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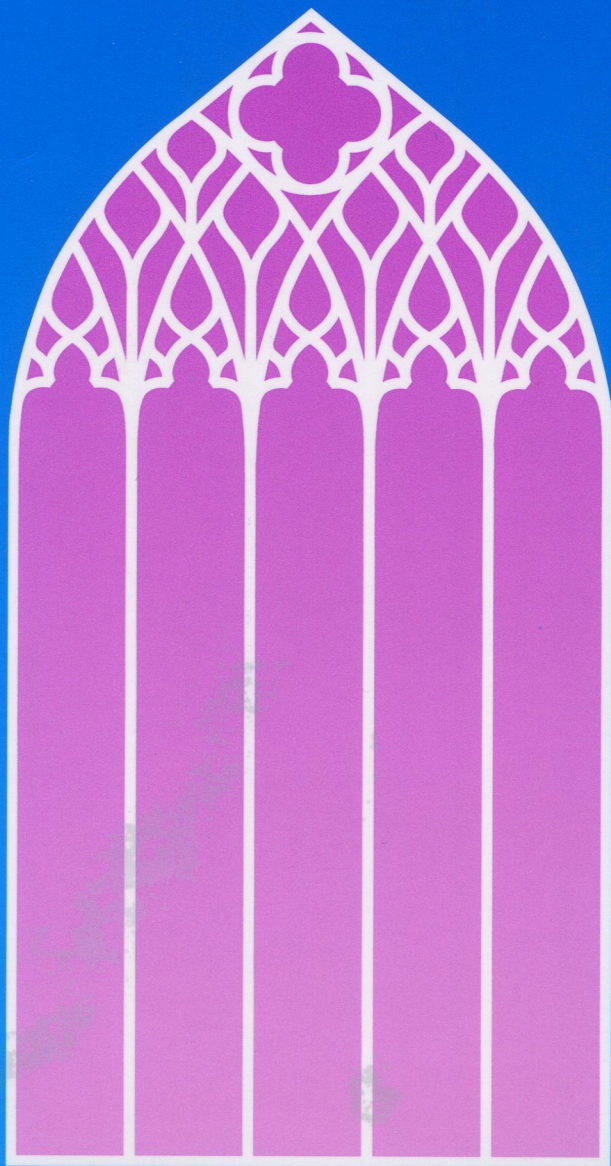
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# JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY



WINTER 2008

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COVER: Abstraction of the window tracery, Salt Lake City Tenth Ward. Design by Warren Archer.

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# LETTER

## *Another Utah War Victim*

I can't say I "enjoyed" William P. MacKinnon's "Lonely Bones': Leadership and Utah War Violence" (Spring 2007) with its distressing litany of murders, but it is a remarkable and important study of Utah War killings perpetrated north of Mountain Meadows.

However, I believe MacKinnon missed one: The murder of Henry Forbes on about January 24, 1858, near Springville. Forbes was originally from Illinois where he was said to have a wife and young children. A Gentile, he was then traveling from California, heading back to Illinois. His business in California is unknown, but he arrived in Utah with revolvers and a good horse. As Brigham Young had declared martial law the previous September, it was difficult for him to get out of Utah. In the meantime, he was boarding with Partial [sic; should be Parshall] Terry, a resident of Springville in Utah County.

His horse and revolvers were stolen, and Terry told him the Indians had taken them. On the evening of January 24, 1858, Forbes was taken out along the road to Provo and there murdered. He had been accused of no crime. No inquest was held. After the murder, Terry was seen riding his horse and wearing his pistols.

Rumors and perceptions in the community suggested that Wilber J. Earl and Sanford Fuller were deeply involved, if not the actual killers. Both Earl and Fuller were members of the Nauvoo Legion: In the muster rolls of the Peteeetneet Military District of the Nauvoo Legion for April 20, 1857, Sanford Fuller is listed as a private in the 3rd Platoon of the Cavalry Company, and W. J. Earl is listed as a private in the 1st Platoon of the 1st Company of Infantry.<sup>1</sup>

Forbes was murdered during the Utah War; he was stripped of his possessions in a pattern consistent with the looting in the cases of Yates, the Aikens, and the Mountain Meadows Massacre; and the prime suspects were Nauvoo Legion men. Their military status and the martial law declared by Governor Young raise serious questions about the extent to which their military superiors, such as Brigadier General (and Springville's bishop) Aaron Johnson, already under historical scrutiny for his involvement in the Parrish-Potter murders, were accountable for their actions. In addition to the absence of any inquiry by civil authorities, there was no Nauvoo Legion court of inquiry or court martial, another shortfall consistent with the lack of action by the legion commanders in the

Yates, Aiken, and Mountain Meadows atrocities.

Henry Forbes should be included in the body count of the Utah War.

*Polly Aird  
Seattle, Washington*

<sup>1</sup>“Charge,” *Deseret News*, March 16,

1859, 1; “Discharge of the Grand Jury,” *Valley Tan*, April 5, 1859, 2; “Court Doings at Provo,” *Deseret News*, April 6, 1859, 2; “Murder of [Henry] Forbes,” *Valley Tan*, April 19, 1859, 2; Utah County Military District 1850-66, Utah Territorial Militia Muster Rolls, 1849-70, LDS Church Archives.



# RESTORING, PRESERVING AND MAINTAINING THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE: 1880–1920

*Barbara B. Walden and Margaret Rastle*

*The resolution of Conference will warrant . . . that the Temple at Kirtland was to be properly repaired to preserve it; and is as I understood it. I wondered at the time why some “watch dog” of the Treasury did not interfere to the “cost” and was quite surprised that it went through as it did.*

*—Joseph Smith III to William H. Kelley, June 15, 1882<sup>1</sup>*

JOSEPH SMITH III REPORTED his surprise to William H. Kelley that the decision to repair the Kirtland Temple had not been blocked at the latest conference of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ

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BARBARA B. WALDEN {bwalden@kirtlandtemple.org} was born and raised in southern California, received her B.A. in history from Graceland University, and a master’s degree in museum studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program. Previous appointments include the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, the Women’s Rights National Historical Park, and New York State Historical Association. She is currently site coordinator at the Kirtland Temple. She and her husband, Jody, have called Kirtland home since 2002. MARGARET RASTLE {rmaggs@aol.com}, a native of Escondido, California, received a B.A. in social work from Graceland University in 2003, and is currently a graduate student of art therapy at Ursuline College. Her historic site experience includes a museum management internship at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in 2000 and a museum studies fellowship at the Kirtland Temple in 2004.

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith III, Letter to William H. Kelley, June 15, 1882, P1, Box 3, F1, Item 22. Unless otherwise noted, all manuscripts are in the Community of Christ Archives, Independence.

of Latter Day Saints.<sup>2</sup> Over the next forty years, with the help of generous donations and an insurance policy, the RLDS Church invested thousands of dollars to repair and restore the first Latter Day Saint temple. This period in Kirtland Temple history is important to modern historians for two reasons. First, descriptions of the physical structure give a stronger understanding of how the temple was used by the community; and second, we see more clearly the importance of the temple to the late nineteenth-century RLDS Church. This forty-year period is a bridge between the modern historic site and the nineteenth-century House of the Lord.

To better understand the repairs made during those years, we must understand the history of the temple prior to the 1882 conference decision. Following the directions of Joseph Smith Jr., the Latter Day Saints constructed their first temple, a strenuous effort that started in 1833 and concluded in 1836. Once completed, the temple towered over the rolling hills at a height of 115 feet. The Kirtland Saints were also at a height of membership by 1838 with two thousand members in the area. The temple was the center of community life, housing a school, offices for leadership, and meeting space, as well as worship services.

Shortly after the temple's dedication, the community fell on difficult times. Financial and personal tensions rose between members of the church and with surrounding communities. By 1839, the Latter Day Saint community consisted of only 100 members. Although few in number and resources, the community continued to use the temple as a "house of learning" by renting the second and third floors to the Western Reserve Teachers Seminary in 1838–39, while the Church continued to occupy the lower court as its worship space.<sup>3</sup>

Following the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in June 1844, the Kirtland Saints hosted a variety of different leaders and followings of the Latter Day Saint movement. Sidney Rigdon led a small

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<sup>2</sup>The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints changed its name to Community of Christ in 2001.

<sup>3</sup>For more information about the history of Kirtland Temple and the origins of the faith community that built the historic edifice, see Roger Launius, *The Kirtland Temple: A Historical Narrative* (Independence: Herald House, 1986).

group to Pennsylvania, returning to Kirtland for a short period to once again speak from the temple pulpits in 1845. Several independent denominations emerged following various leaders; James J. Strang, James Colin Brewster, Zadoc Brooks, and William McLellin worshipped in the temple from 1845 through the 1860s. Russell Huntley, who helped fund the 1859 Zadoc Brooks edition of the Book of Mormon, purchased the temple in 1862 and continued to care for it until 1873 when he sold the structure to Joseph Smith III and Mark Forscutt. Meanwhile, Martin Harris continued to give tours of the temple until departing for Utah in 1870.<sup>4</sup>

Towards the end of the 1870s, local member Rebecca Dayton, who was acting as the temple's caretaker, began writing a series of letters to Joseph Smith III that described its upkeep and use.<sup>5</sup> In May 1879, she considered renting the temple to a Temperance Society. Before allowing the society use of the temple, she shared her maintenance concerns with Joseph Smith III: "My only object in renting it [the temple] was to fill in the Broken window and put the pulpit back that Br. Joseph [McDowell] took away he took away the front and put up a small one only large enough to hold a large bible no place to sit a lamp at. . . . I wish your advice about putting it back the old pulpit."<sup>6</sup> By the end of the year, Dayton had been relieved of her responsibilities: "Br McDanell has taken the keys from me and given them to Sister [not named] I had kept the house clean and this fall I have cleaned it and swept it all over."<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the unnamed "Sister" who received Dayton's keys was

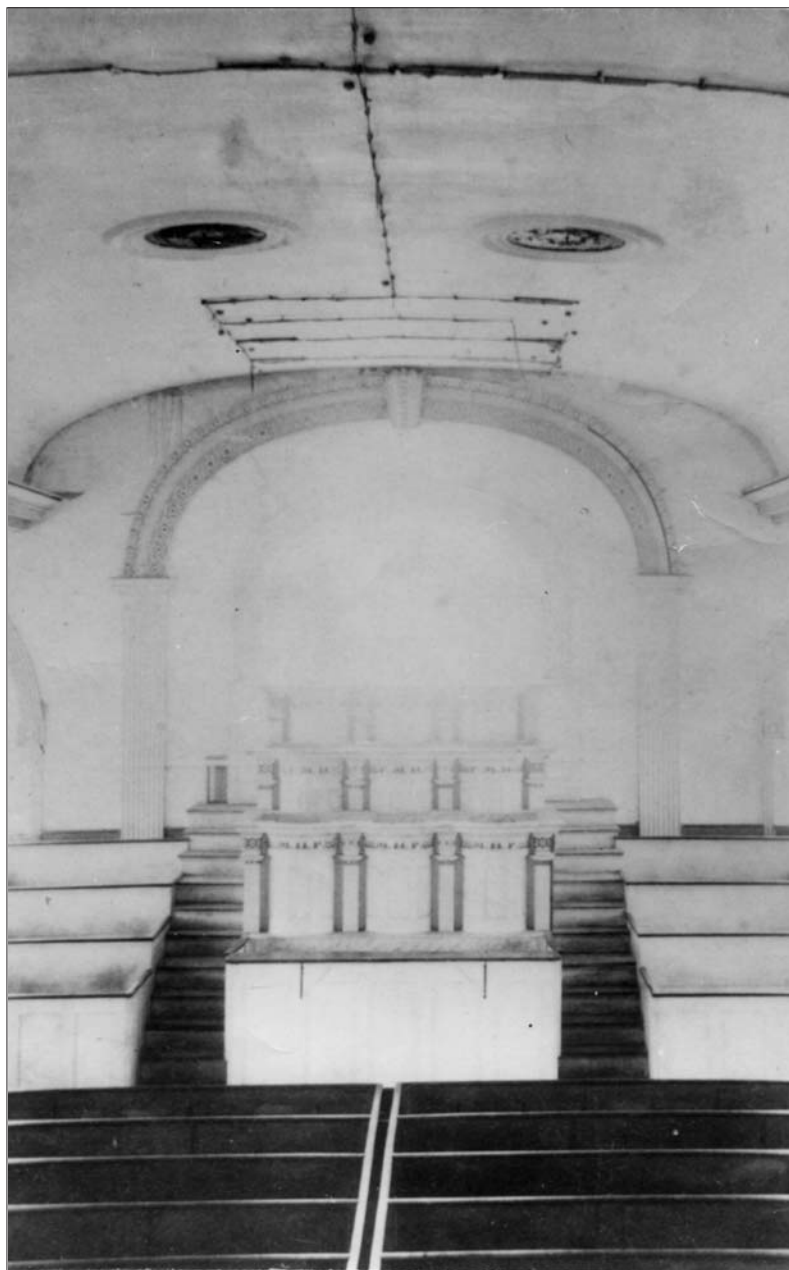
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<sup>4</sup>For more information about the use of the temple during this period, see Lachlan Mackay and Christin Craft Mackay, "A Time of Transition: The Kirtland Temple, 1838–1880," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 18 (1998): 133–48.

<sup>5</sup>Rebecca Dayton acted as temple caretaker for a brief period in the late 1870s. Her involvement in temple repairs during the 1880s is uncertain. However, on March 11, 1888, she reported to William Kelley that her health was failing and that she was then living in Bellevue, Ohio, approximately sixty miles west of Kirtland. R. Dayton, Letter to William Kelley, March 11, 1888, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 9, F5, items 4 and 3.

<sup>6</sup>R. Dayton, Letter to Joseph Smith III, September 1879, P24, F36, item 21.

<sup>7</sup>R. Dayton, Letter to J. Smith III, December 15, 1879, P24, F36, item 25.



*During the 1870s, this photograph of the lower court shows plaster rings in the ceiling and the hooks upon which the curtains had hung. Community of Christ Archives, D377.97. All photographs accompanying this article are in the Community of Christ Archives.*



Electra Stratton, a local Kirtland resident whose family dated back to 1830s Kirtland. Shortly after Dayton's departure, a traveling writer named Frederic G. Mather visited Kirtland and toured the temple for two hours with Stratton, publishing his description in the August 1880 issue of *Lippincott's Magazine*.<sup>8</sup> According to Mather's detailed account, the temple was slowly deteriorating: "Large Gothic windows . . . afford relief to the solid walls of stone and stucco that have so well survived the ravages of nearly half a century, though the iron rust streaking the exterior, the moss-grown shingles, the wasps' nests under the eaves, and the two immense chimneys already tottering to their fall, give evidence of approaching ruin." As part of his history of Mormonism, Mather mentioned that the sign erected by Zadoc Brooks's group in 1860 had remained intact. It read: "House of the Lord, built by the Church of Christ, 1834."<sup>9</sup>

After paying a "small fee for visiting the Temple," Mather passed through the "solid green doors, with oval panels," into a vestibule, inscribed with Latin words on the walls, and also two gender-specific doors into the lower court, one designated "Gentlemen's Entrance" and the other the "Ladies' Entrance." Stratton pointed out the hooks and ropes that had once held the lower court veils, marks on the floor of the upper court where desks had once stood, and a third floor filled with school rooms, falling plaster, and "ratty" floors.<sup>10</sup> His description of the Melchisedec pulpits in the lower court is unique, differing from the traditional 1830s design:

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<sup>8</sup>Mather's Kirtland visit could have occurred in December 1879 or the early months of 1880. Evidence of his Kirtland date includes a letter to Mather, on December 20, 1879, to Joseph Smith III and Smith's response on December 23. Both letters are in the Joseph Smith III Papers, P24, F36. See also Frederic G. Mather, "The Early Days of Mormonism," *Lippincott's Magazine*, August 1880, 198–211.

<sup>9</sup>Mather, "The Early Days of Mormonism," 208. The *Painesville Telegraph* reported on June 14, 1860: "Some changes are being made in the Temple, and one is, the old and original inscription high up on its front, to wit—'House of the Lord built by the latter day Saints A.D. 1834,' has been removed and the simple one 'Church of Christ' put on." Quoted in Elwin Robison, *The First Mormon Temple: Design, Construction, and Historic Context of the Kirtland Temple* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997), 126.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 210–11.

The pulpits against the western end are built up against an outer window, with alternate pane[s] of red and white glass in the arched transom . . . A simple desk below the Melchisedec pulpit bears the title "M.P.E." . . . The letters are in red curtain-cord, and the desk itself, like all the pulpits above, is covered with green calico. In the days of the Temple's glory rich velvet upholstery set off all the carved work of the pulpits, and golden letters shone from spots which are now simply marked by black paint . . . These mottoes still remain upon the walls: "No cross, no crown;" "The Lord reigneth, let His people rejoice;" and "Great is our Lord, and of great power." Over the arched window behind the ten Melchisedec pulpits, and just beneath the vertical Modillion which forms the keystone of the ornamental wooden arch, is the text, "Holiness Unto the Lord."<sup>11</sup>

Two years after Mather reported the temple's dilapidation, the RLDS Church met in Independence, Missouri, in its regularly scheduled general conference. William H. Kelley, an apostle assigned to the Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and western New York area, reminded the conference of the temple's historical and inspirational importance to the religious movement: "The imposing Temple stands on the hill as a reminder; and it is looked upon with something of admiration, and visitors stand with uncovered heads as they view this house of God, built by a handful of people in poverty." Kelley then pleaded with the conference attendees: "I wish to remind the Conference that the Temple is sadly in need of repairs, and should receive an appropriation to re-cover it, in order to protect it, or else turn it over to some one who will, for our own credit."<sup>12</sup> The conference passed a motion to repair the temple for an 1883 General Conference to be held in Kirtland. It also moved that E. L. Kelley, William's brother, who had been recently ordained counselor to General Bishop George Blakeslee, relocate his family from Coldwater, Michigan, to Kirtland to supervise the temple repairs.

The conference's decision to repair the Kirtland Temple and meet the following year in Kirtland was a large financial commitment

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 209. An image of this description is a sketch, B73-013.1, Vault, Community of Christ Archives. On its reverse is a manufactured stamp that reads, "Return to Frederic G. Mather, 120 Lancaster, Albany, NY."

<sup>12</sup>William H. Kelley, Address, General Conference Minutes, *Saints' Herald* 29, no. 9 (May 1, 1882): 132.

for the RLDS Church. At the time, the Kirtland congregation consisted of only a handful of members.<sup>13</sup> It seems likely that voting conference attendees did not comprehend the extent of the repairs needed nor the expense and labor that would be required. Another motive might have been excitement over the conclusion of a recent ownership lawsuit that they interpreted as confirming their movement as Joseph Smith's valid successor.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the motive, the commitment of the RLDS Church to repairing the historic house of worship was momentous.

As word traveled back to the Kirtland congregation, Rebecca Dayton responded, "[It] pleases us greatly to think the Temple is to be repaired a little at least a cover over it, it is a disgrace to our church to leave it as it is."<sup>15</sup> Apostle William Kelley advised his brother, E. L., "You will need to keep a vigilant eye on the repairing of the Temple. Have it done right if it takes all summer, and you have to have them tear off and fix over a dozen times."<sup>16</sup>

Although E. L. Kelley's responsibilities were to direct temple repairs, he was also considered an appointed minister with duties that included hosting visitors, ministering to them at the temple, and traveling outside of Kirtland to areas all over the country throughout the 1880s. When E. L. was unable to supervise temple activities, his wife Catherine ("Cassie") would often substitute. As an apostle, William Kelley's assignment included the Kirtland area. As a result, he found himself highly involved in the laborious work of the repairs, eventually moving to Kirtland in 1885. The Kelley family letters give insight into

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<sup>13</sup>"Our branch is in a delichate [sic] condition. There is only 8 of the members right here and only 2 that meet together. . . . The members are somewhat scattered about 8 miles from here there is 4 members 2 of them old and infirm hardly ever come up here." Rebecca Dayton, Letter to William Kelley, March 27, 1881, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box3, F4, item 27.

<sup>14</sup>Kim L. Loving, "Ownership of the Kirtland Temple: Legends, Lies, and Misunderstandings," *Journal of Mormon History* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 1–80. For the RLDS reaction to the ruling, see *Saints' Herald* 27, no. 7 (March 15, 1882): 84–85, 87–89.

<sup>15</sup>Rebecca Dayton, Letter to W. H. Kelley, May 12, 1882, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 3, F8, item 40.

<sup>16</sup>William Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, April 25, 1882, William Kelley Papers, P1, Box 3, F8, item 32.

the preservation efforts, repair, and maintenance of the temple throughout the 1880s and into the early 1890s.<sup>17</sup>

A great effort was made by both William and E. L. Kelley to repair the temple for the upcoming 1883 Church conference. William wrote to E. L. on March 18, about two weeks before the conference convened, "The glaziers-painters &c are at work. If weather permits will commence shingling tomorrow. . . . We hope to make quite a showing this week. The steeple will not be touched until after Conference."<sup>18</sup>

The temple committee reported to the 1883 conference that the task of repairing the temple was much greater than their initial estimate: "In view of this urgent necessity, the Committee appeals to the Saints for further contributions, in order to carry along the work of repairing. The lower audience room and vestibule should be repaired at all events. It will cost one thousand dollars to do this work, or thereabouts. The Committee has made an estimate of the amount it will cost to complete the building, and put it at three thousand dollars."<sup>19</sup>

With the conference's support, the committee agreed to continue repairing the temple and planned to meet again in Kirtland in 1887, four years hence. (During this period general conferences were held annually.)

For the rest of 1883, E. L. Kelley supervised various temple repairs, including plastering, painting, and shingling from January to May 1883.<sup>20</sup> During the first six months of the year, he hired painters and carpenters to repair the belfry, reshingle the roof, and repair windows.<sup>21</sup> Also in the spring of 1883, decayed bell tower timbers were replaced with new timbers, as nearly all of the support-

<sup>17</sup>For more information about Catherine, E. L., and William Kelley, see Barbara Walden "The Kirtland Letters of Catherine 'Cassie' Kelley," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 24 (2004): 125–34.

<sup>18</sup>William Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, March 18, 1883, P1, Box 3, F8, item 7–8.

<sup>19</sup>George Blakeslee and E. L. Kelley, "Report of Committee on Kirtland Temple," *Saints' Herald* 30, no. 35 (September 1, 1883): 560.

<sup>20</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to W. H. Kelley, May 14, 1883, P1, Box 4, F7, item 2.

<sup>21</sup>William Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, March 18, 1883, P1, Box 4, F6, item 7–8; E. L. Kelley, Letter to William Kelley, May 9, 1883, P1, Box 4, F6,

ing timbers were found to be rotten.<sup>22</sup> The gables, cornices, and dormer windows were painted by the end of 1883. According to the *Saints' Herald*, it was difficult to find workers, especially painters for the steeple that towers more than a hundred feet above the ground. According to the report, painting the steeple "was attended with difficulty and danger. Some painters refused to work at all. . . . Fourteen hundred and seventy five pounds of white lead have been used thus far."<sup>23</sup>

Despite the challenges of the steeple, William H. Kelley found that work on the pulpits in the lower court constituted the year's greatest challenge. Repairing these pulpits was "the finest and most difficult work about the building, and the committee has been particular, and have insisted that every thing should be restored as it was."<sup>24</sup> Pulpit ornaments, mouldings, sacrament tables, and lettering were made to look like the 1830s originals, significantly changing them from the pulpits that Frederic G. Mather had described in 1880.

The basement was also in desperate need of repair during this time. An 1883 *Saints' Herald* article reported that the "basement door-way, on the South side of the building, caved in and let in water from the outside." Before the 1883 conference, this area was repaired with new dressed stone steps and covered with inclined folding doors.<sup>25</sup> The basement windows were strengthened with new frames and iron bars. Solid piers and sound posts were added in the basement to better support the first floor, a difficult task indeed since "the whole of the inside of the building, including the steeple, had to be raised in order to accomplish the work."<sup>26</sup>

Ironically, these repairs subjected the building to two accidental fires in 1883. The first was caused while a worker was adding a layer of

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item 35–36; E. L. Kelley, Letter to William Kelley, May 16, 1883, P1, Box 4, F7, item 9–12.

<sup>22</sup>George Blakeslee and E. L. Kelley, "Report of Committee on Kirtland Temple," *Saints' Herald* 30, no. 35 (September 1, 1883): 560.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to W. H. Kelley, May 14, 1883; Blakeslee and Kelley, "Report of Committee on Kirtland Temple," 560.

tin to protect the belfry in May. Cassie Kelley, with the help of a bucket brigade, managed to extinguish the flames before too much damage was done. The *Saints' Herald* reported:

By letter from Kirtland to Coldwater, Michigan, we learn that the roof of the Temple at Kirtland caught fire from the tinner's kit, employed in tinning the belfry; and but for the timely discovery, and the energy and assistance of Bro. C. Scott and Sr. E. L. Kelley, the old building would have been burned. Sr. Kelley wrote: "Five minutes later and the whole thing would have had to go. Ed. went out on that slick tin roof—and the wind was blowing a gale about that time—and it seemed that his doing so was all that saved it. No damage was done to the building to amount to anything as it was. . . . I drew water and the rest carried."<sup>27</sup>

In September, the year's second fire broke out in the attic of the third floor where a stovepipe entered a chimney.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, the second fire could have been predicted since the stovepipes and chimneys needed repair. Four months earlier, E.L. Kelley had told his brother: "The chimneys ought to be rebuilt next week—one has had a number of bricks blown off this spring knocking down one stove pipe—If rebuilt shall I have them made a little smaller—say 1 brick narrower and perhaps 4 thinner—it would make the opening a little smaller & look just as well outside."<sup>29</sup> By the year's end, two new heating stoves had been installed.

The grounds surrounding the temple also received a makeover in 1883. George Blakeslee, the Church's general bishop, supervised relaying the stone entrance steps and had stone protectors placed at the temple's east corners. E. L. Kelley reported that the walks surrounding the temple were also graveled.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the repairs both inside and out created a new interest in the temple among community members. The local congregation met in the temple regularly in the mornings and afternoons

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<sup>27</sup>Catherine Kelley, Letter, May 26, 1883, *Saints' Herald* 30, no. 21 (May 26, 1883): 321.

<sup>28</sup>Catherine Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, September 30, 1883, P35, F1.

<sup>29</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to William Kelley, May 16, 1883, William H. Kelley Papers, P 1, Box 4, F7, item 9–12.

<sup>30</sup>"Extracts from Letters," *Saints' Herald* 30, no. 35 (August 25, 1883): 554.

throughout the summer of 1885.<sup>31</sup> During the rest of the 1880s, RLDS members gathered to Kirtland and purchased land surrounding the temple.<sup>32</sup> By 1885, a new post office opened in Kirtland with the word "Temple" appearing on its ink stamp of the mail.<sup>33</sup> The Grand Army of the Republic hosted a lawn fête and campfire on the temple grounds in August 1885. E. L. Kelley was uneasy about such activities, but Cassie allowed the festivities to continue and they turned out to be a success.<sup>34</sup> However, Cassie denied the request of a Mr. Plaisted who wanted to use the temple's upper court for a roller skating rink.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the increased interest in the temple, more repairs were desperately needed. In June 1885, E. L. Kelley expressed his frustration at the delay in working on the chimneys and flues after meeting a church member from Pittsburgh capable of doing the much-needed work: "I think the committee ought to have him come and take down these flues & put up right and if it is reasonable after estimate is made, put in proper furnace. The building is unfit for use as it is and in danger the first fire built in it."<sup>36</sup> He complained again less than two weeks later, "The repairing of chimneys ought to be done at once. I have written this a number of times. No use to let the building stand when it is injuring every day."<sup>37</sup>

Discouragingly, enthusiasm for funding and repairing the temple declined even more in 1886. Kelley met an RLDS member named Holman from Conneautville, Pennsylvania, that resulted in the contribution of materials that could be used for plastering, including sand and "lime brick"; but the funds were inadequate to meet the in-

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<sup>31</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to William Kelley, June 27, 1885, P1, Box 6, F2, item 32.

<sup>32</sup>"Yes, the concentrating in Kirtland seems to be very singular but there appears to be an inspiration in it." William Kelley, Letter to Catherine Kelley, October 20, 1885, P1, Box 6, F6, item 12.

<sup>33</sup>Catherine Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, September 1, 1885, P35, F6.

<sup>34</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to Catherine Kelley, August 27, 1885, P35, F6; Catherine Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, September 1, 1885, P35, F6.

<sup>35</sup>Catherine Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, January 29, 1885, P35, F3.

<sup>36</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to William Kelley, June 27, 1885, P1, Box 6, F2, item 32.

<sup>37</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to William Kelley, July 6, 1885, P1, Box 6, F2, item 39-40.



creasing needs of the historic structure.<sup>38</sup> In June, Kelley and Bishop Blakeslee implored *Saints' Herald* readers to contribute to temple repairs because of safety concerns: "It [the temple] can not be properly heated by stoves, and it will be necessary to heat by the use of a furnace, or drums, after the original intention. It is not safe to build fires in the stoves that are in use now, and none have been built for some length of time—a year or more."<sup>39</sup> In November, Joseph Smith III wrote an impassioned *Saints' Herald* article on the subject, arguing that the Church had a spiritual and moral responsibility to repair the temple:

We are decidedly favorable to the idea of fully repairing the Temple at Kirtland. . . . [T]here is a moral prestige to be gained by it which properly utilized by the elders . . . will materially increase the chances of the missionaries to get a hearing before the people. Of course measured merely from a money getting stand point it "will not pay," as there is nothing connected with it that can possibly return cent per centum, upon the expenditure; but measured from a spiritual and moral standpoint, it will return a hundred fold. We were misunderstood when we first suggested that the Temple would be of value as an objective in a legal fight in the courts;<sup>40</sup> but time proved us to be correct; and this encourages us to persist in the belief that while there are no millions in it, as a speculation in the money market, in the moral and intellectual world it is a vantage ground that we can not afford to abandon, or forego to occupy, it will be seen ere long.<sup>41</sup>

On November 7, 1886, two weeks before Smith's plea to the Saints and despite limited funds, William Kelley signed a \$300 contract with William Burch to plaster the temple's interior and complete needed masonry work on the exterior.<sup>42</sup> They were hoping to have the plaster finished for the 1887 conference; but the temple committee reported at the April 1887 general conference that the masonry would

<sup>38</sup>E. L. Kelley, Letter to Catherine Kelley, September 7, 1886, P35, F8.

<sup>39</sup>George Blakeslee and E. L. Kelley, "To The Saints," *Saints' Herald* 33, no. 22 (June 5, 1886): 351.

<sup>40</sup>Loving, "Ownership of the Kirtland Temple."

<sup>41</sup>Joseph Smith III, "Editorial Items," *Saints' Herald* 33, no. 20 (November 1886): 725.

<sup>42</sup>Contract, William H. Kelley and William Burch, Kirtland, Ohio, November 7, 1886, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 7, F5, item 34.



*This photograph, taken about 1899, shows the patched stucco. Community of Christ Archives, K2003.72D.*

need the most attention and that plastering would be cheapest if they paid for all three floors at once. The committee also noted that the contract for the stucco covered only the areas in need of repair, rather than recoating the entire temple.<sup>43</sup> Kelley agreed to supply Burch with the needed materials. Work continued through the winter. Unfortunately, the new stucco used to patch the damaged areas of the exterior walls did not match the original coat.<sup>44</sup>

Two days after the contract was signed for the stucco, Frank Criley of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, wrote William Kelley that he was sending twelve bushels of unwashed long hair,<sup>45</sup> almost certainly as an important ingredient for fiber reinforcement in the plaster. The

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<sup>43</sup>George Blakeslee and William H. Kelley, *Saints' Herald* 34, no. 19 (May 7, 1887): 300–301.

<sup>44</sup>Image showing the patched stucco work, K2003.54D, Community of Christ Archives.

<sup>45</sup>Frank Criley, Letter to William Kelley, November 9, 1886, William

plasterwork included replacing all of the plaster except the under layers on the interior of the masonry walls. The interior surface was pecked to create a good “key” for the new material, and a new putty coat was smoothed over the top of the original layer.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, the plaster being replaced was only fifty years old. Comments Elwin Robison, architectural historian, “Since plaster does not normally deteriorate so completely in fifty years’ time as to require replacement, graffiti must have been at least part of the problem. Repairing only the cracks due to building settlement would not have required wholesale replacement of the plaster surface.”<sup>47</sup>

As the workers concentrated on the plaster and stucco work in the fall of 1886, William Kelley focused on furnishing the temple. Blakeslee agreed to supply the banisters for the lower court.<sup>48</sup> Frank Criley, in addition to access to hair, must have also had connections with chair manufacturers, since he wrote in March 1887: “We do not keep the chairs in stock they are kept by the Marietta Chair Co. and I went to see them on receipt of your letter and they had just 6 Doz in stock and I paid for them and they will be shipped today. . . . The other 4 Doz I will ship the last of this week.”<sup>49</sup> Utah Mormon photographer George Edward Anderson took a photograph in 1907, showing dark Windsor chairs filling the temple’s upper court. They are most likely the ten dozen chairs that Kelley ordered from Frank Criley and the Marietta Chair Company.

On March 26, Kelley received a notice from Archibald Cameron of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that he was sending ninety-seven yards “of selvedge Carpet” in two rolls. “I get a man outside the factory to weave the selvages up for me,” he explained. “I have never unrolled the carpet but presume it to be all right. What it lacks in good looks it will make up in good wear. . . . You should get that carpet by next Saturday in time to cover up that hard noisy floor of which I have yet an

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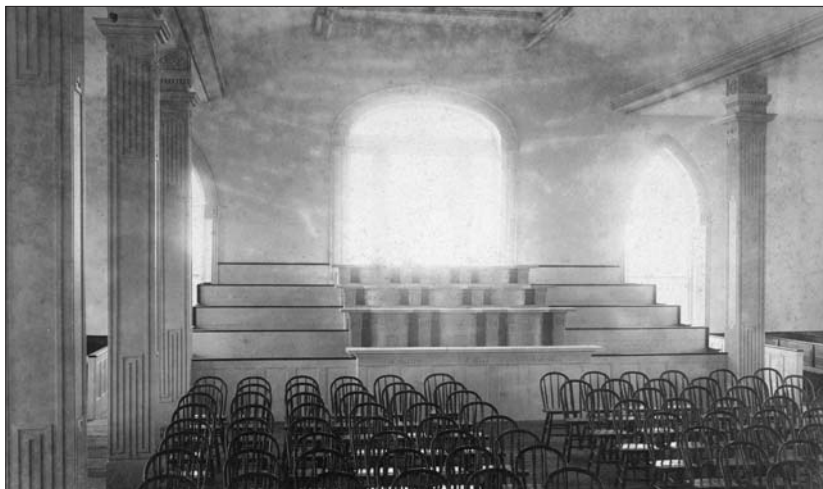
H. Kelley Papers, P1 Box 7, F5, item 37.

<sup>46</sup>“Kirtland,” February 10, 1887, quoted in Robison, *The First Mormon Temple*, 115.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>48</sup>George A. Blakeslee, Letter to William Kelley, October 19, 1886, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 7, F4, item 42.

<sup>49</sup>Frank Criley, Letter to William Kelley, March 21, 1887, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 8, F1, item 29.



*Windsor-style chairs, arranged for the 1887 conference in the upper court. Photograph by George Edward Anderson, 1907. Community of Christ Archives, D377.100.*

unpleasant recollection.”<sup>50</sup> With strenuous efforts, the temple was ready for the RLDS general conference, held in April 1887. The temple repairs committee reported a list of completed projects (already described) plus installing partitions and rollers in the lower court. The committee also noted that their cost estimates had been fairly accurate except for the painting, which had exceeded the estimate. The report explained: “The building is old, and it consumed paint proportionately, and the workmen made slow progress in spreading it, and this is no fault, as we know of theirs. But the painting being the final stroke, it was necessary that it be done.”<sup>51</sup> E. L. Kelley must have been satisfied with the rebuilding of chimneys using new materials and the installation of a furnace “ample to warm it, and pipes and flues and registers arranged for use.”<sup>52</sup>

The temple committee had also repaired seldom-visited areas of the temple, such as the rooms in the upper floors. The upper court

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<sup>50</sup>Archibald Cameron, Letter to William Kelley, March 26, 1887, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 8, F1, item 36.

<sup>51</sup>Blakeslee and Kelley, quoted in “General Annual Conference,” *Saints’ Herald* 34 (May 7, 1887): 300–301.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

had been painted, its pulpits, seats, and ornaments restored. Work in the attic included restored doors, windows, and partitions. Even the stairway and windows had been refurbished with “glazing of all of the windows in the building” and “the stairway has been fully restored, with its ornaments and newly painted.”<sup>53</sup>

At the conference end, William Kelley expressed satisfaction with the results of the exhausting labor in a letter to H. P. Brown: “The recent Conference held at this place . . . was full of cheering comfort from first to last. Some of us had been severely worked previously to get ready but we enjoyed it even [under?] fatigue. The few Saints here are trying to hold the fort in a small way. The outlook is precious for good. . . . The members came down on the neighborhood recently like one of the plagues of Egypt but has about had it run.”<sup>54</sup>

Despite all of the work by the temple committee to repair the temple, problems continued to surface. By 1889, Cassie Kelley wrote to William that the grate in the temple furnace had burned through, causing damage so significant that no fire could be ignited in the furnace and forcing the congregation to meet at an alternative location.<sup>55</sup>

The furnace issue was apparently resolved quickly, for the next major project was installing a bell and clock in the temple tower. William Kelley wrote E. L. from the East Coast as he began pricing clocks in New York City in late July 1890. He visited a large company, “Tower Clock,” and sent catalogues to Kirtland. “A striking Clock will be more than we can stand,” he reported. “They have a nice Church Clock for \$28.00 that I would be in favor of buying. . . . [T]hey guarantee not to deviate a minute in a month.” Tower Clock Company also supplied bells for church towers, and “they say the Baltimore is the cheapest bell in the market. A brass bell of same weight will sound louder than a bronze.”<sup>56</sup> The following day, William visited a second foundry, sent more catalogues, and

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<sup>53</sup>Blakeslee and Kelley, quoted in “General Annual Conference,” 300–301.

<sup>54</sup>William Kelley, Letter to H. P. Brown, June 27, 1887, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 8, F4, item 30–35.

<sup>55</sup>Catherine Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, November 10, 1889, William H. Kelley Papers, P35, F8.

<sup>56</sup>William Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, July 28, 1890, William H.

warned that the price of copper was going up.<sup>57</sup>

Although these plans fizzled, the local Saints found a clock closer to home that same year—a bronze bell from the Buckeye Bell Foundry, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Apostle Gomer Griffith, a long-time Kirtland resident, reminisced forty-five years later about obtaining this bell:

One day I had just left my home when it was given to me that a bell should be placed in the belfry. I went over and consulted with Bishop E. L. Kelley regarding the matter; he said he did not know whether the belfry was strong enough to hold a bell; he was in agreement that a bell should be placed therein if it could be done, but there was no money with which to purchase such a bell. I immediately started out that day among the old time outsiders and collected about one hundred dollars. Then went to the bandmaster in Willoughby [a neighboring town] and asked him if he would bring his band and furnish music for us, but that as we had no money we could only furnish refreshments. He gladly consented and said he would be glad to help us out. The news was broadcast that a lawn fete was to be held and the purpose thereof. A rope was placed around the lot and a ten cent charge was made for admission. We had refreshments, band music, singing, and some speeches. From this affair over one hundred dollars was cleared. In traveling around among the Saints there was also collected one hundred and fifty dollars; to this amount was added seven dollars collected by the bishop. Total amount collected for the bell being three hundred and fifty-seven dollars.

Bishop Kelley purchased the bell in Cincinnati, Ohio, had the belfry reinforced sufficiently to carry the bell and had it installed. . . . There was great rejoicing on the part of Saints and outsiders on this occasion. The bell can be heard for miles around and has not only been used for announcing services but also fires and funerals.<sup>58</sup>

The bell's swinging and ringing was an exciting contribution to the community and temple ambiance, but it eventually led to struc-

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Kelley Papers, P1, Box 10, F6, item 43.

<sup>57</sup>William Kelley, Letter to E. L. Kelley, July 29, 1890, William H. Kelley Papers, P1, Box 10, F6, item 45.

<sup>58</sup>Gomer Griffith, "Reminiscences of Kirtland Temple during a Period of Acquaintance and Experience Covering Fifty-Two Years," *Saints' Herald* 82, no. 23 (June 4, 1935): 723. Griffith was ordained an apostle in the Kirtland Temple in 1887 and is buried in the Kirtland cemetery next to the temple.

tural problems in the tower. After installation, the tower panels enclosing the belfry were replaced with horizontal louvers that allowed the sound to carry over the countryside. However, rain, snow, and hail also entered the tower and pooled around the exterior deck; over the next several decades, the timbers began to rot.

