

Lavinia

The Association for Mormon Letters

Vol 1, No. 1

Newsletter

January 1977

SYMPOSIUM ON MORMON LETTERS

OCTOBER 4, 1976

The symposium on Mormon letters held in the Empire Room of the Hotel Utah last October 4, 1976, was the formal conclusion to an informal gathering which took place the previous April. At that time a group of people with literary interests had met in the Historical Department of the Church in Salt Lake City with the purpose of looking at personal writings of the Latter-day Saints. The session had not progressed an hour before it was apparent that there was more here than a few people could consider in an afternoon, and almost on cue a member of the group railroaded through a proposal for an on-going association complete with enabling committee.

It was that committee which, putting its lunch money on the line, sent out initial mailings, arranged for rooms, called for papers, and invited speakers for the symposium which saw the Association for Mormon Letters into existence.

The October meetings heard papers by four scholars, personal reflections by a contemporary writer-actor, and comments of a panel of poets, and then facilitated future sessions by officially organizing the body with a constitution and its year's officers.

In the morning session commentator Richard Cummings, later elected as second vice president, wove together into a neat whole the conclusions presented in three seemingly disparate papers. Under the title "Tension: Mormon Literature Facing Its Time," the session heard Leonard Arrington discussing the Mormon influences on the life and writings of Vardis Fisher in a paper entitled "The Mormon Heritage of Vardis Fisher"; Bruce Jorgensen told of the roots and results of the traditional Mormon injunction against fiction in "Heritage of Hostility: The Mormon Attack on Fiction in the Nineteenth Century"; and Richard Cracroft, by introducing listeners to Max Adeler and his nineteenth century comic writings, demonstrated what fun was made of Mormon peculiarities in his paper "Bishop Potts and Elder Dunbar: Max Adeler's Much-Married Mormons."

The three papers, however, diverse they appear, were, in Richard Cummings' response, demonstrated to be three parts of a whole: they represented, he noted, "the insider looking in," in the Vardis Fisher paper; "the insider looking out," when Jorgensen

quoted Mormon authorities in their indictment of worldly writings; and the "outsider looking in" in the humorists' views of Mormon polygamy. "In summary," Cummings said, "we have the interesting spectacle of nineteenth-century Mormons focussing on worldly, non-Mormon themes, nineteenth-century non-Mormons focussing on a specific Mormon theme (namely polygamy), and a kind of 'lapsed' Mormon in the twentieth century focussing on the entire panorama of nineteenth-century Mormonism."

Luncheon speaker James Arrington whose "Here's Brother Brigham" had been much lauded in its performances along the Wasatch Front, told of the inception of his one-man show, the creation of one piece of indigenous Mormon drama, and entertained the audience with some excerpts of the sayings of that most famous Mormon. It was unfortunate that the organizational committee had been so short on faith in their planning, that larger facilities could not be found which would have permitted all those who wished to attend the luncheon. Be assured, the same will not happen again!

The afternoon session dealt with the written responses of Latter-day Saints to their experiences, Mormon or otherwise. Narrowing that vast topic to some specific comments, Davis Bitton described some of the writings engendered by the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, demonstrating not only the variety of the responses, but also the universality of the need to respond.

Three poets who are Mormons completed the afternoon with lively comments on what it means to be those two things, Mormon and poet. Emma Lou Thayne, Arthur Henry King, and John S. Harris compared views of the interface of Mormon and poet, and, in a broader sense, discussed with the audience a recent poem or two by way of illustration.

The stimulation of the afternoon's interchange left both participants and hearers weary for the business meeting which followed, probably to the benefit of both, for the incorporation of the Association was quickly dispatched, a slate of officers was elected, and the meeting turned itself into an informal sharing of concerns and hopes for the new organization. The officers elected were as follows: President: Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, First Vice President: Neal A. Lambert, Second Vice President: Richard J. Cummings, Executive Secretary: Steven P. Sondrup, and members of the Advisory Committee: Ed Hart, Lavina Fielding, and George Tate.

The day's events closed with a forward look to next year's symposium and the initial call for papers. One session, it was announced, will address itself to the personal writings--letters, diaries, reminiscences--of Latter-day Saints. A second session will be more open in its subject matter. A more formal announcement will be forthcoming from Richard J. Cummings, progeam chairman for the 1977 symposium.

Maureen Ursenbach Beecher

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS
ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

Article 1. In order to foster scholarly and creative work and interest in the field of Mormon letters, and to promote fellowship and communication among scholars and writers interested in Mormon literature, an international organization is hereby formed with the name, "The Association for Mormon Letters."

