible handwriting, are not indicated uniformly, and normally without information as to how many words, sentences, or lines are missing. The English summaries preceding each new text usually combine content and commentary, making it sometimes difficult to determine which is which. Occasionally these summaries include needless repetitions, convoluted syntax, and solecisms like pronouns referring to non-existent antecedents. The Index compiled by Ruth Blair unfortunately follows German rather than English rules for alphabetizing, and erroneously lists *Pfui* as though it were a person or a place, when in fact it is merely a common German interjection. There are very few typographical errors.

None of these criticisms is serious enough to detract from the basic value of this book as a documentary history. Arndt devoted most of his life to the scholarly study of the Harmony Society, and his love and respect for its pious members permeates all he wrote about them, including this volume. But he is not blind to their faults.

And thus he documents not only the admirable contributions of these communitarians to craftsmanship, agriculture, manufacturing, commerce, education, and the arts in 19th-century America, but also the religious fanaticism, avarice, and lack of Christian charity of their leaders like George Rapp, R. L. Baker and Jacob Henrici. Combining Arndt's rare expertise in theology, German, and history, the book is an encyclopedic monument to the Harmonists as well to Karl Arndt.

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Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States

WENDY CHMIELEWSKI, LOUIS J. KERN AND MARLYN KLEE-HARTZELL, EDITORS

Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993; list of illus., pref., intro., 266 p.; index; \$39.95 hardcover, \$17.95 paper.

At one time, a great deal of the scholarship on communitarian societies tended to presume that communal life was a better life for women, that it freed them both from the isolation of the nuclear family and from dominant cultural constructions of gender. Too often, however, women's experiences were viewed through the perspective of outside observers or through the eyes of male community members who authored the documents most readily accessible to researchers. During the last decade, however, scholars have increasingly put women's experiences and voices at the center of their research. The fifteen essays that make up this volume demonstrate the effect of this change in perspective. They delineate the complexity and variety of women's experiences in community, and they reveal that despite rhetoric to the contrary, women in community often lacked access to either political or personal power.

The book is organized around five themes: "Women's Search for Community," "Women's Creativity in Community," "Women and Structures of Leadership in Community," "Women's Status and Male Power in Community," and "Women's Voices: Personal Experiences of Community." The Shakers are the subject of four essays, including an analysis of their "fancy goods," an examination of Shaker women's economic authority, a discussion of the bonds among Shaker sisters expressed through poetry and letters, and a reassess-

ment of gender equity among the Shakers. Other essays consider the Owenite Communities; The Woman's Commonwealth; Brook Farm; Catholic Sisterhoods, 1850-1940; the Mormons; Oneida; The Farm; the Lubavitcher Community; the Hutterites; Twin Oaks; and Sojourner Truth's search for community.

Because it brings together material about historic as well as living communities, the collection forces readers to recognize the persistence of cultural constructions of gender that transcend chronological and ideological boundaries. Several essays demonstrate the importance of careful attention to changes within specific communities: constructions of gender are not static, but evolve in response to internal experience and to the external milieu. Even those groups that were most isolated from the world failed in attempts to reorganize gender expectations. One of the most important lessons to be drawn from these essays may be that, disclaimers to the contrary, no group can completely isolate itself from the surrounding society. Although they struggled to gain control over work, economics, and their sexuality, many of the examples in this volume show all too well that women often freed themselves from the control of individual men only to have their freedom curtailed by communities that retained patriarchal structure. While some communities gave women room to develop their own creativity and leadership, many curtailed women's opportunities for education and self-development. In celibate communities such as the Shakers or Catholic Sisterhoods, women's work was both undervalued and exploited; yet placing a high value on reproductive work, as do the Mormons or members of The Farm, does not guarantee women any greater freedom outside the domestic sphere; indeed, these women exchange the possibility of public life for strong female and familial identity. In addition to showing the persistence of cultural constructions of gender that limit women, these essays also reveal the power of women to create and sustain female communities that provide opportunities for education, that make women's work meaningful, and that encourage women to develop themselves socially and intellectually.

By juxtaposing essays on such a wide variety of communities, this work raises more questions than it answers. But more importantly, it demonstrates how feminist analysis can open up new ways of thinking. The effect of such scholarship is not reductionist, but rather expansive, in that it points out the complexity of the issues. Consequently, it also suggests many fruitful areas for future work.

DIANE SASSON
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This Strange Society of Women: Reading the Letters and Lives of the Woman's Commonwealth

SALLY L. KITCH

Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1992: xiv, 391 p.: notes, bibliography, index; appendices ("Commonwealth Membership," "Commonwealth Property"); photographs, illustrations; \$39.50 hard-cover.

Professor Kitch's first book, *Chaste Liberation: Celibacy and Female Cultural Status*, focused on three celibate female nineteenth century communities including the Woman's Commonwealth. As she finished, she was given over 5,000 personal and business letters, documents and diaries of the Sanctificationists (members of the Commonwealth) which made it possible to piece together the motivations for joining, staying or leaving, as well as documenting in detail the economic, social and political conditions of their Utopian settlement.

Around 1866 the Sanctificationists formed a community near the town of Belton, Texas, under the able leadership of Martha McWhirter. These divorced or single women could now buy property in their own name, something married women could not do in Texas at the time. Celibacy seemed tied to a dislike of men and memories of bad marriages as well as having a religious foundation. These women became financially solvent by first developing a laundry business, then a boarding house. The Commonwealth was most active between 1879 and 1908. By the 1890s some of the daughters, brought as children to the Commonwealth, wanted to leave. In 1898 the Sanctifications moved to the Washington, D.C., area and set up another boarding house. The last Sanctificationist died at age 101 a decade ago.

This book is divided into four parts. The first focuses on the history of the community. The second, which discusses individual members and mother-daughter combinations, is essential reading to understand the rest of the book. The McWhirters, the Henrys, the Schebles, the Johnsons, and the Pratts all come alive. Some women found it difficult, others impossible to "let go" of their children and other matters of the flesh so that they might focus on spiritual matters. The third section delves into the inner workings of community. The final section provides an evaluation of the Commonwealth women in terms of contemporary feminism and modern feminist theory. Its topics include intergenerational conflict, the utility of celi-

bacy and a brief discussion of the ties the Sanctificationists developed with a few other communal societies and with the national woman's suffrage movement (McWhirter corresponded with Susan B. Anthony). Kitch argues that the Commonwealth's "most enduring feminist legacy" is their example of "coalition politics." (340)

Professor Kitch uses textual analysis to probe the gender implications of the letters written and the feminine act of letter writing. The letters help explain the pros and cons of celibacy as seen by these women. Kitch is at her best when applying textual analysis. Her comments about intergenerational conflict are insightful and contribute to our overall understanding of late nineteenth century mother-daughter relationships. To have functioned successfully with little internal conflict is a tribute to the determination of the Sanctificationists and serves as a reminder of the limited options available to these women. The Commonwealth, then, serves as a backdrop for Kitch's analysis. Its strengths, weaknesses, religious doctrine, and value to an understanding of the Utopian movement are not developed.

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