Those problems were in the future, however, as the local congregation continued to concentrate on repairs and improvements. Around the turn of the century, the temple chimneys were replaced with rectangular, double-banded chimneys (removed in the 1930s). In 1899, the belfry roof was sheathed with tin, the temple grounds were graded, grass was planted, and ninety-six sugar maples were planted. Visitors were soon treated to a new gravel walk twelve feet wide that connected the entrance doors to Chillicothe Road. Also in 1899, the historic inscription high above the entrance doors was repainted with a stronger identity statement: "HOUSE OF THE LORD / BUILT BY THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST / OF LATTER DAY SAINTS 1834 / REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST / OF LATTER DAY SAINTS IN SUCCESSION BY / DECISION OF COURT FEB. 1880." A dark bold line set off the inscription.<sup>59</sup>

Lighting in the temple followed technological advances. Its original chandeliers had been filled with candles. An 1888 photograph of the lower court shows kerosene lamps that hung from the

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<sup>59</sup>Accounts of the 1899 inscription differ. It appears as "HOUSE OF THE LORD, REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS IN SUCCESSION BY ORDER OF COURT FEBRUARY, 1880," in Kirtland Temple Repairs, Joseph III Smith and Heman Hale Smith, *History of the [Reorganized] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1805–1890*, 4 vols.; continued by F. Henry Edwards as *The History of the [Reorganized] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vols. 5–8 (1897–1903; Independence: Herald House, 1969 printing), 5:472; *RLDS General Conference Minutes*, April 11, 1900. It appears as "House of the Lord. / Built by the Church of Jesus Christ / of Latter Day Saints.–1834 / Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ [of] Latter Day Saints in / Succession by decree of Court. / February 1880." "General Conference Minutes," *Saints' Herald* 47, no. 15 (April 11, 1900): 245. See also historic photographs displaying the 1899 inscription: K2003.54D, K2005.24.39D, K2003.72D, K2003.23D.





*This photograph of the lower court taken in 1888 shows banisters installed along the pulpits in 1887. The kerosene lamps are hanging from hooks that had been installed for chandeliers in the 1830s. Community of Christ Archives, D377.173.*

vaulted ceiling.<sup>60</sup> In 1899, gaslights were installed, fed by a gas well that was buried across the street from the temple to supply gas. These gas lamps appear in a turn-of-the-century image of the temple's outer court.<sup>61</sup> Also, the interior was completely repainted.<sup>62</sup>

Five years later in 1904 during a summer thunderstorm, a bolt of lightning struck the tower, badly damaging the belfry and roof. By now, the temple had been insured, and the funds helped finance des-

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<sup>60</sup>Photograph, D377.173, Community of Christ Archives. Hanging lamps also appear in a ca. 1890 image, K2003.77D, Community of Christ Archives.

<sup>61</sup>Photograph, D377.171 Community of Christ Archives, Independence.

<sup>62</sup>Kirtland Temple Repairs, *History of the RLDS Church*, 5:472.

perately needed repairs.<sup>63</sup> Elwin Robison describes the extent of the tower damage and the repairs made in 1904:

The pattern of replacement timbers on the temple belfry shows that water collected and ran down the eight timber columns that form the corners of the octagonal belfry. Where these columns rested on interlocking sets of four beams, the water pooled and was drawn up into the columns by capillary action in the wood cells. This saturation of the wood caused the bottoms of the columns and the four interlocking beams to decay. The repair consisted of splicing new sections on the bottoms of the supporting columns and replacing the interlocking beams that supported the belfry.<sup>64</sup>

Today, circular saw marks on these 1904 timbers differentiate them from those hewn in the 1830s. Visitors were allowed into the bell tower in 1904, since many of them left graffiti, including dates of 1904 and later. That same year, a new railing was installed around the bell tower, allowing historians to date temple photographs confidently as “before” or “after.”

Eight years later in 1912, photographer C. Ed Miller captured the temple interior. One view of the lower court reveals that the 1899 gas lamps had now been electrified. On the west wall above the pulpits, where the wall meets the vaulted ceiling, stains and cracks on the interior plaster shows damage caused as the exterior wall slowly shifted outward, causing moisture to seep into the walls. Miller’s image also reveals that the first pew in the center on the west side of the lower court had been removed to allow additional space between the pews and the pulpits.<sup>65</sup>

The temple continued to receive repairs throughout the decade. Under Albert E. Stone’s care, by 1918 the curtains that had once hung from the ceiling of the lower court had been removed and stored in the far west office on the third floor.<sup>66</sup> General Bishop Benjamin R. McGuire of Independence, Missouri, wrote to Stone, “The Joint Council which has been, considering the use of

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<sup>63</sup>*Painesville Telegraph*, August 19, 1904.

<sup>64</sup>Robison, *The First Mormon Temple*, 119.

<sup>65</sup>Photograph, C. Ed Miller, 1912, K2004.47D, Community of Christ Archives.

<sup>66</sup>Benjamin R. McGuire, Letter to A. E. Stone, October 24, 1918, P54, F203. A. E. Stone was temple caretaker 1905–26. Albert E. Stone, *Autobiography*, Community of Christ Archives.



*This image of the outer court's first floor shows gas lamps installed in 1899. Community of Christ Archives, D377.99.*

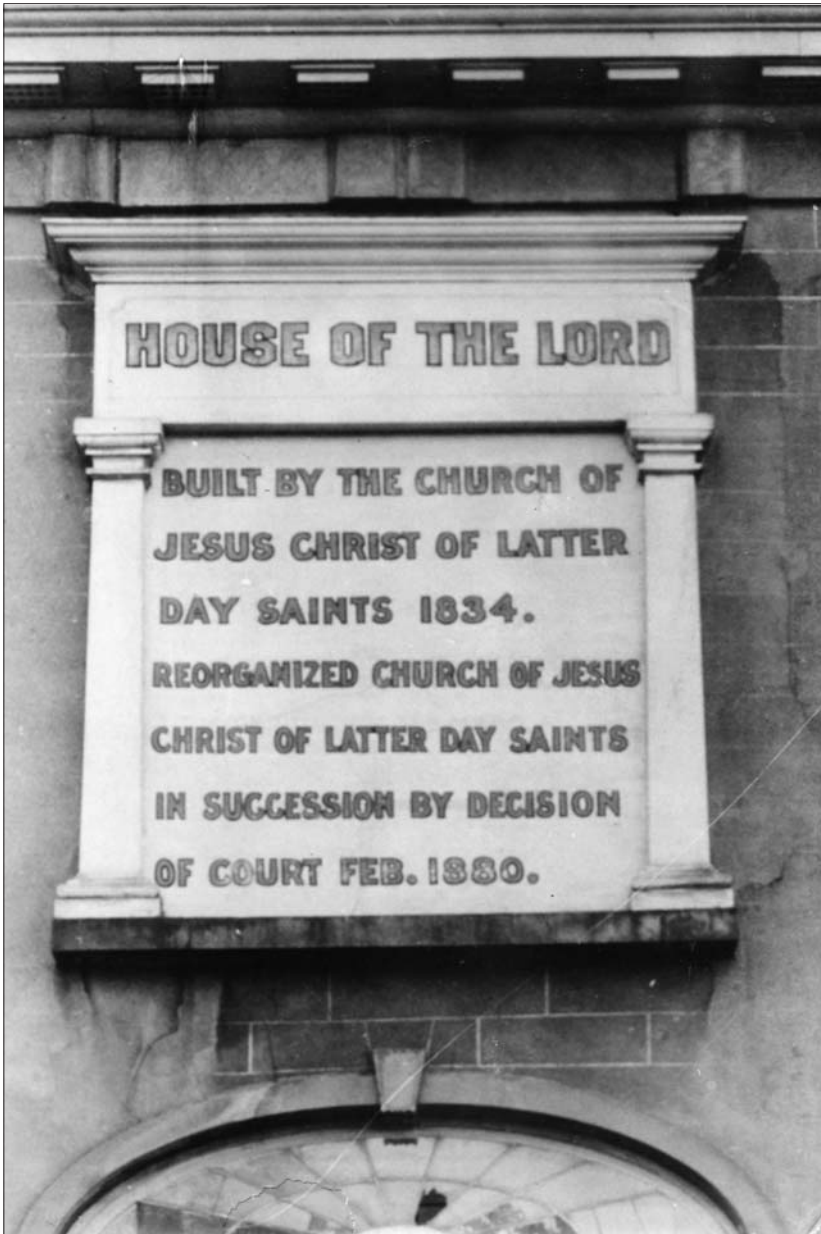
the Temple at Kirtland, has advised that we dispose of the asbestos curtains. . . . We would like to have you secure us a buyer for them if possible.”<sup>67</sup> Stone also took an active role in installing new desks in the upper court in 1917–19.<sup>68</sup> These desks were designed to reflect the originals in the south corners of the room. The center boxes were made with hinged desks so that students could lift up the writing surfaces with a swinging brace that locked into place to support the desktop. The hinges also allowed the desks to fold down, saving space and giving students the option to face either end of the room. Installing these desks allowed the temple to be used as education space by the local congregation and by students attending reunion classes.

Also in 1917–19 the RLDS Church repainted the temple sign. The inscription was the same: “HOUSE OF THE LORD / BUILT BY THE CHURCH OF / JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER / DAY SAINTS 1834. / REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS / CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS / IN SUCCESSION BY DECISION / OF COURT

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<sup>67</sup>Benjamin R. McGuire, Letter to A. E. Stone, October 24, 1918, P54, F203.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.



*Between 1910 and 1919, this inscription replaced the one that had been painted in 1899. The letters in this version were larger and the bold line below the lettering was eliminated. Community of Christ Archives, K2005.24.39D.*

FEB. 1880.”<sup>69</sup> However, the letters were larger and the line beneath it was omitted.

By 1955, the inscription was changed slightly with the addition of inclusive dates to read: “HOUSE OF THE LORD / BUILT BY THE CHURCH OF / JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER / DAY SAINTS 1834–36. / REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS / CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS / IN SUCCESSION BY DECISION / OF COURT FEB. 1880.”<sup>70</sup>

By 1918, the lower court was suffering from structural weaknesses in the basement. The floor joists of the lower court were beginning to show their age. One girder had failed by 1918, since it is propped up with a support marked by dated graffiti. Repairs to the joist use crudely cut plate steel with well-oxidized surfaces consistent with the 1918 date.<sup>71</sup> No other record of this out-of-sight but all-important stabilization has been found. In 1919 Lemuel Curry, a member of the Kirtland congregation, was reimbursed for repair work on eave spouts and troughs.<sup>72</sup> By 1920, C. Ed. Miller made an additional set of photographs showing new electric lamps attached to the ceiling of the lower court.

The eighty years that followed contained continuous repairs and preservation efforts by the RLDS Church. Electric wall sconces and florescent vaulted lighting were installed in the lower court during the 1940s. Under Earl Curry’s care, the exterior walls were strengthened with tie rods, while the roof received stronger braces, and the tower was surrounded with new railing.<sup>73</sup> The exterior walls received a fresh look when the original stucco was removed in 1955 and a new, thicker surface applied to the stone. Several years later, the exterior

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<sup>69</sup>See photographs K2004.7D, K2005.24.39D, K2003.72D, K2003.27D, K2003.29D, K2004.3D, Community of Christ Archives.

<sup>70</sup>Photos that include the 1833–36 change: K2004.41D, K2003.57.1D, K2003.67D, Community of Christ Archives.

<sup>71</sup>Robison, *The First Mormon Temple*, 43.

<sup>72</sup>Business Meeting Records, Kirtland Temple Congregation, May 12, 1919, Community of Christ Archives.

<sup>73</sup>Earl Roy Curry (1890–1980) was a long-time resident of Kirtland, member of the RLDS Kirtland congregation, and temple caretaker from 1934 to 1957. Kevin Bryant (a 2006 Kirtland Temple Fellow), “Earl Roy Curry: A Vision of Future Needs,” 2006, original typescript, 2006 Fellowship File, Kirtland Temple Visitor Center, Kirtland, Ohio.



*This image of the lower court shows that electric lights had been installed. Community of Christ Archives, K2003.21D. Photograph by C. Ed Miller.*

walls were painted a brilliant white. Finally, the twentieth century ended with a stronger foundation, the temple sign was replaced with a replica of the 1830s original, and a new finial was positioned that continues to tower over the Kirtland hills.<sup>74</sup>

The forty years from 1880 to 1920 were an active period in the maintenance and repair of the Kirtland Temple. The RLDS Church renewed a sense of pride in the temple as an important piece of its heritage. Despite the increasing costs and challenges discovered in maintaining a large house of worship, dedicated members like Rebecca Dayton, William, E. L., and Cassie Kelley continued the upkeep and preservation of the House of the Lord. It was through their

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<sup>74</sup>Carl Bezilla, head of Maintenance, Kirtland Temple, interview notes, spring 2006, Maintenance File, Kirtland Temple Collection; photographs of the 1990s compaction grouting, painting temple sign, and finial replacement are in Bezilla's private collection.

sacrifice and efforts that the Kirtland Temple now stands as a National Historic Landmark and a destination site for tens of thousands of visitors each year.



# THE TRANSLATOR AND THE GHOSTWRITER: JOSEPH SMITH AND W. W. PHELPS

*Samuel Brown*

IN 1845, ALMOST A YEAR after the murder of Joseph Smith, John Taylor published a pamphlet titled *The Voice of Truth, Containing the Public Writings, Portrait, and Last Sermon of President Joseph Smith*. This pamphlet compiled political material published in the last years of Smith's life in convenient form, including official correspondence with James Arlington Bennett, John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, the *Washington Daily Globe*, an *Appeal to Vermont's "Green Mountain Boys,"* the "Pacific Innuendo," "A Friendly Hint to Missouri," and Smith's presidential platform: the *Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the U.S.* The sixty-four-page booklet concluded with an appendix, "Joseph Smith's Last Sermon, Delivered at the April Conference, 1844." The appendix, Smith's most famous public sermon (now called the King Follett Discourse), stands apart from the body of the pamphlet. This mystical and colloquial account differs from the formal polemics of the eight political texts, which are prone to pedantic, multilingual asides.<sup>1</sup>

The difference in style in this case resulted from a difference in authorship. William Wines Phelps ghostwrote the political material.

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The story of the ghostwritten pieces and their displays of linguistic prowess provide an important window into Smith's desire to be seen as a skilled translator and sacred linguist, a hunger Phelps shared. Though the multilingual displays came to embarrass Mormons even as they attributed the writings to Smith, they had once expressed Smith's great desire for recognition as a master of language. The reasons for writing the materials and the intended benefits of their publication provide a vital window into early Mormonism, illuminating Smith's and Phelps's self-conceptions, the process of textual attribution, and the religious meaning of translation.

### JOSEPH SMITH'S TRANSLATING ASPIRATIONS

Understanding the purpose of the ghostwritten material requires situating these projects from 1843–44 in the histories of Smith and Phelps from the 1830s on. From the beginning, command of ancient languages figured prominently in Smith's religious activity. In the 1820s, he reported that an angel bestowed on him gold plates inscribed in "Reformed Egyptian" (a shorthand Hebrew-Egyptian hybrid), which he undertook to translate using stones he called "interpreters." In the early 1830s, Smith revised portions of the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, in this case augmenting and correcting the English text, again by supernatural means. In the same period, he sent his followers to found a Hebrew-named city (Zion) and revealed various words in what he termed the Adamic language, including a

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book-length study of early Mormon death culture, tentatively titled *In Heaven As It Is on Earth*. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: I am grateful to colleagues for their linguistic input: Kevin Barney (Aramaic and Hebrew), Andrew Brown (Spanish), Hugh Brown (Italian), Kris Haglund (German), and Susan Hamilton (Latin). I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers of the *Journal*, whose comments significantly improved this essay.

<sup>1</sup>*The Voice of Truth, Containing General Joseph Smith's Correspondence with Gen. James Arlington Bennett; Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys; Correspondence with John C. Calhoun, Esq.; Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States; Pacific Innuendo, and Governor Ford's Letter; a Friendly Hint to Missouri, and a Few Words of Consolation for the "Globe;" Also, Correspondence with the Hon. Henry Clay* (Nauvoo, Ill.: Printed by John Taylor, 1844, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/NCMP1820-1846CISOPTR=2815> (accessed November 8, 2007). The pamphlet reprints the Bullock version of the Follett Discourse published as "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 15 (August 15, 1844): 612–17.

new name for God (Ahman), and one or more place names (Adam-ondi-Ahman and perhaps Zomas).<sup>2</sup>

By 1835, Smith added direct translation from the Egyptian to his repertoire, analyzing, and then translating into what became the book of Abraham a collection of funerary papyri purchased that summer at Kirtland, Ohio. During his sustained encounter with the papyri, Smith also organized a Hebrew School in Kirtland, an amplification of his School of the Prophets under the tutelage of Joshua Seixas, a freelance Hebraist visiting Oberlin College but with connections to the conservative Andover Seminary in central Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> Upon the place to which the Saints fled after the Missouri Mormon War of 1838 Smith also bestowed a Hebrew name (Nauvoo). Smith would continue to study Hebrew, often with the help of Jewish convert Alex Neibaur, until the end of his life. As evidence of familiarity with Greek, he puzzled through the etymology of the word *paradise* in an 1843 sermon exploring life after death.<sup>4</sup> In his last two public sermons (the King Follett Discourse and the Sermon in the Grove), he undertook a radical retranslation of the first sentence of the Hebrew Bible to explain his vision of God's nature.<sup>5</sup> In the same sermons he gave his listeners to understand that he could decipher Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and German.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout his life, Smith would deny aspirations to book learn-

<sup>2</sup>On "Ahman" and "Adam-ondi-Ahman," see Robert J. Matthews, "Adam-ondi-Ahman," *BYU Studies* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1972): 27–35. On "Zomas," see Ezra Booth in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: Howe, 1834), 199. The use of "Zomar" in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers may reflect the same term. See Kirtland Egyptian Papers, Grammar and Alphabet, 23.

<sup>3</sup>Shalom Goldman, "Joshua/James Seixas (1802–74): Jewish apostasy and Christian Hebraism in early nineteenth-century America," *Jewish History* 7, no. 1 (March 1993): 65–88; Louis Zucker, "Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 41–55.

<sup>4</sup>Scott H. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith, Jr.* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), June 11, 1843, 384.

<sup>5</sup>Kevin Barney, "Joseph Smith's Emendation of Genesis 1:1," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 103–35.

<sup>6</sup>Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated

ing, and he and his followers would mock as the heirs of Babylon the “priestcraft” of Protestant clergy prone to “spiritualize” the Bible or enwrap themselves in creedal apostasy from the apostolic faith. Still, however unlearned, he considered himself a preeminent translator. Indeed, translation figured prominently in the title he assumed at the founding of the new church in April 1830—he was “a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ” (D&C 21:1). Throughout his career, Smith struggled with the fact that the educated mainline Protestant clergy defamed him as a semi-literate rural “plough boy” or “illiterate vagrant hanging on the skirts of society,” while the newer Methodist and Baptist clergies (themselves only slowly embracing seminaries) sided with the traditionalists in rejecting Smith’s claims to respectability.<sup>7</sup> Generally only established clergy knew Latin, Hebrew, and Greek; before the dramatic expansion of the Second Great Awakening, “orthodox” clergy in fact were expected to master these languages—early colleges could refuse to graduate the monolingual aspiring minister. Orators, clergymen, and some writers were known to sprinkle their sermons, essays, and stories with foreign terms and phrases as marks of their erudition. Beyond learned circles scattered phrases or names figured in certain popular metaphysical traditions; in general, commoners enjoyed little direct access to ancient languages.<sup>8</sup>

Despite his considerable exertions, Smith never commanded much respect for his language scholarship outside his church. The man who sold Smith Egyptian papyri in 1835 seems merely to have sought a buyer for his tattered wares, and another group who compli-

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Text,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 193–208; Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 2d ed. rev., and first electronic version, on *LDS Collector’s Library 2005*, CD-ROM (Salt Lake City: LDS Media, 2004), 379–411.

<sup>7</sup>Nancy Towle, *Vicissitudes Illustrated in the Experience of Nancy Towle, in Europe and America*, 2d ed. (Portsmouth, N.H.: John Caldwell, 1833), 157; John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (Philadelphia: W. J. & J. K. Simon, 1842), 345.

<sup>8</sup>Paul K. Conkin, *The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 270, discusses the relevance of mastering biblical languages to the struggle to protect the Bible from higher criticism.

mented his translation skills were simple hoaxers. In 1843, a group of Illinoisans claimed to have unearthed bell-shaped plates from an Indian burial mound near Kinderhook and brought them to Smith for translation. He died before he could fall victim to the hoax, though his followers remained convinced of the plates' validity for many decades.<sup>9</sup>

In general, Christian critics were not sympathetic to Smith's quest or appreciative of his achievements. They saw his claim to translate the Book of Mormon as charlatanism and, after Howe proposed the Spaulding theory in 1834, plagiarism. They often mocked him for a meager command of the King's English, citing the Book of Mormon as one of many proofs. Representing his peers, Mormon critic Thomas Sharp (ghostwriting for former Mormon William Harris) complained that Smith and his colleagues "could scarcely write their own language."<sup>10</sup> Palmyra critic Abner Cole jeered at Smith as a "*spindle shanked* ignoramus," possibly mocking both his well-known limp (the sequel of a childhood bone infection) and his lack of education.<sup>11</sup> When Smith made attempts to gain traditional knowledge of ancient languages in the 1830s, the critics mocked him further, remarking wryly that inspiration had failed him because he took to studying Hebrew. One critic acerbically commented: "Whether the stones had become rusty, or whether the gift of the Spirit had withdrawn . . . is not fully revealed."<sup>12</sup>

These insults bothered Smith greatly, not least because he appreciated his inadequacies in language. He wrote in a personal letter in 1832, "Oh Lord God; deliver us in thine own due time from the little narrow prison, almost as it were, total darkness of paper, pen and

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<sup>9</sup>Stanley B. Kimball, "Kinderhook Plates Brought to Joseph Smith Appear to be a Nineteenth-Century Hoax," *Ensign*, August 1981, 66–74.

<sup>10</sup>William Harris, *Mormonism Portrayed* (Warsaw, Ill.: Sharp & Gamble, 1841), 9. John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way*, 292, similarly mocked the language of Smith's Book of Mormon in 1842.

<sup>11</sup>Abner Cole, *Palmyra Reflector*, June 30, 1830, quoted in Spencer Fluhman, "Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Antebellum America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 2006), 33.

<sup>12</sup>J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages: or the Rise, Progress, and Causes of Mormonism* (New York: Platt & Peters, 1842), 40.

ink; and a crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language.”<sup>13</sup> Three years later, he noted in his diary, “O may God give me learning even Language and indo[w] me with qualifications to magnify his name.”<sup>14</sup> The Book of Mormon anticipated these feelings of inadequacy, as several prophetic authors warned that their language was imperfect and the reader who could not overlook those flaws risked damnation (1 Ne. 19:6; 2 Ne. 33:4, 11; Ether 12:23-25). The theme persisted into Smith’s own revelations, most explicitly an 1831 revelation canonized as (LDS) Doctrine and Covenants 67 (see esp. vv. 5-7).

### PHELPS’S LINGUISTIC ASPIRATIONS

The flamboyant William Wine Phelps, recipient of the 1832 letter pleading for power over language, may have represented the salve for Smith’s wounds. Having edited anti-Masonic papers in the 1820s and even pondered a run for lieutenant governor of New York, Phelps came to Mormonism early. An unaffiliated Christian seeker, Phelps could not resist the story of an angel descending from heaven. He accepted baptism in June 1831,<sup>15</sup> and Smith put Phelps to work almost immediately. Within a year, the first Mormon newspaper, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, began publication in Independence, Missouri, under Phelps’s editorship.

Phelps had long considered himself a great legal and journalistic talent, and something of a linguist as well. Disaffected Mormon Ezra Booth commented in 1831 that Phelps “made no little display as an editor of a partizan [sic] newspaper” in New York and after his baptism “made the dupes believe he was master of fourteen different languages, of which they frequently boasted.”<sup>16</sup> Phelps’s claims to linguistic knowledge likely compensated for a lack of prestigious education. Inaugurating a public correspondence in the Church paper with editor Oliver Cowdery,

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<sup>13</sup>Dean Jessee, comp. and ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), November 27, 1832, 287; also printed in *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 19 (October 15, 1844): 673.

<sup>14</sup>Faulring, *American Prophet’s Record*, December 22, 1835, 90-91. His scribe was “unwell.”

<sup>15</sup>William Phelps, “Letter No. 7,” *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 8 (May 1835): 115.

<sup>16</sup>Booth in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 274.

Phelps explained in 1834, "My source of learning, and my manner of life, from my youth up, will exclude me from the fashionable pleasure of staining my communications, with the fancy colors of a freshman of Dartmouth, a sophomore of Harvard, or even a graduate of Yale."<sup>17</sup> Though outsiders and perhaps modern observers would likely dismiss such a disclaimer as hypocritical false modesty, Phelps thus positioned himself as a self-made man and protected himself from criticism. Regardless of the source of his learning or the extent of his modesty, Phelps treasured the meaning of the written word, as indicated by an 1832 editorial in the *Star*: "The art of writing is one of the greatest blessings we enjoy. To cultivate it is our duty, and to use it is our privilege. By these means the thoughts of the heart can act without the body: and the mind can speak without the head, while thousands of miles apart, and for ages after the flesh has mouldered back to its mother dust. . . . It is one of the best gifts of God to man, and it is the privilege of man to enjoy it."<sup>18</sup>

Phelps would be allowed the pleasure of editing the Church periodical for only a brief period. As he attempted to print the *Book of Commandments* in 1833, vigilantes destroyed the printing press, bullied him, and ransacked his home. The *Star* moved to Kirtland on a new press, while Phelps remained behind. After fighting for Mormon rights in Missouri for two more years, Phelps returned to Church headquarters at Kirtland, arriving in May 1835. He promptly began work on the Doctrine and Covenants, as well as transcribing patriarchal blessings, among other duties, all of which he performed as a boarder in the Smith home.<sup>19</sup> Though he likely enjoyed his return to de facto Church headquarters and advertised the significance of the patriarchal blessings he transcribed, he may

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<sup>17</sup>William Phelps, "Letter No. 1," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 2 (November 1834): 22.

<sup>18</sup>W. W. Phelps, "Writing Letters," *The Evening and The Morning Star* 1, no. 4 (September 1832): 49–50.

<sup>19</sup>Walter D. Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps: Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958), 62–63; Howard Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1977), 150, 158. In his published correspondence with Cowdery, Phelps described the significance of patriarchal blessings. W. W. Phelps, "Letter No. 9," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 10 (July



well have awaited opportunities for greater creativity. Smith by then had his hands full with political, military, and administrative problems, not to mention Church governance, with scant time left over for public writing projects.

In June, a visitor arrived in Kirtland who would bring hope to both Smith and Phelps of great progress in the mastery of ancient languages. Michael Chandler, visiting Cleveland with a collection of Theban mummies and funeral papyri, stopped by Kirtland with an offer for the Mormon prophet. Smith purchased the collection, promptly reported that the papyri contained the writings of Joseph and Abraham, and shared the find with Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, and soon Warren Parrish, who joined the group in October. (Other scribes played minor roles in Smith's interactions with the Egyptian relics.)

These initial encounters with the papyri yielded a number of unpublished documents known collectively as the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. Primary among these documents is a notebook entitled "Egyptian Alphabet" or "Grammar and A[l]phabet of the Egyptian Language" (hereafter Grammar and Alphabet). Beyond controversial manuscripts of the book of Abraham with hieroglyphs beside paragraphs of English text, this alphabet, primarily in Phelps's hand, is the main document in the Kirtland Egyptian Papers collection. The Kirtland Egyptian Papers, since their publication in 1966, have occasioned considerable controversy, as they are not Egyptian, and critics see them as the source of the excerpts from the book of Abraham that Smith would publish in 1842.<sup>20</sup> In the interest of distancing Smith and the book of Abraham from these documents, Hugh Nibley proposed that Phelps competed adversarially with Smith over the papyri and wrote the Grammar and Alphabet (with minor input from Warren Parrish) with little if any oversight from

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1835): 146–47.

<sup>20</sup>Mormon scholar Sidney B. Sperry rediscovered the Kirtland Egyptian Papers in LDS Church Archives in 1935, but little came of the rediscovery until 1966, when former Mormons published a purloined microfilm of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1966); republished by H. Michael Marquardt, comp. and ed., *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers* (Sandy, Utah: Author, bound photostat, 1981).



the Prophet.<sup>21</sup> Critics have suggested that Nibley's assertion lacks reliable documentary support and merely reflects his personal quest to limit "dissonance."<sup>22</sup> Both sides appear to have overstated their respective cases, deflecting attention from the meaning of the Egyptian Papers and the nature of the relationship between Phelps and Smith.

Smith and Phelps began working with the Abraham papyri immediately after their acquisition. An entry in the official *History of the Church* claims that Smith spent the latter half of July working on the alphabet.<sup>23</sup> Smith's extant diaries do not cover that period, but the source of the *History of the Church* entry is Willard Richards, who had easy access to both Phelps and Smith at the time (1843).<sup>24</sup> A contemporary letter (likely July 19–20, 1835) from Phelps to his wife Sally confirms their involvement with the papyri at that time: "God has so ordered it that these writings and mummies have been brought into the Church, and the sacred writings I had just locked up in Bro. Joseph's house when your letter came, so I had two consolations of good things in one day."<sup>25</sup> Phelps thus advertised to his wife that he had special access to the sacred papyri (generally kept under lock and key), as well as demonstrating that he and Smith made active use of the texts. An apparent addendum

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<sup>21</sup>Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 2; Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 359–62, 391–93.

<sup>22</sup>Edward Ashment, "Reducing Dissonance: The Book of Abraham as a Case Study," in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 225–28.

<sup>23</sup>Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1902–12), 2:235–36, on *New Mormon Studies: A Comprehensive Resources Library*, CD-ROM (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1998).

<sup>24</sup>Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography," 222; William V. Smith, *A Joseph Smith Commentary on the Book of Abraham*, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University/Book of Abraham Project, 2002), 226; PDF document, <http://www.boap.org> (accessed November 27, 2006).

<sup>25</sup>W. W. Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, in Bruce A. Van Orden, ed. "Writing to Zion: The William W. Phelps Kirtland Letters (1835–1836)," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 3 (1993): 554–56.

to the July 20 letter by Smith himself confirms Phelps's involvement in the interpretation of the papyri. Smith told Sally that her husband would "return [home to Missouri] and teach . . . hid[d]en things of old times . . . the tre[as]ures hid in the sand."<sup>26</sup> Later in the same letter, Phelps proudly anticipated that "these records of old times when we translate and print them in a book will make a good witness for the Book of Mormon."<sup>27</sup> His enthusiasm mixed with that of his prophet during the first weeks of their encounter with the ancient documents. Phelps, like the majority of his peers, had believed in the mystical nature of hieroglyphs since at least 1834, when he wrote that the "Egyptians could astonish the universe . . . concealing their arts in mystical characters or hieroglyphics."<sup>28</sup> In this respect, he and his prophet joined a chorus of other voices concerned with the deep meaning of hieroglyphs and primal language.<sup>29</sup>

The burst of activity on the documents did not last long, much to Phelps's frustration. Two impatient months later, Phelps complained to his wife that "nothing has been doing in the translation of the Egyptian Record for a long time, and probably will not for some time to come."<sup>30</sup> Attention had turned to preparations for harvest, other publication projects, and the reopening of the School of the Elders. Phelps did, however, receive a personal revelation from Smith on September 22. In the revelation, Phelps discovered that he would "have the desires of his heart in the gift that pertaineth to writing the law of God and in being an instrument in writing to lift up an ensign

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<sup>26</sup>Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 360. I agree with Nibley, "Kirtland Egyptian Papers," 358, that this is a reasonably clear reference to the book of Abraham.

<sup>27</sup>Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, July 19–20, 1835, in Van Orden, "Writing to Zion," 554–56.

<sup>28</sup>W. W. Phelps, "Reflections for the Fourth of July, 1834," *Evening and the Morning Star* 2, no. 22 (July 1834): 173. This cultural commonplace even made it into Noah Webster's 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. hieroglyphic.

<sup>29</sup>Samuel Brown, "Joseph Smith's Kirtland Egyptian Papers: Hieroglyphs, the Sacerdotal Genealogy, and the Antidote to Babel," Sunstone Salt Lake Symposium, August 9, 2007.

<sup>30</sup>W. W. Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, September 11, 1835, in Van Orden, "Writing to Zion," 563.

to the Nation[s].” The blessing further reassured him that he would be “a lawyer in Israel,” would be “renowned among men,” who “shall acknowledge his superior wisdom,” and he would acquire “understanding in all science and languages.” Though the blessing would temper this praise with warnings that God would “chasten him because he taketh honor to himself,” Smith promised his scribe great notoriety and power.<sup>31</sup> A note from Smith to Sally Phelps confirmed the Prophet’s appreciation for Phelps’s skill: William was a man “whose Merits and experiance and acquirements, but few can compete with in this generation,” on whom “[G]od in his wisdom hath bestowed gifts.”<sup>32</sup>

A little more than a week after the reassuring revelation (October 1, 1835), Smith’s diary (in Oliver Cowdery’s handwriting) notes that he “labored on the Egyptian alphabet in company with Brs O Cowdery and WW. Phelps.”<sup>33</sup> Four weeks later Smith added a third scribe, Warren Parrish, who shortly received a personalized revelation promising “he shall see much of my ancient records and shall know of hid[d]en things and shall be endowed with a knowledge of hid[d]en languages.”<sup>34</sup> Three days later Smith displayed “the Alphabet of the ancient records” in company with “the Mumies.”<sup>35</sup> As part of their language and translation projects, Smith had dispatched Cowdery to New York to purchase language texts, and the scribe returned November 20 with Hebrew grammars and lexica, in addition to Greek primers and “Webster’s English Lexicon.”<sup>36</sup> On December 26, 1835, Smith “Commenced studeing [sic] the Hebrew Language

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<sup>31</sup>William Phelps, “Diary 1835, January-June,” 30–33, MS 3450, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives). Oliver Cowdery transcribed the blessing into Church records October 3, 1835. Another 1831 warning to Phelps appears in Doctrine and Covenants 58:40–41.

<sup>32</sup>Leah Y. Phelps, “Letters of Faith from Kirtland,” *Improvement Era* 45, no. 8 (August 1942): 529, quoted in Ashment, “Reducing Dissonance,” 227.

<sup>33</sup>Faulring, *American Prophet’s Record*, 35.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, November 14, 1835, 59.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, November 16–17, 1835, 65–66.

<sup>36</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, November 17, 1835, 66. By “Lexicon” Smith probably means Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the*

in company with Bros Parrish and Williams.”<sup>37</sup> Several days later, Phelps complained to his wife that he was not among those first language scholars: “I want to study Hebrew, and I have not as yet been able to begin.”<sup>38</sup> Phelps enrolled in Seixas’s class the next month, and Seixas placed him in the same advanced Hebrew class as the Prophet, evidence of Phelps’s centrality to the effort or perhaps of his aptitude. Both Smith and Phelps were proud of this recognition from Seixas.<sup>39</sup>

After a dramatic spring, finally marked by the epochal dedication of the Kirtland Temple in March, Phelps returned to Missouri in April 1836 at Smith’s instruction. In the aftermath of the Kirtland banking disaster, Parrish turned against Smith in 1837, briefly leading a seceding Church of Christ before giving up on the movement entirely. Smith dispatched Cowdery to Missouri in October 1837, then, in light of mass apostasy, fled from Kirtland with Sidney Rigdon in January 1838. Though Smith initially intended to continue his translation in Missouri and maintain relations with Cowdery and Phelps there, the Far West High Council excommunicated Cowdery in April 1838. Phelps also lost his place in the Church over the course of 1838, starting with an initial excommunication in March over allegations of financial misconduct in real estate dealings related to the Missouri gathering, with full estrangement completed by October. Bereft of his scribes, Smith appears to have abandoned the Egyptian grammar project by late 1837.<sup>40</sup>

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*English Language.* Webster’s *Improved Grammar of the English Language* (1831) is less likely, as it is not primarily a lexicon.

<sup>37</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, 91.

<sup>38</sup>Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, January 5, 1836, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>39</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, February 19, 1836, 134. *History of the Church* 2:397, reports the same material.

<sup>40</sup>Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 145–50; Brigham Young, “Extracts of the Minutes of Conferences,” *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 1 (November 1839): 15. Former Mormon William Swartzell noted on July 26, 1838, that a house was being built in Adam-ondi-Ahman for Smith to engage in “translating the heiroglyphics [sic] of the Egyptian mummies.” William Swartzell, *Mormonism Exposed, Being a Journal of a Residence in Missouri from the 28th of May to the 20th of August, 1838* (Pekin, Ohio: Author, 1840), 25.

Phelps remained outside Mormonism for almost two years. Financially devastated and eager to regain access to Smith, whom he esteemed as prophet and seer, a penitent Phelps pleaded for forgiveness in June 1840. Smith accepted the prodigal's repentance, and Phelps's apology was printed triumphantly in the *Times and Seasons* with gratitude that he would once again be "wielding his pen in the cause of truth." Editor Don Carlos Smith, younger brother of the Prophet, continued, "We hope Elder Phelps will continue to contribute his favors and they shall have a place in our little sheet."<sup>41</sup>

Phelps slowly made his way to Nauvoo (after a brief stay in Kirtland), arriving in August 1841, eager to prove his worth to the magnanimous prophet.<sup>42</sup> Phelps began offering material to the Church paper even before he arrived in Nauvoo, starting with a piece on prayer that displayed his familiarity with biblical scholarship by reference to Johann von Mosheim, whose *Ecclesiastical History* was a standard reference text for educated Christians.<sup>43</sup> Smith responded to Phelps's overtures by naming him Church historian (later assistant to Willard Richards, starting December 1842), and assigning him to work on revisions of the Doctrine and Covenants among other writing and editing projects. With Smith as mayor starting in 1842, Phelps became city clerk (and fire warden) in February 1843.<sup>44</sup>

### CHALLENGES TO SMITH AS TRANSLATOR

Nauvoo represented a busy and increasingly public period for Smith and his church. Requests made in Washington for reparations for the loss of life and land in Missouri, plans to build a hotel to house visiting heads of state, relationships with national newspapermen like James Arlington Bennett of the New York *Sun* and James Gordon Bennett of the New York *Herald*—all these efforts marked an ambitious scope for Mormonism of the 1840s.

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<sup>41</sup>Don Carlos Smith, "We Are Favored," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 7 (February 1, 1841): 304.

<sup>42</sup>Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps," 95–101.

<sup>43</sup>W. W. Phelps, "Pray without Ceasing," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 16 (June 15, 1841): 451. Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History, Antient and Modern*, was widely published in English translation in the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

<sup>44</sup>*History of the Church*, 5:273; Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography," 214–17; *History of the Church*, February 11, 1843, 5:270.

With greater fame came greater criticism, however. The April 1842 visit of a wandering British expatriate, the Anglican divine Henry Caswall, demonstrates the costs of Mormon notoriety. Caswall, then in Madison, Indiana, had noted the “Mormonites” in his 1839 history of American religions as “one of the grossest impostures ever palmed on the credulity of man.” Among other outrageous idiosyncracies, he noted that the Mormons “consider the study of the Hebrew language to be a religious duty.”<sup>45</sup> Situated at Kemper College outside St. Louis in 1842, Caswall decided to investigate Mormonism personally, a project which ultimately generated two more books. Beyond general Anglican concerns about the crudeness of the American frontier and Mormon religion, Caswall’s ultimate indictment of Smith and Mormonism focused on his proclaimed translation ability. By Caswall’s 1842 account, he entered Nauvoo with a six-hundred-year-old Greek psalter, reportedly a family heirloom. According to his vitriolic reminiscence, simple-minded Mormons identified the psalter as a lost book of the Bible which their prophet could translate. Caswall finally met Smith, “a coarse, plebeian person in aspect, [whose] countenance exhibits a curious mixture of the knave and the clown [and whose] dress was of coarse country manufacture.” The visiting scholar reportedly displayed the psalter to Smith, feigning ignorance of its origin, and heard in reply, “It ain’t Greek at all; except, perhaps, a few words. What ain’t Greek, is Egyptian; and what ain’t Egyptian is Greek. This book is very valuable. *It is a dictionary of Egyptian Hieroglyphics.*” By Caswall’s account, Smith pointed at the “capital letters at the commencement of each verse” and said, “Them figures is Egyptian hieroglyphics; and them which follows, is the interpretation of the hieroglyphics, written in the reformed Egyptian.” By Caswall’s now-triumphant account, the disgraced charlatan fled in embarrassment, leaving the visiting divine to announce to his Mormon audience that he had caught their famed translator in a fraud.<sup>46</sup> Such an accusation against Smith, who owned a Greek lexicon and had some limited understanding of Greek, was offensive; the significance of the story was not lost on critics, who gleefully

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<sup>45</sup>Henry Caswall, *America and the American Church* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1839), 322–23.

<sup>46</sup>Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1842), 5, 19–21, 24, 28–29, 34–27, 43;

summarized Caswall's account in 1843.<sup>47</sup> While Mormons recalled the visit and the minister's "old manuscript," they denied Caswall's account and rejected him as something like an English spy on the basis of his Anglicanism.<sup>48</sup>

Caswall was not the only critic of Smith's linguistic credentials in 1842. A Yale-trained classicist and sometime Congregational minister, Professor Jonathan Baldwin Turner of Illinois College (later a noted abolitionist and Christian proto-socialist), commented of the "valorous translator" of Mormonism, that Smith rendered the Book of Mormon "into what HE CALLS the English language."<sup>49</sup> Earlier, Alexander Campbell had complained of the Book of Mormon that "it has not one good sentence in it" beyond those plagiarized from the Bible.<sup>50</sup> An 1840 editorial in a Baptist journal complained that the language of the Book of Mormon "frequently violates every principle and rule of grammar."<sup>51</sup> More generally, Illinois historian Henry Brown complained, after meeting Smith, that "he is, upon the whole, an ordinary man; and considering his pretensions, a very ordinary man."<sup>52</sup>

As Smith aspired to be a statesman and prophetic figure, he confronted accusations of a shabby intellect and hucksterism from many sides. Simultaneously his people knew and advertised that he could unlock the secrets of ancient scripture as a translator. These threats to the credibility of Smith's seeric/prophetic status caused considerable

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emphasis his.