Article 2. The officers of The Association for Mormon Letters shall be as follows:

1. President, elected for a term of one year.
2. President Elect, or first vice president, elected as vice president for one year, to serve the following year as president.
3. Second Vice President, elected for one year, with the specific responsibility for program at meetings and symposia, under the direction of the president and with the consultation of the council.
4. Executive Secretary-Treasurer, appointed by the president in consultation with the vice presidents and council for an unspecified period.
5. Council Members, at least three, elected for alternating three year terms, to begin at this first election (October 1976) as follows:
 1. Three year term, to be replaced in autumn 1979
 2. Two year term, to be replaced in autumn 1978
 3. One year term, to be replaced in autumn 1977

Article 3. The officers shall be nominated by a committee selected by the president. Suggestions for nominations may be submitted to the committee by any member, and additional nominations may be made at the annual meeting.

Article 4. Annual dues shall be assessed all members, to be paid within a month of the annual meeting for members to remain in good standing in the Association. Amount of the dues shall be set by the presidency and council prior to the annual meeting and notification sent to the membership with the announcement of that meeting. The initial fee, 1976-1977, shall be four dollars.

Article 5. An annual meeting shall be held in the fall of each year, at the call of the officers, and members duly notified well in advance.

Article 6. The membership of the organization shall consist of persons who have paid yearly dues, either charter members who shall pay ten dollars prior to October 31, 1976, or regular members who shall pay the annual dues levied by the officers.

Article 7. Amendments to this constitution may be proposed from the floor at the annual meeting, or petitioned by five members and forwarded to the president well in advance of that meeting. Amendments receiving a majority vote at the annual meeting shall become part of the constitution.

CALL FOR PAPERS

A call for papers to be presented at the 1977 fall symposium of the Association for Mormon Letters is hereby made. Abstracts of papers should be sent to Prof. R. J. Cummings, 320 Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112 no later than March 15, 1977. The authors of papers selected for presentation will be notified of the date by which papers in final form will be required by April 15, 1977. One session of the symposium will deal with personal literature of the Latter-day Saints, and the other session will be open as far a subject matter is concerned. Papers of a scholarly nature as well as proposals involving the creative aspects of Mormon letters will be equally welcome.

THE NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Association for Mormon Letters will appear at irregular intervals and has the purpose of keeping members of the Association informed of the activities of the Association and of developments of general interest. Contributions to the Newsletter should be sent to Steven P. Sondrup, Association for Mormon Letters, 1346 South 18th East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108.

MEMBERSHIP

Following is a list of the members of The Association for Mormon Letters as of October 4, 1976. Although memberships run from October to October, new members are welcome at any time.

Linda Adams	E. and Ch. England	Levi Peterson
Penelope Allen	Ron Esplin	Lenet H. Read
Marilyn Arnold	Lavina Fielding	Susan E. Ream
Stanford Andrews	Mary Firmage	Patricia Russell
Leonard Arrington	E. Geary	Candadai Seshachari
Kathryn R. Ashworth	J.S. Harris	Neila Seshachari
Susan H. Aylworth	Linda Harris	Elizabeth Shaw
Maureen Beecher	Edward L. Hart	T.E. Shoemaker
E. M. Bell	D. Hunter	Linda Sillitoe
Francine Bennion	B.S. Jacobs	Alice C. Smith
Sherilyn Bennion	Heber Jacobsen	Dennis V. Smith
Davis Bitton	Dorla Jenkins	Steven P. Sondrup
Mae Blanche	Janet Jensen	P. and Sh. Swensen
Wayne C. Booth	J.L. Johnson	Stephen L. Tanner
Mary Bradford	C. Jolley	George S. Tate
Juanita Brooks	B.W. Jorgensen	Lucile C. Tate
Benita L. Brown	E.G. Kump	Douglas H. Thayer
W. and M. Brown	Neal Lambert	Emma Lou Thayne
H.E. Burnham	Clinton Larson	Robert K. Thomas
Scott Cameron	Glen Leonard	Laurel Ulrich
David Canaan	Jon C. Lloyd	Neal and Sue Van Alfen
Marilyn M. Capell	A. Logie	Maurine Jensen Ward
Kris Cassity	Karen Lynn	Christine Waters
Bruce B. Clark	T.E. Lyon	Gwen Webster
Marden Clark	B. and E. McKay	Marilyn D. Whipple
Aileen H. Clyde	F.M. McKiernan	William Wilson
William Conway	M.R. Miller	Glena D. Wood
Richard Cracroft	Jill Mulvay	Ruth R. Yeaman
Marshall Craig	Christine Norman	Addenda:
R.J. Cummings	Lena Marie Pack	John B. Harris
Kathy O. Czerny	Jeri Parker	Charles Tate
Afton Day	Elinore Partridge	
W. Decoo	Jaynann M. Payne	
L.V. Donaldson	Virginia Pearce	
R.G. Ellsworth	M.D. Pederson	

