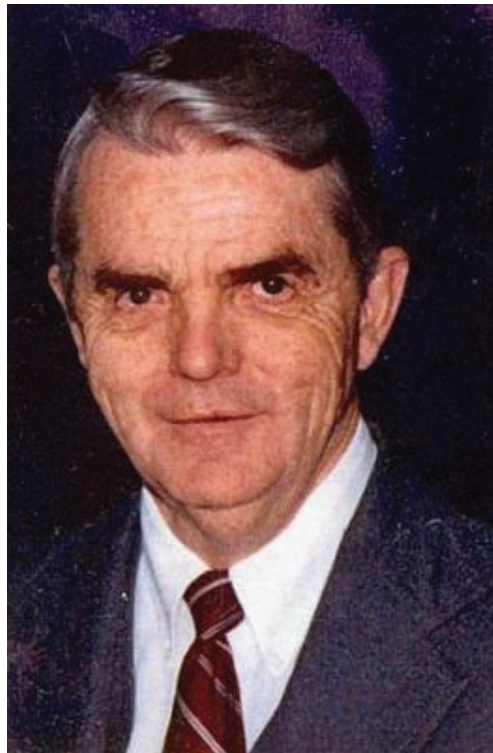


Davis Bitton, 1930 – 2007

Founding member and former president of MHA, professor emeritus of the University of Utah, Assistant Church Historian of the LDS Church, and prolific scholar, Davis Bitton died peacefully on April 13 after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife JoAn, ten children and stepchildren, and 56 grand- and great-grandchildren.

Davis grew up in Idaho, attended Brigham Young University, served as a Mormon missionary in France, and earned a Ph.D. in French History at Princeton University. Although his publications are too numerous to list in detail, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (1979), co-authored with his long-time friend and mentor Leonard Arrington, remains among the best-selling and most admired works in all of Mormon history. He also wrote extensively in other areas of historical Mormonism, focusing primarily on nineteenth-century history, including a prize-winning biography of George Q. Cannon, a historical dictionary of Mormonism, a guide to Mormon diaries and autobiographies, and edited collections

of his own and other historians' essays in Mormon history and historiography. He was a thorough and tireless researcher, as well as a generous critic. He was also well-known to friends as a gifted pianist.



Davis taught at the University of Texas (Austin) and the University of California at Santa Barbara before joining the history faculty at the University of Utah. His ten years as Assistant Church Historian spanned a period of great intensity and excitement among historians working in the Mormon past. Under Leonard Arrington's leadership, and with Davis's able assistance, the richness of the Mormon historical experience and

its connections to religious studies and American history unfolded as the historians of Mormonism engaged and encouraged historical research at unprecedented levels. In the twenty-five years since he left the Church History Division, Davis continued to work on Mormon history, often writing reviews and essays. In addition to his biography of George Q. Cannon, historians value his meticulous guides to rich archival resources for the study of Mormonism.