<sup>47</sup>"The Mormon Prophet and the Greek Psalter," *Warsaw Message* 1, no. 45 (November 15, 1843), Dale Broadbent's transcription, <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/IL/sign1843.htm> (accessed August 8, 2007), not paginated.

<sup>48</sup>[John Taylor], "Reward of Merit," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 23 (October 15, 1843): 364–65.

<sup>49</sup>Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages*, 17; emphasis his.

<sup>50</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Delusions," *Millennial Harbinger* 2, no. 2 (February 7, 1831): 95.

<sup>51</sup>*The Religious Herald* 59, no. 1 (April 9, 1840), quoted in Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 86.

<sup>52</sup>Henry Brown, *The History of Illinois, from Its First Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time* (New York: Winchester, 1844), 403, quoted in Givens, *Viper on the Hearth*, 84.



distraction. Such was the context in which Phelps began public ghostwriting for Smith.

### PHELPS AS SMITH'S GHOSTWRITER

Phelps's first obvious ghostwriting effort in Nauvoo began with a Latin-titled poem ("Vade Mecum, (Translated.) Go with Me."), published in the *Times and Seasons*.<sup>53</sup> In this poem, Phelps invited Smith to join him on a voyage into the next life, implicitly committing himself forever to the Prophet he had once betrayed. This invitation preceded Smith's poetic rejoinder, an expanded paraphrase of an 1832 revelation of Smith and Sidney Rigdon called "The Vision." This rapidly canonized vision (now D&C 76) of the afterlife included heaven (the "celestial kingdom"), hell ("outer darkness" or "perdition"), and the many gradations between.<sup>54</sup> After a wordy preamble, the poem dramatically amplifies the depiction of hell, moving beyond the 1832 revelation and emphasizing outer darkness as the fate of all apostates. Phelps, who had made public in 1835 his belief that perdition contained "millions of the children of this world," may have emphasized the horrible fate of apostates in something like a convoluted apology for his prior betrayal.<sup>55</sup> Smith, whose actual forays into poetry are limited to two pieces of memorial doggerel in his 1842 "Book of the Law of the Lord" (a section of his official diary devoted to memorials to the faithful) and a few scrawled lines in Barbara Neff's autograph book, appears to have found these conversing poems sufficiently compelling to have his own name attached to the response, as Michael Hicks has carefully demonstrated. Importantly, this poem intentionally and explicitly refuted the suggestion that Smith differed from the ancient prophets by prophesying merely in prose. Phelps's "A Vi-

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<sup>53</sup>W. W. Phelps, "From W. W. Phelps to Joseph Smith: The Prophet," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 6 (February 1, 1843): 82. A version of this poem became the LDS hymn "Come to Me, Will Ye Come." This title is actually an intelligible Latin pun, playing on the meaning of *vade mecum* and its etymology. The poem was a reworking of his prior hymn "Indian Hunter." Michael Hicks, "Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of 'The Vision,'" *Journal of Mormon History* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 70.

<sup>54</sup>Joseph Smith, "The Answer to W. W. Phelps, Esq. A Vision," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 6 (February 1, 1843): 82–85.

<sup>55</sup>W. W. Phelps, "Letter No. V," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 6 (March 1835): 82.



sion” attempted to prove that Smith possessed the literary skill of an Isaiah.<sup>56</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Smith enlisted Phelps to respond to the longstanding claim (first made by E. D. Howe in his influential 1834 *Mormonism Unveiled*) that the Mormons derived their name from the Greek term *mormo*, a root meaning “frighten” from which “bogy man” and “scare crow” are derived. The word confronted any reader of Webster’s 1828 dictionary as well as standard Greek lexicons, and Methodist critic Daniel Kidder resurrected the claim in his 1842 diatribe.<sup>57</sup> This claim served much as Caswall’s psalter: to demonstrate Smith’s over-reach as a translator, so clumsy he inadvertently let the truth out, allowing himself to be indicted by the language of the New Testament. The rebuttal etymology, attributed to Smith (who never claimed knowledge of Danish, Anglo-Saxon, or Gothic) but penned by Phelps, begins by explaining that “there was no Greek or Latin upon the plates,” and reiterating the distinctive and esoteric nature of “*Reformed Egyptian*.” In closing this explanation of Smith’s original translation project, Phelps offers unrelated translations for the word “good” in a string of languages. “We say from the Saxon, *good*; the Dane, *god*; the Goth, *goda*; the German, *gut*; the Dutch, *goed*; the Latin, *bonus*; the Greek, *kalos*; the Hebrew, *tob*; and the Egyptian, *mon*. Hence, with the addition of more, or the contraction, *mor*, we have the word MORMON; which means, literally, more good.”<sup>58</sup> This fanciful etymology brought the problem back to Phelps’s and Smith’s perceived strength, the Egyptian language, while it was meant to demonstrate their familiarity with many languages, including the Greek that Howe, Kidder, and

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<sup>56</sup>Hicks, “Poetic Paraphrase,” 63–84, esp. 72.

<sup>57</sup>Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 21; Daniel P. Kidder, *Mormonism and the Mormons: A Historical View of the Rise and Progress of the Sect Self-styled Latter-day Saints* (New York: Lane & Sandford for the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1842), 81–82.

<sup>58</sup>Joseph Smith, “To the Editor of the Times and Seasons,” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 13 (May 15, 1843): 194. The etymology was reprinted in *Millennial Star* 4, no. 8 (December 1843): 125. B. H. Roberts merely deleted the extra translations from the etymology in editing *History of the Church* (5:399–400). Phelps’s translations of “good” are essentially all correct, although the Gothic word appears to be misspelled.

Caswall claimed had betrayed them.<sup>59</sup>

There is some suggestion that Smith may have considered Phelps as an editor again in spring 1843, as the *Wasp* became the *Neighbor* under John Taylor's editorship and Taylor continued to edit the *Times and Seasons*, a post he had assumed in November 1842. Joseph Smith's cousin George A. reported in a diary entry for May 15, 1843, that the Prophet inquired about Phelps's suitability as an editor. George A. replied: "[When] it came to the cool discretion necessarily intrusted to an editor in the control of public opinion, the soothing of enmity, he was deficient, and would always make more enemies than friends. But for my part I would be willing, if I were able to pay Phelps for editing a paper, providing nobody else should have the privilege of reading it but myself. Joseph laughed heartily and said I had the thing just right."<sup>60</sup> With this ambivalent appreciation of his skills, Phelps did not take over the *Times and Seasons* or the *Nauvoo Neighbor*. Instead he continued to ghostwrite for his prophet.

That fall Phelps felt emboldened to request support for his wife in the form of a city lot, phrasing his request as a melodramatic poem on November 7, 1843.<sup>61</sup> Two days after the poetic request, Smith "called at the office with a letter from Jas A Bennett and gave instruction to have it answered." Four days later, Smith "heard Judge Phelps read letter to Jas A. Bennet and made some corrections," then took Phelps to the Mansion house and had Phelps "read a letter which I [Smith] had dictated to Gen James Arlington Bennet[t] which pleased me much." That evening Phelps again read the letter to Dr. John Bernhisel and William Clayton, and the next day Smith had it read to

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<sup>59</sup>According to Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81, the etymology represents an instance of Bakhtin's "authoritative discourse"; this suggestion misses the broader social and intellectual context of this exercise by Phelps and Smith. Stuart Gallacher, "Mormon: An Example of Folk Etymology," *Western Folklore* 8, no. 1 (January 1949): 22–24, proposes a folkloric analysis that is interpretively quite limited.

<sup>60</sup>George A. Smith, Diary, quoted in *History of the Church* 5:390.

<sup>61</sup>Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps," 107–8.

Edward Southwick, a friendly attorney from Dixon, Illinois.<sup>62</sup> In this official response, Phelps took his prior Latinisms to a whole new level, engaging the haughty Bennett in a contest of great apparent erudition.<sup>63</sup> “Were I an Egyptian, I would exclaim, Jah-oh-eh, Enish-goon-dosh, Flo-ees-Flos-is-is; [O the earth! the power of attraction, and the moon passing between her and the sun.]<sup>64</sup> A Hebrew; Hauloheem yerau<sup>65</sup>; a Greek, O Theos phos esi<sup>66</sup>; a Roman, Dominus regit me;<sup>67</sup> a German, *Gott gebe uns das licht*<sup>68</sup>; a Portugee, Senhor Jesu Christo e libordade<sup>69</sup>; a Frenchman, Dieu defend le droit.”<sup>70</sup>

The Bennett correspondence proved so popular that the *Neighbor* exhausted its run and had to reprint the document in the following number.<sup>71</sup> On November 17, Smith deeded the lot to Sally Phelps, as requested, likely indicating his satisfaction with his clerk’s work.<sup>72</sup> The ghostwriting assignments continued to proliferate. On November 21, Smith “gave WW. Phelps instructions to write an appeal to the citizens of Vermont,” a project that would ultimately be published and distributed as *General Joseph Smith’s Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys*.<sup>73</sup> Phelps completed the statement by December 3, when he read it to assembled

<sup>62</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, November 14, 1843, 426–27.

<sup>63</sup>The correspondence is printed in *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 24 (November 1, 1843): 371–75. Some of the fury of the letter may be a response to Bennett’s veiled and somewhat hostile reference to his recent baptism at the hand of Brigham Young, which he labeled little more than a “frolic.”

<sup>64</sup>This is a composite summary from entries in the Grammar and Alphabet, as discussed below. Brackets in original.

<sup>65</sup>This is an incomplete rendering of “Fear God” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

<sup>66</sup>This is an almost correct rendition of 1 John 1:5: “God is light.”

<sup>67</sup>This is correct Latin and means “The Lord rules me.”

<sup>68</sup>This is correct, archaic German and means “God give us light.”

<sup>69</sup>This is an almost correct rendition of “Lord Jesus Christ is liberty.”

<sup>70</sup>The French is essentially correct and means “God defends the right,” though not in the sense of “the righteous.”

<sup>71</sup>“For the Neighbor,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 32 (December 6, 1843): 3; and “In consequence of the numerous calls,” 1, no. 33 (December 13, 1843): 2–3.

<sup>72</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, 427.

<sup>73</sup>*General Joseph Smith’s Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys* (Nauvoo, Ill.: Woodruff and Taylor, 1843).

Church leaders, who “dedicate[d it] by prayer.”<sup>74</sup> A repeat performance the next day attracted an overflow audience and a report in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.<sup>75</sup> Phelps was apparently the only individual to read the *Appeal* in public, possibly because only he could pronounce the polyglot perorations he included:

Were I a Chaldean I would exclaim: Keed’nauh ta-meroon le-hoam elauhayauh dey-shemayauh veh aur’kau lau gnaubadoo, yabadoo ma-ar’gnau oomeen tehoat shemayauh allah. (Thus shall ye say unto them: The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.)<sup>76</sup> An Egyptian, Su-e-eh-ni; (What other persons are those?)<sup>77</sup> A Grecian, Diabolos bassileuei; (The Devil reigns.)<sup>78</sup> A Frenchman, Messieurs sans Dieu; (Gentlemen without God.)<sup>79</sup> A Turk, Ain shems; (The fountain of light.)<sup>80</sup> A German, sie sind unferstandig; (What consummate ignorance!)<sup>81</sup> A Syrian, Zaubok; (Sacrifice!)<sup>82</sup> A Spaniard, Il sabio muda

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<sup>74</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, 430.

<sup>75</sup>[John Taylor], “A Public Meeting Was Called,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 32 (December 6, 1843): 2.

<sup>76</sup>Aramaic, the Semitic language in which portions of the Masoretic text of the Old Testament are written, was termed Chaldean in the nineteenth century. Joshua Seixas, who taught Hebrew to Smith and his colleagues in 1836, had written a brief Aramaic primer that may have been used in the Hebrew school, and his transliteration scheme is apparent in this excerpt. This phrase is drawn directly from KJV Jeremiah 10:11 (an Aramaic verse) and differs only by omitting the italicized “even.”

<sup>77</sup>This is drawn from the Kirtland Egyptian Papers, Document 4, as noted below.

<sup>78</sup>Aside from a missing definite article, this is correct.

<sup>79</sup>This is correct.

<sup>80</sup>This appears to be a reference to the *ayini cem* (or *ayin-i cem*), an Alevi religious festival of union, meaning essentially “a gathering of ritual music.” The Alevi have long been grouped with other so-called “dervish” groups of Sufi mystics and ascetics, though the Alevi are distinct. The Turkish words for “fountain” and “light” are not similar to Phelps’s offering.

<sup>81</sup>This is a melodramatic translation of “They are uncomprehending.” Phelps makes the phonetic substitution of *f* for *v* and fails to capitalize *Sie* but is otherwise essentially correct.

<sup>82</sup>I have been unable to determine what Phelps intended here.

conscio, il nescio no. (A wise man reflects, a fool does not.)<sup>83</sup> A Samaritan: Saunau! (O stranger!)<sup>84</sup> An Italian: Oh tempa! oh diffidenza! (O the times! O the diffidence!)<sup>85</sup> A Hebrew: Ahtauh ail rauey. (Thou God seest me.)<sup>86</sup> A Dane: Hvad tidende! (What tidings!)<sup>87</sup> A Saxon. Hwæt riht; (What right!)<sup>88</sup> A Swede: Hvad skilia: (What skill!)<sup>89</sup> A Polander: Nav-yen-shoo bah pon na Jesu Christus; (Blessed be the name of Jesus Christ.)<sup>90</sup> A western Indian: She-mo-kah she-mo-keh teh ough-ne-gah. (The white man, O the white man, he very uncertain.)<sup>91</sup> A Roman:

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<sup>83</sup>This is malformed Spanish. *El sabio medita, el nescio no* would be a more correct phrasing. Phelps may have been trying to use *muda* ("changes") with *conscio* as a malformed version of *conciencia* ("consciousness") in the sense of "changes his mind."

<sup>84</sup>Phelps appears to have not been far off. There is a word in Samaritan Aramaic from the root for "hatred" ("one who hates") that could be transliterated (using Seixas's scheme) as *saunau*. I suspect that Phelps's memory of Seixas was the source for this mildly garbled translation.

<sup>85</sup>This is more accurately *O i tempi, o la diffidenza*, which would correspond with the English translation.

<sup>86</sup>This is Hagar's statement to the angel (Gen. 16:13). Bearing the Seixas transliteration scheme in mind, this is basically correct, and the English is the verbatim KJV translation.

<sup>87</sup>Phelps appears to be essentially if not idiomatically correct. *Hvad* does mean "what," and *tidende* is the word for "tidings" or "times." It appears in the name of several Danish newspapers.

<sup>88</sup>The two words are both Anglo-Saxon and mean something like what Phelps describes, though the word combination may not have the same meaning. *Hwæt* is an adverb or interjection meaning "why," "lo," or possibly "what." *Riht* means "right," "correct," or "erect."

<sup>89</sup>Phelps appears to have employed false cross-linguistic homophony. The Swedish word for "skill" is *skicklighet*. The word *skilja* means "to distinguish or separate."

<sup>90</sup>The transliteration is nonstandard and difficult to guess at. It does not correlate well at all with actual Polish, though perhaps Phelps meant to invoke *nazwa*, "name." "Blessedness" in Polish is based on *Błogosław*.

<sup>91</sup>According to correspondence (November 28, 1857) from the famous Belgian Jesuit Pierre de Smet (a close associate of James Bouchard, the Christianized Lenape-Delaware Watomika), this phrase is Lenape and means, "White man, you have been very unjust with us." The letter was published in *Précis Historiques* 188 (October 15, 1859), <http://users.skynet.be/>

Procul, O procul este profani! (Be off, be off ye profane!)<sup>92</sup> But as I am I will only add; when the wicked rule the people mourn.<sup>93</sup>

This appeal to the militia of Smith's natal state was intended to shame his frontier enemies by emphasizing his roots in New England, perhaps also advertising the Nauvoo Legion, the city militia, as an important military body in U.S. geopolitics. Always battling against the popular stereotype that depicted him as an unlearned manual laborer with a tenuous command of language, Smith may have allowed Phelps free rein as a demonstration of Mormon erudition. Vermonters were unimpressed; several Green Mountain Boys wrote an insulting response, which they forwarded to anti-Mormon editor Thomas Sharp in February 1844, mocking the "lofty strains" of the *Appeal*.<sup>94</sup>

Regardless of actual results, Smith continued to use Phelps as his ghostwriter in 1844. On January 26, he "instructed Bro Phelps to write a piece on the situation of the nation—referring to the President's Messages &c."<sup>95</sup> Three days later, the official diary notes that Smith "gave some instructions concerning an address to the paper for Bro Phelps to write—views on the powers and policy of the Government of United States &c."<sup>96</sup> On February 5, three days after Phelps received his second anointing, Smith "heard read my views of the Gen Government."<sup>97</sup> John Bernhisel proposed possible changes to the platform at the time, demonstrating the occasional input of other advisers to ghostwritten material, much as he had done with the

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pater.de.smet/pj-b-f/pagina177.htm (accessed December 3, 2006). Of note, the first Mormon mission to the Indians involved sustained visits with a Delaware group relocated to territory near Fort Leavenworth; and contact persisted. Lori Elaine Taylor, "Telling Stories about Mormons and Indians" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 2000). This contact (or oral tradition) may have been the source of Phelps's translation.

<sup>92</sup>Phelps is quite close here. The Latin phrase is probably best translated "Be far from me, O profane things."

<sup>93</sup>*The Voice of Truth*, 16–17.

<sup>94</sup>Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2004), 1:595–98.

<sup>95</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 442.

<sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, January 29, 1844, 444; Richard D. Poll, "Joseph Smith and the Presidency, 1844," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1968): 19, suggests Phelps as coauthor of the presidential platform.

<sup>97</sup>Scott Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, typescript, 9 vols.,

Bennett correspondence of 1843.<sup>98</sup> The *Times and Seasons* reported on a public reading of the statement on February 9: "On Friday evening last . . . a public address, of General Joseph Smith's to the citizens of the United States was read by Judge Phelps. The address is certainly an able document, big with meaning and interest, clearly pointing out the way for the temporal salvation of this union, shewing what would be our best policy, pointing out the rocks and quicksand where our political bark is in danger of being wrecked, and the way to escape it and evincing a knowledge and foresight of our political economy, worthy of the writer."<sup>99</sup>

This political platform again displayed Phelps's fascination with foreign, particularly biblical, languages. Phelps invoked the Bible, "As a Chaldean might exclaim, *Beram etai elauh beshmayauh gauhah rauzeen*: (Certainly there is a God in heaven to reveal secrets;),"<sup>100</sup> and interposed a German phrase "(A Dutchman might exclaim: *Ein erlicher name ist besser als Reichthum* [a good name is better than riches])"<sup>101</sup> and a Hebrew proverb "(*'Sedaukauh teromain goy, veh ka-sade le-u-meem khahmaut.*' Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people),"<sup>102</sup> as well as various untranslated Greek and Latin phrases.<sup>103</sup> These snippets from foreign languages must have seemed to Phelps and Smith fitting evidence of a great

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Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–85, 2:346, 348; Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 445. Phelps read the platform to a public audience three days later. Though Woodruff writes the tantalizing phrase the "views were written & were read by Wm. W Phelps," he may have been specifying merely that Phelps read written material.

<sup>98</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, February 19, 1844, 446.

<sup>99</sup>[John Taylor], "Public Meeting," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 4 (February 15, 1844): 441.

<sup>100</sup>The statement was initially published in *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 10 (May 15, 1844): 528–33. The Aramaic is from Daniel 2:28, and both transliteration and translation are almost correct. A mocking response from Francis Blair's *Globe* of Washington, D.C., is printed in *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 8 (April 15, 1844): 511. See also *The Voice of Truth*, 33.

<sup>101</sup>*The Voice of Truth*, 35. This is correct except for minor typographical errors.

<sup>102</sup>*The Voice of Truth*, 31. This is Proverbs 14:34. The Hebrew has several minor transliteration errors but is basically correct.

<sup>103</sup>For example, *Amor vincit omnia* (love conquers all).



statesman and translator.

Later that month, Phelps penned the “Pacific Innuendo,” at Smith’s request.<sup>104</sup> Though this statement stands alone in lacking the polyglot flourishes typical of other Phelps creations, the rhetorical style is otherwise consistent with his documented authorship.<sup>105</sup> “A Friendly Hint to Missouri,” published over Smith’s name in March 1844, contains a single obscure Latinism (*felo de se*, an archaic legal reference to suicide) while recommending, in Phelps’s overweening style, that Missouri repent.<sup>106</sup> Smith had specifically “instructed [Phelps] to write” the piece.<sup>107</sup> Notably, Church historians writing in the 1850s would change the critical word from “instructed” to “dictated,” as a later attempt to retake Smith’s authorship of the statement.<sup>108</sup> The same historians engaged in similar revisions for the Vermont *Appeal*<sup>109</sup> and the presidential platform, converting the ghostwriter into a passive scribe in both instances.<sup>110</sup>

At the end of February, Smith asked Phelps to create a statement that would be presented in four separate meetings of the Relief Society.<sup>111</sup> The statement, “The Voice of Innocence,” rebutted claims of polygamy arising out of *City of Nauvoo vs. Orsimus Bostwick*. (Bostwick

<sup>104</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, February 16, 21, 1844, 446–47.

<sup>105</sup>[W. W. Phelps,] “Pacific Innuendo”?, *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 4 (February 15, 1844): 442–43.

<sup>106</sup>Joseph Smith [W. W. Phelps], “A Friendly Hint to Missouri,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 6 (March 15, 1844): 473–74.

<sup>107</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, March 18, 1844, 457.

<sup>108</sup>Searle, “Early Mormon Historiography,” 228, dates the writing of this section of the official history to 1854–57. Compare *History of the Church*, 6:245 (“dictated”) to Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, March 8, 1844, 428 (Smith “had instructed [Phelps] to write” the document).

<sup>109</sup>*History of the Church*, 6:80 (“dictated”) compared to Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, November 21, 1843, 428 (“Gave WW Phelps instructions”).

<sup>110</sup>*History of the Church*, 6:189 (“dictated the heads of my pamphlet”) compared to Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, January 29, 1844, 444 (“gave some instructions concerning an address to the paper for Bro Phelps to write”).

<sup>111</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, February 28, 1844, 449:



had accused Hyrum Smith of polygamy, impugning the virtue of Nauvoo women in the process, and was being tried for slander.)<sup>112</sup> After being “unanimously” acclaimed at the Relief Society meetings and undergoing Emma Smith’s final edits, the statement was published March 20, 1843, in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* over Emma’s signature. In it Phelps continued to demonstrate his knowledge of Latin as he recommended that good citizens encountering dissolute men should “write with indelible ink, upon every such villain: *Vitare perditoris!* Beware of the wretch!”<sup>113</sup>

An angry retort to Francis Blair’s *Daily Globe* (which had mocked Smith’s presidential platform, giving much satisfaction to critics in Warsaw<sup>114</sup>), published over Smith’s name, bears the same imprint of florid rhetoric and an obscure Latinism (“*Unitas, libertas, caritas esto perpetua!*”) that attempted to translate the masthead of the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.<sup>115</sup> Finally, an irate rebuke of Henry Clay for his reluctance to commit to the Mormon side partakes of the same rhetorical style with another token Latinism (*vox reprobi, vox diaboli*), echoing a prior swat at Martin van Buren in the *Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys*.<sup>116</sup> Phelps had written the letter for Smith, who did not hear it read until Phelps had completed his work.<sup>117</sup>

John Taylor compiled the ghostwritten political pieces and published them as *The Voice of Truth* in 1845. Though they are clearly attributed to Joseph Smith throughout the pamphlet, Phelps’s name stands out as the person who registered copyright on the inside leaf, and his poem “The Cap Stone” appears on the back cover without at-

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“Phelps writing on O. F. Bostwick for women.”

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, February 26, 1844, 448.

<sup>113</sup>Emma Smith [W. W. Phelps], “The Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 47 (March 20, 1844). This is a malformed Latin warning to “avoid the destroyer.”

<sup>114</sup>Thomas Sharp, *Warsaw Signal*, April 17, 1844.

<sup>115</sup>[W. W. Phelps,] “The Globe,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 8 (April 15, 1844): 507–10. The *Neighbor* masthead was “Our Motto—The Saints’ Singularity—is Unity Liberty Charity.” The Latin is recognizable but grammatically flawed. See also *History of the Church*, 5:304–5.

<sup>116</sup>Joseph Smith [W. W. Phelps], “Gen. Smith’s Rejoinder,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 11 (June 1, 1844): 544–48. There he used *vox Matty, vox diaboli*, in reference to van Buren as the voice of the devil.

<sup>117</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, May 15, 19, 1844, 479–80.

tribution.<sup>118</sup> The material is thematically and rhetorically coherent, and it is possible that Taylor and others understood this quality of the material in deciding to highlight Phelps's writing throughout the pamphlet. Phelps may have been an important factor in having his work published, as suggested by his copyright, though the evidence is not certain. Taylor cannot have failed to know that Phelps ghostwrote the pieces but seems to have believed that Smith was best honored by ascribing the political writings to his authorship.

The King Follett Discourse, included in *The Voice of Truth* almost as an afterthought, demonstrates a dramatically different style. There Smith warned, "I do not calculate to please your ears with superfluity of words or oratory, or with much learning." The amateur Hebraist then criticized the use of "James" to translate the Greek "Jakobos" in the Authorized Version New Testament as well as retranslating the Hebrew of the opening line of Genesis.<sup>119</sup> Smith's invocation of linguistic knowledge, though milder than Phelps's, still demonstrates his conviction that ancient languages could reveal important secrets as well as his desire to reveal those secrets to his followers.

Despite evidence to the contrary, the attribution of the entire pamphlet to Smith stuck. For a prophet who had hoped, however incorrectly, to establish intellectual credibility through public statements, the period after his martyrdom was no time to reveal the man behind the curtain. Those aware of Phelps's role likely saw Smith's supervision of his scribe's efforts as the most important factor in deciding authorship. Wilford Woodruff would ignore Phelps's contributions when he revisited the pamphlet in 1848: "Those letters & writings are of much interest & show the spirit of the times & the mighty rebuke of wicked men by that great, good, & wise Prophet Joseph. I was much edified in reading it."<sup>120</sup> Many authors afterward have attributed these writings primarily to Joseph Smith, even using them occasionally as evidence of Smith's knowledge of ancient lan-

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<sup>118</sup>The authorship of the poem is made clear in W. W. Phelps, "The Cap Stone," *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 14 (August 1, 1845): 991. Smith had died by the time of publication, so he could not have secured copyright, but Phelps's copyright (as opposed to a more senior ecclesiastical authority) is nevertheless important.

<sup>119</sup>*The Voice of Truth*, 59–64.

<sup>120</sup>Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, February 7, 1848, 3:316.

guages.<sup>121</sup> Louis Zucker followed the attribution to Smith, citing “Ahtau ail rauey” as evidence of Smith’s use of Hebrew outside Mormon scripture proper.<sup>122</sup> William Hamblin, in a somewhat confusing argument with Lance Owens over Smith’s capacity to read the Kabbalistic *Zohar*, implies that Smith was the source of these Latin and Aramaic quotations while hoping to distance him from claims that he had mastered the languages.<sup>123</sup> Less charitably, Thomas Gregg, a contemporary chronicler of Mormonism, mocked Smith as the author of Phelps’s polyglot displays.<sup>124</sup>

However, other contemporaries openly recognized Phelps’s authorship. “Mr. Skiniway” (a pseudonym for an unknown disaffected Mormon) of Nauvoo spoke to the heart of the matter in a letter to the *Warsaw Signal* dated April 13, 1844. Appreciating the significance of the political correspondence, Skiniway noted that “the readers of the ‘Nauvoo Neighbor’ would suppose, from the articles which appear in that paper, that Joe was one of the greatest statesmen and scholars of the age.” He continued insultingly, “In relation to Joe’s Scholarship, we have only to say that he is one of the greatest *ignoramus*es of the age; and has not even had the advantages of a common country schooling.” To prove his low view of Smith’s intelligence, Skiniway, implicitly recognizing that the polyglot displays demonstrated erudition, noted that “all the *articles*, to which Joe[’]s name has appeared of late, as well as his *Statesman-like* ‘Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States,’ were written by the immaculate William W. Phelps, Esq., the City Attorney for the *Holy City* and Private Secretary to his holiness *Joe*.”<sup>125</sup> The angry writer then impugned Phelps’s sincerity by recalling his sworn testimony against Smith in 1838. Phelps promptly published a response in which he publicly denied

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<sup>121</sup>David Brion Davis, “The New England Origins of Mormonism,” *New England Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (June 1953): 157, incidentally but correctly invokes the Mormon etymology as evidence of Smith’s desire to be seen as an erudite divine.

<sup>122</sup>Zucker, “Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew,” 48.

<sup>123</sup>William J. Hamblin, “‘Everything Is Everything’: Was Joseph Smith Influenced by Kabbalah?” Review of “Joseph Smith and Kabbalah,” by Lance Owens, *FARMS Review of Books* 8, no. 2 (1996): 251–325.

<sup>124</sup>Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: J. B. Alden, 1890), 490–94. The section is entitled “The Prophet as a Linguist.”

<sup>125</sup>Mr. Skiniway (pseud.), “Mr. Editor, April 13, 1844,” *Warsaw Signal*,

the allegations he had made during the 1838 schism, claiming they had been made under duress, with threat of violence, and represented no more than a “hoax.” He did not, however, deny that he was the ghostwriter of the published political material.<sup>126</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, B. H. Roberts, without explicitly citing contemporary evidence, came to a similar conclusion regarding at least the Mormon etymology, the Bennett correspondence, the presidential platform, and the appeal to Vermont. Roberts, unimpressed with the polyglot Judge Phelps, recalled that he “had some smattering knowledge of languages, which he was ever fond of displaying.” Roberts justified deleting from the published *History of the Church* what he saw as Phelps material on the grounds that it represented mere “displays of pedantry” and that it left Smith “open to ridicule.”<sup>127</sup> In this regard, he followed Oliver Huntington, who in 1847 complained of Phelps that “he knew seemingly everything for a man, and all the learning was his.”<sup>128</sup> However, Roberts could not separate himself entirely from presenting the Prophet as language scholar, retaining the Hebrew proverb and Aramaic phrase in the presidential platform when he republished it in 1900.<sup>129</sup> Van Orden, in his review of Phelps as political scribe, added “Pacific Innuendo” and “Friendly Hint to Missouri” to Roberts’s list of ghostwritten documents.<sup>130</sup> Neither Roberts nor Van Orden described the extent of Phelps’s ghostwriting or analyzed what Smith and Phelps hoped to accomplish with and gained from the multilingual flourishes that most jar later audiences.

### PHELPS AS VIATOR

Phelps did not limit himself to ghostwriting for Smith. Writings

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April 24, 1844.

<sup>126</sup>His affidavit of May 20, 1844, is published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* 2, no. 3 (June 12, 1844): 255.

<sup>127</sup>*History of the Church*, 6:75, 90. See discussion in Searle, “Early Mormon Historiography,” 321.

<sup>128</sup>Oliver Huntington, *Diary*, 1:163, quoted in Bowen, “The Versatile W. W. Phelps,” 135.

<sup>129</sup>B. H. Roberts, *The Rise and Fall of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1900), 396–97.

<sup>130</sup>Bruce A. Van Orden, “William W. Phelps’s Service as Joseph Smith’s Political Clerk,” *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1–2 (Winter-Spring 1991): 88–89.

of *Viator* (the Christian “wanderer,” a not uncommon pseudonym in antebellum journalism) appear to have issued from his pen as well. In July 1843, Phelps in the guise of *Viator* wrote to the *Boston Bee*. There he made explicit reference to the *mormon* etymology (“The meaning of Mormon, the prophet Joe says, is ‘More Good,’ and no matter where it is, the Mormons will have it”), made clearly pro-Mormon claims while claiming to be unconverted, and closed with a melodramatic Latin cry, “O Gladius! O Crumena!”<sup>131</sup> The rhetorical style is typical Phelps, and he read the letter to Smith at the same time he read an earlier letter to James Arlington Bennett.<sup>132</sup>

*Viator* offered a political commentary the next month, with an introduction in the *Neighbor* from Taylor that described him as “a man of sound sense and discernment, and of no ordinary legal talents.” In defending the Nauvoo City Charter, which he called a “Magna Charta,” *Viator* argued as a legal expert for the charter’s broad scope.<sup>133</sup> In October *Viator* took on Warsaw anti-Mormons, arguing that he was “under the suspicion or jealousy of that firm of filth [the anti-Mormons],” responding dismissively with reference to a cross-linguistic pun and signing the letter *Philo Viator*, a malformed Greek-Latin abbreviation likely intended to mean “a supporter of *Viator*.”<sup>134</sup>

Further evidence of Phelps as *Viator* comes in the publication of the James Arlington Bennett correspondence in the *Times and Seasons*, introduced in words difficult to attribute to anyone but Phelps, the author of the published correspondence: “Mr. Editor, I occasionally drop into the Prophet’s office, and take a sly peep at matters and things; and in one of these moments of observation I spied a letter from Gen. Bennet, to Lieut.-Gen. Joseph Smith, and also the reply, both of which I thought a little TOO GOOD to be lost among the rubbish, so I take the liberty to forward you a copy for publication.

<sup>131</sup>“O the sword! O the purse!” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 20 (September 1, 1843): 305–6. A litany of countries visited by Mormon elders echoes Phelps’s usual collection of foreign phrases.

<sup>132</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, March 17, 1843, 334.

<sup>133</sup>*Viator* (pseud.), “Vested Rights of Nauvoo,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 18 (August 30, 1843): 2–3.

<sup>134</sup>*Philo Viator* (pseud.), “To the Editor,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 24 (October 11, 1843): 3. *Philo* is a Greek prefix meaning essentially “lover of.”

VIATOR.”<sup>135</sup>

Recognizing Phelps as *Viator* provides additional insight into Phelps’s desire to engage ancient languages. Specifically, *Viator*, “one of the Literati, not the Prophet,” published a new translation of Isaiah 18 “from the ms of Michaelis” in September 1843.<sup>136</sup> The editors acclaimed the translator as “a man of great tact and genius, and of no mean literary attainments. . . . It is evident that a great deal of obscurity is removed from this hitherto mysterious chapter, by the translation of our friend; and we would respectfully invite him to proceed with his researches, whether his interpretations are orthodox or not.”<sup>137</sup> Phelps had made similar attempts, including translations of Isaiah 2, 60, and 62 in the back pages of his 1835 diary.<sup>138</sup> (These attempts likely evolved from his involvement in the Seixas Hebrew class.) Further suggestions of Phelps’s involvement in Bible translation comes from his 1843 interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15 “from an old translation,” his unpublished translations of the Lord’s Prayer, or his 1841 essay “Despise Not Prophesyings.”<sup>139</sup> Phelps relished not just evidence of knowledge of diverse languages, but actual involvement in translating sacred texts.

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<sup>135</sup>*Viator* (pseud.), “For the Times and Seasons,” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 24 (November 1, 1843): 371.

<sup>136</sup>Johan David Michaelis, an eighteenth-century Hebraist, had published a German translation of the Old Testament with critical commentary: *Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments* (Gottingen, Germ.: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1789); it was available in the United States at the time. Whether this means *Viator*’s offering is translated from German or amended on the basis of German readings is not clear.

<sup>137</sup>*Viator* (pseud.), “*From the Boston Bee*,” and [John Taylor], “There Is Something So Very Novel,” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 20 (September 1, 1843): 306–7.

<sup>138</sup>Phelps, “Diary 1835.” Phelps also decoded the names Jesus (“First born”), Christ (“anointed”), Enoch (“consecrated”), and Joseph (“to spread out[,] to enlarge”). The translations are not paginated.

<sup>139</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, April 8, 1844, 468; W. W. Phelps, “Despise Not Prophesyings,” *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 7 (February 1, 1841): 297–99. The Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13) translation is in the 1835 diary, with a more polished but undated version of his “literal translation” accompanied by an attempt at Luke 2:3–4. “Translation,” MS 16929, LDS Church Archives.

Phelps may have employed still another pseudonym, that of "Gad the Seer," a popular figure in Old Testament apocrypha.<sup>140</sup> "Gad" forwarded an angry response to the arrest of Joseph Smith in Dixon, Illinois, on June 23, 1843, to James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald*; it was also published in the *Neighbor*. The letter sarcastically denounced the Missourians to Bennett's national readership. An important clue to Phelps's authorship is in an associated letter direct to the *Neighbor*, which requested, "I hope you will publish my communications just as I send them. As I am half lawyer half priest, and the rest of the requisites being made up of nobility, not within the scrutiny of Babylonish curiosity, it will consist of *truth*."<sup>141</sup> Phelps was, at the time, Nauvoo city attorney but had been called "Judge" at least since his appointment as Caldwell County justice in 1837; he had long understood himself to be a homegrown legal authority, even when he wasn't actually practicing law.<sup>142</sup> In addition, a May 1843 poem ("The Mobbers of Missouri") is signed "A Lawyer in Israel"—a title he claimed by revelation and emphasized during his receipt of the second anointing.<sup>143</sup> Further, Phelps's signed advertisement for the office of the city clerk is headed "*Suum cuique tribuito*, a famous reference to a principle of Roman law ("allot to each his own"), which he presents as an obscure pun (offenders

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<sup>140</sup>Gad the Seer popularly referred to an apocryphal book mentioned in the Old Testament (1 Chr. 29:29) and mentioned by various Latter-day Saints. J. Goodson, "Dear Sir," *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 1 (October 1836): 398; E. Snow and B. Winchester, "An Address to the Citizens of Salem (Mass.) and Vicinity," *Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 1 (October 1836): 398, and *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 1 (November 1, 1841): 581.

<sup>141</sup>Gad the Seer (pseud.), "To the Editor of the Neighbor," *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 13 (July 26, 1843).

<sup>142</sup>Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps," 154–55. In February 1844, he would speak "concerning his appointment as a Lawyer in Israel," Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:346.

<sup>143</sup>"A Lawyer in Israel" (pseud.), "The Mobbers of Missouri," *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 5 (May 31, 1843). The poem focuses on the 1833 destruction of Phelps's printing press and, as is characteristic of Phelps's poetry, is somewhat more polished than the standard Mormon poem of the period. This was the title Smith had given Phelps in the personal revelation of September 1835.



“sued quickly for tribute”).<sup>144</sup>

### POST-MARTYRDOM ACTIVITIES

After Smith's death, Phelps continued to demonstrate his interest in languages and translation. He assisted John Taylor in preparing the Hebrew references in the King Follett Discourse for publication in the *Times and Seasons* (the version used for the *Voice of Truth*).<sup>145</sup> In Winter Quarters Phelps appears to have taught Greek lessons, one auditor recording his novel translation of 2 Peter 1:17 in an attempt to prove that God had a Father.<sup>146</sup> In the 1860s Phelps would offer translations for a variety of the code names used in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. These late translations are inconsistent, as indicated by his varying definitions of “Shalemanasseh” and his failure to recognize “Shinehah” and “Olehah” from Smith's scriptures. Still they are imaginative, particularly “a tried broken Pillar” and “everlasting helpmet.”<sup>147</sup> Interestingly Phelps may have learned a partial lesson after the exodus to Utah. In an 1857 statement, rather than employ variations on the Latin *vox populi, vox diaboli*, he used merely the English, “THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE, THE VOICE OF THE DEVIL!”<sup>148</sup>

Phelps's ongoing interest in languages is also manifest in his

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<sup>144</sup>Mayor's Clerk [W.W. Phelps], “To the Editor of the Nauvoo Neighbor,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 1, no. 2 (May 10, 1843). The advertisement may indicate a misunderstanding of the Latin, though fanciful word play is also a possibility. Phelps writes “offenders *sued quickly for tribute* are dealt with according to law,” matching through italics the English to Latin words. If this is a pun rather than a mistranslation, it is unlikely to have made any sense to its intended audience.

<sup>145</sup>Barney, “Joseph Smith's Emendation,” 116–18.

<sup>146</sup>Maurine Carr Ward, ed., *Winter Quarters: The 1846–1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), February 21, 1847, 191: “Had them (L & S) cite their lessons in Greek. to Br Phelps' who trancelated these words' and he received from God the Father honer Glory. which afterwards read' and he recived in presence of God's Father honer and Glory.”

<sup>147</sup>David J. Whittaker, “Substituted Names in the Published Revelations of Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 111.

<sup>148</sup>“Celebration of the Twenty-Fourth of July,” *Millennial Star* 13, no. 20 (October 15, 1857): 307. John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints; or, An*



work on the Deseret Alphabet, an attempt to liberate American English from the vagaries of historical orthography.<sup>149</sup> Phelps also flaunted his knowledge of “Hebrew and other linguistic studies” to Richard Burton when the explorer passed through Salt Lake City in 1860.<sup>150</sup> During the Howard Egan trial of 1851, Phelps quoted Homer and Virgil in his client’s defense. (Egan was acquitted for murdering his wife’s non-Mormon lover.)<sup>151</sup> Phelps’s interest in Egyptian would continue through his discussions of astrology in comments for the *Deseret News* in 1851.<sup>152</sup> In 1858 he created another whimsical etymology in the spirit of *mormon*, presenting it in a short essay on comets. “The word *Comet*, allowing all deference to the witty Greek theme *Kome*, (hair) and the sedate opinion of Dr. Webster, from the Latin, *Cometa*, ‘an opaque, spherical, solid body,’ &c. was anciently doubtless understood, from old Hebrew, *Komaz etah*, to mean a ‘brilliant, passing globe.’”<sup>153</sup>

Phelps again tried his hand at deciphering “hieroglyphics or characters and Hebrew coin letters,” when an inscribed copper coin was found “on the Colorado river” in 1860. He informed the questioners that the coin was “a Nephite Senine or farthing” issued by a King Hagagadonihah in A.D. 95, and indicated that Hebrew-Egyptian hieroglyphics employed Arabic numerals, just as he had implicitly

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*Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland and Whiting, 1842), 281, had invoked *vox populi, vox Dei* in his indictment of the Saints.