The Association for Mormon Letters

1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84108

Vol. 1, No. 2

Newsletter

June 1977

SECOND SYMPOSIUM ON MORMON LETTERS

SCHEDULED

The 1977 Symposium on Mormon Letters will be held at the University of Utah on Saturday, October 8, 1977. Many requests from members of the Association led to the scheduling of the Symposium on Saturday rather than on Monday as was the case last year. Hopefully, this change will prove convenient to the membership.

As last year, however, papers will be presented in a morning and an afternoon session. Promised for the morning are miscellaneous papers dealing with Mormonism and fiction. That session will be chaired by Franklin Fisher of the University of Utah Department of English. Speakers in the afternoon session will discuss a wide range of issues relating to personal literature of the Latter-day Saints. One of the papers anticipated will deal with theoretical and philosophical dimensions of Mormon autobiography; the second will treat folklore as a serious and important form of literary expression; and the final paper will consider, from a literary point of view, the diaries of one nineteenth-century Mormon. The afternoon session will be chaired by Candadai Seshachari of Weber State College Department of English.

A luncheon will be held in the Panorama Room of the Olpin Student Union Building, a room that will easily accommodate all participants in the Symposium. The guest speaker at that event has not yet been confirmed, but will be announced in the next newsletter.

Advance registration forms as well as details of the program will be included in the next newsletter scheduled for late August.

All members of the Association are cordially invited to register for and attend the Symposium. Guests and prospective members of the Association will be most welcome.

CONFERENCE ON CHRISTIANITY AND LITERATURE

Members of the AML may be interested in the Conference on Christianity and Literature, a national association dedicated to a greater understanding of the relationships between Christianity and the creation, study, and teaching of literature. The CCL holds an annual session during the MLA meetings, and a number of lively and stimulating regional conferences. The Western Regional Meeting will be held this winter in Azusa, California. Information for the Western Regional Meeting may be obtained by writing James Hedges, Azusa Pacific College, Azusa, California 91702.

The CCL sponsors a Book of the Year Citation and offers articles, book reviews, and bibliography in its quarterly journal, *Christianity and Literature*. Address manuscripts (except poetry) and requests for subscriptions to Clarence Walhout, Editor, *Christianity and Literature*, Department of English, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. Manuscripts should follow the *MLA Style Sheet* with endnotes and should be accompanied by return postage. Poetry should be sent to Eugene Warren, Poetry Editor, *Christianity and Literature*, 107 South Rolla, Rolla, Missouri 65401 and should be accompanied by return postage.

AML TO SPONSOR SESSION AT
ROCKY MOUNTAIN MODERN LANGUAGES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

The Association for Mormon Letters will hold a meeting in conjunction with the annual conference of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association at 5:30 p.m., October 20, 1977, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Steven P. Sondrup, Department of Comparative Literature (BYU) will preside, and Neal E. Lambert, Department of English (BYU) will present a paper entitled "The Representation of Reality in Mormon Diaries." Prof. Lambert has provided the following description of his presentation:

"Assuming that questions of technique and questions of meaning are inseparable, this study deals with the structure, syntax, and vocabulary of a number of nineteenth-century Mormon journals and diaries. In their attempt (largely unconscious) to impose upon the varieties of their own experience some kind of order, the writers of these journals and diaries not only reveal their attitudes toward their experience but also establish a relationship to that experience, protecting themselves, for instance, from certain painful events by covering the incidents over with a blanket of genteel prose derived from accepted popular descriptions; or, on the other hand, confronting experience directly with a particularly apt selection of sharp-edged details; or perhaps reducing all events to a monotonous series that is memorable only for a few startling juxtapositions. In every case, we see a people committed to a God-centered universe, shaping and ordering the particular events of their own lives."

Following Professor Lambert's presentation, organizational matters pertaining to the future of the Association will be discussed. Everyone is cordially invited to attend.

