

Samuel Bradshaw – UNIV 101, Sec. 40

*Weekly Assignment 1: Thomas Edwin Ricks*

Thomas Edwin Ricks is a good example of a disciple-scholar. Thomas Ricks founded Rexburg, Idaho (“Ricks”burg in German), and Bannock Stake Academy (it was renamed Ricks Academy/College in Thomas Ricks’ honor after his death, and remained thus until 2001, when it became Brigham Young University – Idaho). He was a disciple in that he was active in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, since his baptism in 1845. He helped work on the Nauvoo Temple. He trekked to Salt Lake Valley with pioneers when he was only twenty. He was assigned by President John Taylor to colonize eastern Idaho. He served for a time as a stake president (in Rexburg). Thomas Ricks helped many in his community financially, even to the end of his means. He once said, “I was called here and have expended my means for the benefit of the people. My means have been used up, and I am comparatively poor. But my faith has been increased in the Lord, and I acknowledge the blessings of the Lord.” Essentially, he gave his life to the service of God and his community.

Ricks is a scholar as well: as the founder of Ricks College, he was committed to education and realized that it was important. He had in fact had little formal education himself. Ricks had founded the college, in his own words, “to give spirituality precedence over worldliness; the principles of the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ were to be taught side by side with arithmetic, geography, reading and other mundane subjects.” So, he realized that school without religious education could become quite mundane. He even taught his own children and grandchildren about the Gospel (one of his descendants is a missionary in my branch in Florida). Therefore, the characteristics of “disciple-scholar” are found in Thomas E. Ricks. He committed himself to both discipleship and scholarship. His work benefits hundreds today.