<sup>149</sup>Bowen, “The Versatile W. W. Phelps,” 154–55.

<sup>150</sup>Richard Burton, *The City of the Saints*, edited by Fawn Brodie (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 279. Burton also discovered a Hebrew insignia on Phelps’s weathervane and ultimately decided that he was “a little *tête-montée* on certain subjects,” a pejorative French idiom signifying adle-brained self-importance.

<sup>151</sup>Bowen, “The Versatile W. W. Phelps,” 160. Phelps served as co-counsel with George A. Smith.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>153</sup>W. W. Phelps, “The Comet,” *Deseret News*, September 22, 1858, 127. The transliteration and verbal declension are slightly off, but *kumaz* does mean a small orb (such as used in jewelry) and *‘atah* as a verbal root refers to “passing by.” Of note, this meaning of *kumaz* is obscured by the KJV (Ex. 35:22; Num. 31:50) which uses “tablets.” Phelps’s Latin and Greek are correct, and his quotation from Webster’s is correct, at least in the 1828 edition.

claimed in one of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers documents.<sup>154</sup> The same year he made a similar claim about a relic from Ohio, providing an idiosyncratic translation of purported Hebrew.<sup>155</sup>

### PHELPS AND THE KIRTLAND EGYPTIAN PAPERS

Phelps's desire to master ancient languages appears to account for the final reference in Smith's writings to the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. In November 1843, after calling twice in a day to read the Bennett correspondence, Phelps returned a third time that evening "enquir[ing] for the Egyptian grammer."<sup>156</sup> Two days later the diary would record that Smith "suggested the idea of preparing a grammar of the Egyptian Language."<sup>157</sup> The presence in the political correspondence being discussed that week of Egyptian phrases from the extant manuscripts suggests Phelps's use of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers in drafting his displays of linguistic prowess at the same time that it suggests the project was never actually finished. The Egyptian project irrupted more generally into the letter. Advertising Smith's great power, Phelps proclaimed, "Ecce veritas! Ecce cadaveros! Behold the truth! Behold the mummies!"<sup>158</sup> Phelps's use of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers stresses his great interest in the documents, as well as his probable important contributions to authorship. Despite these intentions, neither Phelps nor Smith appears to have returned to the project before Smith's death in June 1844. For those brief months, though, the ghostwriting projects appear to have brought the Egyptian documents back to Smith's attention.

Chronologically the first use of Egyptian in Phelps's political writings demonstrates the incompleteness of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. *Mon* from the *mormon* etymology is nowhere present in extant

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<sup>154</sup>"An Old Nephite Coin," *Deseret News*, December 12, 1860, 321. The Kirtland Egyptian Papers, Document 2, is titled, "Egyptian counting."

<sup>155</sup>Journal History, October 9, 1860, quoted in Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps," 170.

<sup>156</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, November 13, 1843, 427.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., November 15, 1843, 427.

<sup>158</sup>W. W. Phelps, "For the Times and Seasons," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 24 (November 1, 1843): 374.

manuscripts.<sup>159</sup> Though it is tempting to see the etymology merely as Phelps's sarcastic response to Mormon critics, several arguments suggest the contrary. Phelps used Egyptian phrases from the Kirtland Egyptian Papers in other documents, he later proposed a similar etymology for "comet" in apparently full seriousness, and he would also approvingly cite the etymology in the defense of the Church.

In the popular 1843 response to James Arlington Bennett, Phelps presented a string of words taken in strict order from the Grammar and Alphabet. There *Jah-oh-eh* means "the earth under the government of another," while *Enish-go-on-dosh* represents a fixed star, specifically as it relates to *Jah-oh-eh*—"the power of attraction it has with the earth." *Flo-ees* refers to the moon specifically in its ability to eclipse the sun, while *Flos-is-is* refers to "the sun in its affinity with Earth and moon."<sup>160</sup> Each is a relational astronomical term to describe the interactions of three heavenly bodies. The translation offered in the Bennett letter is a paraphrase of the original definitions: "O earth! the power of attraction, and the moon passing between her and the sun." Notably, though, this use of *Enish-go-on-dosh* (without *Oliblish* or *Kae-e-vanrash*) violates its prominent use in both the Grammar and Alphabet and the published description of Facsimile 2 in the *Times and Seasons* as one of a triumvirate of "governing creation[s]," and this discordance with the published version may suggest Phelps's relative lack of involvement with the facsimile legend.<sup>161</sup>

In the *Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys*, the translation of *Sue-ehni* does not closely match the definition employed in the Grammar and Alphabet ("who, whence, &c an interrogative pronoun through its degrees"), but it is nearly a direct quote of the definition from a smaller document called "Egyptian alphabet," which was appar-

<sup>159</sup>The Egyptian papers do contain one possible candidate for "good." *Beth* is represented to mean "good to the taste, pleasing to the eye," though this may not have been preferred, given its obvious Hebrew meaning (house) that could have opened Smith and Phelps to ridicule. In the Kirtland Egyptian Papers, goodness is a subset of the broader meaning of *beth*, which does signify a residence. Grammar and Alphabet, 13.

<sup>160</sup>Grammar and Alphabet, 24, 27, 30, 33.

<sup>161</sup>"A Fac-simile from the book of Abraham, No. 2," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 720a.

ently in Smith's handwriting ("what other person is that or who").<sup>162</sup> Phelps almost certainly had the Egyptian papers in hand while drafting the political correspondence, and he appears to have preferred the Prophet's definition to his own, though it is possible that Smith recommended the modification. In short, though Smith may have overseen the effort, Phelps appears to have made use of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers fairly autonomously in 1843, bringing the documents back to Smith's attention after a long hiatus. Despite the publication of extracts from the book of Abraham in 1842, Smith does not seem to have been concerned with the Egyptian Grammar documents until Phelps came calling with his letter to James Arlington Bennett in hand.

### CONCLUSION

Careful review of the scribal activity of William Wine Phelps in the last year or so of Smith's life points to and illuminates several important aspects of Smith's creative work. First, it demonstrates his reliance on a ghostwriter for the bulk of his published political statements and correspondence, though his doctrinal statements do not necessarily show the same evidence of ghostwriting. The well-documented drafting of the Bennett correspondence during the writing of several similar political statements seems to provide a reasonable overview of the process by which Smith "wrote" several of the late documents attributed to him. Smith assigned topics, providing some guidance on the content required, then reviewed the productions of his lieutenants before final approval.

Second, that Smith allowed Phelps to continue to include what are now embarrassing multilingual asides in his official correspondence provides a glimpse of both men's desires. Language as a sign of erudition or access to biblical mysteries mattered a great deal to both of them. Not to be left behind by seminary-trained ministers or erudite scholars, they hoped to demonstrate their familiarity with ancient language and texts. Though many writers of the era adorned their phrases with snippets from foreign languages, few could compete with Phelps's excesses. That the project failed to convince critics

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<sup>162</sup>Egyptian Alphabet, B. I am aware of some controversy regarding whether the document in question is Smith's holograph. Even if the apologist's view is maintained, the handwriting is not that of Phelps, implying that he did not limit himself to the portions of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers in his own handwriting.

suggests Smith's poor judgment rather than his failure as a translator. That most of Phelps's translations are reasonably correct would probably have validated Phelps's self-perception and, by extension, his prophet's. In work that is certainly his own, such as his exegesis of Genesis 1:1, Smith demonstrated this hunger, though his philological reach was more focused than that of his creative amanuensis.<sup>163</sup> Early Latter-day Saints, in attributing Phelps's work to Smith, would likely not have offended their prophet, who continued to study German and Hebrew until shortly before his death.<sup>164</sup>

Third, and perhaps most controversially, Phelps's ghostwriting provides additional evidence regarding the provenance of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. Specifically, the documents are incomplete; they did not appear to be directly accessed during the publication of the book of Abraham in 1842; and Phelps, ceaselessly seeking new linguistic knowledge, appears to have been a major force in the creation of at least the Grammar and Alphabet. While Smith appears to have been involved in supervising the project, it seems unlikely, though not impossible, that the grammar was actively used in producing the book of Abraham. This evidence supports Nibley's initial impression of Phelps's important creative role, though without Nibley's reliance on allegations of conflict between the men: Smith needed Phelps, and Phelps needed Smith.

In this instance, peeling back the layers of tradition proves useful in finding Joseph Smith's actual voice, which, while narrower in scope than previously thought, is actually less susceptible to criticism. At the same time, Smith's great drive to assemble the apparatus required to comprehend human language—a vision shared by his assistant and amanuensis, W. W. Phelps—shows through clearly.

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<sup>163</sup>Bowen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps," 112–13 has misapprehended the situation by labeling Phelps merely a "spokesman."

<sup>164</sup>Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, March 20, 1844, 460; May 23, 1844, 481.

# HORACE EPHRAIM ROBERTS: PIONEERING POTTERY IN NAUVOO AND PROVO

*Nancy J. Andersen*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, RIPLEY WAS the genesis of Mormon frontier settlement pottery. Situated just forty-eight miles southeast of Nauvoo, Illinois, this obscure township in Brown County, settled in 1835, eventually became a booming pottery center encompassing a two-mile radius.<sup>1</sup> Upon discovering an excellent light blue shale clay there, John Ebey set up shop and fired Ripley's first stoneware in 1836.<sup>2</sup> Stoneware, a much-desired product, required clay with plasticity and excellent drying and firing prop-

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<sup>1</sup>Liz Pensoneau, "Ripley, Illinois: A Town Paved with Broken Shard," <http://www.lib.niu.edu/ipo/oi020302.html> (accessed March 2002).

<sup>2</sup>Betty I. Madden, *Arts, Crafts, and Architecture of Early Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 183–84. Prior to this time, the production of stoneware, a finer grade of pottery, had become a leading industry in New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Indiana. This type of pottery had been produced for centuries in Germany and England, but the large amounts of fine, light buff or gray clays needed for its manufacture were rare in eastern America. It was not until the late 1700s, as settlers began to move into the

erties.<sup>3</sup> Although it demanded a relatively high temperature for proper firing, it was much more durable than ordinary redware (made from brick clay), and had a density that required no glaze to be waterproof.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, numerous other manufacturers of stoneware pottery also set up shop in Ripley,<sup>5</sup> but Horace Ephraim Roberts was one of the earliest on the scene. He had become acquainted with Ebey in Winchester, Illinois, about forty-seven miles south of Ripley, where both had been involved in the pottery industry.<sup>6</sup>

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Midwest, that they discovered large amounts of these stoneware clays, first in Ohio, then in Indiana, and later in Illinois. Sources of clay near the surface were usually contaminated with other minerals; but Illinois had deposits surprisingly near the surface, shoved upward during periods of geologic turbulence. *Ibid.*, 181–82.

<sup>3</sup>Pensoneau, “Ripley, Illinois.” According to Glen C. Nelson, *Ceramics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), 5: “A good clay must have plasticity, since the success of the potter depends upon the capacity of the wet clay to maintain its shape under pressure of the hand during the forming process. The fineness of the particle is also a factor. The presence of small amounts of organic matter encourages the formation of acids which in turn break down the compounds composing the clay. It is believed that the presence of organic matter in clay is responsible for its plasticity.”

<sup>4</sup>Earliest Ripley stoneware samples indicate that a single firing process was used, because it was too expensive to fire twice. Glazes would respond to one firing, but not the bisque finishes produced by second firings. Products were utilitarian, not the fine pieces produced later. Hildegard Cannon (professional potter residing in Ripley, Illinois), email to Nancy J. Andersen, January 9, 2004, printout in my possession.

<sup>5</sup>Ripley was once the second largest producer of earthenware in the United States. In the 1850s and early 1860s, there were seventeen potteries within a two-mile radius of Ripley. In 1865, thirteen pottery shops were still in operation in Ripley, and over 1,000,000 gallons of ware shipped annually. Brown County, Board of the Schuyler Brown Historical and Genealogical Society, *A History of Brown County, Illinois* (Astoria, Ill.: Stevens Publishing, 1972), 652.

<sup>6</sup>Winchester had been founded in 1830, and the Robertses’ second child was born there in 1831. Previously, Horace’s extended family, headed by his father Ephraim Roberts Jr., a farmer but perhaps also a potter, resided in Connecticut and then Ohio. Much pottery was produced in these



### IN RIPLEY, ILLINOIS

Horace Ephraim Roberts was born April 1, 1807, and married Harriet McEvers June 5, 1828. In 1837 when he was thirty, he and Harriet moved with their children Maria Louisa, Homer, Susan, and Jane Cecilia, to "Jugtown," as Ripley came to be known. Moving with him were his parents, Ephraim Roberts Jr. and Huldah Gibbs Roberts, and some siblings who were also potters. Horace seized the opportunity to produce superior ware in Ripley. The 1840 U.S. Industrial Census of Illinois states that Brown County had two potteries which employed twelve people and had a value of \$4,000.<sup>7</sup> One of those was Horace Roberts's pottery, producing such items as canning jars, storage jars, crocks, milk bowls, churns, pitchers, jugs, flower pots, and tableware. Considering Roberts's expertise, establishing a stoneware business in Ripley likely paid dividends for his family.

Because of their somewhat isolated location, the Ripley potters were forced to market their wares in the neighboring countryside.<sup>8</sup> Generally, the potteries were smaller, family-owned operations. The potters shipped their product overland by horse and wagon, floating some crates south on the LaMoine River.<sup>9</sup> On June 7, 1840, Ephraim Roberts and one of his sons were selling pottery in southeastern Iowa, just north of Fort Madison, when they attended a Mormon meeting in a barn. Luman Andros Shurtliff, who served a short mission to Iowa in June 1840, recorded the encounter:

I preached to a respectable congregation. When I was about half through, two men came in. After meeting, one of them came to me and asked me if this was Mormonism I had been preaching. I told him I had presented a few of the first principles of what people call Mormonism. Well, said he, if this is Mormonism, I have believed Mormonism for years. I believe all I have heard you preach today and a great deal more. I had some more conversation with him in which I learned that he had been a Universalian but of late his mind had been led to

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states. John Spargo, *Early American Pottery and China* (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1926), 213–21. It's uncertain how many in the extended family were involved in the pottery industry at this time, but their collective move to Winchester suggests that pottery was an important economic activity in the extended family.

<sup>7</sup>Cannon, email to Andersen, January 9, 2004.

<sup>8</sup>Madden, *Arts, Crafts, and Architecture of Early Illinois*, 186.

<sup>9</sup>Pensoneau, "Ripley, Illinois."

search into these principles. (His name is Ephraim Roberts.) He said he had never heard a Mormon preach until now. I gave him some more instruction. We parted. I saw him no more until the 19th of the month [June 1840]. Then I was at Brother Selars [sic].

Near night, I walked out a short distance from the house and the Spirit said to me, "Go and baptize Mr. Roberts." I went into the house and inquired for Mr. Roberts. Brother Selars said he lived [probably, was staying] about three miles from there across the prairie and gave me the direction. I started immediately and on arriving, I found Mr. Roberts in the house. We conversed one hour and found he was quite intelligent. Near sunset, I told him I would walk across the prairie to Brother Selars. Without saying a word to urge baptism or that I thought of baptizing him, I saw him preparing to walk a piece with me as I bade the family good night and we stepped out into the yard. Mr. Roberts introduced his son [unidentified] to me and invited him to take a walk with us. He did so, and I took the direction to Brother Selars. We walked about half a mile.

When we came to water suitable for baptizing, Mr. Roberts, turning to me, said, "Here is water. What hinders my being baptized for the remission of my past sins." I told him if he believed what I had taught him and sincerely repented of all his sins and would forsake them and live by obeying every word taught him by those holding the holy priesthood, it was his privilege. He said he believed and wished to obey. I baptized him and confirmed him a member of the Church. The next time I saw him was in Nauvoo.<sup>10</sup>

While Ephraim's son, Horace, was engaged in the family pottery business in Ripley from 1837 to 1841, Mormons being expelled from Missouri were settling in such Illinois towns as Quincy, Lima, Burton, Columbus, Rushville, Pittsfield, Naples, Jacksonville, Winchester, and Springfield prior to the establishment of Nauvoo.<sup>11</sup> In their travels, some Mormon refugees had contact with Ripley residents. Horace's eldest daughter, Maria Louisa Roberts Newell, later recalled:

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<sup>10</sup>"Luman A. Shurtliff, His Personal History 1807-1884," typescript, 40-41, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

<sup>11</sup>S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, Richard H. Jackson, eds., *Historical Atlas of Mormonism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 60-61; Eldin Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801-1844* (Salt Lake City: Smith Secretarial Service, 1968), 50; Heber C. Kimball, quoted in Helen Mar Kimball, "Life Incidents," *Woman's Exponent* 9 (July 1, 1880): 18, 25-26.

At the time of the persecution and driving the Latter-day Saints from the state of Missouri, many of them passed by my father's house in the town of Ripley, Illinois. He gave them food and shelter, became acquainted with their principles, and the following summer [1840] he and mother and myself were baptized by Elder Eden Smith. [Harriet was baptized June 5, 1840; Horace was baptized July 16, 1840. Maria was baptized in October 1840 at age ten.] We were then set upon by mobs, our house was stoned, and the windows were broken. Our home and other property was taken from us, and we were compelled to leave it in February 1841. We went to Nauvoo, taking everything in one wagon, and on the road was father and mother, and seven children [actually five] with the wagon driver. We arrived at Nauvoo all right.<sup>12</sup>

### IN NAUVOO, ILLINOIS

Horace Roberts probably would have preferred to stay in Ripley, given its professional advantages, but he apparently had no choice. In Nauvoo, according to Maria, Horace became acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith, just two years his senior, who "advised my father to build a pottery and make crockery for the poor Saints. But with what was the question that only the Lord could answer. However, there was no such word as fail. He went to work and ere long had it in running order."<sup>13</sup>

Horace Roberts constructed another frontier pottery, utilizing the few resources he was able to bring from Ripley. Since Shurtliff notes the presence of Ephraim in Nauvoo, he must also have moved about this time. Except for Horace, there are no land records verifying that other Roberts family members owned property in Nauvoo; but they may have shared the dwellings on Horace's property. His older brother, Daniel Roberts, a physician, also lived in Nauvoo. Orville ("Clark"), Daniel's son, told his children that he could remember "standing in the doorway beside his father watching the Prophet come up the walk; the Prophet stumbled and nearly fell. Dr. Roberts jokingly said, 'Well, Joseph, I never thought I would live to see a

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<sup>12</sup>Maria Louisa Roberts Newell, "A Historical Sketch," 1, typescript, 1891, photocopy of typescript in my possession.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

Prophet fall.' Brother Joseph laughed heartily at the joke."<sup>14</sup>

Horace bought a lot and built a shop four blocks east of the temple on Mulholland Street.<sup>15</sup> No information has survived about where Horace found clay or what type of earthenware he produced in Nauvoo. But the discovery of a wealth of stoneware clays in the area had convinced many Illinois potters by the early 1840s to discontinue their redware operations.<sup>16</sup> Four basic clay types, in ten to fifteen different colors and textures, have all been found in Nauvoo's city limits.<sup>17</sup> Nauvoo's distinctive red brick clay was plentiful;<sup>18</sup> but because of Horace's experience making stoneware at Ripley, I conjecture that he would not have been content with redware if there was any possibility of obtaining stoneware clay.

Outside Nauvoo, Hancock County had only one pottery functioning in 1840, a one-man operation,<sup>19</sup> and the need for earthenware was high. Horace Roberts became Nauvoo's first full-time resident potter. (Heber C. Kimball, a potter, was already in Nauvoo; but he was occupied with building the kingdom, not making pots.) By July 1842, a notice in the local *Wasp* comments on "the foundation of a large building for a POTTERY. This is noble; we have the materials

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<sup>14</sup>Orville Clark Roberts, quoted in Daphne Hartle and Jennie Noel Weeks, "Roberts Family—Connecticut to California," 1:22, typescript, September 26, 1964, LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

<sup>15</sup>Untitled documents, Historic Nauvoo Land and Records Research Center, photocopy in my possession. The lot was in Block 27 of the Wells Addition.

<sup>16</sup>Madden, *Arts, Crafts, and Architecture of Early Illinois*, 187.

<sup>17</sup>Ida Blum, *Nauvoo: Gateway to the West* (Carthage, Ill.: Journal Printing Company, 1974), 73.

<sup>18</sup>Redware, which is somewhat porous, will hold liquid for a period of time but is not suitable for the long-term storage of liquids. It makes superior baking dishes since heat penetrates well and evenly through the red clay. Most baking dishes in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries were redware. Many kinds of clay could be used for redware, but salt-glazed stoneware required a clay which would fire to a very high temperature.

<sup>19</sup>Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 159.

and workmen. Why not produce as good crockery as England!"<sup>20</sup>

Roberts's work predated the arrival of British or Scandinavian craftsmen by at least two years. But, according to historian Glen Leonard, Roberts's "welcome output could not fully meet a pressing need for supplanting imports with locally produced goods. When the Nauvoo Agriculture and Manufacturing Association failed to complete the large pottery for which it laid the foundation during the summer of 1842, independent shops proliferated, and some potters organized for cooperative efforts."<sup>21</sup>

By 1845, the Nauvoo Potters' Association was formed, comprised of mostly British artisans. I have found no documentation on whether Horace Roberts ever joined this association or any other. Since he was already well established and accustomed to running a family-oriented business, he may have continued as an independent potter. No information has survived about his output; but during his five years in Nauvoo, he must have furnished hundreds of pottery items to Nauvoo housewives, many of which pieces would have been transported west after 1845, continuing their service on the trail and in frontier kitchens throughout the Mormon corridor.

During the Nauvoo era, Horace's family experienced typical joys and sorrows. Their fifth child, Ephraim Horace, was born in Ripley; Harriet Emily and Charles Daniel were born in Nauvoo, making a sizeable family of four daughters and three sons. Their oldest son, Homer, died in Nauvoo at age eleven. In 1841, soon after reaching Nauvoo, Horace and Harriet performed proxy baptisms in the Mississippi River for deceased family members and also received their patriarchal blessings. Horace resided in the Nauvoo Fourth Ward and was ordained a member of the Seventeenth Quorum of Seventies in Nauvoo on April 7, 1842.<sup>22</sup> With other Nauvoo men, Horace "many times . . . was detailed for guardsman and other public work for the defence of the city and people."<sup>23</sup>

Neither Horace nor Harriet left details about their time in Nauvoo; but all indications were that they participated fully and faithfully, working with their fellow Saints to establish Zion. Orson

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<sup>20</sup>"Nauvoo Ahead," *Wasp*, July 16, 1842, 54.

<sup>21</sup>Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 159.

<sup>22</sup>Documents at Historic Nauvoo Land and Records Research Center, photocopy in my possession.

<sup>23</sup>Newell, "A Historical Sketch," 1.

Spencer wrote to a friend: "There is not a more contented and cheerful people to be found. . . . You must not marvel if we do not all at once become rich, and build large houses, and enclose productive farms.—If riches were our object, we might readily gratify the most ambitious grasp. We possess every facility for being rich; but we long to behold the beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his holy Temple. . . . Our people . . . are prepared to endure all things with the assurance that their reward is great in heaven."<sup>24</sup>

Undoubtedly, the opportunity for personal interaction with the Prophet Joseph Smith was a sustaining influence on the Nauvoo Saints. Maria recalled:

I knew the Prophet and family quite well. His adopted daughter, Julia, attended the same school as I, and we were quite friendly. I well remember the days of trouble and persecution the Saints were called to endure and the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. I saw their bodies in their coffins, saw some of their wounds.

Indeed they were dark and trying times. We were among those that had to leave our homes in Nauvoo and go into strange lands among strangers and seek a new home and subsistence upon the extreme borders of civilization with nothing to record [sic] us to the charities of the frontiersmen or the savage Indian except the good spirit or influence we carried with us.<sup>25</sup>

Before leaving Nauvoo, Horace and Harriet Roberts received their endowments and were sealed in the Nauvoo Temple.<sup>26</sup> Horace's parents, Ephraim and Hilda, both age seventy-one, returned to their former home in Ripley, never to see their son again.<sup>27</sup> But Horace and Harriet followed Brigham Young westward. As the Saints departed from Nauvoo, Heber C. Kimball, also a potter, preached: "I am glad that the time of our exodus has come. I have looked forward to it for years . . . although we must leave everything, we will go to a land where white man's foot has never trod; nor a

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<sup>24</sup>Orson Spencer, quoted in Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 171–72.

<sup>25</sup>Newell, "A Historical Sketch," 1.

<sup>26</sup>Untitled documents, Historic Nauvoo Land and Records Research Center, photocopy in my possession.

<sup>27</sup>Ephraim Roberts Jr. died August 25, 1861, at the home of his son, Levi, and is buried in Ripley. Hulda had died a decade earlier in 1851 in Winchester, Scott County, Illinois, at the home of her son, Clark, a physician.

lion's whelps; nor a devil; there we can enjoy it, with no one to molest or make afraid; and we will bid all nations welcome, whether Pagans, Catholics, or Protestants. Let us become passive as clay in the hands of the potter. If we don't we will be cut from the wheel and thrown back into the mill again."<sup>28</sup>

#### AFTER NAUVOO

Horace moved his family to Garden Grove, Iowa, in early 1846. There they remained until spring 1848. At least two of Horace's brothers, Clark and Daniel, their spouses, and some children were also in Garden Grove.<sup>29</sup> (Coincidentally, so was the Luman Shurtliff family, and they ultimately immigrated with the Roberts family; Luman had baptized Ephraim Roberts.) During the stay at Garden Grove, families were engaged in planting and harvesting crops for themselves and others being driven from Nauvoo, as well as making long-term preparations for an eventual journey west.

The Garden Grove High Council minutes of April 6, 1848, state, "Sister Roberts donated \$6.75 to help Elders Nathaniel Beach and Warren F. Reynolds, who were voted in as pioneers for the camp."<sup>30</sup> Sister Roberts's first name is not recorded; she could have been the wife of Horace, Daniel, or Clark. These two elders covenanted with the participating camp members that they would emigrate in 1848 to the Salt Lake Valley, plow, put in crops, make fences, and build homes for their sponsors who would emigrate later.<sup>31</sup>

By April 26, 1848, Horace and Harriet had moved their family to Winter Quarters, a move established by the sad drowning of their four-year-old Charles Daniel in the Missouri River. The child is buried in the Winter Quarters cemetery, where his name appears on the

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<sup>28</sup>Heber C. Kimball, quoted in Emma C. Nielsen, "Development of Pioneer Pottery" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963), 43.

<sup>29</sup>Record of Members, 1847, Garden Grove Branch, Iowa, 1847-48, microfilm #001923, item 1, 29, 40, 53, LDS Family History Library.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>31</sup>Roberts family histories do not mention any benefit derived from Beach and Reynolds's efforts. Beach, age thirty-three, and Reynolds, age twenty-five, were both married and living in South Cottonwood in 1853. Reynolds lived there until his death; Beach moved to Manti in 1853 and built one of the first log homes in the fort, which is now the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Relic Hall.



monument. A month later, May 26, 1848, their ninth child, Morris Geraldus Roberts, was born in Winter Quarters, followed by Laura Celestia Roberts, born August 8, 1850, in Kanesville, Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

Maria Louisa Roberts, who was then about nineteen, became acquainted at Council Bluffs (Kanesville), Iowa, with Elliot Alfred Newell. He wished to marry her, even though she had been married and sealed to Isaac Decker on January 29, 1846, in the Nauvoo Temple at age fifteen. Decker "had deserted me and ran away with another woman not his wife, and left me to make my own living best I might," Maria reported. This abandonment leaves unanswered questions, since Decker was a prominent early Mormon, whose sister, Clarissa, was one of Brigham Young's plural wives. Maria moved back into her parents' home, since she says she came to Council Bluffs "with my father." Maria "took my father and mother" and "went and talked with Orson Hyde, one of the Twelve Apostles that was left in charge of the affairs at the Bluff. I . . . laid my case and circumstances before him, and by his council [sic] was married"—presumably after ecclesiastically dissolving the marriage. Hyde "performed the ceremony . . . on the 4th of May 1851."<sup>32</sup> Newell was twenty at the time of their marriage. His parents joined the Church in 1835 in New York, then moved to Nauvoo where Newell was baptized in 1842.

Since Horace was in Kanesville for three years and needed to support his family, he found clay and continued making pots. Kanesville was a major outfitting location for huge numbers of Mormons and non-Mormons headed west, so Horace would have had a ready market for his earthenware. The Pottawattamie High Council Tithing Record dated December 18, 1849, lists Horace Roberts as "Offering to the Poor, Crockery \$1.50; Onions .75, 1½ bushels."<sup>33</sup> In addition, the 1850 federal census for Pottawattamie County lists Horace Roberts as a potter, age forty-four, with seven members in his

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<sup>32</sup>Newell, "A Historical Sketch," 1. Decker first married Harriet Page Wheeler in 1820, fathered six children, and separated from her on March 9, 1843. He was never sealed to Harriet. She later married and was sealed to Lorenzo Dow Young, Brigham Young's brother, in the Nauvoo Temple on January 26, 1846. Isaac was endowed December 24, 1845, about a year before marrying Maria Roberts. Sealings and Adoptions of the Living, 1846–1847," film #183374, p. 579, Family History Library.

<sup>33</sup>Pottawattamie High Council Tithing Record, 1849–1852, LR 1764/

household. Pottawattamie County records for 1849 show that Horace owned a pottery (and property) at "Duck Hollow," now Harrison Street, a short distance north of the junction of Harrison and Harmony Streets in Council Bluffs.<sup>34</sup>

A large company of Saints from Garden Grove began their trek across the plains in the spring of 1851. The Roberts family joined them at Kaneshville. Laura, Horace's youngest daughter, confirms that her family reached Utah in 1851 "with the Garden Grove Company."<sup>35</sup> The roster of those coming to Utah in 1851, but not attached to a particular company, lists Horace Roberts. His brother, Daniel, and family are listed in the Garden Grove Company, and it would seem natural for Horace's family to travel with them. This group left Garden Grove May 17, 1851, and upon arriving at Kaneshville, engaged the services of Harry Walton, "an outsider, going to California with his family, to lead the company."<sup>36</sup> Counting the Kaneshville Saints who joined the Garden Grove emigrants, the company numbered 226 with 59 wagons and a threshing machine, by far the largest company to emigrate in 1851.<sup>37</sup>

The company left Kaneshville on June 23, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley September 24. Laura was only a year old, but reported in her autobiography the stories she had heard from her family about the journey:

My cousin, Clark, just a young man [age eighteen] drove one of my father's teams part of the way.<sup>38</sup> They were oxen and my father sent them back twice to help other emigrants across the plains. The first or second trip they worked a cow back as one of the team and brought

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23, p. 7, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>34</sup>Allen D. Roberts, holograph notes, private research, May 29, 2004, photocopy in my possession, used by permission. Allen is a descendant of Horace Ephraim Roberts. My thanks for his courtesy.

<sup>35</sup>Laura Celestia Roberts Bell, "Life Sketch," 1, dictated to Myrtle Bell Labrum, 1932; photocopy in my possession.

<sup>36</sup>Andrew Jenson, Church Emigration of 1851, Garden Grove Company, in "Church Emigration Book, 1850-1854," 1, Ms 78245, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

<sup>37</sup>Deseret Morning News, 1997-98 *Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Morning News, 1996), 169.

<sup>38</sup>Orville ("Clark") Roberts and his brother, Bolivar, came to Utah in 1850 with the Milo Andrus Company, a year before any of their extended

her to Utah for a milk cow. She was a real large, partly Holstein cow, with long horns and she would hook. The children had to keep out of her way. Father kept this cow for years. I remember her well.

On the plains the buffalo gave the emigrants lots of trouble. They would stampede the oxen and cause them to run away for miles. One day as we were traveling along, there was a big herd of buffalo crossing the plains and ran between the wagons. Cousin Clark stood in the front of the wagon with his gun and father said, "Now be sure and hit it in a vital spot for you know we are short of ammunition." Just then his buffalo fell—hit in a vital spot allright. There were several buffalo killed at that time, and the people supplied themselves with all the meat they could haul. I remember mother saying that they would have gone awfully short of food if it hadn't been for the buffalo they killed.<sup>39</sup>

### IN PROVO, UTAH

According to Bell's life sketch, Brigham Young requested that Horace establish a pottery in Provo, Utah, after the extended Roberts family settled there. Provo was incorporated seven months earlier in February 1851. A mile square city plat had been surveyed, beginning in the center of the public square (now Pioneer Park), at the corner of Main Street (now Fifth West) and Center Street. The plat extended six blocks west of Main Street, and five blocks north. The numbering of the blocks began in the southeast corner of the plat and ran west, then east on the next tier, and so forth, the last number, Block 121, ending in the northwest corner.<sup>40</sup>

Horace established his home, shop, and kiln in the southwest corner of Block 115, now the northeast corner of the intersection of Fourth North and Fifth West. Since Roberts's pottery was on the south half of the block, its northern boundary may have abutted the fort wall, established in the spring of 1850. Roberts's consecration deed, made in August 1855, lists four rods of fort wall.<sup>41</sup> The location of the Roberts pottery would have taken advantage of the fact that the

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family. Clark went back east in 1851 and helped the rest of the family move west. In all, he crossed the plains thirteen times.

<sup>39</sup>Bell, "Life Sketch," 1–2.

<sup>40</sup>J. Marinus Jensen, "History of Provo, Utah" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1924), 63–64.

<sup>41</sup>Deed Records, 1851–1915, Utah County Recorder, Utah County Probate Court Record, film #482986, pp. 356–57, Family History Library. "Horace Roberts [Consecration Deed] to Brigham Young and the Church

fort adobe yards would have been a convenient source of clay. The second requirement, water, was provided by a race that had been dug to bring water down Dry Creek from the Provo River, which flowed through the nearby fort, and a branch from this source ran down Main Street past Horace's pottery.<sup>42</sup>

According to Marinus Jensen's history of early Provo, "Potter Roberts appears to have been the first man to manufacture crockeryware in Provo. He began turning his wheel on the east side of West Main street."<sup>43</sup> The Roberts (or Provo) Pottery was the first private, commercial pottery established in Utah. The Deseret Pottery in Salt Lake City predated it but was a joint venture of British potters. The Roberts Pottery was also the first in the territory to use the treadle wheel and thrown-pot method of making pottery. On February 7, 1852, the *Deseret News* announced: "A pottery is in blast in Provo and a good crockery is produced by Horace Roberts. Two weeks later, it commented: "Last week, we saw a load of earthenware, in our streets, from the Provo Pottery, which appeared to us to be of a good quality, with the exception of glazing; materials for which appear to be scarce in our midst, at present. The ware will do well for a little season; and let those who can, purchase, and it will do the purchaser good, and help the manufacturer to means to get glazing and produce a better article next time. All such attempts at improvements, are worthy of support and encouragement from the whole people."<sup>44</sup>

Horace Roberts received the first certificates of ownership for

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of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jensen, "History of Provo, Utah," 104, states that there were plans in the spring of 1854 to extend the wall "on what is now Seventh West Street, from Sixth South to Fifth North and east on these streets to the present University Avenue and along the avenue to complete the enclosure." Each resident and lot owner was responsible for building a certain portion.

<sup>42</sup>Jensen, "History of Provo, Utah," 85. In the early 1850s, the Provo City Council frequently struggled with water allocation. The numerous irrigation ditches made building and maintaining roads difficult. In the early 1850s, the council notified owners of lots on the east side of Main Street (now Fifth West) "to make their water ditch on the east side of said street as they will not be allowed to take water across Main St. to irrigate their gardens." That regulation would have included Horace's pottery shop.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>44</sup>[Untitled notice], *Deseret News*, February 7, 1852, 27; "Provo Pot-

his lots in Block 115 in August and September 1852. By November 1855, he had constructed an adobe home one and a half stories high, with seven rooms, a cellar, a porch, and a good well. The potter's shop, a separate adobe building, had three rooms. On the ground floor, Roberts made and stored pottery. The upper floor was a dance hall where "the boys would pay for their tickets with home-made candies, squash, carrots, and such things," according to Laura. A kiln for baking and glazing the pottery stood nearby.<sup>45</sup>

Eventually Roberts owned numerous city lots, any of which may have contained clay deposits of various types and qualities.<sup>46</sup> Laura recollects that "the clay for the pottery was hauled up from the country some place, with wagons and ox teams, or sometimes horses."<sup>47</sup> One researcher found forty-one separately listed clay deposits in Utah County.<sup>48</sup> Another asserts that Utah County has more sedimentary clay than any county in the state, and "Potter Roberts, of Provo, found an abundance of good clay near the surface for his work in the year 1852."<sup>49</sup> On February 21, 1852, the *Deseret News* reported: "Horace Roberts has burned one kiln of ware and found it much better than he expected, in consequence of having different kinds of clay from different parts of the valley to ascertain the best quality, and he is now satisfied that he can make as good ware here as he could in any other part of the world."<sup>50</sup>

When a potter discovered a possible source of clay, he "dampened it in the palm of his hand and kneaded it into a ball to see if it had

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tery," *Deseret News*, March 20, 1852, 38.

<sup>45</sup>"By Their Works They Shall Be Known," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, compiled by Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1967-77), 18:479; Bell, "Life Sketch," 3.

<sup>46</sup>Horace Roberts was wealthy in terms of land ownership. Perhaps he received some parcels as payment for pottery. Utah County Land Deed records show twenty-two separate land transactions for Horace Roberts between August 1853 and April 1864. Information compiled by Henry Zabriskie, film #822986, pp. 57, 75, 77, 81, 105, Family History Library; notes in my possession.

<sup>47</sup>Bell, "Life Sketch," 3.

<sup>48</sup>Richard H. Ornelas, quoted in Nielsen, "Development of Pioneer Pottery," 13.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>50</sup>"Improvements in Provo," *Deseret News*, February 21, 1852, 32.

plasticity.” A “good” specimen would make a long rope that he could “wind around his finger without cracking. The clay should also be free of alkali. . . . To test the alkali content in the clay, the potter formed a small dish-shaped mound in the palm of his hand and put a few drops of vinegar in the center, watching to see if bubbles would form. Bubbles indicated the presence of alkali or free calcium carbonate.”<sup>51</sup>

Laura, who witnessed the pottery operation from age two to sixteen, supplied a vivid description of both the pottery and the methods used by her father. These recollections contain some technical inaccuracies which Kirk Henrichsen, an authority on nineteenth-century pottery, clarifies with the information in brackets.<sup>52</sup>

Father’s potter shop was a large adobe building. . . . Father had what was called a *potter’s wheel* which was run by pedals [a treadle] underneath it. The wheel was level and he would put great balls of clay on it, and shape it into crocks with his hands while turning the wheel with his feet. Then he had a big sponge which he wet and washed the loose sand and dirt off the crocks [to smooth the surface]. He then put them on a shelf to dry. After they had dried he glazed them with a lead glazing. People in those days used tea, which they bought in caddies made of lead and paper. Father would melt these caddies in a big iron pot and burn the paper out. Then he would make paste of flour [finely ground clay powder] and water and mix with the lead and glaze the crockery in that. After the soldiers came [the Utah Expedition in 1857] he bought lead bars from them. The bars were about 18 inches long and about as large as my finger and he made glazing out of them, instead of the tea caddies. After the glazing was finished the crocks were put into a kiln and burned. There were not only crocks but plates, cups and saucers, bowls, pitchers, mugs, and almost everything that anyone used in the kitchen. If he wanted a different color he would add lamp black [various minerals] to the glazing mixture. The dishes were made in molds of clay [plaster]. After they had stood a few minutes on the mold, they would shrink away and could be easily lifted off. They were then sponged and glazed just as the crocks were.

The kiln was a big room made of adobe with a door in one end. The crockery was piled in there in such a way as to let the heat go all through it. The fire was built in an arch underneath the kiln. The arch ran the full length. For fuel he used quaking asp and cottonwood which was brought from the canyons near Provo. The fire was started slow and gradually increased until the crockery was all red-hot. This took a

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<sup>51</sup>Nielsen, “Development of Pioneer Pottery,” 11.

<sup>52</sup>Kirk Henrichsen, email to Nancy Andersen, March 7, 2007, print-out in my possession.

week or ten days. Father would then close up the place where he fed the fire with sheet iron and dirt to shut out the air and then leave it for several days to cool off gradually so that the crocks would not crack. People for miles around knew when he was burning crockery because they could see the smoke coming from the top of the kiln. It was roofed over with adobes with here and there a four inch hole left for the smoke and steam to escape.<sup>53</sup>

According to Henrichsen, during the fourteen years Roberts operated his pottery business (1852–66), only Salt Lake City, Ogden, Brigham City, Hyrum, Fillmore, Parowan, and Fort Ephraim also had resident potters.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, most Utah Valley towns claimed Horace Roberts as their potter. For example, Lucille Walker writing about Pleasant Grove, notes: “The first culinary water . . . came from ditches that ran down each block. Drinking water was kept in large crockery jars in the cellars. Pleasant Grove had a first class pottery maker, Horace Roberts, so the housewives had plenty of crocks for storing water.”<sup>55</sup>

Laura commented about her father’s business practices:

The potter shop soon became known all around the country. And the poor were supplied as well as the well-to-do. Father never denied anyone what they wanted and would take anything they offered as pay—potatoes, eggs, molasses, butter, wheat or flour or anything else, and if his family couldn’t use it, he would trade it off for something they could.