A CALL FOR PAPERS

Professor Neila Seshachari, who is chairing the Letters Section of the Utah Academy of Sciences Arts and Letters fall conference, has extended an invitation to members of the Association for Mormon Letters to submit quality papers dealing with Mormon letters for consideration for presentation at the October meeting of the Academy. Papers should be submitted to Prof. Richard Cracroft, Department of English, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602 as soon as possible. Papers can be considered for publication in *Encyclia*, the official journal of the Academy.

President: Maureen Ursenbach Beecher
President Elect: Neal E. Lambert
Vice President: Richard J. Cummings

Council: Edward L. Hart
Lavina Fielding Anderson
George S. Tate

Executive Secretary: Steven P. Sondrup

Who needs
to go to Vegas
to get this
copy.
ask
JAN
to know

The Association for Mormon Letters

1346 South 18th East
Salt Lake City, Utah
84108

Vol. 1, No. 3

Newsletter

September 1977

SECOND SYMPOSIUM ON MORMON LETTERS

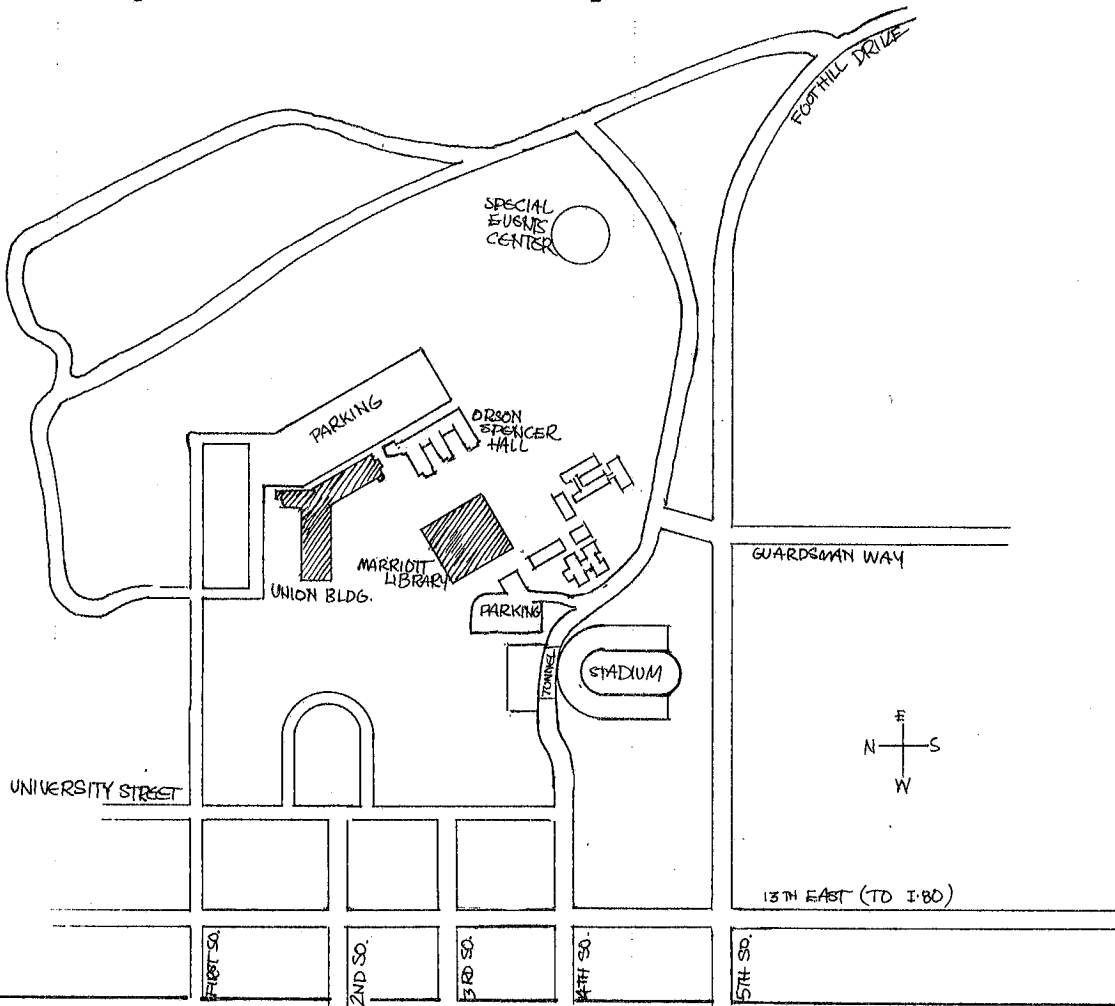
SCHEDULED

The 1977 Symposium on Mormon Letters will be held at the Marriott Library Auditorium at the University of Utah on Saturday, October 8, 1977. The following schedule for the day's activities has been established:

