

## Leonard James Arrington (1917-1999)

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints historian Leonard James Arrington served as the seventh president of the Western History Association from 1968 to 1969, and served as the first editor of the Western Historical Quarterly in 1969.

Born on a farm near Twin Falls, Idaho, on July 2, 1917, Arrington received his B.A. in Agriculture Economics from the University of Idaho in 1939, and his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill in 1952. Between earning his B.A. and Ph.D., Arrington taught classes at the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State College, Meredith College, the University of California, Los Angeles, and Utah State Agricultural College. Along with his teaching career,

he worked in the Office of Price Administration, served in the U.S. Army in Italy, and worked as the American representative on the Institute of Statistics gathering information for the rehabilitation of the post-war Italian economy.



Arrington was a Fulbright Professor of American Economics at the University of Genoa and the Lemuel Redd Chair of Western History at Brigham Young University. Arrington also received several significant awards. In 1966 he received the Charles Redd Humanities Award from the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters. He was appointed as the Distinguished Lecturer for Utah by the Utah Commission for Higher Education from 1969 to 1970. He also became the first Utahan and Mormon elected as a member of the Society of American Historians in 1986.

Arrington wrote a long list of articles in several journals and wrote or co-wrote 22 books. Among these were *Beet Sugar in the West* (1966), *History of Idaho* (1994), and *Brigham Young: American Moses* (1985) for which he received the David Evans and Beatrice Cannon Evans Award, the Mormon History Association's Best Book Award, and a nomination by the National Book Critics Circle for a "distinguished work of biography." Perhaps his best known work is *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints* (1958).

Leonard Arrington served as a bishop and counselor in a stake presidency for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and as General Church Historian from 1972 to 1982. In 1965 he helped organize the Mormon History Association and became its first president as well as serving as president of the Agricultural History Association from 1969 to 1970. Leonard Arrington died in Salt Lake City, Utah, on the 11th of February 1999. He was 81.

### Sources:

Leonard J. Arrington, *Reflections of a Mormon Historian: Leonard J. Arrington on the New Mormon History*, Reid L. Neilson and Ronald J. Walker editors (Arthur H. Clark: Norman, Oklahoma, 2006), 43-50.

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