He used to send young men out with wagon loads of pottery, packed with straw and grass or sawdust, to sell for him. One day one of the peddlers was out with a load of crocks. He came to an old Danish lady, who said she wanted some crocks and wanted to pay for them with cheese. But she said, “I have nothing to weigh the cheese with. O yes, I have, here’s my garter, loop it around the cheese and hook the scales in it.” And she took a long knit garter from around her knee. “No, no,” said the peddler, “I’ll take a strap off the harness,” which he did—as if a strap off the old sweaty harness was

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<sup>53</sup>Bell, “Life Sketch,” 3–5.

<sup>54</sup>Kirk Henrichsen, “Pioneer Pottery of Utah and E. C. Henrichsen’s Provo Pottery Company,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (Fall 1988): 393–95.

<sup>55</sup>Lucille H. Walker, “Pioneer Water Supply,” in *Heart Throbs of the West*, compiled by Daughters of Utah Pioneer Lesson Committee, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1939–51) 9:192.



cleaner than the old lady's garter.<sup>56</sup>

Horace operated the Roberts Pottery as a family business from 1852 to 1855, assisted by his son Ephraim and probably other helpers. Beginning in 1855, Brigham Young began an effort to revive the law of consecration and stewardship, first initiated unsuccessfully in Missouri in the 1830s.<sup>57</sup> In August 1855, Horace Roberts obediently deeded his land and possessions, valued at \$2,012.00, to the Church.<sup>58</sup> This figure indicates the profitability of Roberts's enterprise, compared to the average Utah resident at the time. It is difficult to ascertain how this consecration principle impacted his business practices, but consecration deeds were largely symbolic, and Horace continued to manufacture and sell pottery. The 1860 Territorial Agricultural Census lists Horace Roberts as a potter whose property value exceeded \$3,000: clay and raw material (\$100); 1,000 lbs. lead (\$250); 36 cords of wood (\$288); 2 male employees (\$100 / month); and crockery ware (\$2,700). At the 1860 Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Fair, Horace Roberts won third prize place for "Best Specimen of Earthenware."<sup>59</sup>

During the 1860s, Brigham Young stressed the establishment of

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<sup>56</sup>Bell, "Life Sketch," 3–5.

<sup>57</sup>Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 63–64.

<sup>58</sup>"Horace Roberts [Consecration Deed] to Brigham Young and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The list of property includes: South Half Block 115—1 128/160 acres Provo City Building lots. With Adobe house, 1½ stories high, with 7 rooms, cellar and porch, and a good well. Also a potter's shop with three rooms, and four rods of fort wall. Value \$1,400.00. Block 34, and west half of Block 58, 5, and 54/120 acres, Provo City Building lots, Value \$150.00. One cow and calf, value \$35.00. 3 swine, value \$27.00. One cooking stove, value \$50.00. Household furniture and bedding, value \$150.00. Farming and mechanics tools, value \$50.00. Dry goods, value \$100.00. Crops on hand, value \$50.00. Total, \$2012.00. Deed proved 14 Aug. 1855, recorded 20 Aug. 1855." Horace owned parcels of land on five different blocks at this time. Some perhaps served as a source of clay, others were used for farming, etc.

<sup>59</sup>Allen D. Roberts, holograph notes.

cooperatives Churchwide.<sup>60</sup> At some point, Roberts joined the Provo co-op and his shop became the “Zion’s Co-Operative Pottery,” which he operated until 1866, with the help of his son Ephraim, nephew William, and youngest brother Levi. Levi had joined the Church in about 1846, but did not come west until after his father’s death in 1861, where he became known as one of Provo’s brickmakers. Having continued the pottery business in Ripley during the intervening years, his skills were invaluable to the Roberts Pottery in Provo especially since, by 1866, Horace was so ill that he could no longer work. Perhaps the long exposure to lead in the glazing caused his demise. Lead poisoning eventually claimed his son Ephraim as well.<sup>61</sup> Horace Ephraim Roberts died on Christmas day, 1868, at age sixty-one, and was buried in the Provo Cemetery.<sup>62</sup>

William and Levi Roberts continued working the pottery with A. H. Bowen, who eventually bought the establishment.<sup>63</sup> William Roberts ran an advertisement in the *Deseret News*: “We will keep on hand constantly a complete assortment of choice pottery ware, which they may offer for sale much cheaper than ever before offered in this territory. Liberal discount to peddlers and other dealers. N.B.: First class moulder wanted. (Signed) Wm. D. Roberts, Manager.”<sup>64</sup>

William apparently changed his line of work; but Levi moved to Logan where he operated the Logan City Pottery with the help of his son, Jerome, from 1874 until about 1879, when it was destroyed by fire. Ephraim made pottery in Mona, Utah, from 1866 to 1893, then moved near Vernal, Utah, where he established the Naples Pottery,

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<sup>60</sup>Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 92.

<sup>61</sup>Nielsen, “Development of Pioneer Pottery,” 45.

<sup>62</sup>The location of Horace’s grave is unknown. Harriet’s grave number is #22038, but its location is also unknown. A daughter, Emily, died during their first winter in Provo, February 18, 1852, and was buried in an early cemetery, later moved to the Provo City Cemetery in 1854. Her name appears on the pioneer monument at the new location.

<sup>63</sup>In 1874 [sic], A. H. Bowen advertised himself in the *Provo Times* as “proprietor of the old established City Pottery.” Quoted in Jensen, “History of Provo, Utah,” 289. Bowen soon thereafter became captain of the Provo police and was killed on duty October 15, 1873. Presumably Jensen’s date is in error.

<sup>64</sup>“Zions Co-op Pottery, Provo City,” *Deseret Weekly News*, October 19, 1870, 1.

which operated from 1893 to 1898.

Horace's indispensable skill as a potter and his resulting financial success earned him respect in the community. The Roberts family belonged to the Provo City LDS Branch. Horace was a member of the 12th Quorum of Seventy in Provo, until July 1858 when Apostle George A. Smith ordained him a high priest. Horace was a member of the Utah Stake high priests quorum until his death in 1868. He briefly participated in polygamy by marrying Mary Jane Bigelow, a former plural wife of Brigham Young, on September 29, 1852. They had no children. Mary Jane divorced Horace barely a year later (December 15, 1853) and married three other men before her death in 1868 at age forty-one.<sup>65</sup>

In 1854, Horace sponsored a British convert, Jane Eliza Graves, through the Perpetual Emigration Fund.<sup>66</sup> According to family biographers, Jane was an "educated commoner" who came to live with the Roberts family and began teaching school. On December 11, 1856, she became Horace's plural wife and bore two children, Emaline Elizabeth and a son whose name is unknown, although he is mentioned in her obituary. Jane's home was directly east of the pottery on the corner of Fourth North and Fourth West in Provo.<sup>67</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Along with other essential trades, the pottery industry was vital to the success of pioneer settlements, particularly before the completion of the railroad. An accomplished potter like Horace Roberts was a valued citizen. Although no samples of his earthenware are known to exist, his willingness to contribute to the material culture of a society in both early Nauvoo and Provo is admirable. In the exercise of his daily profession under pioneering circumstances, he was also working to build Zion.

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<sup>65</sup>My thanks to Jeffery O. Johnson, "Wives of Brigham Young," ca. 1995, typescript summary of private research, photocopy in my possession, used by permission.

<sup>66</sup>Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, Financial Accounts 1849-1885, Microfilm #CR376-2. Horace could not have known Jane Eliza Graves personally at this time because he was not from England, nor had he ever been to England. The surety was dated February 7, 1854, fourteen months before Jane immigrated with her family. He repaid the PEF debt of \$66.65 plus \$12.00 interest for a total of \$78.65.

<sup>67</sup>Allen D. Roberts, typescript summary.

# THE MORMON ESPIONAGE SCARE AND ITS COVERAGE IN FINLAND, 1982–84

*Kim B. Östman*

THE DECADE OF THE 1980s was a turbulent period for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Finland, a country with approximately 5 million inhabitants and 4,000 Mormons at that time.<sup>1</sup> Unprecedented anticult activity, a highly publicized Finnish book critical of the Latter-day Saint movement, the Salamander letter episode, and public showings of *The Temple of the God Makers* all combined to make the decade something that has affected Mor-

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<sup>1</sup>Organizational units in Finland were (and still are) the Helsinki and Tampere stakes (organized 1977 and 1983, respectively) and the Finland Helsinki Mission and its districts.

monism in Finland ever since. Such general issues influenced Mormonism's public image and impacted proselytizing also in other countries during the same period.

In addition to these difficulties, however, was a Finnish issue. Partly due to Finland's geopolitical position between "the East" and "the West," and partly due to the American image of the Mormon Church and its missionaries, LDS activity has periodically aroused politically colored suspicion in some Finnish circles since the Church's permanent arrival in the 1940s. The specific issue that surfaced again in the 1980s was latent suspicion that Mormons were engaged in espionage promoting American political goals, a suspicion sometimes publicly voiced by politicians on the far left of the ideological spectrum.

This issue rose to public consciousness through the mixed influence of anti-Mormon activity, leftist political motivations, contemporary reports of Mormon political power, and rumors that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had recruited Mormons as its agents.<sup>2</sup> In 1982 and 1983, the Finnish discussion focused on the Church's microfilming of Finnish Lutheran parish registers three decades previously<sup>3</sup> and the suspicion that these registers were being used for U.S. intelligence purposes. In the spring of 1984, the focus turned to Mormon missionaries and the accusation that they were systematically gathering Finns' political opinions, sending on reports to the United States for further use in intelligence. Both issues were rehashed in mostly leftist newspapers and brought up as questions to the Finnish government by two leftist members of the national parliament.

Suspicious of Mormon-espionage connections are, of course,

<sup>2</sup>See for example Howard Means, "The Mormon Church: As Big and as Powerful as Its Temple," *Washingtonian*, March 1981; Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Mormon Spies, Hughes, and the C.I.A.* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1976).

<sup>3</sup>For the microfilming and contemporary reactions, see Maria Ollila, "Käsin kopiinnista mormonien rahoittamaan mikrofilmaukseen: Suomalaisten kirkonkirjojen jäljennystyö 1924–1955" (From Copying by Hand to Mormon-Funded Microfilming: The Replication of Finnish Church Records 1924–1955) (M.Th. thesis, University of Helsinki, 2003), and Kahlile B. Mehr, "Preserving the Source: Early Microfilming Efforts of the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1938–1950" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1985), 90–91.

not unique to Finland. Similar allegations have surfaced, for example, in Chile; and together with Mormonism's American image, may have been partially responsible for the bombings of LDS meetinghouses there in the 1980s. The American image, combined with other factors, resulted in attacks on LDS missionaries and meetinghouses in Bolivia during the same decade.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately for the Mormons, Finnish suspicions of Mormon cooperation with espionage did not result in violence or legal sanctions.

This article describes and analyzes 1982–84 events surrounding both the microfilming and missionary work issues as an important episode in Mormonism's history in Finland. My primary source of documents is holdings at the LDS Church's archive in Hämeenlinna, Finland.<sup>5</sup> Among other things, the archive contains a comprehensive collection of Finnish newspaper clippings from the time period in question. From my analysis of this media coverage, I reconstructed contemporary attitudes of Finns mainly on the political left about Mormonism, supplemented by communication with some persons directly or indirectly involved with the espionage suspicions.

I first describe the politico-historical context in which the suspicions of Mormon espionage arose in Finland and were perpetuated. The second section describes and analyzes the two parliamentary questions (1982–83 and 1984), the main focus of this article. I conclude with some brief examples of how the suspicions of Mormon espionage have continued since 1984.

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<sup>4</sup>On Chile, see Daniel C. Peterson, "P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*," *FARMS Review of Books* 7 (1995): 65–66. For suspected connections between the Mormons and the CIA in India, see R. Lanier Britsch, *From the East: The History of the Latter-day Saints in Asia, 1851–1996* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 542–43. For an analysis of Bolivian militants targeting Mormons, see David Clark Knowlton, "Mormonism and Guerrillas in Bolivia," *Journal of Mormon History* 32 (Fall 2006): 180–208.

<sup>5</sup>The archive, established in 1999, is located in the basement of the Hämeenlinna Branch meetinghouse. It contains newspaper clippings, correspondence, histories of Church units, recordings of interviews, etc. Most of the newspaper and magazine articles quoted in this article were found as photocopies at the archive, some unfortunately without page numbers, not all of which I was able to ascertain. Address queries about the archive to Pirkko Lahti {[pirkko.lahti@luukku.com](mailto:pirkko.lahti@luukku.com)}, the LDS Church's historian in Finland.

### THE POLITICO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Although the first Mormon baptisms in Finland took place in 1876, it was not until 1946 when the Church made serious efforts at a permanent presence. Finland was then dealing with the aftermath of World War II. Through the Winter War of 1939–40 and the Continuation War of 1941–44, Finland had lost territory to the Soviet Union. Unlike many other eastern European nations, however, it managed to retain its sovereignty and political system, nor was it occupied by foreign military forces.<sup>6</sup> Because of a wartime treaty of cooperation between the Finns and the Germans against the Soviet Union, Finland was eventually counted among the war's losers. An Allied Control Commission was therefore installed after a 1944 temporary peace treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

After the war, the Communist Party, suppressed since its formation in 1918 by the Finnish government, was revitalized. The Allied Control Commission, which was present until the final Paris peace treaty of 1947, was chaired by a powerful Soviet politician and staffed mostly by Soviet personnel. The influence of the Soviet Union eventually gave rise to a controversial process of "finlandization," a term describing the transformations and political changes of a small country influenced by a neighboring superpower. In Finland's case, this often meant, among other things, a reorientation of political thinking to more Soviet-friendly views. A special Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance functioned between the two countries from 1948 to 1992, and the Finnish political left, characterized by a Soviet-friendly agenda, gained ground.<sup>8</sup>

As the U.S.-Soviet Cold War set in beginning in the late 1940s, Finland occupied an important geopolitical position as a buffer zone of sorts between two superpowers. Finland had a Western style of life but was clearly also influenced by Eastern political thinking. It was

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<sup>6</sup>The exception to this generalization is Porkkala, a region on Finland's south coast. It was leased to the Soviet Union in 1944 for fifty years and returned to Finland prematurely in 1956.

<sup>7</sup>For a good overview of Finland's political history, see Osmo Jussila, Seppo Hentilä, and Jukka Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy to a Modern State: A Political History of Finland since 1809* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), esp. 217–328 for 1945 to the mid-1980s.

<sup>8</sup>Roy Allison, *Finland's Relations with the Soviet Union, 1944–84* (London: Macmillan, 1985).



**TABLE 1**  
**NEWSPAPERS CITED**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Year of info</i>
Helsingin Sanomat	Nationwide	156,430	General	1949
Hufvudstadsbladet	Nationwide	66,000	General	1950
Hämeen Yhteistyö	Greater Tampere region	6,505	SKDL	1948
Kansan Uutiset	Nationwide	54,000	SKDL / SKP	1960
Kansan Ääni	Greater Vaasa region	6,782	SKDL	1948
Salon Seudun Sanomat	Salo region	12,300	General	1948
Suomen Sosialidemokraatti	Nationwide	34,000	SDP	1948
Työkansan Sanomat	Nationwide	27,000	SKP	1948
Vaasa	Greater Vaasa region	40,100	General	1951
Vapaa Sana	Nationwide	27,600	SKDL	1948
Aamulehti	Greater Tampere region	138,876	General	1984
Etelä-Suomen Sanomat	Greater Lahti region	63,449	General	1983
Etelä-Suomi	Kotka region	18,240	General	1981
Helsingin Sanomat	Nationwide	425,589	General	1984
Hyvinkään Uutiset	Hyvinkää region	16,602	General	1984
Hämeen Yhteistyö	Greater Tampere region	13,895	SKDL	1983
Iltalehti	Nationwide	72,660	General	1984
Ilta-Sanomat	Nationwide	154,266	General	1984
Kaleva	Greater Oulu region	85,481	General	1984
Kansan Sana	Greater Kuopio region	8,843	SKDL / SKP	1979
Kansan Tahto	Greater Oulu region	18,743	SKDL / SKP	1983
Kansan Uutiset	Nationwide	45,731	SKDL / SKP	1983
Kansan Uutiset / Viikkolehti	Nationwide	45,731	SKDL / SKP	1983
Kansan Ääni	Greater Vaasa region	11,215	SKDL	1979
Karjalainen	Greater Joensuu	52,587	General	1983

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Year of info</i>
Keski-Uusimaa	Kerava region	20,431	General	1983
Kotimaa	Nationwide	79,273	Christian / Lutheran	1983
Kouvola Sanomat	Kouvola region	31,348	General	1983
Länsi-Savo	Mikkeli region	26,711	General	1984
Pohjanmaan Kansa	Greater Vaasa region	10,054	SDP	1981
Pohjolan Sanomat	Greater Kemi region	38,123	General	1985
Satakunnan Työ	Pori region	14,755	SKDL	1984
Savon Sanomat	Greater Kuopio region	81,312	General	1982
Tamperelainen	Tampere	109,493	General	1987
Tiedonantaja	Greater Helsinki region	20,000	SKP	1984
Turun Sanomat	Greater Turku region	130,885	General	1984
Uusi Suomi	Nationwide	85,533	General	1982
Vaasa	Greater Vaasa region	63,149	General	1983
Keskisuomalainen	Greater Jyväskylä region	76,083	General	1996
Seinäjokinen	Seinäjoki region			

*SDP: Social Democrat Party, SKDL: Finnish People's Democratic League, SKP: Finnish Communist Party*

### MAGAZINES CITED

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Year of info</i>
Ahjo	Nationwide	175,000	Metal workers	1985
Arbetartidningen	Nationwide		Workers	
Näköpiiri	Nationwide		Neutral revisionist	
Ydin	Nationwide		Peace organization	
Nykyposti	Nationwide		General popular	

*Note: I derived circulation data mainly from volumes 5 through 9 of Päiviö Tommila, ed., Suomen lehdistön historia, a general history of print media in Finland.*

against this backdrop that numbers of American (and some Swedish) Mormon leaders and missionaries began arriving in the latter part of the 1940s. Newspapers around the country publicized these American missionaries.<sup>9</sup> (The table lists the papers and magazines referenced in this article, their area of circulation, etc.) Considering Cold War tensions, it was perhaps inevitable that this American presence would kindle suspicions of espionage in some circles.

The Communists were among those most critical toward the LDS movement. On March 13, 1948, the Communist newspaper *Työkansan Sanomat* wrote:

Imperialistic countries spread out their dominion also under the disguise of religious missionary work. At first usually come the missionaries, then the diplomats and the merchants, and after them the police and the military forces. . . . The United States has begun conquest work under the disguise of religion even in Finland. . . . It is a far-reaching business. . . . The people of Finland do not need a religious revival arranged by strangers. Even less do we need the kind of revival where religiosity clothes itself in the kaftan of Mormonism, and of which it can never be known whether it serves more the grubby spirits of the Mormonites or the foreign capital with which this activity is upheld.<sup>10</sup>

In February 1949 the Finnish Communist Party (Suomen Kommunistinen Puolue, SKP) created a six-page memo on Mormon missionaries' activities. Among other charges, it alleged that the Mormon Church was "the warring USA's secret fifth column." The party gave the memo to the press of the Communist Finnish People's Democratic League (Suomen Kansan Demokraattinen Liitto, SKDL); thereafter, parts appeared in some leftist newspapers.<sup>11</sup> For example, *Hämeen Yhteistyö* claimed explicitly that the Mormon missionaries ("young American officers, mainly trained in the Air Force") were

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<sup>9</sup>See for example "Mormonikirkon edustajia tutustumiskäynnillä Salossa" (Representatives of the Mormon Church on Excursion in Salo), *Salon Seudun Sanomat* [Salo Region Gazette], August 14, 1947, 2.

<sup>10</sup>"Amerikka lähettää Suomeen mormooneja" (America Sends Mormons to Finland), *Työkansan Sanomat* [Working People's Gazette], March 13, 1948, 5. See also "Vapahduksen kiertokulku" (The Cycle of Redemption), *Työkansan Sanomat*, March 16, 1948, 5.

<sup>11</sup>Matti Helin, *Päästä meidät pahasta: Uskonto SKDL:n politiikassa 1944–1961* [Deliver Us from Evil: Religion in SKDL Politics 1944–61]

part of a CIA operation to build a network on both sides of the Iron Curtain, for example by allegedly trying to make contact with Finnish army officers.<sup>12</sup>

One of Finland's nationwide newspapers, *Helsingin Sanomat*, reported contradicting information from the Ministry of the Interior; none of the thirty-seven American missionaries was on active military duty, and "the authorities have not found information of the kind of secret operations of the Mormon missionaries that the mentioned articles have insinuated."<sup>13</sup> (See Figure 1.)

In 1951, the Soviet news bureau Tass distributed the claim that Mormon missionaries in Finland were spreading anti-Soviet propaganda and giving false information about the Finnish-Soviet Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. It further claimed that many missionaries, including the mission president Henry Matis, an American, had been active in U.S. intelligence for years and that the missionaries had special interests close to the Soviet border. Significantly, *Helsingin Sanomat* again denounced this Tass document as groundless.<sup>14</sup> The news was also reported in the

(Turku: University of Turku, 1996), 171–72.

<sup>12</sup>"Mormoonit toimivat Suomessa CIA:n käsivarsina" (Mormons Function as CIA Arms in Finland), *Hämeen Yhteistyö* [Häme Cooperation], April 20, 1949, 1. See also "Lähes 40 mormoonipapin nimellä kulkevaa jenkkiasiamiestä tekee hämäläperäistä työtä maassamme: Miten suhtautuu hallitus näihin 'kristittyihin'?", (Nearly 40 Yankee Representatives by the Name of Mormon Preachers Do Dubious Work in Our Country: How Does the Government Regard These "Christians"?), *Vapaa Sana* [The Free Word], April 27, 1949, 2. See also "Mormoonien salaperäinen toiminta ulotettu jo Eteläja Keski-Pohjanmaallekin" (Mysterious Mormon Activity Spread Already to Southern and Central Ostrobothnia), *Kansan Ääni* [The People's Voice], March 4, 1949, 4.

<sup>13</sup>"Mormoonisaarnaajat" (The Mormon Preachers), *Helsingin Sanomat* [The Helsinki Gazette], May 1, 1949, 5. Similar articles appeared in the Swedish-language "Ingen av Sista Dagars Heliga aktiv militär" (None of the Latter-day Saints Active Military), *Hufvudstadsbladet* [Capital City Paper], May 1, 1949, 5, and "Mormonisaarnaajat ja Vapaa Sana" (The Mormon Preachers and Vapaa Sana), *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* [Finland's Social Democrat], May 1, 1949, 11.

<sup>14</sup>"Neuvostoliitto syyttää mormonisaarnaajia" (The Soviet Union Ac-



Figure 1. The speaker on the left in clerical garb (never worn by Mormon missionaries) is saying, "I think it would be best if we 'Saints of the Last Days' take our salvation journey closer to the border." Note the pistol on the right and the camera on the lower left. *Vapaa Sana*, April 27, 1949.

United States.<sup>15</sup> Because of the international ramifications, the Finnish Ministry of the Interior had prepared a confidential memo

cuses Mormon Preachers), *Helsingin Sanomat*, June 13, 1951, 9; "Neuvostolehdet väittävät mormoonien harjoittavan vakoilua Suomessa" (Soviet Newspapers Claim Mormons Spy in Finland), *Vaasa*, June 13, 1951; "Mormoonit Suomessa" (The Mormons in Finland), *Vapaa Sana*, June 20, 1951, 5; and "Mormoonit Suomessa," *Työkansan Sanomat*, June 21, 1951, 3. In the Soviet Union, the news item was published in the government-sponsored *Izvestija* and read on Moscow radio.

<sup>15</sup>"Tass Charges Mormons Spy from Finland," *Washington Post*, June 14, 1951, 12, and "Russia Claims LDS Envoys Spy in Finland," *Salt Lake Tri-*

based on reports from Finnish security police. It concluded that Mormon missionaries did not have “political side tasks.” Matis was one of their sources.<sup>16</sup> The Mormon espionage issue subsided after these events, although, as a prelude to the 1982–83 question, *Vapaa Sana* in November 1953 reported on LDS microfilming of parish registers, implying that the registers also contained data on living Finns and explicitly claiming that this information would be used for U.S. intelligence purposes. The article further alleged: “There is probably no doubt that except for Utah’s ‘genealogical archives’ . . . the U.S. embassies of each European country also contain the name lists of that country’s people.”<sup>17</sup>

Mormon Church members and missionaries in Finland had to deal with the espionage issue to varying degrees throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Some recently converted Latter-day Saints in the 1950s were frightened about the alleged CIA connections and “were sure that we would get sent to Siberia.”<sup>18</sup> A 1960 letter to the editor in the leftist *Kansan Uutiset* wondered where financing for the Mormon Church, then quite active in Helsinki, was coming from. The writer found it “impossible to believe that the purpose of the [missionary] visits is of a purely religious nature.”<sup>19</sup> A Mormon family in northern Finland was also accused in the early 1960s of cooperating with the CIA.<sup>20</sup>

A native Finnish missionary had an encounter during the 1970s with a construction worker who had heard of the espionage rumors at his work site. His initial friendliness turned to hostility. Dissatisfied with the elders’ answers to his questions, he cited the rumors, became infuriated, and eventually tried to hit the missionary’s companion

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*bune*, June 14, 1951, 7.

<sup>16</sup>Helin, *Päästä meidät pahasta*, 173. Henry A. Matis, Letter to First Presidency, April 30, 1949, LR 2869 21, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

<sup>17</sup>“Miksi mormoonikirkko valokuvaa arkistoja?” (Why Is the Mormon Church Photographing Archives?), *Vapaa Sana*, November 29, 1953, 5.

<sup>18</sup>Helvi Palomäki, commentary on my presentation, May 29, 2005; notes in my possession.

<sup>19</sup>“Valtakirja jumalalta” (“A Commission from God”), *Kansan Uutiset* [The People’s News], September 12, 1960, 7.

<sup>20</sup>Jaana Rogers, email to the Finland Helsinki Mission Alumni List, November 14, 2005, printout in my possession.

with a metal object, only to be stopped by his wife.<sup>21</sup> A profitable field for future research would be to carefully gather similar accounts from this interim era. Clearly the political left was mainly responsible for perpetuating the rumors, but an analysis of the accounts could shed valuable light on how and why the rumors were circulated. It seems probable that the primary motivation behind these rumors was to maintain or increase anti-American feelings.

These suspicions receded but did not die during the 1970s. In the 1980s, the connection between the Mormons and American political interests again returned to the national arena. Spurring the new controversy was the apostasy of a Mormon couple, Pentti and Terttu Maljanen. They had converted in Kuopio, Finland, in 1965, but returned to Lutheranism in 1979, and became the leading figures in Finnish anticultism during the 1980s.<sup>22</sup> After their disaffiliation, they have at various times based their criticisms of the Mormons and other religious movements on both secular and sectarian concerns. Their activities generated negative press for the Mormon Church and led directly to the parliamentary questions of 1982–83 and 1984.

Although an important force underlying the 1980s' politically colored controversy was anti-Mormonism, once again it was mainly leftist newspapers and politicians that raised public concerns about Mormon-related espionage. The issues were similar to those of the late 1940s and early 1950s, but the emphases were different. It was again alleged that Mormon missionaries were spies and that they were performing tasks to further the U.S. political agenda. In contrast to the earlier suspicions, however, this time proponents of the suspicions claimed to have clear evidence. Let us now turn to the background, content, and aftermath of the 1982–83 parliamentary question.

### THE MICROFILMING ISSUE RESURRECTED

In 1978, two Finnish journalists writing about CIA activities as-

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<sup>21</sup>Markku Leppänen, *Journal*, June 30, 1973; typescript excerpt in my possession.

<sup>22</sup>The Maljanens changed their surname to Forsell in the latter half of the 1990s. For a brief overview of anticultism and countercultism in Finland, see Marjukka Tenngren, "The Development of the Anticult Movement and the Cult Controversies in Finland," in *Beyond the Mainstream: The Emergence of Religious Pluralism in Finland, Estonia, and Russia*, edited by Jeffrey Kaplan (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2000), 319–30.



serted: "The CIA is assumed to have especially strong ties to the Mormon Church. . . . The ultraconservative and racist Mormon Church annually sends thousands of young men abroad as missionaries. It is quite plausible that the CIA has used also this system as a cover for its intelligence operation."<sup>23</sup> The authors published a magazine article the same year that made the same Mormon-CIA connection.<sup>24</sup>

A Finnish Communist magazine contained allegations of Mormon-CIA connections in 1980 and 1981.<sup>25</sup> A 1980 article titled "The Heralds of Racism and Anti-Communism" contained information about alleged Mormon involvement in American politics and various scandals, claiming that microfilming parish registers provided the CIA with information on leading politicians in eastern Europe. Interestingly, the article explained that Mormon missionaries were "too young for the task," so older returned missionaries were especially recruited for intelligence purposes. In 1981, a second article reported the elevation of "ultraconservative" Ezra Taft Benson to LDS Church president and reported that "every Nordic country now has a Marmon [sic] as ambassador and the Mormons demonstrably have connections to the CIA."<sup>26</sup>

In 1982, Jukka Rislakki, coauthor of the 1978 book on the CIA, published a book on espionage in Finland, claiming that the Mormons "have long had solid ties to intelligence services." According to Rislakki, many of the young missionaries in Finland had had military officer training and the leader of international Mormon missionary work (by whom he meant Apostle Neal A. Maxwell) was a former CIA employee. Rislakki found interesting the microfilmed registers stored in the Church's genealogical archives containing information on about one billion people. He mentioned how an article in the German magazine *Der Spiegel* said that the CIA had been interested in the archive in order to find ancestors of eastern European immigrants to the United States who may have been Communist. He did not note

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<sup>23</sup>Jorma Lindfors and Jukka Rislakki, *CIA* (Helsinki: LOVE-kirjat, 1978), 77.

<sup>24</sup>"Kymmeniä suomalaisia CIA:n palkkalistoilla" (Tens of Finns on CIA Payrolls), *Näköpiiri* [Horizon], 1, no. 10 (November 1978): 26–27.

<sup>25</sup>"Rasismin ja antikommunismien sanansaattajat" (The Heralds of Racism and Anti-Communism), *Ydin* [Core], 14, no. 3 (1980): 7–11.

<sup>26</sup>"Lehtimiehiä vuokrataan urkkijoiksi" (Journalists Hired as Snoopers), *Ydin* 15, no. 7 (1981): 22–28.

the apparent incongruence of covert Mormon-government connections and the fact that the Mormons apparently openly acknowledged that the CIA had researched in its publicly available archive.<sup>27</sup>

On March 5, 1982, Pentti Maljanen was a featured speaker at a countercult gathering organized by the Puijo Lutheran parish in Kuopio. Also on the program was another countercult activist, Matti Liljeqvist. They reportedly accused two Finnish Latter-day Saints present who tried to correct information that they felt was false of being CIA agents.<sup>28</sup> Later in March, the Maljanens were excommunicated. On April 3, the leftist newspaper *Kansan Sana* in Kuopio published an article reporting the excommunications and various Mormon practices and atrocities to which the Maljanens felt they had been subjected during their membership in the LDS Church.<sup>29</sup>

Most notable in connection to that article, however, was the partial photograph of a letter sent to the newspaper by a local LDS official denying any Mormon ties to the CIA. The article's writer sarcastically commented: "According to the Mormons themselves, god's [sic] tribunal is in Salt Lake City. But strangely, some persons that are nasty toward the Mormons have hinted that the tribunal is the central intelligence agency of a certain unnamed country."

Beyond these publications, however, perhaps the most significant source of accusations about the Mormon Church's political aspirations was Pentti Maljanen's countercult book *Pääsin irti mormoneista* [*I Got Away from the Mormons*] published in the spring of 1982. In addition to criticism of LDS theology and practices, the book also claimed that the Mormons were set on eventual world domination. (In a sense, this is true, but only during and through the millennial reign of

<sup>27</sup>Jukka Rislakki, *Erittäin salainen: Vakoilu Suomessa* (Helsinki: LOVE-kirjat, 1982), 433–34. See also "Größte Pflicht" (The Greatest Responsibility), *Der Spiegel* [The Mirror], 35, no. 38 (September 14, 1981): 196–98. It is not clear how the LDS Church spokespersons alluded to in the article knew that the CIA had used the archives—whether the CIA had used the resources like any other researcher or through some special agreement with the LDS Church.

<sup>28</sup>Ritva Muhonen, "Mormonit ja kirkonmies" (Mormons and the Church Man), *Länsi-Savo* [Western Savo], June 6, 1985, 2; for a notice on the gathering, see *Savon Sanomat* [The Savo Gazette], March 5, 1982, 9.

<sup>29</sup>"Mormonismin syövereissä" (In the Depths of Mormonism), *Kansan Sana* [The People's Word], April 3, 1982, 1, 8–9.

Christ.) Once the Soviet Union fell, Maljanen claimed, Finnish Mormons would enter the country and create a new political order based on the Mormon “law of consecration.” For the moment, the task was being anticipated by young Finnish Mormons studying political science and the Russian language.<sup>30</sup>

The Mormon-Soviet allegations were reported widely in many newspaper reviews of Maljanen’s book around Finland.<sup>31</sup> One of the most significant was a review in the mainstream *Ilta-Sanomat*, a nationwide tabloid with a large readership, headlined “When the Lord Gets the Governments Overthrown: Finland’s Mormons Are Going to Rule the Soviet Union.” The reviewer uncritically repeated Maljanen’s charges that Mormons planned to rule the Soviet area and commented on the strong American elements in the Mormon Church, and somewhat misleadingly referred to Maljanen as “a former Finnish Mormon leader.” (Maljanen had served as a counselor in the Kuopio Branch presidency.)

On the positive side, the reviewer also noted that Maljanen found the Mormon work ethic exemplary and denied allegations of sexual misconduct in Mormon temple ceremonies. A few days later, the newspaper published a response by Toivo Hiltunen, counselor in the Finland Helsinki Mission presidency, who denied that the Church was involved in politics and dismissed Maljanen’s tales as the result of his “vivid imagination.”<sup>32</sup>

Another important review appeared in the Communist-spon-

<sup>30</sup>Pentti Maljanen, *Pääsin irti mormoneista* [I Got Away from the Mormons] (Helsinki: SLEY-kirjat, 1982), 109–10. Maljanen later said that he didn’t agree with the title, assigned by the publisher, as no Mormon had harmed him and the Mormons were “really nice people.” Finland Helsinki Mission History, Pietarsaari District, November 15, 1982. This mission history is housed in the mission office in Helsinki.

<sup>31</sup>For a fairly complete list of the reviews, see my *Käsittelyssä ”Pääsin irti mormoneista”* [Discussing “I Got Away from the Mormons”] (Tampere: Privately published, 2004), 13.

<sup>32</sup>“Kunhan Herra on kaatanut hallitukset: Suomen mormonit aikovat hallita Neuvostoliittoa” (When the Lord Gets the Governments Overthrown: Finland’s Mormons Are Going to Rule the Soviet Union), *Ilta-Sanomat* [Evening Gazette], November 4, 1982, 22; “Mormonit vastaavat Maljaselle: Poliitiikkaan emme sekaannu” (The Mormons Answer Maljanen: We Don’t Interfere in Politics), *Ilta-Sanomat*, November 9, 1982, 5.

sored *Kansan Uutiset*, titled “The Mormons Are Seeking World Domination.” It noted that some U.S. ambassadors in Scandinavian countries were Mormons and claimed that, according to Maljanen, their presence “is no coincidence.” The reviewer summarized: “At every moment the Mormons are ready to move over the Finnish border to the Soviet Union and assume power there. This would happen after communism in the Soviet Union has been destroyed by fire.”<sup>33</sup>

Hiltunen again sent in a rebuttal denying Mormonism’s involvement in politics. He lamented that Maljanen’s claims had been seen as credible by journalists across the spectrum from both “spiritual” to “party” newspapers. Pentti Maljanen wrote his own letter to the editor claiming that “Mormon missionary work in the 1970s was in any case rampant and aimed at world domination. Why, the international missionary work of the LDS Church in the years 70–76 was led by Dr. Neal Maxwell—a CIA operative.”<sup>34</sup> Apostle Maxwell, in fact, had had a desk job, not a field assignment, at the CIA (a “government intelligence department,” as his biographer calls it), for a little more than a year in the early 1950s. During 1970–76 he was not head of international Mormon missionary work, but rather the Church’s Commissioner of Education.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, because of this inaccurate identification, Maxwell would reappear in many later Finnish allegations of LDS connections to the CIA.

The most extensive coverage of the suspicions of Mormon espionage generated by Maljanen’s book appeared in the Communist newspaper *Kansan Ääni*: a one-page book review and a three-page feature on Mormonism, both of which included material from an interview with the Maljanens. A front-page introduction to both articles was headlined “A Foreign Power Makes Files on Finns.” It included a few general comments and a large photograph of the English-lan-

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<sup>33</sup>“Paljastuskirja ’pyhien kirkosta’: Mormonit havittelevat maailman valtiutta” (An Exposé of the “Saints’ Church”: Mormons Are Seeking World Domination), *Kansan Uutiset / Viikkolehti* [People’s News/Weekly Paper], November 14, 1982, 16.

<sup>34</sup>“Mitä mormonit havittelevat?” (What Are the Mormons Seeking?), *Kansan Uutiset / Viikkolehti*, December 19, 1982, 47; “Pentti Maljanen vastaa mormoneille” (Pentti Maljanen Answers the Mormons), *Kansan Uutiset / Viikkolehti*, January 2, 1983, 22.

<sup>35</sup>Bruce C. Hafen, *A Disciple’s Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 205, 343–99.

guage book *The Mormon Mirage*, with a Mormon chapel in the background. It quoted Pentti Maljanen's claim that the Mormons would eventually take over the Soviet Union's territory after the government fell and that Mormon youth had been given "the patriarch's order to study Russian." Young Finnish Latter-day Saints had even "visited the Soviet Union and taken a look at their future mandates."<sup>36</sup>

The book review continued by stating that Mormon missionaries included in their reports information on the political opinions of Finns with whom they spoke. Maljanen asserted that these reports were "undoubtedly" forwarded to the United States where the CIA had access to them. The Maljanens had turned over to civil authorities two folders containing such reports. However, it is quite significant that Pentti Maljanen's book (published in the spring of 1982) does not contain allegations of Mormon espionage or reporting of Finns' political opinions to U.S. intelligence. Although Maljanen said, for example in 1987, that Mormon missionary reports on Finns' political opinions had gone through his hands,<sup>37</sup> I was unable to find his mention of any such reports before his son completed an LDS mission in Finland in March 1982. According to Pekka Roto, Public Communications director for the Tampere stake in 1984, Maljanen admitted that he had copied his son's missionary papers; the two samples he presented as evidence of espionage came in fact from those papers.<sup>38</sup>

According to the *Kansan Ääni* reporter, the Maljanen couple had lost this oldest son to the Mormons. "The boy now has new parents," they were quoted as saying, showing a letter in English; but unfortunately, the report does not further describe the contents. In reality it was probably the standard letter of greeting from the

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<sup>36</sup>"Vieras valta kortistoi suomalaisia" (A Foreign Power Makes Files on Finns), "Suomalaisten henkilötiedot vieraan vallan käytössä" (Finns' Personal Data Used by Foreign Power), and "Mormonien salat julki kirjassa" (Mormon Secrets Publicized in Book), *Kansan Ääni*, October 23, 1982, pages 1, 12–14, and 15, respectively.

<sup>37</sup>"Mormoneista eronnut Pentti Maljanen: 'Kaikkeaa sitä ihminen uskoo'" (Pentti Maljanen, Disaffiliated From the Mormons: "A Person Can Believe All Sorts of Things"), *Tamperealainen* [The Tamperean], April 5, 1987, 5.

<sup>38</sup>Pekka Roto, Letter to Arja Miettinen, June 5, 1984, LDS Church Archives, Hämeenlinna, Finland; photocopy in my possession.

mission president and wife expressing concern and a commitment to the young missionary's well-being during his mission. The reporter's highly derogatory coverage also included information on the LDS microfilming of Finnish parish registers, the genealogical archives in Utah, the alleged Mormon-CIA association, and claims about Mormon influence on the U.S. economy. Alleging that Walt Disney Productions was in Mormon hands, the reporter even speculated on the extent to which Donald Duck cartoons contained Mormon symbolism. "The research target could, for example, be beverages and foods forbidden to Mormons, forbidden animals and other specialties of Mormon theology." While this coverage may seem extreme, it must be kept in mind that the paper's subscriber base was small and these musings probably had little influence.

However, Finnish LDS officials found it desirable to set the record straight. First, Markku Sillanpää, Pietarsaari District president, sent the reporter a letter of corrections, mentioning his own political background and the political diversity of Mormons in Finland. For instance, a current city councilor represented the leftist SKDL. Sillanpää also telephoned the reporter and found him well-informed about anti-Mormon publications and alleged Mormon connections to U.S. politics. Sillanpää later received a telephone call from Pentti Maljanen, who announced he would use Sillanpää's letter for his own purposes and had forwarded it to LDS Church leaders (location unspecified) who, he predicted, would reject Sillanpää's views. Maljanen cursed and "said he would do all he could against the church," Sillanpää recalled.<sup>39</sup>

Second, Toivo Hiltunen, a counselor in the Finland Helsinki Mission presidency, also wrote a letter to *Kansan Ääni* denying allegations of Mormon espionage in Finland. The letter, which was published, also provided some background on Pentti Maljanen to explain his hostile tone. The newspaper replied by listing the sources to the earlier article. It also denied that it had alleged that Mormon missionaries were spies. It stated, however, that all the personal information

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<sup>39</sup>Markku Sillanpää, Letter to Tapio Parkkari, October 31, 1982, photocopy in my possession; Finland Helsinki Mission History, Pietarsaari District, November 3, 6, and 15, 1982; Markku Sillanpää, email to Kim Östman, November 17, 2005, printout in my possession.

that “the sect” gathered was “freely available also to the CIA.”<sup>40</sup>

The leftist *Satakunnan Työ* also published a review of Maljanen’s book, titled “The Mormon Church = Business, Religion, or U.S. Intelligence Service.” It included information from Maljanen’s book on both Mormon theology and alleged political aspirations. The reviewer mentioned that Rislakki had written that the Mormon Church is an espionage organization. “I’ve heard information according to which parish registers have been microfilmed from the 1500s to the present,” the reviewer asserted, adding that the microfilms are stored in computer databases at Mormon headquarters.<sup>41</sup> In reality the microfilmed registers stop at around the year 1860.