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| 9:00-10:00 | Registration |
| 10:00-12:00 | Aspects of Mormon Fiction
Ed Geary: Mormondom's Lost Generation:
The Novelists of the 1940s
George Tate: Halldór Laxness: The Mormons
and the Promised Land
Bruce Jorgensen: The Life and Writing of
David L. Wright
Chairman: Richard J. Cummings
Commentary: Franklin Fischer |
| 12:15-1:45 | Lunch: Panorama Room, University of Utah Student
Union Building
Chairman: Neal Lambert
Introduction of the Speaker: Maureen Beecher
Speaker: Herb Harker |
| 2:00-4:00 | Personal Literature: Chairman, Clifton Jolley
Elaine Burnham: The Orally-Told Tales About
Solomon Henry Hale
Steven P. Sondrup: The Literary Dimensions
of Mormon Autobiography
Mary Bradford: I, Eye, Aye: The Personal
Essay in Mormon Literature
Commentary: Candadai Seshachari |
| 4:00-5:00 | Business Meeting
Reports
New Officers
Amendments of the Constitution
Other Business |

Members of the Association planning to attend the Symposium are encouraged to pre-register and, if desired, to make reservations for the luncheon. A pre-registration/reservation form is included with the Newsletter for the benefit of those wishing to take advantage of this option. The registration fee is \$1.00 and the price of the luncheon is \$3.75. Although the registration fee may be payed at the door, luncheon tickets will, unfortunately, not be available after Wednesday, October 5, 1977. The form together with the appropriate remittance should be sent to The Association for Mormon Letters, 1346 South 18th East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108. Members who have pre-registered will be able to claim their packet of registration material at the door on the morning of the Symposium.

The Auditorium in the Marriott Library is on the second floor. Those entering the Library from the west will see the Auditorium immediately in front of them. Those entering from the east, though, will need to go down one floor and through the door immediately to the left following the corridor to the main entrance of the Auditorium. University of Utah parking restrictions do not apply on Saturdays, so all of the parking area surrounding the Marriott Library will be available to Symposium participants. As can be seen from the map below, the Union Building, where the luncheon will be held, is within easy walking distance of the Library.



HERBERT HARKER, THE A.M.L. LUNCHEON SPEAKER

Ever since the widespread acclaim surrounding the publication of Herbert Harker's first novel, Goldenrod, (New York: Random House, 1972), many who know his work have been eagerly waiting for him to deal more directly and in greater detail with his Mormon background. With the appearance of Turn Again Home (New York: Random House, 1977), these anticipations have been met.

The book has already received enough reviews to stimulate controversy, and many more will be forthcoming. The luncheon address at the A.M.L. Symposium should prove an exciting forum for an introductory statement from Mr. Harker and a response from his audience.

Herbert Harker is Canadian by birth, raised in the Mormon colonies in Southern Alberta. His debut as an author came relatively late in life but, to be sure, with style. His son Randall published his first novel just three years after that of his father. Mr. Harker lives with his wife and three of their seven children in Santa Barbara, and recently saw his first novel, Goldenrod, presented as a television special.

BOOKS NEW AND FORTHCOMING

With this issue of the Newsletter, begins what is hoped will be a valued service to members: a listing of works of Mormon letters published, or about to appear. The editors invite suggestions for inclusion in the column in the attempt to be as complete as space allows.

Gladys Clark Farmer. Elders and Sisters. Salt Lake City: Seagull Books, 1977. (Paperback, \$2.95)

Herbert Harker. Turn Again Home. New York: Random House, 1977. \$8.95.

Donna Hill. Joseph Smith: The First Mormon. New York: Doubleday, 1977. (\$12.95)

Donald R. Marshall. Frost in the Orchard. Provo: B.Y.U. Press, 1977. (\$4.95)

Samuel W. Taylor. The Kingdom or Nothing: The Life of John Taylor, Militant Mormon. New York: Macmillan, 1976. (\$15.00)

Douglas Thayer. Under the Cottonwoods and Other Mormon Stories. Provo: Frankson Press, 1977. (Hardback, \$6.00; Paperback, \$4.00)

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