




BROWSE



 ***The Mormon Conflict 1850–1859* by Norman F. Furness  
(review)**

Roscoe L. Buckland

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REVIEW

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**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

Reviews 159 survived a few years longer by transferring their hold-up techniques to South America, where they held up one payroll too many. The literature on this small but highly skilled and successful gang is quite extensive. The two leading documents are James D. Horan's *Desperate Men*, based on Pinkerton Agency files, and Charles Kelly's *The Outlaw Trail*, which exploits first-hand oral sources. It would seem that not much could be added at this late date, but in 1965 Swallow located a new informant—one whose name he does not reveal. He does tell us that the man is a "distinguished" member of "one of the recognized professions." He says he resolved to let him tell his story his own way with "as little interference as possible." As a result, much of the first part of the book need not have been written. Swallow himself admits

that the background chapter on the cattle industry, the old-time cowboy and the Johnson County War might well have been spared, and much of the material on the exploits and personalities of the Wild Bunch is a twice-told tale. The narrative begins to run clear and fresh; however, when the story turns to Harvey Logan, the clever little man who was caught at Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1901. Harvey made a sensational jail break in June, 1903, went back to the wilds, and tried to resume his old business of robbing trains. By now, however, Cassidy was in South America and there was no well organized Wild Bunch behind him. In June, 1904, as a posse closed in, he committed suicide. The anonymous author says he got his information "from Logan's own story of what happened." The outlaw's arrest, his legal maneuverings, and his escape are described in great detail. There is even a floor plan of the Knoxville jail. Who would know about all this better than Logan's attorney, Sam Haskell, former mayor of Knoxville? If Sam didn't write the book, somebody close to him probably did. The man was almost certainly a lawyer, one of the old-fashioned kind who could say of Logan's miserable death, "... as sure as the sun rises and sets it is the ultimate end of all those who deliberately take human lives or in any other way continually violate the God-given rights of man." Why he has chosen to remain anonymous is anybody's guess, but he has added at least one chapter to a frontier saga which continues to interest the public as the years go by.

C. L. Sonnichsen, *The University of Texas at El Paso The Mormon Conflict 1850-1859*. By Norman F. Furness. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960. 311 pages, \$1.95.)

160 *Western American Literature* The conflict between the Mormons and the Federal government, which culminated with the Mormon War of 1857-58, provides an interesting study of an American moral crusade. The Mormons were resisting an attempt to destroy their state of Zion with its government by Elders, its probate court system, and its moral institutions. The Federal government was punishing treason, establishing law and order, abolishing polygamy, and delivering a suffering people from an immoral tyranny. The Mormons charged the government with placing immoral, incompetent, and dishonest territorial officers over them, while at the same time failing to deliver the federal money promised. Through newspapers published in Zion and in England they recited long stories of martyrdom and attacked the character of everyone who opposed them. Supporters of the Federal government's actions, and those who demanded more action, charged the Mormons with "six years of treason" and immorality: with setting up a separate nation, enticing Indians, harassing public officials, forming secret societies, hiring secret assassins, and engaging in horrid rituals. Confessions of ex-Mormons rivaled the confessions of ex-priests and ex-nuns. When the war came the Mormons alternately threatened to destroy the army and to remove again into the wilderness. The United States throughout acted with the sure faith that the people in Utah, especially the women, were only waiting to be delivered from Brigham Young...

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As a result, much of the first part of the book need not have been written. Swallow himself admits that the background chapter on the cattle industry, the old-time cowboy and the Johnson County War might well have been spared, and much of the material on the exploits and personalities of the Wild Bunch is a twice-told tale. The narrative begins to run clear and fresh, however, when the story turns to Harvey Logan, the clever little man who was caught at Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1901. Harvey made a sensational jail break in June, 1903, went back to the wilds, and tried to resume his old business of robbing trains. By now, however, Cassidy was in South America and there was no well organized Wild Bunch behind him. In June, 1904, as a posse closed in, he committed suicide.

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C. L. SONNICHSEN, *The University of Texas at El Paso*

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