This issue of microfilming parish registers rose to the national level just before Christmas 1982. *Helsingin Sanomat*, Finland’s leading newspaper, summarized and quoted from an article in a Swedish Social Democrat newspaper, claiming that liberal Swedish politician Olle Westberg had acquired his wealth from the Mormons. Westberg’s father had established the microfilming company Rekolid and had “sold” about 15 million Swedish souls and a couple million Finnish souls to American Mormons. The *Helsingin Sanomat* reporter acknowledged that the Swedish paper probably had something of a political agenda since a leadership debate was then going on in Sweden’s liberal party.<sup>42</sup>

Finnish leftist circles, however, promptly picked up the microfilming issue. *Kansan Uutiset* a week later printed an article on Mormon proxy baptism headlined “Unbelievable Foreign Trade Authorized by the Episcopal Conference: Souls from Finland to U.S. Mormons.” The article acknowledged the importance of microfilming to save the information in aging parish registers and praised its helpfulness to family researchers. However, it quotes an inspector of the Lutheran Church’s Population Register as saying that the church probably would not give permission to microfilm at present as it had in the 1940s and 1950s. The article summarized what it saw as the main

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<sup>40</sup>“Mormonien salatko julki?” (Mormon Secrets Made Public?), *Kansan Ääni*, November 27, 1982, 20.

<sup>41</sup>“Mormonikirkko = bisnestä, uskontoa tai USA:n tiedustelupalvelua,” (The Mormon Church = Business, Religion, or U.S. Intelligence Service), *Satakunnan Työ* [Satakunta Work], December 18, 1982, 7.

<sup>42</sup>“Ruotsalaispoliitikko myi mormoneille sieluja” (Swedish Politician Sold Souls to Mormons), *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 10, 1982, 31.



point: "Trafficking in dead souls is ethically questionable. It may be that there has also been trade with living people's personal information, and nobody can guarantee that the Mormons use their register only for religious purposes."<sup>43</sup>

It is not possible to determine how these publications and events affected either public opinion in general or even that of the political left. Since the overwhelming majority of the information appeared in leftist newspapers and since individuals with leftist views were often preconditioned to view the United States negatively, probably they were most strongly affected. However, mainstream newspapers like *Ilta-Sanomat* and *Helsingin Sanomat* with national circulation also communicated information to a larger Finnish population that may, to some extent, have increased suspicions about the Mormons. Nevertheless, it is important not to exaggerate the effect of the publicity since it was limited mainly to leftist papers and their specialized subscribers.

To summarize, the main issues raised by 1982 were: (1) The Mormons have a political agenda and are planning to take over the Soviet Union when it is destroyed, (2) The Mormons are collecting information on Finns' political opinions and transmitting it to their USA headquarters; and (3) The Mormons have microfilmed Finnish parish registers (allegedly, to the present), and the use made of the information is unknown. LDS spokesmen acknowledged that the CIA has had access to Mormon microfilm data.

### FIRST PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

On December 21, 1982, parliament member Lauha Männistö of the SKDL Party presented the government with a written question titled "On Monitoring the Activities of Religious Societies." Although Männistö named a few non-Mormon Finnish organizations allegedly involved in anti-Communist activities, most of her question dealt with Mormon activities in Finland. She does not identify her sources of information beyond "the international discussion," "the Finnish press," "information presented in public," and "persons that have belonged to Finnish Mormon congregations." Whether or to what extent these

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<sup>43</sup>"Uskomatonta ulkomaankauppaa piispainkokouksen luvalla: Sieluja Suomesta USA:n mormoneille" (Unbelievable Foreign Trade Authorized by the Episcopal Conference: Souls from Finland to U.S. Mormons), *Kansan Uutiset* / *Viikkolehti*, December 19, 1982, 2-3.

sources are interrelated or interdependent is not clear.

Männistö wondered whether missionary work alone required the presence of nearly 200 Mormon missionaries in Finland. Without citing figures, she highlighted the large amount of funds of Finnish origin that reportedly flowed to Mormon headquarters in the United States and commented about invasions of privacy resulting from Mormon microfilming and subsequent genealogical research. She also took issue with the alleged reporting of Finns' political opinions to LDS headquarters in the United States. She asked what steps the government was going to take to prevent invasions of privacy and to safeguard Finland's national interest in the fund-raising, exports, and the societal-political activities of religious movements.<sup>44</sup>

At least two leftist newspapers reported on Männistö's parliamentary question.<sup>45</sup> In addition, the general newspaper *Uusi Suomi* mentioned the microfilming controversy in its Christmas Eve edition but did not reference Männistö's Parliamentary question. A few days later, the same paper published a very balanced article by non-Mormon Kauko Pirinen, professor of church history, who had been personally involved with the microfilming as a young employee of the National Archives. Pirinen described the extent of the microfilming and settled rumors of "soul-selling" by explaining that, instead of money, the Mormons gave a copy of all microfilms to Finland's National Archives.<sup>46</sup> Less temperate was an article in the Lutheran *Kotimaa*, repeating the well-worn accusation that Finnish Mormons were plan-

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<sup>44</sup>Lauha Männistö, "Uskonnollisten yhteisöjen toiminnan valvomisesta" (On Monitoring the Activities of Religious Societies), written parliamentary question 467/1982, December 21, 1982, in *Vuoden 1982 valtiopäivät, Asiakirjat* (Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus, 1983), vol. 3, not paginated. About a hundred Mormon missionaries were then working in Finland.

<sup>45</sup>See for example "Eduskunta odottaa selvitystä: Mitä voi tehdä uskonnon nimissä?" (Parliament Waiting for Explanation: What Can Be Done in the Name of Religion?), *Kansan Utiset*, December 23, 1982, 10; "Männistö kysyy mormonien varankeräyksestä ja kansalaissuojasta," (Männistö Asks about Mormon Fund-Raising and Civil Protection), *Kansan Sana* [The People's Word], December 28, 1982, 3. An especially inflammatory report also mentioning Männistö's query is the Swedish-language "Mormonerna registrerar oss för CIA:s räkning!" (The Mormons Register Us for the CIA!), *Arbetartidningen* [The Worker Newspaper], January 1983.

<sup>46</sup>"Myikö kirkko nimiä mormoneille?" (Did the Church Sell Names to

ning to take over the Soviet Union. However, *Kotimaa* reprinted Pirinen's article from *Uusi Suomi* a few days later, thus cancelling out some of the earlier negativity.<sup>47</sup>

Finnish Mormons formulated an official response to the Parliamentary question in early January 1983. Written mainly by Kari Haikkola, an attorney and president of the Helsinki Stake, with the assistance of E. Arnold Isaacson, Finland Helsinki Mission president, it was prepared in case government officials requested information from the Church. It is not clear whether the government used Haikkola's response, because a governmental officer told him that the LDS Church would not be singled out; rather, the government would present a general answer.<sup>48</sup>

Mikko Jokela, Minister of the Interior, submitted the government's answer on January 28, 1983. He did not name any of the organizations listed in Männistö's question, simply replying that the microfilming of parish registers had been performed in accordance with law and that no restrictions could be placed on information gathered from public sources in terms of religious use. He added that the government had received no information showing misuse of these data nor, in the government's opinion, did Mormon fund-raising and other activities merit intervention. However, Jokela mentioned that the other organizations named in the question had been monitored by the authorities because of questionable actions with regards to foreign policy.<sup>49</sup> This last statement would also be erroneously applied to the LDS Church in some press reports.

the Mormons?), *Uusi Suomi* [New Finland], December 24, 1982, 11; "Kirkko ei saanut arkistotiedoista rahaa vaan mikrofilmit" (The Church Received Microfilms, Not Money, for the Archival Information), *Uusi Suomi*, December 29, 1982, 14.

<sup>47</sup>"Keskus Yhdysvalloissa-jäseniä yli 80 maassa" (Center in the United States—Members in Over 80 Countries), *Kotimaa* [Homeland], January 7, 1983, 5; "Kirkonkirjojen arkistovalokuvaus," (The Archive Photographing of Church Registers), *Kotimaa*, January 11, 1983, 6. The first article was accompanied by an interview with Jukka Lehtimäki, bishop of Helsinki First Ward.

<sup>48</sup>Finland Helsinki Mission History, January 5, 10, and 11, 1983.

<sup>49</sup>Mikko Jokela, written answer to written parliamentary question 467/1982, January 28, 1983, in *Vuoden 1982 valtiopäivät, Asiakirjat* (Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus, 1983), vol. 3, not paginated.

The government's response generated more interest in the press than the original question. The largely similar reports in newspapers across the political spectrum frequently mentioned the questionable foreign policy practices of some of the religious organizations, although most included a statement like this: "In contrast, Jokela sees nothing to complain about in the activity of the Mormon Church."<sup>50</sup> Interestingly enough, though, the Communist-sponsored *Kansan Uutiset* obscured the difference among the religious groups, leaving the impression that the government had been monitoring the Mormon Church as well. The Lutheran-sponsored *Kotimaa* exonerated the Latter-day Saints on the microfilming issue but did not quote Jokela's full exoneration,<sup>51</sup> thus perpetuating the impression that the LDS Church was politically suspect.

While the publicity surrounding the Mormon espionage scare died down, the matter was still unresolved in some people's minds. Were the Latter-day Saints and their missionaries really innocent of

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<sup>50</sup>See the following articles, all published February 4, 1983: "Sisäministeri Jokela: Uskonnollisia yhdyskuntia tarkkaillaan" (Minister of the Interior Jokela: Religious Communities Monitored), *Vaasa*, 13; "Mormoneilla puhtaat paperit" (Mormons Have Clean Papers), *Etelä-Suomi* [Southern Finland], 16; "Jokela näkee arveluttavia muotoja eräissä uskonnoliikkeissä" (Jokela Sees Dubious Forms in Some Faith Movements), *Kaleva*, 5; "Arveluttavia uskonnollisia" (Dubious Religious), *Keski-Uusimaa* [Central Uusimaa], 2; "Mikko Jokela: Uskonnollisten yhdyskuntien toiminnassa arveluttavia piirteitä" (Mikko Jokela: Dubious Features in Activities of Religious Communities), *Karjalainen* [The Karelian], 4; "Uskonnollisten yhdyskuntien toimintaa seurataan" (Activity of Religious Communities Monitored), *Savon Sanomat*, 19; "Mikko Jokela: Uskonnollista toimintaa seurataan" (Mikko Jokela: Religious Activity Monitored), *Kouvolan Sanomat* [The Kouvola Gazette], 2; see also "Jokela: Uskonnollisten yhdyskuntien toimintaa seurataan" (Jokela: Activity of Religious Communities Monitored), *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat* [The Southern Finland Gazette], February 6, 1983, 13.

<sup>51</sup>"Sisäministeri: Uskonnon varjolla ulkopoliittikkaa" (Minister of the Interior: Foreign Politics in the Guise of Religion), *Kansan Uutiset*, February 5, 1983, 12; "Sisäministeri Jokela: Ulkopoliittisesti arveluttavia piirteitä uskonnollisissa yhdistyksissä" (Minister of the Interior Jokela: Foreign-Politically Dubious Features in Religious Associations), *Kotimaa*, February 10, 1983, 3.

subversive political activities? Although proving a negative is impossible, Jokela's answer seemed to express the government's confidence beyond a reasonable doubt that LDS activities were within the bounds set for religious organizations.

Microfilming and related issues dropped from view, except for a few press items. In mid-April 1983, Elder Neal A. Maxwell came to Finland to organize the Tampere Finland Stake, the country's second. The Communist *Kansan Uutiset* announced "CIA-Maxwell Performing Mormon Duties in Tampere," reviving the association between the Church and the CIA ties and ambiguously describing Maxwell as known "for his close ties to the USA Central Intelligence Agency." It somewhat erroneously recounted Maxwell's career as a CIA operative in 1952–54, then as "Mormon education chief," and finally as head of international Mormon missionary work in 1970–76.<sup>52</sup>

The nationwide *Ilta-Sanomat* also reported on Maxwell's visit, likewise identifying him as current head of international Mormon missionary work. The newspaper commented on the intensity of Mormon activity in Finland, speculatively attributing it to the country's proximity to the Soviet Union, and giving an exaggerated estimate of 200–300 missionaries in Finland. The article also commented on the microfilming program and mentioned that the current U.S. ambassador to Finland, Keith F. Nyborg, was a Latter-day Saint. Perhaps most curiously, the paper commented that "life in Tampere has felt strangely safe. Tampere became an autonomous Mormon area, a stake. This kind of place is in a special position, because it isn't threatened by war or plague."<sup>53</sup>

Then, about a year later, through a mixture of anti-Mormon sentiment and leftist political concerns, the suspicions of Mormon espionage again surfaced during the spring and early summer of 1984.

### RENEWED CLAIMS OF ESPIONAGE

Ilkka Aura, a former missionary to Finland and a Finnish citizen, was called in for an interview with Supo (Suojelupoliisi), the Finnish

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<sup>52</sup>"CIA-Maxwell mormonien tehtävissä Tampereella" (CIA-Maxwell Performing Mormon Duties in Tampere), *Kansan Uutiset*, April 16, 1983, 3. As noted above, in 1970–76 Maxwell was Church Commissioner of Education, not head of missionary work.

<sup>53</sup>"Tampereesta tuli maan turvallisim" (Tampere Became the Country's Safest), *Ilta-Sanomat*, April 19, 1983, 4.

security police, in early April 1984. Due to an official inquiry on Mormon missionary activities, Supo was required to investigate the matter further. The interviewing officer, a deeply religious Laestadian,<sup>54</sup> felt that the inquiry was motivated by anti-American sentiment and designed to bolster the leftist party's image among its supporters. During the brief interview, Aura explained that Mormon missionaries wrote down general information on the people they visited so that they and later missionaries would have a record relevant to their proselytizing activities. (Aura gives no further detail.) This information satisfied the officer and provided an answer sufficient for the official inquiry.<sup>55</sup>

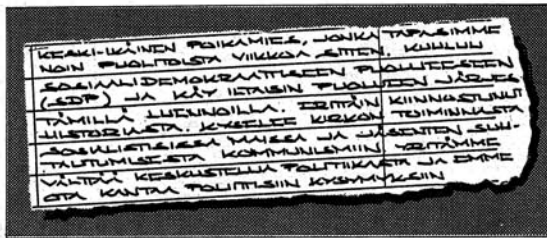
Then in mid-May, the Communist *Kansan Ääni* reported that it had "received new evidence of the political prying that Mormons carry on in Finland" and claimed, citing "researchers close to the Evangelical Lutheran Church," that LDS activity had lately been focused close to the Soviet border. It repeated the story about the "prophesied" collapse of the Soviet Union followed by a takeover by Mormon Finns who were preparing for that event. The article also repeated the claims that the Mormons kept meticulous records, including information on Finns' political opinions, which they sent to their mission president. The article suspiciously queried how Mormons could deny any underground activities while enabling its members to order Church materials in eastern European languages. Moreover, and perhaps most seriously, it claimed that the genealogical archive in Utah "probably contains the information that the missionaries have collected in Finland of *living* Finns' political opinions."

Accompanying the article was a partly blacked-out photograph

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<sup>54</sup>Laestadianism is an intra-church revival movement of Lutheranism that was established in the 1800s.

<sup>55</sup>Ilkka Aura, email to Kim Östman, December 1, 2005, printout in my possession. According to Aura, some American missionaries were interviewed in the spring of 1984 for a magazine article on how American youth become accustomed to missionary work and Finnish culture. When the article appeared, none of the interview material had been used, but rather the title mentioned name-gathering for the CIA and the article itself discussed how missionaries make notes on people they meet. It also mentioned the planned visit of Apostle Neal A. Maxwell, a former CIA employee, to Finland. Unfortunately I have been unable to locate this article.



Mormonilähenneillä raportoivat kaiken, minkä he saavat tietoonsa. Erityisesti heitä kiinnostaa poliittinen kanta.

## Mormonit listaavat myös poliittisia mielipiteitä

Suomessa lähetystyötä tekevät mormonikirkon edustajat listaavat myös suomalaisten poliittisia kantoja. Kaikki tiedot, mitä mormonit saavat kokeistaan eri, raportoidaan eteenpäin. Raportit ovat usein hyvin amerikkalaisia.

Helsingin Sanomat on tutustu-

nut yhdysvaltalaisen mormonikirkon eli MAP-kirkon käyttämiin raportointilomakkeisiin. Ne paljastavat, miten yleispuhuttu kiinnostunut kirkko on Suomenkin kansalaisista.

Yhdysvalloissa on kirjoitettu paljon MAP-kirkon välityksellä

sihteistä tiedustelupalveluihin. Kentällä liikkuvia saarnaajia ei ole leimattu, mutta heidän johtajansa yhteistyöstä viranomaisien kanssa on esitetty tietoja.

Mormonit ovat kuvanneet myös suomalaisia kirkonkirjoja. Suomeksi on yksi 20 kansakunnasta, joista

kerätään tietoja maailman suurimpaan arkistoon. Kallioholassa Utahissa on mikrofilmilla tietoja yli miljoonasta ihmisestä. Kirkko myöntää, että tiedustelupalvelut ovat arkistosta kiinnostuneita.

Sivu 15.

*The inside-front-page headline says: “Mormons Also List Political Opinions.” Helsingin Sanomat, May 30, 1984. Reproduced by permission.*

of what is most probably an Investigator Record.<sup>56</sup> The handwritten text described “a middle-aged bachelor, whom we met about one and one-half weeks ago. Belongs to the Social Democratic Party [Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, SDP] and attends the party’s lectures in the evenings. Very interested in history. Asks about the church’s activities in socialistic countries and about the members’ attitudes toward communism. We are trying to avoid discussing politics and do not speak out on political questions.”<sup>57</sup>

The writer was Pentti and Terttu Maljanen’s son, who had served a Mormon mission in Finland (1980–82). As noted above, Maljanen in 1987 admitted copying his son’s mission papers, an act he justified to his son by calling them, according to Pekka Roto, “reporting and evidence of treasonous activity. That is why it [the correspon-

<sup>56</sup>“Investigator Records” are forms used by LDS missionaries that record which teachings have been presented to the individual and how he or she responded.

<sup>57</sup>“Suomalaisten mielipiteet kiinnostavat mormoneja” (Finns’ Opinions of Interest to Mormons), *Kansan Ääni*, May 12, 1984, 1, 10–11. See also the text in Figure 2.



dence] is publishable.”<sup>58</sup>

On May 30, the country’s largest newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, published an article by Jukka Rislakki, author or coauthor of the two earlier espionage books, including a partial reproduction of the missionary form. (See Figure 2.) Rislakki claimed: All information “that the Mormons can get on their objects is reported forward. The reporters are most often Americans. . . . The reporting forms reveal how abundantly interested the church is in Finland’s citizens too.” An unnamed interviewee claimed that the recorded political opinions were mostly leftist.

In addition to the middle-aged bachelor, Rislakki quoted another report: “The bookshelf contained works of Lenin. The family is apparently oriented to the left wing.” The article also mentioned Maxwell’s recent visit, his CIA employment, the Utah genealogical archive, and the CIA’s interest in its content. While not explicitly claiming that Mormon reports went to U.S. government agencies, Rislakki asserted that “information concerning cooperation between [missionary] leaders and the government has been presented” in the United States. Other items in the feature article included information on the LDS communication satellite system, the Church’s wealth, the cash flow from Finland to the United States, the Church’s teaching about end times, and its emphasis on having food stored for one month.<sup>59</sup>

Seppo Forsman, president of Helsinki Stake, responded in a letter to the editor a week later. Denying all connections between the LDS Church and politics, Forsman wrote: “We are not interested in the political opinions of church members or other people.” Tithing was a freewill offering. Furthermore, more Mormon money flowed from the United States to Finland than from Finland to the United States because Finnish membership couldn’t finance the many Mormon chapels. In a short response published in the same issue, Rislakki

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<sup>58</sup>Roto, Letter to Miettinen, June 5, 1984.

<sup>59</sup>“Mormonit listaavat myös poliittisia mielipiteitä” (Mormons Also List Political Opinions), and “Mormonien raportti suomalaisperheestä: Hyllässä Leninin teoksia, koti ehkä vasemmistolainen” (Mormon Report on Finnish Family: Bookshelf Contains Works of Lenin, Home Perhaps Leftist), *Helsingin Sanomat*, May 30, 1984, 3, 15. Omitting the fact that Apostle Boyd K. Packer, senior to Maxwell, accompanied him to Finland can also be considered indicative of the writer’s intentions.

emphasized, correctly, that he had not explicitly claimed a connection between the LDS Church and the U.S. political agenda. Still, Forsman's public clarifications can certainly be seen as necessary in light of Rislakki's original speculations. Rislakki concluded somewhat sarcastically: "You really can abstain from paying [tithing]—if you don't want to be saved and receive eternal life."<sup>60</sup>

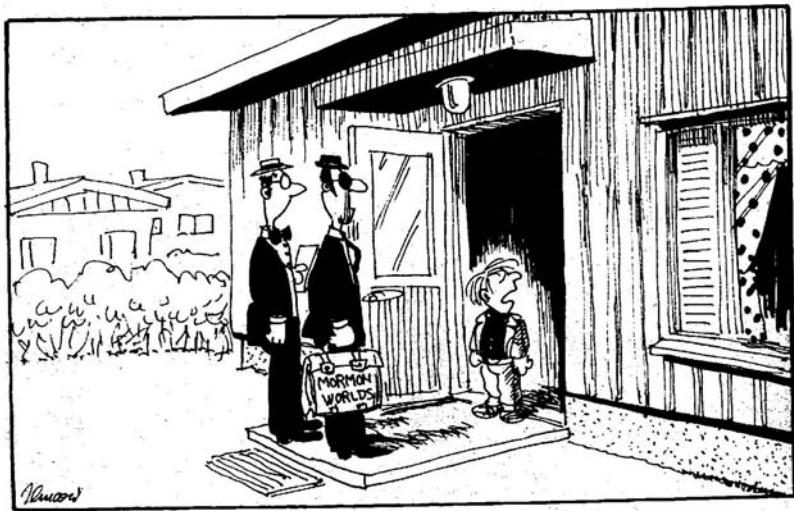
On June 2, *Iltalehti*, a tabloid with nationwide circulation, announced that Ensio Laine of the SDKL Party had initiated a second parliamentary question, quoting Laine as saying: "I am under the impression that all kinds of blacklists are forbidden by Finnish law. If Mormon reports go all the way to the U.S., then they could be used even in Finland by, for example, employers." The paper speculated that Matti Luttinen, Minister of the Interior, would answer the question and quoted him as saying that if the proselytizing Latter-day Saints "seem to be asking questions unnecessary in view of their religious activity . . . they should be asked to leave." The article also gave the impression that the Mormons collected information on living persons that ended up in Utah archives, where it attracted the interest of U.S. intelligence services.<sup>61</sup>

The *Helsingin Sanomat* article gave the Mormon matter national attention, both in leftist circles and among mainstream papers. For example *Aamulehti*, a Tampere-based newspaper with large circulation, printed an article on May 31 essentially summarizing Rislakki's article.<sup>62</sup> On June 3, Pekka Roto, Tampere Stake public communica-

<sup>60</sup>"Mormonikirkko on epäpoliittinen" (The Mormon Church Is Unpolitical), *Helsingin Sanomat*, June 5, 1984, 13. Rislakki's untitled brief response immediately follows Forsman's letter.

<sup>61</sup>"Kansanedustajakin huolestui: Ovatko mormonien suomalaisraportit työnantajien käytössä?," (Even a Member of Parliament Got Worried: Are Mormon Reports on Finns Used by Employers?), *Iltalehti* [The Evening Paper], June 2, 1984, 9. Leftist newspapers seemed divided on whether missionary reports were forwarded to the United States. See "Laine kysyy mormonien toiminnasta" (Laine Asks Concerning Mormon Activities), *Tiedonantaja* [The Informant], June 1, 1984, 3, for an affirmative view, and "MAP-kirkosta kysely" (Query on the LDS Church), *Kansan Ääni*, June 2, 1984, 1, 4, for a negative view.

<sup>62</sup>"Mormonit luettelivat suomalaisia" (Mormons Catalog Finns), *Aamulehti* [The Morning Paper], May 31, 1984, 21.



*The son is shouting back into the house: "Dad, there are a couple of Latter-day Saints here!" The father calls back, "Say that there's still a latter-day ordinary Communist here. Tell them to put me down in their report as a hopeless case!"* Kansan Uutiset, June 6, 1984. Reproduced by permission.

tions director, published a response in *Aamulehti*.<sup>63</sup>

Two days earlier on June 1, Pentti Maljanen telephoned Roto saying that if the *Helsingin Sanomat* published the church's planned rebuttal (by Forsman), Maljanen "would be forced to publicly reveal the most sensitive material" on Mormonism. It is not clear what he meant, since his later statements did not disclose any new information that seemed especially "sensitive." Maljanen also said that he regretted delivering the material to leftist newspapers, because "they had mixed in politics."<sup>64</sup> This statement seems somewhat disingenuous, since it is difficult to see how such allegations would fail to create political repercussions. In addition, Maljanen himself had already explicitly and publicly claimed that the Latter-day Saints had ulterior political motives. Regardless of this telephone call, the Church's rebuttal

<sup>63</sup>"MAP-kirkko ei vakoile" (The LDS Church Doesn't Spy), *Aamulehti*, June 3, 1984, 9.

<sup>64</sup>Roto, Letter to Miettinen, June 5, 1984.

was published on June 5 as noted above.

Also on June 5, *Kansan Uutiset*, a leftist paper, not only asserted flatly that the missionary reports went to the Utah archive but that this “new feature” of exporting the “political opinions to the archives of the central church in the USA interests the [Finnish] secret police.” It saw these reports as a change from the earlier Mormon agenda of just “microfilming parish registers.”<sup>65</sup> On June 7, another leftist newspaper, *Kansan Ääni*, added fuel to the flames by claiming that the Mormons “are interested in the military background of the Finns that want to serve as missionaries.” The article reproduced an application to be filled out by a prospective missionary’s ecclesiastical leader, listed some of the military-related questions on the form,<sup>66</sup> and wondered why there was “any connection between military matters and missionary work.” The writer added that Latter-day Saints serving at NATO bases in Keflavik, Iceland, and Moss, Norway, had organized congregations.<sup>67</sup>

Some more reflective and less sensational articles in small leftist papers also brought up the suspected espionage. In one, “Two-Faced Missionary Work,” the writer told of an initial positive experience with LDS missionaries, then outlined the current controversy over Mormon reporting. Her initial good feelings had clearly changed to a sense of betrayal: “Against that background of prying it feels nasty that one has let into one’s home persons that are snooping for information to report forward. Although you don’t have anything to hide, the knowledge of snooping is unpleasant. I think we were deceptively abused and duped. . . . I would no longer welcome Mormons.”<sup>68</sup>

Another writer commented that he found it difficult to turn anyone from his door, including Mormons. Although he found the dis-

<sup>65</sup>“Mormonien tietorekisterit kiinnostavat Supoa” (Mormon Data Registers of Interest to Supo), *Kansan Uutiset*, June 5, 1984, 3. A cartoon was published the next day (p. 109).

<sup>66</sup>Typical questions were: “Does candidate have any military obligations within the next three years?,” “Is candidate a member of any military organization?,” and “Period served on active duty.” The questions are most likely intended for clarifying whether or how military service obligations, which are sometimes compulsory, might interfere with the intended missionary assignment.

<sup>68</sup>“Kaksinaamaista lähetystyötä” (Two-Faced Missionary Work), *Pohjanmaan Kansa* [The People of Ostrobothnia], June 1, 1984, 2.

cussions unrewarding because of the missionaries' poor knowledge of Finland's history, culture, and customs, he liked talking to them. But now, "after the news in *Helsingin Sanomat* the Mormons no longer have any business in Wallu's apartment."<sup>69</sup>

At this point, the matter had not come to Parliament's floor; but because of the publicity, stake presidents Forsman and Haikkola along with other Finnish Mormon officials held a press conference on June 11. Six of twelve invited journalists attended. As a result, a short radio piece with Tampere Stake Public Communications Director Pekka Roto discussing missionaries, microfilming, and the CIA was aired the next morning on national radio, thus countering some of the negative publicity.<sup>70</sup> A number of newspaper articles also appeared, quoting the three Mormon officials. One quoted Roto's identification of a probable main cause of the recent stir: "Roto laments that due to its American origin the church's activity is easily connected to the CIA.—This is a serious mixup of the earthly and the heavenly."<sup>71</sup> Significantly, no report of this conference was published in *Helsingin Sanomat*, which originally brought the matter to national attention. At least three other local LDS officials, Oulu District president Ossi Tuisku, Mikkeli Branch president Matti Ojala, and Hyvinkää Branch president Jouko Vuori, were interviewed for newspaper reports that appeared during this period before Laine's oral parliamentary question, presented on June 14.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>"Vapaus uskoa" (Freedom to Believe), *Ahjo* [The Forge], no. 23 (1984).

<sup>70</sup>Arja Miettinen, Letter to Harald Frome, June 28, 1984, LDS Church Archives, Hämeenlinna, Finland; photocopy in my possession.

<sup>71</sup>"Mormonit tuohtuivat: Amerikkalaisuutta vainotaan Suomessa" (Mormons Became Indignant: Americanism Persecuted in Finland), *Iltä-Sanomat*, June 12, 1984, 5. For the other articles, see, for example, "Mormonit kiistävät vakoilusyhteet" (Mormons Deny Espionage Charges), *Turun Sanomat* [The Turku Gazette], June 12, 1984, 21; "Mormoonit kiistävät vakoilusyhteet," *Uusi Suomi*, June 12, 1984, 9.

<sup>72</sup>"Sisäministeriö tutkii mormonien raportit" (Ministry of the Interior to Examine Mormon Reports), *Kaleva*, June 6, 1984, 10; "Matti Ojala puolustaa kirkkoaan: Mormoneilla on puhtaat paperit" (Matti Ojala Defends His Church: Mormons Have Clean Papers), *Länsi-Savo*, June 12, 1984,

## SECOND PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

Ensio Laine's question was born of his own initiative based on the persistent publicity about alleged Mormon espionage. He had not been in contact with the Maljanen couple.<sup>73</sup> On June 14, Laine presented his question orally in Parliament, asking whether the government thought the Mormons were acting according to Finnish law and good manners with respect to their reporting practices. Another part of the question, assuming that the information was exported to the United States, asked directly about collecting political opinions. And finally, Laine asked why gathering such political information was part of the Mormon Church's activities.<sup>74</sup>

Gustav Björkstrand, Second Minister of Education, answered the question in the same session of Parliament. He exonerated the Mormons on all counts, saying that the government had found nothing in the activities of the LDS Church that was out of bounds for a religious organization. All such organizations had a right to maintain internal communications and records, as long as it was done legally. Björkstrand pointed out the danger of relying too much on newspaper accounts and concluded: "All kinds of information is presented in public, but the government has not received any information giving reason to assume that something illegal would have happened here."<sup>75</sup> This description presumably includes Ilkka Aura's information as well. While Björkstrand's comments exonerated the Mormons in general, they also implicitly but definitely dismissed the Maljanens' 1982 copies of their son's investigator reports.

A few articles, mostly in left-wing newspapers, correctly reported the government's response that LDS activities were legal while making it clear that suspicions of espionage remained in some cir-

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5; "Kerätyt tiedot opin mukaiset" (Gathered Information Conforms to Doctrine), *Hyvinkään Uutiset* [Hyvinkää News], June 14, 1984, 4. The interviews are very informative on LDS policy but contain some mutually contradictory data on the content of missionary reports.

<sup>73</sup>Ensio Laine, Letter to Kim Östman, December 25, 2005.

<sup>74</sup>Ensio Laine, "Mormonikirkon edustajien toiminnasta" (On the Activity of Mormon Church Representatives), oral parliamentary question 256/1984, June 14, 1984, in *Vuoden 1984 valtiopäivät, Pöytäkirjat* (Helsinki: Eduskunta, n.d.), vol. 2, 1532–33.

<sup>75</sup>Björkstrand's oral responses are interspersed with Laine's questions in the same parliamentary transcript.

cles.<sup>76</sup> Some leftist newspaper articles continued to report as facts that Mormons collected Finns' political opinions and forwarded them to the United States. This attitude was captured by a headline in a leftist paper: "The Government Permits Mormon Snooping." Laine was reportedly disappointed in the government's response and "saw reason to return to the matter."<sup>77</sup> However, to my knowledge the issue has not been raised at the parliamentary level since June 1984.

In summary, the 1984 question was focused on an issue already brought up in 1982–83, namely, that of collecting personal information on Finnish people. In 1984, a leftist newspaper first raised the issue, which thereafter became nationally known through an article in the country's largest paper and other mainstream papers. Mormon rebuttals and the government's exonerating answer appeared in various papers around the country, but some on the political left remained unconvinced.

#### AFTERMATH

The issue of suspected Mormon espionage has mostly disappeared from post-1984 public discourse in Finland, but suspicions of sinister Mormon activities continue to simmer among some Finnish people. The current situation is not entirely clear; but the collapse of the Soviet Union has probably rendered the espionage issue moot, and the rumored Mormon takeover of the Soviet Union has become a historical curiosity.

Pentti Maljanen, the principal originator of alarm about the alleged Mormon agenda for the Soviet Union and the possibility of Mormon political reports going to the United States, continued to assert that Mormon missionaries collect and report Finns' political opinions. While many newspapers in 1984 were careful not to assert definitely that missionary reports were forwarded to the United

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<sup>76</sup>"Mormonien tietojen keruu lakien mukaista" (Mormon Information Gathering Conforms to Law), *Hämeen Yhteistyö*, June 15, 1984, 14; "Mormonien tietojen keruu lakien mukaista," *Kansan Tahto* [The People's Will], June 15, 1984; "Mormonien listat laillisia" (Mormon Lists Legal), *Kansan Ääni*, June 16, 1984, 2; "Hallituksen mielestä: Mormonien urkinta lakien mukaista" (Government Opinion: Mormon Snooping Conforms to Law), *Satakunnan Työ*, June 26, 1984, 3.

<sup>77</sup>"Hallitus sallii mormoneille urkinnan" (The Government Permits Mormon Snooping), *Tiedonantaja*, June 15, 1984, 20.



States, Maljanen was adamant. At a countercult gathering held at a Lutheran church in October 1985, for example, he and his wife described their experience as Latter-day Saints, warning: "These sincere brothers, who come—they're not really as sincere as it seems. They report the contents of your bookshelf. They report everything. I don't know what meaning the information on each Finn's political views or hobbies has in America, but these missionary rascals do that job, too." Maljanen also mistakenly claimed at this meeting that Neal Maxwell, "holding a high position in the LDS Church," was simultaneously a CIA department head.<sup>78</sup> It was probably the most extreme exaggeration on Maxwell's position made in Finland.

In 1987, Maljanen, interviewed for the local newspaper *Tampereleinen*, recited the usual list of Mormon atrocities and claimed that many Latter-day Saints no longer denied the Mormon-CIA connection. He also raised the question whether American missionaries in Finland are connected to U.S. intelligence services, then answered the question himself. He claimed that, based on missionary reports he had seen, the missionaries "told everything about a person in their reports. To the United States went the information on somebody's clothing, books in his bookshelf, and his political opinion." Marja-Liisa Kiviniemi, a local Mormon public affairs representative, denied Maljanen's claims in the paper a week later. Lamenting the technique of branding a group as politically suspicious, she queried: "Are the tools of the Nazis becoming fashionable again?"<sup>79</sup>

Arguably the most inflammatory material came from Leo Meller, a controversial evangelical Protestant who promotes countercult activity and various conspiracy theories. At a 1985 gathering, he gave a chilling overview of alleged Mormon aspirations for world domination and entanglement with Satanic powers. Pointing out the conservative political views of Church President Ezra Taft Benson and the Mormon proclivity for following the prophet, Meller warned

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<sup>78</sup>He made this statement at a gathering titled "Mitä muuta mormonit opettavat kuin ilmaista englantia?" (What Else Do the Mormons Teach Except Free English?), Lutheran Church, Hervanta, Tampere, October 29, 1985; audio recording and transcript in my possession.

<sup>79</sup>"Mormoneista eronnut Pentti Maljanen: 'Kaikkea sitä ihminen uskoo,'" 5; "Vastausta kirjoitukseen Kaikkea sitä ihminen uskoo" (Answer to the Article A Person Can Believe All Sorts of Things), *Tampereleinen*, April 12, 1987, 15.

that one day hundreds of millions of people would be killed, if they “don’t submit to the Utah prophet.” Meller cited the shopworn assertions that Mormon missionaries in Finland make political reports on their contacts and claimed, buttressed by the fact that some U.S. ambassadors are Mormons, that it was all part of the grand Mormon plan to establish a theocracy.<sup>80</sup> He failed to explain how the small Mormon Church could force the capitulation of the rest of the world. Meller’s sphere of influence is not large, but his comments show the longevity of rumors about Mormon espionage in Finland.

An open question is the degree to which these suspicions impact LDS missionary work. As an example, Elder Derek White, an American, serving in the southern city of Lappeenranta in 1986, met a man who asserted that Mormon reports went on to Salt Lake City and then to the CIA and accused, “That’s why you’re here . . . to gather information for the CIA.”<sup>81</sup> A 1987 newspaper photographed Curt Thomas, another U.S. missionary, biking across the Finnish-Swedish border in northern Finland. While the article is a satire on a Swede convicted of spying for the Soviet Union, it calls the missionaries “CIA agents disguised as religious bicyclists.”<sup>82</sup>

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Given that parts of only two missionary reports with possible political implications were ever published in Finland, it is perhaps most striking how willing the leftist forces were to generalize LDS activity. It is clearly true that Mormon missionaries recorded information on those they visited to aid their own proselytizing; almost certainly they passed on some of that information in their weekly reports to their mission president. However, it was never proved that this information

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<sup>80</sup>Meller made this presentation at a gathering titled “Mormonien veriset askeleet” (The Mormons’ Bloodstained Footsteps), held at the end of 1985; audio recording and partial transcript in my possession.

<sup>81</sup>Derek White, email to Kim Östman, November 16, 2005; printout in my possession.

<sup>82</sup>Curt Thomas, email to Kim Östman, November 16, 2005; printout in my possession. The article mentioning the missionaries is “Taas uusi henkilöllisyys, AIDSiakin epäillään . . . Ruotsalainen vakooja havaittiin mopoilemassa avopäin Tervolassa” (New Identity Again, AIDS Suspected Too . . . Swedish Spy was Spotted Riding Moped Bareheaded in Tervola), *Pohjolan Sanomat* [The Gazette of the North], October 14, 1987, 10.

was forwarded to the United States or that it was part of a spying effort. In most missions, the weekly reports are simply accumulated in the missionary's file and either destroyed or returned to him or her at the mission's end. Investigator Records remain in missionary apartments for various lengths of time. Instead, the primarily leftist agenda simply assumed such purposes a priori, allowing ideology to replace evidence.

The extent to which these 1980s suspicions linger on in Finland is not clear.<sup>83</sup> Because the Cold War has ended and Finland entered the European Union on January 1, 1995, probably the issue is dead, even for most people on the left. However, the presence and the perpetuation of espionage allegations is an important element that must be considered when analyzing Mormonism's image and Finns' response to Mormonism from post-World War II days to the present.

Some aspects of the issue are inherent in the LDS Church's identification with an American image and with American culture. The LDS Church in Finland essentially operates as a colony of the American church,<sup>84</sup> importing programs, attitudes, leadership models, etc. For at least nationalistically oriented Finns, this relationship doubtless has negative overtones. To what degree the 1982–84 scare and its explicit connection between Mormonism and U.S. government interests actually affected Finns' opinions of Mormonism is not clear. However, given the Finnish sense of privacy, which is easily affronted by door-to-door proselytizing, the impact was at least potentially negative for those who came in contact with media reports on the subject. What impact this situation may have had on LDS Church growth in Finland lies beyond the scope of this article; but yearly baptismal fig-

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<sup>83</sup>However, see "Ovatko mormonit CIA:n vakoilijoita?," (Are Mormons CIA Spies?) *Keskisuomalainen* [The Central Finlander], July 25, 1996, 11, for a brief interview with Mormon mission president P. Lyn Thompson regarding the topic. An article reviewing a new Finnish novel about Mormon missionaries explicitly assumes that the missionaries in the 1960s were involved with political sidetasks. See "Mormonien käynnit" (Mormon Visits), *Seinäjokinen*, 15, no. 47 (November 29, 2003): 6.

<sup>84</sup>For a valuable general discussion of Mormonism's character in Europe, see Walter E. A. van Beek, "Mormon Europeans or European Mormons? An 'Afro-European' View of Religious Colonization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38 (Winter 2005): 3–36.

ures remained fairly constant throughout this period.<sup>85</sup> A 2004 article, for example, raised the issue of microfilming but focused on the propriety of proxy baptisms of the deceased, not U.S. political interests.<sup>86</sup>

To summarize, the 1982–84 public espionage scare is an interesting case study of how anti-Mormon activity, sensationalism, and political interests can combine, whether the motives involved are sincere or malicious. Numerous questions invite further study; and it is my hope that the outline and analysis I have provided will raise interest in further research on non-U.S. Mormonism. For example, the process of introducing Mormonism to Finland in the late 1940s would provide a highly interesting topic. How were the early missionaries treated? How did Finns view the Church generally? How, in turn, were these attitudes shaped by Finland's precarious political situation after World War II? What can be learned by comparing the Finnish reception process to that of other European countries in the mid-twentieth century? I believe that answers to such questions will shed valuable light on the potential and problems of global Mormonism in a changing world.

