

*Contingent Citizens: Shifting Perceptions of Latter-day Saints in American Political Culture*, edited by Spencer W. McBride, Brent M. Rogers, and Keith A. Ereksun. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2020. xv, 291 pp. Index, notes. \$29.95 paperback.

Reviewer Andrea G. Radke-Moss, PhD., is a professor in the Department of History, Geography, and Political Science at Brigham Young University-Idaho. Her research focuses on the intersection of women's history and Mormon history during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

*Contingent Citizens* explores how major themes of authority and mobilization, power and sovereignty, and unity and nationalism have informed Latter-day Saints' relationship to the national state. Using these frameworks, this edited collection examines Latter-day Saints' troubled place in the American political fabric and their ambiguous place "somewhere between citizens and foreigners" (ix). These thirteen essays assert that Mormons were seen and treated as "not quite fully American," yet "their religious peculiarity" only partly accounted for their outsider status (ix).

Part I examines how fears of Mormon political mobilization influenced early American discourse, particularly about concerns that Latter-day Saints' religious expression and political action conflicted with the republic's functioning. Adam Jortner considers how early Americans opposed Mormonism and other alternative sects like the Shakers due to fears about superstition and magic, which were considered contrary to democracy. Spencer McBride then argues that Joseph Smith combined his ecclesiastical position with political ambitions in his 1844 presidential campaign, which stoked Americans' deeper fears about anti-republicanism and about religious leaders mixing their religious, political, and military authority.

Benjamin Park shows similarities between Mormons' struggle to integrate into America's religious fabric and the challenges of anti-Catholic sentiment among Americans who believed that the both religions were antithetical to individualism and freedom. In the section's final essay, Natalie Rose examines how the Church used evangelizing efforts to fight the ERA in the 1970s and '80s and later reapplied similar political mobilization toward other moral causes.

Part II explores the "complex intersection of Mormons with other Americans in the negotiation of power" in the larger republic, and particularly how the Latter-day Saint experience interacted with tightening federal power and "strengthening national sovereignty" (71). Amy Greenburg finds similarities between the power used against the Sauk and Meskwaki Indians in Illinois during the Black Hawk War and the power later used against Mormons. In both cases, Greenburg argues

that military actions against these groups were “symptomatic of white manhood and territorial expansion” (76). Thomas Richards then looks at how Mormons figured into President Polk’s territorial ambitions after their expulsion from Illinois. Polk questioned whether the group “could be trusted as agents of American empire,” yet because of their whiteness, Richards concludes that Mormons were ultimately included (72).

Brent Rogers considers the criticism of Latter-day Saints for their use of martial law in early America. When Joseph Smith in Nauvoo in 1844, and Brigham Young in Utah in 1857 employed martial law, both leaders “believed their actions necessary for the protection of rights and liberties of their minority group,” yet these uses of martial law were criticized as anti-republican (126). In his chapter, Stephen Smith argues that Congressional obstruction during Utah’s battle for statehood was part of a larger Americanizing effort; only when Congress deemed Mormons loyal Americans who would reject theocracy and embrace diverse politics, did Utah receive statehood. Matthew Godfrey concludes the section with his essay on Progressive Era Latter-day Saints’ involvement in the Sugar Trust, which drew criticism from muckrakers who were fighting monopolies and the concentration of wealth in America at the turn of the twentieth century.

In the final section, “Unity and Nationalism,” four essays look at how Latter-day Saints have fit within or disrupted national unities. Matthew Mason first considers nineteenth-century Whig intellectual Edward Everett’s opposition to Utah’s statehood in the 1840s. Although Utah gained territorial status, Everett convinced Congress to reject the proposed name of “Deseret,” which he considered a label of dubious religious origin and an emblem of Mormon delusion and zealotry. Rachel St. John then argues that nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints made great efforts to create their own autonomous state while also demonstrating their loyalty to the United States; however, contests over sovereignty ultimately led to numerous attempts to exert greater federal control over Utah.

JB Haws sets the stage for understanding Mormons’ increasing acceptance in the mid-twentieth century. As the U.S. entered the Cold War, Americans countered “Godless Communism,” giving the need for religious unanimity a political cast. This national civic religion created space for a Mormon Christianity to be welcomed into the religious mainstream. In that context, Ezra Taft Benson became Dwight Eisenhower’s Secretary of Agriculture, while also serving as an Apostle of the Church. Patrick Mason shows how Benson’s “visibility and outspokenness” brought national attention to his archconservative political views,

which “cemented the perceived and often real alliance of Latter-day Saints with American political, social, and religious conservatives” (209).

Throughout this volume the authors challenge notions of Mormon exceptionalism; instead, they suggest that “Mormons’ experiences reflect how America struggled to define and respond to the challenges of the early American republic.” National concerns about the fragility of democracy led to vigilance over a suspect religious minority whose political behavior was considered contrary to republican values. These new frameworks remind Latter-day Saints that their complicated experiences with American unity and nationalism are not entirely exceptional.

Thus, *Contingent Citizens* deemphasizes the common narrative of a marginal group that gradually progressed toward American acceptance. Rather, shifting political alignments have contributed to Mormons at times being at odds with national interests and at others aligning with them. Overall, the focus is on the Mormon experience in a context of changing democratic mobilization and shifting national identity. *Annals of Iowa* readers will find particular relevance in the Latter-day Saints’ historic encounters with the American state, and how those interactions affected the Mormons’ regional position while settled in Illinois, and their later religious exodus across Iowa to the Far West.

*Contingent Citizens*’s new approach is refreshing, if sometimes over-labored. These frameworks will enliven the field of Mormon history, helping to make it more relevant to a larger American historical context. It will also require a major reorientation of thought among those who are used to the typical “persecuted religious minority” narrative that has dominated the Mormon story.

*Moon of the Snowblind: Spirit Lake*, by Gary Kelley. Iowa City: Ice Cube Press, 2021. 184 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$19.99 graphic novel.

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Gary Kelley’s graphic novel, *Moon of the Snow Blind*, brings new balance to interpretations of Inkpaduta’s 1857 attack on Spirit Lake in an accessible medium for general audiences. Through immaculately drawn images and hand-written text, Kelley approaches an important topic in Iowa’s history in a meaningful way.

Kelley manages to create balance in the narrative through intentional incorporation of the Dakota language and calendar, which the author utilizes as titles as the work moves chronologically from June