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<sup>85</sup>According to the Finland Helsinki Mission office's statistics, convert baptisms for 1981–90 in Finland were 101, 73, 63, 57, 61, 61, 87, 112, 126, 83, and 76, respectively. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some Finnish members of the Church disaffiliated, with this issue being part of their reason for doing so.

<sup>86</sup>See, for example, "MAP-kirkko pystyttää temppeliä Espooseen: Esi-isämme kastetaan mormoneiksi" (The LDS Church Is Erecting a Temple in Espoo: Our Forefathers Are Baptized as Mormons), *Nykyposti* [The Modern Post], 27, no. 5 (2004): 14–18.

# THE USE OF “LAMANITE” IN OFFICIAL LDS DISCOURSE

*John-Charles Duffy*

ON DECEMBER 8, 2002, A RALLY was staged on Main Street Plaza in downtown Salt Lake City in support of LDS researcher Thomas Murphy, who faced the possibility of Church discipline for publicly stating that genetic studies of Native Americans challenged claims regarding the ancient historicity of the Book of Mormon. By an unanticipated coincidence, the protest occurred on the same evening as the Church's first ever Spanish-language devotional. Consequently, thousands of Hispanic Saints pouring out of the LDS Conference Center and across the plaza to the southeast were confronted—to the surprise of both parties—by Murphy's supporters, who held signs reading, for example, “And it came to pass that no Lamanite DNA was found throughout all of the land.” As she passed the sign-carriers, one Latina Saint was overheard to say to her Anglo companion, “Pero yo soy lamanita!” (“But I am a Lamanite!”) Her friend responded with a muffled sound that seemed vaguely supportive but also a little uncomfortable, perhaps even unconvinced.<sup>1</sup>

As this anecdote illustrates, different stakeholders derive different meanings from, and have varying degrees of investment in, LDS

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teachings identifying the native peoples of the Americas and the Pacific Islands as literal descendants of ancient Book of Mormon peoples (traditionally called "Lamanites," after Laman, a character in the Book of Mormon narrative). For some, these teachings are important as a test of the truthfulness of Mormonism. Others place these teachings at the heart of their personal identity. For still others, claims about Lamanite identity are relatively inconsequential when it comes to their belief in the truth claims of the LDS Church.

That complexity has not always been appreciated in the discussions regarding Lamanite DNA that continue to play out between Book of Mormon revisionists and Book of Mormon apologists.<sup>2</sup> Both sides in these debates agree that current genetic studies challenge traditional LDS teachings that all native peoples of the Americas are the literal descendants of Book of Mormon peoples (or Lamanites). The debates have therefore tended to hinge on the status of those teachings. Are they normative, prophetic statements, or are they merely individual Church leaders' speculations? In other words, are past statements about the identity of Lamanites official LDS Church doctrine? Both sides in the discussion typically favor straight-

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gious history. Some *Church News* citations were obtained from *LDS Collectors Library*, 2005 (Salt Lake City: LDS Media and Deseret Book, 2005), which does not supply page numbers and provides writers' bylines inconsistently.

<sup>1</sup>I witnessed this exchange while observing the pro-Murphy demonstration on Main Street Plaza on December 8, 2002.

<sup>2</sup>For studies in the vein that I am calling "revisionist," see Thomas W. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics," in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of the Mormon*, edited by Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 47-77; Thomas W. Murphy, "Simply Implausible: DNA and a Mesoamerican Setting for the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36 (Winter 2003): 109-31; and Simon Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004). For examples of what I am calling "apologetic" approaches, see John L. Sorenson and Matthew Roper, "Before DNA," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12 (2003): 6-23; Michael F. Whiting, "DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12 (2003): 24-35; and D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens, "Who Are the Children of Lehi?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12 (2003): 38-51.

forward, uncomplicated definitions of official teaching that serve their respective interests. Revisionists' insistence that science invalidates LDS doctrine about the origin of Native Americans<sup>3</sup> relies on a broad definition of doctrine that treats most or all statements made from the pulpit by high-ranking LDS leaders as if Mormons were obligated by their faith to accept these statements as revealed truth. On the other hand, apologists' attempts to retreat from past statements by Church leaders require them to define official discourse very narrowly or to subordinate the authority of Church leaders to that of LDS scripture.<sup>4</sup>

Defining statements as "official" or normative because they were made by certain office holders in certain settings may be a useful move in debates over what Mormons *ought* to believe. But that kind of definition does not correspond to how authority actually works in LDS discourse. Statements exercise normative force among Latter-day Saints not simply because they are spoken by Church leaders but because they serve functions that matter to members. To recognize what was—or was not—at stake in claims regarding Lamanite identity for the parties whose paths crossed during the protest on Main Street Plaza in late 2002, it is not enough to collect statements documenting what Church leaders have taught about Lamanite identity in the past. We must also understand *why* Church leaders taught these beliefs. What did these teachings motivate Church members to

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<sup>3</sup>This way of framing the issue strikes me as implicit in Brent Lee Metcalfe's description of the Lamanite DNA controversy as a "Galileo moment." See Thomas W. Murphy, "Inventing Galileo," *Sunstone*, Issue 131 (March 2004): 58.

<sup>4</sup>For a limited definition of official discourse, see Stephen E. Robinson's claim that only statements issued over the signatures of the First Presidency and/or the Quorum of the Twelve constitute official Mormon doctrine. Robinson, a professor of religion at Brigham Young University, does not use this definition in the specific context of Lamanite identification, but he does to disclaim responsibility for teachings by past LDS Church leaders on other subjects with which he does not agree. See Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 140. For an assertion that the authority of scripture is superior to that of Church leaders, see Matthew Roper, "Swimming in the Gene Pool: Israelite Kinship Relations, Genes, and Genealogy," *FARMS Review* 15 (2006): 156–58.



do? How have these teachings been connected to Latter-day Saints' understandings of salvation history—of their identity and mission, their origin and destiny?

In search of precedents to validate their rethinking regarding Lamanite identity, some apologists overstate the diversity of views on the subject espoused by past Church leaders; also, apologists obscure the extent to which such views were presented and received as prophetic declarations, not as mere opinion or speculation. On the other hand, some revisionists paint an overly homogenous picture of LDS discourse about Lamanites, overlooking the varying degrees of investment that different Church leaders have shown in the idea that Native Americans and/or Pacific Islanders may be descended from Book of Mormon peoples. In this essay, I offer a more nuanced history of Lamanite identification in official LDS discourse.

Because sitting Church presidents and apostles enjoy the greatest formal power to define normative LDS teaching, their statements are the primary focus of this study. Because Church leaders do not compose their teachings in a vacuum, some attention is also paid to statements by lower-level Church leaders (Seventies, mission presidents, etc.) and by some lay members. In this essay, "Lamanite identification" refers to statements that identify the contemporary indigenous peoples of the Americas as Lamanites (or related terms like "children of Lehi").<sup>5</sup> Borrowing terms used to describe different models for Book of Mormon geography, I speak of "hemispheric" and "limited" Lamanite identification. Hemispheric Lamanite identification is the teaching that native peoples throughout North and South America—often the Pacific Islands as well—are direct blood-descendants of ancient Book of Mormon peoples. Limited Lamanite identification is the more recent contention that the descendants of Lehi—the father of the Book of Mormon peoples—consisted of a small colony, probably in Mesoamerica, who were eventually absorbed into existing populations and whose genetic markers have evidently not survived to the present.

Although some proponents of limited Lamanite identification claim precedents in earlier LDS teachings, hemispheric identification

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<sup>5</sup>Lamanite identification is distinct from discourse that alludes to Lamanites as characters in stories from the Book of Mormon. Lamanite identification applies the concept of "Lamanite" to people living in the present.

monopolized discourse about Lamanites until the last two decades of the twentieth century. Even so, the discourse was not static: hemispheric Lamanite identification served multiple and shifting functions in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hemispheric Lamanite identification enjoyed its heyday during the forty years of Spencer W. Kimball's tenure as LDS apostle and later Church president. Since Kimball's death in 1985, there has been a noticeable (though not total) decline in Church leaders' use of Lamanite identification; during the same period, some Church members have found limited Lamanite identification increasingly attractive. Contrary to what some may assume, the recent controversy over Lamanite DNA is not the only, or even principal, factor motivating Church leaders' retreat from Lamanite identification. While the DNA controversy is a contributing factor, I argue that other considerations play a role as well, including changing attitudes toward race and new administrative challenges created by the Church's international growth. Indeed, the shift away from Lamanite identification in Church leaders' discourse predates the DNA controversy. This pattern suggests that the future of LDS discourse about Lamanites may be affected, but will probably not be determined, by discussions regarding genetics and geography.

#### **NINETEENTH-CENTURY USAGE: THE JOSEPH SMITH YEARS, 1827–44**

From the time of the Book of Mormon's publication in March 1830, Joseph Smith and other early Mormon leaders described it as a record of the ancestors of America's native peoples. Smith's earliest revelations referred to the living descendants of Book of Mormon peoples collectively as "Lamanites" (LDS D&C 3:20, 10:48). When early Church leaders spoke of contemporary Lamanites, they most often meant the Indians of the United States and its western territories, not North and South America as a whole. Smith, for example, explaining Mormon beliefs for two U.S. periodicals, identified the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples as "our western Tribes of Indians" or "the Indians that now inhabit this country."<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, Smith's revelations used the term "Lamanite" to refer unambiguously to the tribes then occupying the Indian territory west

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<sup>6</sup>Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 273; and reproduced as "The Wentworth Let-

of the Mississippi (D&C 32:2, 54:8). Probably this usage reflects the degree to which the United States dominated LDS leaders' mental maps of the New World. At the same time, Smith showed signs of a more hemispheric understanding of Lamanite identity. In 1841, he recognized newly discovered temples in Mesoamerica as the work of Book of Mormon peoples,<sup>7</sup> and he reportedly located Lehi's landing site in the New World, on separate occasions, in both Chile and Panama.<sup>8</sup>

The claim that the Book of Mormon is a history of the American Indians was not a secondary selling point to arouse public curiosity: LDS writer Terryl Givens has noted that Church leaders "did all they could" to promote this claim.<sup>9</sup> Apostle Parley P. Pratt, for example, dedicated an entire chapter of his 1837 *A Voice of Warning* to establishing that the Book of Mormon "reveals the origin of the American Indian, which was before a mystery."<sup>10</sup> One reason that this claim may have been so important to Church leaders is that, by tracing Indian origins to migrations from biblical lands, the Book of Mormon affirmed the historical veracity of the Bible over against contemporary

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ter," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1751.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Smith, Letter to John M. Bernhisel, November 16, 1841, in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 501–2; see also Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 102.

<sup>8</sup>Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, eds., *A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1886), 289; Joseph Smith, *Times and Seasons*, September 15, 1842, 921–22, quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. and ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 267. Attributing these statements to Smith has been disputed in recent decades: see John E. Clark, "Book of Mormon Geography," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:178; and [no author identified], "Did Lehi Land in Chile?" in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, edited by John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 57–61.

<sup>9</sup>Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 95.

<sup>10</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People* (1937; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1952), 77; see also Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon: Religious Solutions from Columbus to Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 35.

skeptics who cited the existence of this formerly unknown race to “call in question the authority of the sacred writings.”<sup>11</sup> Identifying Indians as scattered Hebrews was one way that the Book of Mormon bore witness to the truth of the Bible.

Lamanite identification was also important as a component of early Mormon millenarianism. The equation of Lamanites and Indians made America a theater for the redemption of Israel, allowing American Saints to contribute, on their own shores, to the promised gathering of the chosen people. Missions to the Indians were thus a principal element of the work the Saints believed themselves called to undertake. The first Indian mission was launched by Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, and others within months of the publication of the Book of Mormon. Setting a pattern that would continue into the latter half of the twentieth century, the missionaries informed Indian audiences that the Book of Mormon was the Indians’ own ancestral record.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to a common misunderstanding, interest in Indian missions did not decline after the essentially unsuccessful 1830 mission but continued throughout Joseph Smith’s life and beyond.<sup>13</sup> The most famous Lamanite convert during the Smith years was Lewis Dana, an Oneida, who was baptized in 1840 and became a member of Smith’s elite Council of Fifty. Apostle Heber C. Kimball attributed to Dana the distinction of being “the first Lamanite” to be sealed in marriage (to his Anglo wife) in a latter-day temple.<sup>14</sup>

LDS teachings about the Indians’ destiny as Lamanites contrib-

<sup>11</sup>Vogel, *Indian Origins*, 35–39; and Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 121–23.

<sup>12</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry and Travels, with Extracts, in Prose and Verse, from His Miscellaneous Writings*, edited by Parley P. Pratt [Jr.] (1874; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985 printing), chaps. 7–8.

<sup>13</sup>Ronald W. Walker, “Seeking the ‘Remnant’: The Native American during the Joseph Smith Period,” *Journal of Mormon History* 19 (Spring 1993): 1–33.

<sup>14</sup>Stanley B. Kimball, ed., *On the Potter’s Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books and Smith Research Associates, 1987), 104. On Dana’s membership in the Council of Fifty, see Andrew F. Ehat, “‘It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth’: Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God,” *BYU Studies* 20 (Spring 1980): 269.

uted to the hostility against the Saints in Missouri and Illinois. On the basis of 3 Nephi 20:14–20, Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and others preached a distinctively Mormon apocalypticism in which the Indians were destined to reclaim their promised land before Christ's second coming, destroying all white settlers except those who were numbered among Israel (i.e., the Mormons).<sup>15</sup> This preaching provoked fears that Mormons would foment Indian uprisings. During the Church's Illinois period, a Potawatomi delegation actually invited the Saints to join a ten-tribe confederation for mutual defense, an offer in which Smith, fearful of how non-Mormon whites would react, expressed cautious interest.<sup>16</sup> Paradoxically, visions of Lamanites violently reseizing their homeland and wreaking God's justice upon the wicked existed side-by-side with expectations that Lamanites would be pacified and civilized through conversion.<sup>17</sup> In either case, identifying the Indians as Lamanites was integral to the Saints' understanding of how scriptural prophecies would be fulfilled.

Identifying American Indians and their cultural artifacts as Lamanite also sacralized the landscapes in which the Saints found themselves. When Smith identified a skeleton uncovered in an Illinois mound as Zeph, a "white Lamanite," or when he told the Saints that there was a Nephite altar north of Far West, Missouri,<sup>18</sup> he helped to orient his followers in unfamiliar places by relating them to events from the Saints' distinctive version of salvation history. By the same token, he promoted a sense that the Saints were living on holy ground. Smith's identification of Spring Hill, Missouri, as Adam-ondi-Ahman, where Adam offered up sacrifices (LDS D&C 116:1),

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<sup>15</sup>Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 77–83.

<sup>16</sup>Walker, "Seeking the 'Remnant,'" 26–27.

<sup>17</sup>In the Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer, for example, Smith prayed that the Lamanites would "be converted from their wild and savage condition" and "lay down their weapons of bloodshed, and cease their rebellions" (D&C 109:65–66; all citations from the 1981 LDS edition). The W. W. Phelps hymn, "O Stop and Tell Me, Red Man," included in the first LDS hymnal (1835), anticipated the day when God would both "break [the] Gentile yoke" from the Indians and inspire them to "quit their savage customs."

<sup>18</sup>Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (1932; Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980 printing), 2:79–80; 3:35.

served a similar function.

From the beginning of Mormonism, Lamanite identification served multiple purposes. Like other Americans, the first Saints manifested ambivalent attitudes toward their country's native inhabitants: guilt about the decimation and displacement of the Indians; fear of Indian violence; fascination with Indian artifacts and lore.<sup>19</sup> Mormons, more than other Americans, intensified these attitudes by identifying Indians as Lamanites, thus giving them a prominent role in salvation history.

### THE PIONEER YEARS, 1845–90

In the decades following Smith's death in 1844, hemispheric identification became firmly established in LDS discourse about Lamanites, although the Indians of the Intermountain West, being closest to home, received the lion's share of Church leaders' attention. In their 1845 proclamation to the kings of the world, the Twelve Apostles bore "testimony that the 'Indians' (so called) of North and South America are a remnant of the tribes of Israel; as is now made manifest by the discovery and revelation of their ancient oracles and records."<sup>20</sup> In his apostolic proclamation of 1852, Parley P. Pratt instructed the "Red Men of America" that Lehi's descendants had "peopled the entire continent of North and South America. . . . Peruvians, Mexicans, Guatemalans, descendants of every tribe and tongue of this mysterious race! Your history, your Gospel, your destiny is revealed."<sup>21</sup> During an abortive mission to South America, 1851–52, Pratt concluded that "perhaps nine-tenths of the vast population of Peru, as well as of most other countries of Spanish America, are of the

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<sup>19</sup>Historian Joel W. Martin has discussed the "tremendous symbolic power" Indians had for settlers and the complexity of settlers' "identification with Indians." See his "Indians, Contact, and Colonialism in the Deep South: Themes for a Postcolonial History of American Religion," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, edited by Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 149–80.

<sup>20</sup>James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 1:254.

<sup>21</sup>Parley P. Pratt, "Proclamation! To the People of the Coasts and Islands of the Pacific (Ocean), of Every Nation, Kindred, and Tongue," *Millennial Star* 14 (September 18, 1852): 469.

*blood of Lehi.*"<sup>22</sup> Consistent with this understanding of Lamanite identity, Pratt's younger brother Orson, also a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, developed a hemispheric Book of Mormon geography, which he expounded on two occasions in the Salt Lake Tabernacle and incorporated into the footnotes of the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon.<sup>23</sup>

At the same time that Parley P. Pratt attempted to bring the Mormon gospel to Lamanites in South America, LDS missionaries to the Society Islands (French Polynesia) and Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) became convinced that local natives were also descended from Book of Mormon peoples. One of those missionaries, George Q. Cannon, professed to receive this knowledge by revelation around 1851.<sup>24</sup> Later, as a member of the First Presidency, Cannon preached that "no one who is not completely prejudiced and darkened through unbelief can doubt the common origin of the Polynesian nations with the . . . Indians of North America."<sup>25</sup>

This new form of Lamanite identification was well—and rapidly—received back in Utah. By 1858, Church President Brigham Young was teaching that "those islanders, and the natives of this country are of the House of Israel," a claim he repeated in a letter to Hawaiian King Kamehameha V. Before the 1860s ended, an article in the Church's *Juvenile Instructor* alluded to the Lehiite ancestry of the Pacific Islanders as common knowledge among the Saints.<sup>26</sup> Because the Book of Mormon story of Hagoth (Alma 63:5–8) became the standard explanation for how some Book of Mormon peoples settled the

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<sup>22</sup>Pratt, *Autobiography*, 368, emphasis his.

<sup>23</sup>Orson Pratt, December 27, 1868, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool and London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 12:337–46; Orson Pratt, February 11, 1872, *Journal of Discourses*, 14:323–35; Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 106.

<sup>24</sup>R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 97–98.

<sup>25</sup>George Q. Cannon, "The Church in Polynesia," in *Collected Discourses*, edited by Brian H. Stuy, 4 vols. (Burbank, Calif./Woodland Hills, Utah: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987–92), 2:4.

<sup>26</sup>G. R., "Man and His Varieties," *Juvenile Instructor* 3 (October 1, 1868): 146; see also Norman Douglas, "The Sons of the Lehi and the Seed of Cain: Racial Myths in Mormon Scripture and Their Relevance to the Pacific Islands," *Journal of Religious History* 8 (June 1974): 98.



Pacific Islands, the island natives were often referred to, not as Lamanites, but as “Nephites,” the latter being how the Book of Mormon identifies Hagoth’s people. In either case, Pacific Islanders were seen as heirs of the promises that had come, on the mainland, to be associated with “Lamanite” identity. Across the second half of the nineteenth century, LDS missionaries promoted the Lamanite (or Nephite) identity of Pacific Islanders throughout the South Seas.

The belief that they were working among modern-day Lamanites inspired missionaries. It lent a sense of intensified significance to their labors and provided the basis for a special appeal in their preaching. The Book of Mormon is *your* book, missionaries informed their listeners—the record of *your* ancestors. When Apostle Moses Thatcher dedicated Mexico for missionary work in 1881, he turned the key not only for the preaching of the Mormon gospel but also for “the redemption of the Lamanites in that land.”<sup>27</sup> Thatcher thus set a pattern that other apostles would follow throughout the twentieth century: invoking Lamanite identification on high ceremonial occasions, such as mission and temple dedications, as a way of situating the Church’s work in Latin America and the Pacific Islands within the Mormon narrative of salvation history.

In addition to motivating missionaries, Lamanite identification explained the Church’s success within the framework of LDS understandings regarding the religious significance of race. LDS sociologist Armand Mauss has observed that, to preserve their identity in the face of opposition from American society, white Mormons during the nineteenth century became deeply invested in a doctrine that they were lineally descended from ancient Israel through the tribe of Ephraim.<sup>28</sup> As a corollary to this doctrine, the Church’s missionary efforts were frequently described as the gathering of scattered Israel. It followed that success in the mission field indicated the presence of “believing blood.” Lamanite identification explained how there came

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<sup>27</sup>Rey L. Pratt, *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1930* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 127 (hereafter *Conference Report*); see also F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), 41.

<sup>28</sup>Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), chaps. 1–2.

to be people with believing blood in the Pacific Islands.<sup>29</sup> Related to the believing blood concept was the characterization of Lamanites as people "ready to believe" and extraordinarily firm in their commitment to the gospel, a description George Q. Cannon applied to Pacific Islanders.<sup>30</sup> Echoing Book of Mormon depictions of the exemplary fidelity of converted Lamanites, this characterization in one sense flattered those to whom it was applied, but it also tended to reinforce their status as Other and reproduced stereotypes about simple, tractable, childlike natives.

In contrast to the "positive" conception of Lamanites in the Pacific, the Mormon romance with the American Indian soured as a result of the pioneer experience in the Intermountain West. The romance had been easier to maintain before the trek west, when Lamanites were at a safe distance beyond the Mississippi River and when Indian raids were an apocalyptic scenario threatening only unrepentant non-Mormons. Once settled in the West, however, the Saints competed with native tribes for resources and thus become targets of Indian begging and, at times, of attack. At this point, many Mormons came to regard the Indians as did other white settlers: with "disgust and loathing."<sup>31</sup> Idealistic missionaries and Church leaders struggled perennially against their coreligionists' disinterest in preaching to Indians or even in negotiating a peaceful coexistence with them.

Against this background, Lamanite identification offered a strategy for encouraging more generous and conciliatory Indian relations. In 1855, Apostle Wilford Woodruff demanded to know why Saints neglected Indian missions and withheld charitable assistance. Did the Saints not realize, he asked, "our true position with regard to

<sup>29</sup>This point is made explicitly in G. R., "Man and His Varieties," 146: "One great evidence to the Latter-day Saints that the Sandwich Islanders are of the house of Israel is the success the Elders have had in preaching the gospel in their midst. . . . [W]hen we see a people obey the everlasting gospel in great numbers, we have a right to consider that they are descended from those to whom the promises were given."

<sup>30</sup>Cannon, "The Church in Polynesia," 4.

<sup>31</sup>Juanita Brooks, "Indian Relations on the Mormon Frontier," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 12 (January-April 1944): 12; see also Charles S. Peterson, "Jacob Hamblin, Apostle to Lamanites, and the Indian Mission," *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975): 24-25. "Disgust and loathing" are Brooks's characterization.

the Lamanites”—that the Indians, unlike the Saints, were “legal heirs to the priesthood . . . of the promised seed” and that the Book of Mormon called the Saints “to do all we possibly can” to assist them.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Brigham Young was prone to speak of “Lamanites” instead of “Indians” when urging Saints to assist indigent natives or castigating Saints who wanted to expel or exterminate local tribes.<sup>33</sup>

Lamanite identification motivated Church leaders to maintain missionary work among western Indians despite discouraging results. Orson Pratt, citing Brigham Young’s authority, preached that God had brought the Saints to the West “for this very purpose—that we might accomplish the redemption of these suffering, degraded Israelites, as predicted in the sacred records of their forefathers.”<sup>34</sup> The U.S. government’s campaign against Mormon plural marriage during the 1880s prompted a surge of LDS apocalypticism, one manifestation of which was a renewed interest in the conversion of the Lamanites as a precursor to the Second Coming. In 1882, Church President John Taylor warned the Saints, on the basis of a recently received revelation, that “the work of the Lord among the Lamanites must not be postponed.”<sup>35</sup> Consequently, members of the Twelve undertook missions to tribes throughout the western territories; in addition, Apostle Brigham Young Jr. reported that Church leaders “ha[d] in view the

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<sup>32</sup>Wilford Woodruff, July 15, 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:227–29.

<sup>33</sup>Brigham Young, July 28, 1866, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:263–66, referred to native peoples as “ungoverned and wild Indian[s]” in the context of urging LDS settlers to take defensive precautions against Indian attack; but elsewhere in the same address, he spoke of “poor, ignorant Lamanites” or “that poor, down-trodden branch of the house of Israel” in the context of urging the Saints to refrain from bloodshed and to let the Indians share access to the land. Another illustration of the tendency to use “Lamanite” in sympathetic contexts (albeit from a later period), is John D. Giles, “Aaronic Priesthood,” *Improvement Era*, 31 (August 1938): 492, who describes George A. Smith Jr., a missionary companion of Jacob Hamblin, as being killed by “Indians” while serving a mission to the “Lamanites.”

<sup>34</sup>Orson Pratt, July 15, 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:179.

<sup>35</sup>Quoted in G. Homer Durham, ed., *The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941), 247.

5,000,000 Lamanites in Mexico."<sup>36</sup> In 1855 Apostle Wilford Woodruff asserted that "the Lamanites of these mountains will yet be a shield to this people"—that is, the Saints—against "the knives of our enemies."<sup>37</sup> This view was a variation on the Book of Mormon's vision of the Lamanites trampling unrepentant non-Mormons. The Saints' apocalyptic hopes for the redemption of the Lamanites were reinforced by the apocalypticism then spreading among western tribes in response to the tribes' own struggles against the federal government. Apostle Heber J. Grant, for example, said he met an Indian named Lehi who was having dreams that corresponded to Mormon prophecies about the last days.<sup>38</sup>

In 1890, two events occurred that initiated decisive shifts in the social positioning of, respectively, Mormons and American Indians: the Wilford Woodruff Manifesto, which initiated the end of polygamy, and the Wounded Knee Massacre, which effectively marked the end of armed Indian resistance to the U.S. government and, with it, the end of the American frontier. Mormons' accommodation to American society and Indians' submission to the reservation system dulled apocalyptic expectations about Lamanites violently reclaiming their promised land. However, hemispheric Lamanite identification, which had solidified during the pioneer years in tandem with the doctrine of Mormons' lineal Israelite descent, persisted well into the twentieth century.

#### TWENTIETH-CENTURY USAGE: THE PRE-SPENCER W. KIMBALL YEARS, 1890–1943

After the closing of the frontier in 1890, the next major landmark in LDS discourse about Lamanites came in 1946, when Apostle Spencer W. Kimball (ordained October 7, 1943) was assigned responsibility for the Church's Indian affairs. During the intervening years, Church leaders and missionaries continued to promote hemispheric Lamanite identification in connection with the Church's growth in Latin America and the Pacific Islands and as part of a continuing commitment to the doctrine of lineal Israelite descent for Mormons generally. At the same time, LDS intellectu-

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<sup>36</sup>Peterson, "Jacob Hamblin," 29.

<sup>37</sup>Wilford Woodruff, July 15, 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:227.

<sup>38</sup>Rachel Grant Taylor, "The Arizona Apostle," *Improvement Era* 34 (July 1942): 474.

als, some of them General Authorities, began to nuance hemispheric identification to mitigate tensions with scientific discourse about the origins of the peoples whom Mormons called Lamanites. Also during this period, a schism in Mexico (discussed below) revealed that Lamanite identity could be claimed for ends Church leaders found uncomfortable.

With the pacification of the American Indians at the end of the nineteenth century, the millennial vision of Lamanites as peoples of “savage condition” (D&C 109:65) who would one day tread down the Gentiles became anachronistic. But Church leaders continued to describe the redemption of Lamanites—in the sense of their conversion, civilization, and rise to prosperity—as an important facet of the Saints’ mission. The conversion of Lamanites was a necessary precursor to the Second Coming and a principal purpose of the Book of Mormon—“the chief reason,” in fact, that God gave the Saints the book, according to Melvin J. Ballard, another apostle with a special interest in Lamanite mission.<sup>39</sup>

Despite this continuing emphasis on Lamanite redemption, LDS missionary work among American Indians was not pursued energetically during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>40</sup> Prejudices against Indians that had developed during the pioneer years persisted—a fact that would later outrage Spencer Kimball—and there was no longer an apocalyptic impulse to compensate for most Saints’ disinclination to work with Indians. Lamanite missions continued with greater enthusiasm in the more rewarding fields of the Pacific Islands, where by 1913 the Church’s membership encompassed 25 percent of native Hawaiians and 10 percent of New Zealand Maoris.<sup>41</sup> Latin America was another center for continuing Lamanite missions: missionary work in Mexico resumed in 1901, after a ten-year hiatus following the Woodruff Manifesto, and South America was dedicated for the preaching of the gospel in 1925.<sup>42</sup>

Hemispheric Lamanite identification remained integral to missionary teaching in the Pacific Islands and Mexico and was reg-

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<sup>39</sup>Melvin J. Ballard, *Conference Report*, October 1926, 40; see also Melvin J. Ballard, *Conference Report*, April 1930, 156.

<sup>40</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children*, 79–80.

<sup>41</sup>Laurie Maffly-Kipp, “Looking West: Mormonism and the Pacific World,” *Journal of Mormon History* 26 (Spring 2000): 46.

<sup>42</sup>Although LDS leaders conceived of South America as a Lamanite

ularly invoked by Church leaders in prophetically charged settings such as general conference addresses and mission and temple dedications. Texts composed for the first Spanish hymnals, published by the Mexican mission, celebrated the coming of the gospel to the "thousands who live in the south" who were of the blood of "the Lamanite people."<sup>43</sup> Rey L. Pratt of the First Council of the Seventy and long-time Mexico mission president, reported to general conference several times during the 1910s and 1920s on his work among "the Lamanite people [who] extend from Alaska to Patagonia."<sup>44</sup> Apostle Melvin J. Ballard's oft-quoted 1925 dedicatory prayer for South America included a petition for "the fulfilment of Thy promises, contained in the Book of Mormon, to the Indians of this land, who are descendants of Lehi."<sup>45</sup> During three different temple dedications—in Hawaii (1919), Alberta (1923), and Arizona (1927)—Church President Heber J. Grant prayed for the "descendants of Lehi" living in those locales.<sup>46</sup> Church President Joseph F. Smith told Stuart Meha, a Maori Latter-day Saint visiting Salt Lake City in 1913, that "you brethren and sisters from New Zealand, you are some of Hagoth's people, and there is no *pea* [that is, doubt] about it!"<sup>47</sup> Smith's statement was cited in later decades as prophetic confirmation of the Pacific Islanders' Book of Mormon origins.<sup>47</sup> As an apostle, Heber J. Grant received an impression, on the occasion of dedicating Japan for missionary work in 1901, that

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mission field—Melvin J. Ballard's dedicatory prayer alluded to "the descendants of Lehi[,] millions of whom reside in this country"—missionary work was confined to peoples of mostly European ancestry in Argentina and Brazil until after World War II.

<sup>43</sup>The quoted text is from "La obra ya empieza." See John-Charles Duffy and Hugo Olaiz, "Correlated Praise: The Development of the Spanish Hymnal," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35 (Summer 2002): 92–93.

<sup>44</sup>Rey L. Pratt, *Conference Report*, October 1913, 48.

<sup>45</sup>Bryant S. Hinckley, ed., *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1949), 96.

<sup>46</sup>Quoted in N. B. Lundwall, ed., *Temples of the Most High* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 146, 159, 173.

<sup>47</sup>Meha later said of Smith's statement, in a 1962 tape-recorded interview, that "this is the word of a prophet of God, we need look no further." Quoted in Robert E. Parsons, "Hagoth and the Polynesians," in *Alma: The*

an influx of Nephite and Lamanite blood explained what Grant perceived as physical similarity between the Japanese and the American Indians. Grant's idea, however, was not widely shared.<sup>48</sup>

Even though Church leaders remained committed to hemispheric Lamanite identification through the first half of the twentieth century, a certain defensiveness surrounded the topic. As Mormons came into greater contact, post-polygamy, with the mainstream of American society, they had greater opportunities to experience the dissonance between hemispheric Lamanite identification and scientific theories regarding the origins of Native Americans and Pacific Islanders. Several LDS writers moved to reduce the dissonance, cautioning their fellow Saints that the Book of Mormon did not preclude the possibility of other migrations to the Americas and that the hemisphere's native peoples were not *altogether* descended from Book of Mormon peoples. LDS researcher Matthew Roper has charted these disclaimers, which became increasingly frequent from the 1920s on. Among the writers who made these disclaimers were popular scriptural commentator Janne M. Sjodahl, Seventies B. H. Roberts and Milton R. Hunter, and Apostles Anthony W. Ivins, John A. Widtsoe, and Richard L. Evans.<sup>49</sup>

The import of these disclaimers should not be overstated: The writers were not abandoning hemispheric Lamanite identification. Mormon discourse about Lamanites during the first half of the twentieth century was still firmly embedded in doctrines about believing blood and the worldwide scattering of Israel. These doctrines implied a worldview in which Native Americans and Pacific Islanders constituted a single racial stock—mingled with other bloods, but with Israelite blood predominating. Similarly, most twentieth-century LDS leaders believed that the blood of Ephraim predominated among An-

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*Testimony of the Word*, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1992), 256.

<sup>48</sup>Alma O. Taylor, Letter to Joseph E. Taylor, September 1, 1901, Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), LDS Church Archives.

<sup>49</sup>Matthew Roper, "Nephi's Neighbors: Book of Mormon Peoples and Pre-Columbian Populations," *FARMS Review* 15 (2003): 91–128.



glo-Saxons.<sup>50</sup> It was crucial for this worldview that Lamanite identity be a *racial* identity, because it was through bloodlines that certain traits and rights to covenantal promises flowed. The importance of race in Lamanite identification during this period may be seen in Anthony W. Ivins's interest in redeeming "the probably 100,000,000" of the remnant of Israel living "from Mexico to Cape Horn whose blood has not been contaminated by admixture with any other race"; in Rey L. Pratt's reminder that the Lamanites south of the American border were "blood relatives" of the Saints in Utah because their blood was that of Ephraim and Manasseh; in James E. Talmage's assertion that "Lamanites have lived on as the degraded race of red men, whom Columbus found in the land"; and in the widely held expectation, echoed by Melvin J. Ballard in his dedicatory prayer for South America, that the Lamanites "would again become a white and delightful people."<sup>51</sup>

A racial conception of Lamanite identity was one manifestation of the coalescing of LDS "antimodernism" during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> Like Protestant fundamentalism (which coalesced during the 1910s and 1920s), Mormon antimodernism took a defensive stand on certain defining issues that served to set Mormons over against science in the name of revealed truth. For Protestant fundamentalists and Mormon antimodernists alike, this meant rejecting organic evolution and biblical higher criticism; for Mormons, it also meant affirming the ancient historicity of the Book of Mormon, of which hemispheric Lamanite identification was understood to be a corollary. From his position in the First Presidency, J. Reuben Clark vigorously promoted antimodernism within the Church Education

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<sup>50</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 26–31.

<sup>51</sup>Anthony W. Ivins, *Conference Report*, April 1901, 58; Rey L. Pratt, *Conference Report*, October 1924, 144; James E. Talmage, *The Vitality of Mormonism* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1919), 135; and Hinckley, *Sermons and Missionary Services*, 96.

<sup>52</sup>I borrow the term "antimodernism" from Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 98. Antimodernism means the same thing as "fundamentalism" as applied to Protestants. I use "antimodernism" instead of "fundamentalism" to avoid confusion with "Mormon fundamentalism" (i.e., the unsanctioned practice of plural marriage).

System after 1935.<sup>53</sup> As will be seen during the Spencer W. Kimball years, the most popular apostle-scriptorians of the mid-twentieth century were antimodernists as well. Disclaimers about non-Lamanite groups having migrated to the New World nuanced—but only lightly—the antimodernist worldview that dominated Mormonism until the final decades of the twentieth century, a worldview grounded in scriptural literalism, nineteenth-century conceptions of race, and a sense of Mormon superiority over the wisdom of the world.

From the beginning of Mormon missionizing, Lamanite identity was offered to native peoples as a dignifying vision of their past and future.<sup>54</sup> At times, missionaries and Church leaders even spoke of Lamanites as superior to whites by virtue of the promises made to their lineage.<sup>55</sup> However, when recipients of Lamanite identity asserted for themselves a status superior to that of white Saints, Church leaders balked. From 1937 to 1946, a third of the Church's members in Mexico belonged to a schismatic movement called the Third Convention, which arose out of members' frustrated desires for a greater native voice in local ecclesiastical government. The convention was inspired by the writings of longtime member Margarito Bautista. Fusing Lamanite identity with postrevolutionary Mexican nationalism, Bautista asserted that the Mexican revolution (fought throughout the 1910s) had initiated the promised day when the Lamanites would reclaim their land and liberty from Gentile powers. The importance of Lamanite identity for the Third Convention is indicated by the title of the organization's magazine: *El Sendero Lamanita* (The Lamanite

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<sup>53</sup>Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 95–99.

<sup>54</sup>There was, however, a less dignifying side to Lamanite identification. As Laurie Maffly-Kipp, "Looking West," 50, observes: "The call to preach to the Lamanites encoded a double message: On the one hand, missionaries carried an announcement of salvation and future hope; on the other, they reminded converts that they were degraded, uncivilized creatures who had fallen from the virtues of their ancestors."

<sup>55</sup>In 1862, George Q. Cannon told native Sandwich Islanders that, because they were of the house of Israel, they had the potential to "outstrip their white brethren," who were Gentiles. Quoted in Douglas, "Sons of Lehi," 97. Apostle Wilford Woodruff, July 15, 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:228–29, preached that because the American Indians were Lamanites, "instead of them being inferior to us in birthright, they are superior, and they stand first in many instances, with regard to the promises."

Path). Bautista also maintained, on the authority of the Book of Mormon, that white Latter-day Saints had a status subordinate to that of Lamanites because they were Gentiles adopted into the house of Israel, not Israelites by blood descent. J. Reuben Clark disputed this teaching in a letter he wrote on behalf of the First Presidency formally chastising the Third Convention: Anglo-Scandinavian Saints, Clark insisted, were literally of the blood of Israel through Ephraim and thus shared in the promises made to the Lamanites.<sup>56</sup> Although the schism was healed during the presidency of George Albert Smith, the controversy demonstrates the importance, for all parties, of literal, lineal descent in early twentieth-century teaching. The controversy also demonstrates the power of Lamanite identification to inspire those so identified to a sense of status and mission sometimes beyond Church leaders' ability to manage.

#### THE SPENCER W. KIMBALL YEARS, 1943–85

During Spencer W. Kimball's tenure as Church apostle (1943–73) and Church president (1973–85), discourse about Lamanites was more widely disseminated and more strongly emphasized than at any other time in LDS history. Hemispheric Lamanite identification was the foundation for Kimball's enthusiastic pursuit of Lamanite mission, as well as for enduring LDS antimodernism and Book of Mormon apologetics. Also during this period, however, the relevance of Lamanite identification was undermined by the Church's own increasingly international scope, by the imperatives of Church correlation, and by ambivalence toward Lamanite identity within the very groups to which it had traditionally been applied. The Kimball years thus witnessed both the zenith of Lamanite identification and the beginnings of its decline.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Church Presidents Heber J. Grant and George Albert Smith came to feel that the Church needed to do more to discharge its obligations to take the gospel to the Lamanites, meaning, more specifically, the American Indians.<sup>57</sup> As Apostle Matthew Cowley lamented, the Saints had "neglected these relatives of Samuel the Lamanite" (speaking of the Navajo), even

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<sup>56</sup>Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico*, 122–27, 142, 148; Thomas W. Murphy, "Other Mormon Histories: Lamanite Subjectivity in Mexico," *Journal of Mormon History* 26 (Fall 2000): 188–206.

<sup>57</sup>According to George Albert Smith's biographer, LDS Church Pres-

though a missionary presence had been steadily maintained among their “relatives” in the Pacific Islands.<sup>58</sup> In 1946, George Albert Smith responded to this sense of neglect by giving junior apostle Spencer W. Kimball the special assignment to “watch after the Indians in all the world.”<sup>59</sup> Kimball pursued the assignment for the next quarter century, at which point he became president of the Church, an office that allowed him to marshal the resources of the whole Church in service of the Lamanite mission.

Kimball was born in 1895, the son of the president of the Church’s Indian Territory Mission, and grew up in Arizona, where he was struck by the sight of Indians riding atop railroad cars because they were refused seats inside. His patriarchal blessing told him that he would “preach the gospel to many people, but more especially to the Lamanites.” The patriarch also said that he would live to see the Lamanites “organized and be prepared to stand as the bulwarks around this people”—suggesting that Wilford Woodruff’s apocalyptic vision of the Indians defending the Saints from their enemies continued to fire the imaginations of members at the grassroots.<sup>60</sup> LDS teachings regarding the restoration of the Lamanites captivated Kimball. Though he is probably most remembered for ringing in the

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ident Heber J. Grant gave Smith the special assignment “to work with the Lamanites” around 1938, in response to which Smith toured the Pacific Islands and Hopi and Navajo villages. Like Jacob Hamblin before him and Spencer W. Kimball after him, Smith was known as the “Apostle to the Lamanites.” Francis M. Gibbons, *George Albert Smith: Kind and Caring Christian, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 246–47. BYU religion professor Richard O. Cowan attributes the opening of the Church’s Navajo-Zuni Mission in 1943 to a personal petition made by an LDS Navajo woman to President Grant. Reportedly moved to tears, Grant told George Albert Smith: “The time has arrived for the preaching of the gospel to the Lamanites of the Southwest.” Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 222.

<sup>58</sup>Matthew Cowley, *Matthew Cowley Speaks* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), 118.

<sup>59</sup>Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 237.

<sup>60</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, “Lamanite Prophecies Fulfilled,” *BYU Speeches of the Year, 1963* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1965), 2–4.

"long-promised day" when priesthood ordination and temples were opened to people of black African ancestry, Kimball's great passion was the "day of the Lamanite."

As in the nineteenth century, Lamanite identification served Kimball as a means to counteract prejudice and encourage humanitarian service to Indians. In an address during the April 1954 general conference, he asked that Church publications stop using the demeaning terms "buck" and "squaw" in favor of "Indian men and women" and "Lamanite brethren and sisters." He was outraged by a letter he received from an anonymous Latter-day Saint who complained that the presence of Indians in the temples and in local Church leadership was an imposition "on the white race."<sup>61</sup> As head of the Church's Lamanite Committee, Kimball was the driving force behind a number of Church and Brigham Young University programs to benefit "the Lamanites," usually targeting American Indians: Lamanite seminary, Lamanite Mutual Improvement Associations, Lamanite youth conferences, a BYU Institute for Lamanite Research and Service, and, most famously, the Indian (or Lamanite) Student Placement Program, which placed Indian children temporarily in the homes of white Mormons so they could attend off-reservation schools.<sup>62</sup> In the 1970s, BYU boasted that it spent more, per student, on American Indian education than on any other undergraduate program and spent more on Indian scholarships than all other colleges and universities in the United States combined; this commitment was explained as an expression of the Church's mission to the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples.<sup>63</sup>

Lamanite identification gave rise to Kimball's oft-professed love for the Indians, but it did so in ways that encouraged paternalism and *noblesse oblige*. Kimball appeared sincerely scandalized that "[we], their conquerors" had confined the Indians to "reservations with

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<sup>61</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, April 1954, 103; and Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 293.

<sup>62</sup>These programs are named in *Lamanite Handbook of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, February 23, 1968, LDS Church History Library and Archives, Salt Lake City.

<sup>63</sup>*The Lamanite Generation*, BYU-produced pamphlet, LDS Church History Library and Archives. The library dates the pamphlet to the 1970s.

such limited resources . . . while we become fat in the prosperity from the assets we took from them.” However, Kimball’s vision of Lamanite redemption left the Indians dependent on whites for a better future: “Only through us, the ‘nursing fathers and mothers,’ may they eventually enjoy a fulfilment of the many promises made to them.”<sup>64</sup> To imagine white Saints as nursing fathers and mothers was, by extension, to imagine Indians as children. That image was fundamental to an anecdote involving Boyd K. Packer that Kimball found moving. Packer, holding on his lap a “little Lamanite ragamuffin” who had wandered into a Church meeting Packer was attending in Peru, felt that “it was not a single little Lamanite I held” but “a nation, indeed a multitude of nations of deprived, hungering souls.”<sup>65</sup> The paternalism implicit in this brand of Lamanite identification came under fire in the 1970s with the emergence of American Indian civil rights activism: the Church’s Placement Program was one of the chief targets of activists’ criticisms.<sup>66</sup>

Although American Indians were the principal focus of the Church programs Kimball inaugurated, his vision of Lamanite identity was hemispheric, and his work therefore encompassed Latin America and the Pacific Islands as part of what he called “the Lamanite world.”<sup>67</sup> In 1947, just a year after George Albert Smith charged him to minister to the Lamanites, Kimball toured the Church’s Mexican mission and later testified during general conference of his love for the “children of Lehi in the islands of the sea, and . . . in North and South America.”<sup>68</sup> Two years later, he asked the president of the Uruguay Mission for a status report on proselytizing among the Lamanites there; the mission president shortly af-

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<sup>64</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, April 1947, 151–52.

<sup>65</sup>Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 347–48. Consider, in light of this anecdote, the potentially paternalistic connotations of the expression “children of Lehi.”

<sup>66</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children*, 87; James B. Allen, “The Rise and Decline of the LDS Indian Student Placement Program, 1947–1996,” in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson*, edited by Davis Bitton (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998), 85–119.

<sup>67</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, April 1953, 107.

<sup>68</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, April 1947, 145; and Spencer W. Kimball, *ibid.*, October 1947, 19.

terward persuaded the First Presidency and Twelve to initiate missionary work in Paraguay, one of his appeals being that Paraguay's indigenous population would make it the first Lamanite mission in South America.<sup>69</sup> In 1952, Kimball dedicated Central America for the preaching of the gospel, asking for blessings upon "the seed of Lehi . . . in these countries."<sup>70</sup> As apostle and later Church president, he made multiple visits to Latin America and the South Pacific, regularly calling the Saints of native descent in these regions "Lamanites." Hemispheric Lamanite identification was integral to Kimball's sense of the scope of his work. He was fond of citing a figure of 60 million Lamanites worldwide to illustrate the magnitude of the task.<sup>71</sup> An article in the *Church News* published in 1984, at the end of Kimball's presidency, set the number of Lehi's posterity even higher, at 177 million, with a map breaking that figure down by the countries of North and South America and the Pacific.<sup>72</sup>

Having grown up in the early twentieth century, Kimball placed great importance on the racial nature of Lamanite identity. Lamanites should be proud to claim that name, he explained during a 1959 general conference address, because it indicated that "in your veins flows the blood of prophets and statesmen; of emperors and kings; apostles and martyrs."<sup>73</sup> Kimball was particularly interested in the Otavalo Indians of Ecuador, whom he visited in 1967, because

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<sup>69</sup>Frederick S. Williams and Frederick G. Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree: A Personal History of the Establishment and First Quarter Development of the South American Missions* (Fullerton, Calif.: Et Cetera Graphics, 1987), 283–85.

<sup>70</sup>Craig A. Hill, "New Facility Evidence of Growth," *Church News*, July 18, 1992.

<sup>71</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, April 1947, 145; Kimball, *ibid.*, October 1959, 57; Kimball, *ibid.*, October 1976, 9; Kimball, "Of Royal Blood," *Ensign*, July 1971, 7; Kimball, "A Report and a Challenge," *Ensign*, November 1976, 8; Jay M. Todd, "Report of the Seminar for Regional Representatives," *Ensign*, May 1977, 105.

<sup>72</sup>John L. Hart, "Children of Promise," *Church News*, February 26, 1984, 3. A similar, though less exhaustive, breakdown by country had appeared in the 1968 "Lamanite Handbook," 20, which had been prepared under Kimball's direction.

<sup>73</sup>Kimball, *Conference Report*, October 1959, 57–58.



he felt they “might be of pure Lamanite descent.”<sup>74</sup> Kimball espoused a doctrine of “believing blood,” affirming that “the converted Lamanite is devout. Few ever apostatize. . . . [T]he children of Lehi of the twentieth century have inherited that grace and ability to believe like their ancestors of long ago.”<sup>75</sup> He also believed that the Lamanites were literally becoming whiter-skinned in fulfillment of prophecy. During a 1960 general conference, he displayed a photograph to demonstrate that Lamanite missionaries had become “as light as Anglos,” and he claimed that “children in the home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation.”<sup>76</sup> Like Kimball’s paternalism, these racist claims would become uncomfortable for many Mormons, especially after the civil rights era of the 1960s.

Kimball invoked scriptural and prophetic authority to assure Lamanites of their identity. The Book of Mormon “sets at rest” all speculation about “the origin of the early Americans,” Kimball declared in general conference in 1959.<sup>77</sup> He repeated the point during a Lamanite youth conference in 1971: Prior to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, no one knew the true origin of the Native Americans and Pacific Islanders, “but now the question is fully answered.”<sup>78</sup> During a 1976 tour of the Pacific as Church president, Kimball instructed the Saints of Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, and New Zealand that their ancestors had crossed the Pacific with Hagoth; he even proposed the route they had taken.<sup>79</sup> Kimball further lent his prophetic authority to Lamanite identification during temple dedications or rededications in Arizona, Hawaii, and Brazil.<sup>80</sup> By citing the Church’s growth among American Indians, in Latin America, and in the Pacific as fulfillment of the promises made to the Lamanites in scrip-

<sup>74</sup>Francis M. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball: Resolute Disciple, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 238–39.

<sup>75</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 178.

<sup>76</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, October 1960, 34.

<sup>77</sup>Kimball, *Conference Report*, October 1959, 61.

<sup>78</sup>Kimball, “Of Royal Blood,” 7.

<sup>79</sup>Parson, “Hagoth and the Polynesians,” 252; Russell T. Clement, “Polynesian Origins: More Word on the Mormon Perspective,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Winter 1980): 92–97.

<sup>80</sup>Reports in *Church News*: “Temple Dedicatory Prayer,” April 19,

ture, Kimball linked Lamanite identification to the Saints' faith in prophecy and their vision of salvation history.

Under Kimball's presidency, native peoples of the Americas and the Pacific were encouraged to embrace Lamanite identity as their "true heritage" and "true identity"—their answer to the questions: "Who are you?" and "Where do you come from?"<sup>81</sup> This was the message of a pamphlet produced by the Church in 1974, *Lamanites and the Book of Mormon*, and of special conferences for Lamanite youth.<sup>82</sup> A generation earlier, the same message had saturated the special *Teaching Aids for Lamanite Missionaries* developed in 1950 under the direction of Kimball's Indian Relations Committee.<sup>83</sup> Kimball promised that Lamanites could receive a testimony of their identity: "Every Lamanite who reads the Book of Mormon . . . will get a testimony that those are his ancestors, that it is his record, and that he is one of them."<sup>84</sup>

Encouraging Native Americans and Pacific Islanders to identify as descendants of Book of Mormon peoples was nothing new, of course. However, the promotion of Lamanite identity during the Kimball years coincided with a period of rapid international growth for the Church, especially in Latin America, and with a period when "the purpose of life" was a major theme of LDS proselytizing. Together, these factors created a climate that invited unprecedented numbers of people to make Lamanite identity fundamental to their sense of self. Signs of how this invitation was received among Church members at large include the creation of the BYU performing group Lamanite Generation in 1971, as well as testimonials published in Church magazines from American Indian, Latin American, or Pa-

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1975, 4–5, 14; "Pres. Kimball Offers Rededication Prayer," June 24, 1978, 5–7; "Pres. Kimball Dedicates New Temple," November 11, 1978, 6.

<sup>81</sup>The expressions "true heritage" and "true identity" are quoted from George P. Lee, "My Heritage Is Choice," *Ensign*, November 1975, 100.

<sup>82</sup>*Lamanites and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1974); *Lamanite Leadership Youth Conference Booklet 1971*, LDS Church History Library and Archives; and *Guidelines for Lamanite Youth Conferences—1975*, LDS Church History Library and Archives.

<sup>83</sup>Golden R. Buchanan, *Teaching Aids for Lamanite Missionaries* ([Salt Lake City]: Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee, 1950).

<sup>84</sup>Kimball, "Of Royal Blood," 9.

cific Islander Saints asserting that Lamanite identity had made them proud of their ethnicity or gave them hope for their nations' future.<sup>85</sup> One can also point to the 1983 publication of *Historia del mormonismo en México*, by Agricol Lozano, a leader of the Church in Mexico who, in 1967, had become "the first Lamanite stake president." Like Margarito Bautista half a century earlier, Lozano fused Mexican nationalism with Lamanite identity, asserting, for example, that the name Mexico was derived from the Hebrew word for "messiah." Unlike Bautista, Lozano did not challenge Church leadership or the status of white Saints.<sup>86</sup>

Kimball was by no means alone among upper-level Church leaders in his promotion of Lamanite identification. In the four decades between 1946 and 1985, a number of apostles and Church presidents referred to American Indians, Latin Americans, or Pacific Islanders as Lamanites.<sup>87</sup> Among these were Stephen L Richards,<sup>88</sup> Matthew Cowley,<sup>89</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith,<sup>90</sup> LeGrand Richards,<sup>91</sup> Hugh B. Brown,<sup>92</sup> David O. McKay,<sup>93</sup> Gordon B. Hinckley,<sup>94</sup> Mark E. Peter-

<sup>85</sup>See, for example, Lee, "My Heritage Is Choice," 100–101; "Portraits in Miniature," *Ensign*, November 1973, 60; and Lawrence Cummins, "Meet Father Lehi's Children," *Ensign*, December 1975, 26–31.

<sup>86</sup>Murphy, "Other Mormon Histories," 206–9.

<sup>87</sup>Kimball favored the term "Lamanite," but other Church leaders made a point of using alternatives such as "children of Lehi" to signal that the peoples in question might also be descended from other Book of Mormon lineages.

<sup>88</sup>Stephen L Richards, *Conference Report*, October 1948, 147–48.

<sup>89</sup>Cowley, *Matthew Cowley Speaks*, 118.

<sup>90</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man, His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), 172–73.

<sup>91</sup>LeGrand Richards, *Israel! Do You Know?* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), 37.

<sup>92</sup>Quoted in David W. Cummings, *Mighty Missionary of the Pacific: The Building Program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—Its History, Scope, and Significance* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1961), 63.

<sup>93</sup>David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, April 1957, 58–59; "Dedicatory Prayer Delivered by Pres. McKay at New Zealand Temple," *Church News*, May 10, 1958, 2, 6.

<sup>94</sup>Gordon B. Hinckley, "Temple in the Pacific," *Improvement Era* 61

sen,<sup>95</sup> Boyd K. Packer,<sup>96</sup> Marvin J. Ashton,<sup>97</sup> Harold B. Lee,<sup>98</sup> James E. Faust,<sup>99</sup> Howard W. Hunter,<sup>100</sup> and Bruce R. McConkie.<sup>101</sup> Reportedly, Apostle Harold B. Lee believed that he had received revelation that the Andean region of South America, which he dedicated for missionary work, was the setting for much of the Book of Mormon.<sup>102</sup>

For those Church leaders who were invested in antimodernism, Lamanite identification offered an occasion to assert the superiority of revealed truth. "We Latter-day Saints have learned through revelation . . . why the Indian (Lamanite) is reddish-brown," Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith affirmed in 1954, whereas "the man who depends on his science alone cannot understand this."<sup>103</sup> Apostle Mark E. Petersen likewise dismissed secular theories about the origins of native peoples he regarded as Lamanites: "As Latter-day Saints we have always believed that the Polynesians are descendants of Lehi and blood relatives of the American Indians," he told a 1962 general conference, "despite the contrary theories of other men."<sup>104</sup> Petersen eschewed the nuancing disclaimers that some LDS writers used to tem-

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(July 1958): 509.

<sup>95</sup>Mark E. Petersen, *Conference Report*, April 1962, 112.

<sup>96</sup>Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 327–28; see also Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 347–48.

<sup>97</sup>Marvin J. Ashton, "Love of the Right," *Ensign*, June 1971, 32.

<sup>98</sup>Harold B. Lee, "May the Kingdom of God Go Forth," *Ensign*, January 1973, 23.

<sup>99</sup>James E. Faust, "The Keys of the Kingdom," *Ensign*, November 1975, 56–57.

<sup>100</sup>Jack E. Jarrard, "800th Stake in Church Is Formed in Mexico," *Church News*, January 29, 1977, 3–4.

<sup>101</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 209.

<sup>102</sup>Williams and Williams, *From Acorn to Oak Tree*, 300.

<sup>103</sup>Smith's rejection of scientific theories regarding the origins of American Indians was linked to his conviction that "in the beginning the Lord did not make man black, yellow and brown" but rather "of one family, white and delightful." The diverse "color and national characteristics" encountered today were "added later" by the Lord through such events as the marking of Cain or the curse upon the Lamanites. See Smith, *Man, His Origin and Destiny*, 172–73, 419–20.

<sup>104</sup>Petersen, *Conference Report*, April 1962, 112.

per the dissonance between hemispheric Lamanite identification and science. He insisted, rather, that “the descendants of Laman and Lemuel were sifted over the vast areas of the western hemisphere . . . from pole to pole,” with the result that “in the South Pacific Islands, 90 percent of the Church membership has Lamanite lineage.”<sup>105</sup> Popular apostle-scriptorian LeGrand Richards made a similarly bold assertion: that “all” of “the dark-skinned people who occupied this land of America” were of the blood of Israel.<sup>106</sup> For these apostles, Lamanite identification was part of an appealingly simple account of the peopling of the world, grounded in a strictly literal reading of the scriptures and bound up in the conviction that racial differences had religious significance.

Related to LDS antimodernism was the role of Lamanite identification in Book of Mormon apologetics. Mormons had a long history of pointing to the remains of civilizations in Central or South America as tangible evidence for the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith himself had made this apologetic move.<sup>107</sup> In 1881, the same year that he dedicated Mexico for the preaching of the gospel to the Lamanites, Apostle Moses Thatcher proposed that the character Votan, from the Maya text the *Popol Vuh*, was the brother of Jared from the Book of Mormon.<sup>108</sup> Milton R. Hunter, of the First Council of Seventy, linked peoples of ancient Mexico to the Book of Mormon in general conference addresses and Deseret Book publications of the 1950s-70s. On the basis of his own study of Mesoamerican archaeology, Hunter identified the Toltecs as Nephites, the Olmecs as Mulekites, and the ancestors of the Quiché Maya as Lamanites. Hunter was a principal promoter of what proved, among Latter-day Saints, to be the popular equation of ancient Mesoamerican god Quetzalcoatl with Jesus Christ.<sup>109</sup>

At the same time, other LDS writers, some ranking Church authorities among them, continued the trend of nuancing hemispheric

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<sup>105</sup>Mark E. Petersen, *Children of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1981), 31; Mark E. Petersen, *Joseph of Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 110.

<sup>106</sup>Richards, *Israel!*, 37.

<sup>107</sup>Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 102.

<sup>108</sup>Moses Thatcher, “Divine Origin of the Book of Mormon IV,” *Contributor* 2 (July 1881): 291.

<sup>109</sup>Milton R. Hunter, *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake

Lamanite identification with the admission that groups other than Book of Mormon peoples had migrated to the Americas and the Pacific. Gordon B. Hinckley used careful language as early as 1947, stating that "a remnant of the Lamanite nation is found today among the American Indians."<sup>110</sup> Seventy Antoine R. Ivins was prepared to imagine "great changes" in the demographics of the Book of Mormon lands after 420 A.D. and even the possibility that "there may have been other peoples whom the Nephites never discovered then living on this great land."<sup>111</sup> The most oft-cited instance of nuanced hemispheric Lamanite identification during Kimball's years as Church president is the Introduction to the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon, with its ambiguous assertion that "the Lamanites . . . are the *principal* ancestors of the American Indians" (emphasis mine). It is not clear what, if anything, should be made of the fact that this statement does not mention Pacific Islanders. The use of qualifying language in the 1981 introduction is important as a sign that at least some of the antimodernism of Joseph Fielding Smith and Mark E. Petersen was waning by the end of Kimball's presidency.

Kimball's years as apostle and Church president were the height of Lamanite identification, but that same period witnessed shifts that would contribute to a decrease in Lamanite discourse once Kimball was no longer on the scene. One of these shifts was the Church's increasing emphasis on the Christ-centered nature of Mormonism, which gained momentum during the late 1970s and

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City: Deseret Book, 1956); Hunter, *Christ in Ancient America* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1959); Hunter, *Conference Report*, October 1954, 106–14; Hunter, *Conference Report*, April 1961, 50–54; and Hunter, *Conference Report*, April 1970, 136–38.

<sup>110</sup>Gordon B. Hinckley, *What of the Mormons?* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1947), 78. On the other hand, Hinckley, then an Assistant to the Twelve, in reporting on the New Zealand Temple dedication in 1958, showed that lineal hemispheric Lamanite identity, together with Anglo-Israelite identity, informed his understanding of the gathering of Israel. The temple dedication had brought together "two great strains of the house of Israel—the children of Ephraim from the isles of Britain, and the children of Lehi from the isles of the Pacific." Hinckley, "Temple in the Pacific," 509.

<sup>111</sup>Antoine R. Ivins, "The Lamanites," *Relief Society Magazine* 37 (April 1950): 508.

early 1980s in response to increased opposition to Mormonism from evangelical Protestants (as exemplified by the film *The God Makers*) and out of a desire to work with Christian coalitions like the Moral Majority.<sup>112</sup> In the post-Kimball years, LDS discourse about bringing all people to Christ came to displace lineage-centered discourse regarding the gathering of Israel, thus rendering Lamanite identification effectively irrelevant to the Church's primary mission. Another development within Mormonism that would promote dramatic changes in Lamanite discourse after Kimball was the increased engagement of LDS scholars with the mainstream of academia during the 1960s and 1970s, which had the effect of reducing Mormon antimodernism. (See next section.)

During Kimball's lifetime, the chief forces that pushed against his emphasis on Lamanites were the Church's international growth and the rise of correlation at headquarters. As the Church grew worldwide, especially in Asia, it became increasingly difficult for Church leaders to justify giving what amounted to privileged treatment to American Indians, Latin Americans, and Polynesians. Why, for example, did the Church build schools in Mexico and Polynesia but not in Asia?<sup>113</sup> Why did BYU devote so many resources to Lamanites and not to other minorities? Kimball's approach to the Lamanites was admittedly preferential. In Kimball's view, as paraphrased by his biographers, the Lamanites had a "special claim" on the Church by virtue of the promises made to their Book of Mormon ancestors and the special charge the Saints had received to be their nurs-

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<sup>112</sup>Jan Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 341, 350–51. For further documentation of the shift toward a more Christ-centered discourse, see John-Charles Duffy, "The New Missionary Discussions and the Future of Correlation," *Sunstone* 138 (September 2005): 44 note 30.

<sup>113</sup>Paul Rose, who had served as a mission president in the Philippines, told a BYU 1972 symposium on the Church in Asia that he had raised this issue with Church leaders: "If we had Church schools in Asia it would greatly help the work. If schools are good in Mexico, they're good in other areas. I feel very strongly about this. I've talked to Brother Neal Maxwell and others about this, and I think they're aware of the problem." R. Lanier Britsch, Paul S. Rose, H. Grant Heaton, Adney Y. Komatsu, and Spencer J. Palmer, "A Symposium: Problems and Opportunities of Missionary Work in Asia," *BYU Studies* 12 (Autumn 1971): 104.



ing fathers and mothers. Kimball espoused a doctrine of racial privilege, one that worked in the interests of the Lamanites but left other peoples without the same advantages. Kimball "reacted with shock," according to his biographers, to discover in the late 1960s that some of his colleagues among the Twelve did not share his views on the "priority" due to the Lamanites.<sup>114</sup> Although Lamanite identification was part of the worldview of other apostles, the cause of the Lamanites did not occupy their vision as it did Kimball's. The needs of other segments of the Church's increasingly diverse membership called for Church leaders' attention.

In addition, the push for correlation—for organizational efficiency and uniformity—bred resistance to special programs or jurisdictions for Lamanites.<sup>115</sup> Kimball insisted that "the Lord certainly had in mind that there should be Lamanite branches, Lamanite

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<sup>114</sup>Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 366. The *Lamanite Handbook*, 11, prepared by Kimball's Lamanite Committee argued for a kind of affirmative action in the Church's work with Lamanites (meaning, especially, American Indians). The context of the statement was youth programs, but the principle applied to other Lamanite programs: "Because the Lamanites have been deprived and underprivileged for many generations, it now requires an extra effort on the part of the Church system to provide the same opportunities for youth as are available to non-Lamanite youth."

<sup>115</sup>Resistance by Church leaders to special programs affected American Indians more than other "Lamanites" because, in Latin America and the Pacific Islands, Lamanite mission work was integrated into regular mission work, not administered through separate programs, as in the United States. This fact is important because it points to a difficulty with Mauss's treatment of the dismantling of Indian programs described in *All Abraham's Children*, an indispensable resource in many other ways. Mauss describes the dismantling of Indian programs as part of a process in which "Anglo-Mormons gradually [reconstructed] their definition of *Lamanite* in such a way as to transfer the divine destiny implied in that term to the peoples of the South, while leaving increasingly dubious the divine status of the aboriginal Indians of the North who had originally been considered the true Lamanites of the Book of Mormon" (p. 136). Mauss's interpretation does not account for the extent to which LDS discourse at various levels, official and unofficial, identified Latin Americans as Lamanites well before the late twentieth century. Mauss is correct that, since Kimball's administra-

stakes, Lamanite missions.”<sup>116</sup> But other Church leaders were not persuaded. Separate programs for Lamanites required extra effort and expenditures; and given the low retention rates among Indian members (a fact that pushed against rhetoric about Lamanites’ exceptional faithfulness), not all Church leaders believed that the results justified the costs.<sup>117</sup> A sign of things to come was a question that appeared on a 1975 evaluation form for Lamanite youth conferences, asking organizers how they felt about the practice of organizing separate Lamanite conferences as opposed to integrating Lamanites with other youth.<sup>118</sup> Shortly before Kimball became Church president in late 1973, special Indian missions began to be dissolved into missions organized by geographical region.<sup>119</sup> Gradually, Church organizations created to serve Lamanites were reconceived as serving minorities more generally. The Indian Committee became the Committee for Lamanites and Minority Affairs; Lamanite programs at BYU came under the auspices of a Multicultural Education program. The controversial Indian Placement Program was drastically cut back; by

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tion, Church leaders have paid less attention to American Indians than to “Lamanites” in Latin America, where the Church has enjoyed greater “success,” as defined by Church administrators. However, this is a question of realigning institutional priorities, not of doubting the Lamanite identity of American Indians. The crucial shift in LDS discourse about Lamanites has not been from North to South, but from hemispheric Lamanite identification to limited Lamanite identification or no Lamanite identification. This shift has impacted *all* of the peoples traditionally identified as Lamanites, though the impact has been most visible for American Indians because of the loss of the special programs through which the Lamanite mission was pursued in the United States.

<sup>116</sup>Kimball delivered these instructions to regional representatives and other general Church authorities in his capacity as Church president. Todd, “Report of the Seminar for Regional Representatives,” 105.

<sup>117</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children*, 95–98.

<sup>118</sup>*Guidelines for Youth Conferences–1975*, not paginated.

<sup>119</sup>Indian missions were not the only targets of this reorganization: missions serving specific LDS historical sites (Cumorah, Nauvoo, etc.) or language groups (Spanish-American) were also integrated into missions organized according to geographic region. See “Full-time Missions,” *Deseret Morning News 2006 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2005), 484–508, entries 33, 38, 46a, 77, 78, 97.

the end of the 1990s, it had been phased out.<sup>120</sup>

A final source of resistance to Lamanite identification came from "Lamanites" themselves. Individuals whom Church leaders considered Lamanites displayed varying degrees of commitment to the identity. This point was driven home in an *Ensign* article, published a year before Kimball became Church president, titled "What Is a Lamanite?" Written by Harold Brown, a white Latter-day Saint with extensive experience in Mexico and Argentina, the article conveyed the diversity of attitudes toward Lamanite identification among Latin American Saints by depicting an imaginary conversation among LDS young adults from several different Spanish-speaking countries. Some voices in the conversation expressed pride in their Lamanite heritage, which they conflated with ethno-nationalist sentiments recalling the glories of the Aztec, Maya, and Inca empires. But other voices maintained that Lamanite identification had little importance for them, either because their primary identity was national, not ethnic, or because they had no Indian ancestry. Brown's article also gave voice to concerns that the name "Lamanite" connoted "benighted" and that too much emphasis on Lamanite heritage undermined bonds of unity and equality with other Church members.<sup>121</sup> These concerns were overshadowed during the Kimball presidency, when the spotlight fell on those Saints who articulated their identities in terms that echoed Kimball's own teachings about Lamanites. But Brown's article was an important, if overlooked, reminder that not all Saints whom Church leaders such as Kimball saw as Lamanites understood themselves in those same terms.

### THE POST-KIMBALL YEARS, AFTER 1985

The two decades following Kimball's death in 1985 saw a sharp, immediate decline in Lamanite identification by top-level Church leaders. In large part, this decline simply reflected the fact that Kimball had been the major source of, and driving force behind, most Lamanite discourse during the preceding forty years. In addition, several factors motivated Church leaders to downplay the significance of claims to Lamanite identity: an intensified emphasis on the universal, Christ-centered aspects of LDS teaching; decreased attraction to doc-

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<sup>120</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 86–87, 98–100.

<sup>121</sup>Harold Brown, "What Is a Lamanite?" *Ensign*, September 1972, 62–63.

trines of lineage as a result of the Church's international growth and shifting social attitudes about race; and rhetorical exigencies occasioned by Church leaders' desire to dismantle special Indian programs. Two factors which have been especially significant in reducing Lamanite identification since the mid-1990s are: (1) Church leaders' concerns that unity may be threatened by members' undue investment in cultural or ethnic identities; and (2) the need to accommodate limited Lamanite identification as a strategy for affirming the Book of Mormon's antiquity without seeming to challenge previous leaders' teachings regarding Lamanite identity.

With the inauguration of Ezra Taft Benson's presidency in 1985, a new emphasis took center stage in official discourse about the Church's mission, displacing Kimball's pursuit of Lamanite redemption. Benson's presidency boosted the momentum of a process that had begun in the 1950s: the promotion of an evangelical LDS discourse that was self-consciously Christ-centered and employed a Protestant-informed vocabulary about grace, sanctification, new birth, and so on. The threefold mission of the Church formulated during Kimball's presidency—perfecting the Saints, proclaiming the gospel, redeeming the dead—was summed up during Benson's presidency in a new, conspicuously Christocentric formula: “to invite all to come to Christ.”<sup>122</sup> The *all* in this formula is significant because it reflects the fact that the new evangelical Mormonism was overtly universal in scope. By the end of the twentieth century, as Armand Mauss has documented, LDS leaders were “virtually ignoring” the doctrines of covenant and cursed lineages that had pervaded Mormon discourse throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in favor of Christian universalism.<sup>123</sup> The gathering of scattered Israel to Zion was no longer the governing image for the Church's work: Church leaders now vigorously encouraged members to understand their mission as gathering all people to Christ.<sup>124</sup> The universal nature of the invitation to come to Christ obviated the need to call special attention to the task of redeeming the Lamanites, which had formerly been conceived

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<sup>122</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, “A Report of My Stewardship,” *Ensign*, May 1981, 5; and “June Videoconference: ‘Accomplishing the Mission of the Church,’” *Ensign*, September 1987, 73.

<sup>123</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 36.

<sup>124</sup>A disjointed, even confusing, 2006 general conference address by Russell M. Nelson illustrates how contemporary correlation strips lin-

as one theater for the gathering of Israel.

Another way that evangelical discourse yielded a reduction in Lamanite discourse was by reframing the purpose of the Book of Mormon. In reclaiming an evangelical ethos for the Book of Mormon, Church leaders promoted it as God's instrument to the Church to convince Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.<sup>125</sup> This was a shift away from earlier teachings that "the chief reason" God gave the Latter-day Saints the Book of Mormon was to bring to "the descendants of Father Lehi the knowledge of the Redeemer of the world, and to establish them in the faith of their fathers."<sup>126</sup> This was the dimension of the Book of Mormon's mission that Kimball had stressed.<sup>127</sup> However, Lamanite identification was less relevant to evangelical Mormonism's promotion of the Book of Mormon as a message for the whole world.

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eage-based promises from discourse about the gathering of Israel. Nelson begins his talk with God's promise to make Abraham's posterity "a chosen people," followed by a historical summary of the literal scattering of Israel among "all nations" as a result of wickedness. Nelson then states that "the long-awaited gathering of scattered Israel" must occur "as part of" the promised restoration of all things. He cites the appearance of Moses, Elias, and Elijah in the Kirtland Temple as inaugurating the promised gathering and, in a footnote, refers to Orson Hyde's dedication of Palestine for the return of the Jews. From this point on, however, Nelson's talk takes a universalizing turn. Although Nelson has described the scattering as the literal displacement of a particular people from a promised homeland, he equates the gathering with family history, temple work for the dead, and missionary work. Further, he denies at some length that the gathering requires a literal migration. At an unannounced point between Nelson's discussion of the scattering and his discussion of the gathering, chosen lineages and promised lands drop out of the story, replaced by the universalist assurance that "Saints in every land have equal claim upon the blessings of the Lord." Russell M. Nelson, "The Gathering of Scattered Israel," *Ensign*, November 2006, 79–81.

<sup>125</sup>Ezra Taft Benson and Gordon B. Hinckley identified this formula as the Book of Mormon's own statement of purpose. In one instance, Benson added, "and Lamanite," but that phrase dropped out in Church leaders' subsequent repetitions of the formula. Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God," *Ensign*, January 1988, 34; and Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, June 1988, 6.

<sup>126</sup>Melvin J. Ballard, *Conference Report*, October 1926, 40.

<sup>127</sup>The difference between Kimball's Lamanite-centered sense of the

At the same time, the international growth of the Church after the 1960s, in tandem with the anti-racist consciousness that gained ascendancy during the civil rights era, diminished the appeal of doctrines about lineage as explanations for missionary success and rendered the conception of a worldwide scattering of Israel less meaningful. With members all over the world being told in their patriarchal blessings that their lineage was of the house of Ephraim, it became less plausible to believe that these members were all literally descended from scattered Israelites. Growing numbers of Saints therefore began to conclude that their declared lineage was adoptive, a development that Church leaders tolerated, if not encouraged, through the ambiguity of official discourse on the subject.<sup>128</sup> If all people could obtain the blessings of the gospel by coming to Christ—as emphasized in evangelical Mormon discourse—what did it matter if one was or was not a lineal descendant of Israel?

Certainly there were many within Mormonism who remained invested in doctrines of lineage. BYU religion professors Robert Millet and Joseph Fielding McConkie, for example, were disappointed to find that many Latter-day Saint students believed themselves adopted into Israel and questioned the relevance of bloodlineage.<sup>129</sup> But such concerns reflected an antimodernist orientation that was becoming less compelling for many Saints, at least in

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Book of Mormon's purpose and that promoted by LDS leaders after Kimball's death may be seen in his April 1977 address to the Church's regional representatives, during which Kimball quoted from the title page of the Book of Mormon. Where General Authorities after him focused on the statement that the book's purpose was to convince Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, Kimball quoted at greater length, though also selectively, to emphasize first and foremost that the book was "written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel . . . to show unto . . . the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD." Quoted in Todd, "Report of the Seminar for Regional Representatives," 104–5, ellipses in original.

<sup>128</sup>Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 34–35.

<sup>129</sup>During the 1989 Sperry Symposium at BYU, Millet reported with dismay that a returned missionary had asked him some years earlier, "What difference does it make if I am of the house of Israel? Why does it matter

the United States. The logic that led some to wonder why it mattered whether or not someone was literally descended from Ephraim invited the same question about being literally descended from Lehi. As a worldview that emphasized lineage became less important for many Saints, so too did Lamanite identification. Ironically, Kimball himself had made a momentous contribution to undermining the relevance of lineage in Mormon teaching—and thus to undermining the relevance of Lamanite identity—through his role in lifting the black priesthood ban.

Church leaders' desire to continue dismantling the special Indian programs created under Kimball's tenure was yet another motivation to reduce Lamanite discourse, since leaders needed to downplay the special claims for Lamanites that had originally legitimated those programs. An unforeseen consequence of this development was the excommunication of Navajo Seventy George P. Lee in 1989. Incensed by the dismantling of Indian programs, Lee quoted the Book of Mormon (much as Margarito Bautista had done half a century earlier) to assert a subordinate role for white Saints and thus for the majority of LDS leaders. They were Gentiles adopted into Israel, while Lamanites were Israel by blood-descent. In addition, Lee accused the First Presidency and Twelve of "teaching that the 'Day of the Lamanites' is over and past"; "downplay[ing] the role of the Lamanites in these last days"; teaching "that the Book of Mormon is not written to the Lamanites but to the Gentiles in our day"; and "com[ing] very close to denying that the Book of Mormon is about

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that I am of the tribe of Ephraim?" Millet had then asked the class, "How many of you feel that you are adopted into the house of Israel?' Of the eighty members of the class, perhaps sixty raised their hands, evidencing their own misunderstandings concerning patriarchal declarations of lineage." Robert L. Millet, "The House of Israel: From Everlasting to Everlasting," in *A Witness of Jesus Christ: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Old Testament*, edited by Richard D. Draper (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 178. Millet's complaint was reprinted in 1994 and 2000: Millet, *The Power of the Word: Saving Doctrines from the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 209–27; and Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 255–75. See also Robert L. Millet and Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Our Destiny: The Call and Election of the House of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993; rpt., Sandy, Utah: Leatherwood Press, 2006).



Lamanites.” Taking cues, perhaps, from the rhetoric of non-LDS Indian activists, Lee characterized these shifts in discourse as a “silent behind the scenes subtle scriptural and spiritual slaughter of the Lamanites.”<sup>130</sup> Granted that Lee’s account of Church leaders’ teachings is exaggerated, his complaints nevertheless provide a window onto Church leaders’ retreat from Lamanite discourse following Kimball’s death.

The ascendance of evangelical Mormonism, the corresponding decline in the salience of doctrines of lineage, and the dismantling of Indian programs all prompted a general reduction of Lamanite identification in Church leaders’ discourse. At the same time, a new, *limited* Lamanite identification came to compete with hemispheric Lamanite identification in Latter-day Saints’ imaginations.<sup>131</sup> Limited Lamanite identification was a corollary to BYU anthropologist John Sorenson’s Tehuantepec setting for Book of Mormon geography, which he introduced to Church members near the end of Kimball’s presidency through articles in the *Ensign* and the Deseret Book publication *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*.<sup>132</sup> Sorenson’s limited geography—which posited a narrow physical stage for Book of Mormon events in southern Mexico, near the Yucatan Peninsula, as opposed to much larger sections of North and South America—appealed to a category of LDS intellectuals that started to emerge during the late 1970s. These new intellectuals, or “faithful scholars,” were neither antimodernists nor self-taught dilettantes. Rather, they were trained academics who wanted a faith that was orthodox (entailing, in this case, affirmation of the antiquity of the Book of Mormon) yet credible by mainstream secular standards. The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), housed at BYU and eventually adopted as part of its struc-

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<sup>130</sup>Quoted in “The Lee Letters,” *Sunstone*, August 1989, 50–55.

<sup>131</sup>The term “imagination” used here refers neutrally to the images, conceptualizations, or understandings of Lamanite identity (and of the setting of Book of Mormon events) that Latter-day Saints carry in their minds.

<sup>132</sup>John L. Sorenson, “Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture, Part 1,” *Ensign*, September 1984, 26–37, and Part 2, October 1984, 12–23; and John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1985).

ture, became a center of gravity for such scholars and their lay supporters after the mid-1980s, with encouragement from Apostles Neal A. Maxwell, Dallin H. Oaks, and Jeffrey R. Holland. Not incidentally, FARMS was also a primary promoter of the limited geography theory.

Hemispheric Lamanite identification was a liability for faithful scholars because it stood in greater tension with mainstream science than they could tolerate. A limited Book of Mormon geography resolved what they perceived as pressing secular challenges to the Book of Mormon. Of course, a limited geography theory also created problems for Saints whose identities were bound up in hemispheric Lamanite identification; but those identity problems did not directly touch the mostly white, English-speaking Americans drawn to FARMS.

It is important to note that hemispheric Lamanite identification did not disappear entirely in the post-Kimball years. Church leaders retreated from teachings that gave Lamanites privileged status in the Church, but some senior officials continued to identify Native Americans of both continents as Lamanites, or "children of Lehi" (the preferred term after Kimball's death), as they had been taught while growing up during the early twentieth century. Right through to the beginning of the twenty-first century, members of the First Presidency—Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and James E. Faust—continued the tradition of referring to Latin Americans as children of Lehi on ceremonial occasions such as temple dedications.<sup>133</sup> For Hinckley, at least, Lamanite identification remained explicitly racial, albeit with some nuance. He told an audience of Mexican Saints in 1996 that "father Lehi" would be pleased by

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<sup>133</sup>While organizing the Church's 2000th stake in 1994, Hunter told his Mexican audience that "the promises made to Father Lehi and his children about their posterity have been and are continuing to be fulfilled in Mexico." Quoted in "Pres. Hunter's Admonition: Let Lives Reflect the Gospel," *Church News*, December 17, 1994. He had made a similar statement when organizing the Church's 800th stake, also in Mexico in 1977. Quoted in "800th Stake in Church Is Formed in Mexico." As Church president, Hinckley repeatedly told American Indian and Latin American Saints that Father Lehi must weep (with joy or sorrow, depending on the context) when he looks upon his posterity. See "Mexico Welcomes Prophet's Visit," *Church News*, February 3, 1996; "Messages of Inspiration from President Hinckley,"

the faithfulness of “his children, so many of you who carry within your veins his blood.”<sup>134</sup>

Quotations from various Seventies and mission presidents appearing in *Church News* stories from the post-Kimball years demonstrate that traditional Lamanite identification continued—especially in Latin America but also among American Indians—to motivate missionary work, to demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecy, to fuel a sense of walking where ancients prophets walked, and to provide the satisfaction of helping restore a branch of the house of Israel in preparation for Christ’s second coming.<sup>135</sup> Even some non-nuanced versions of hemispheric Lamanite identification persisted. In 1995, emeritus Seventy Ted E. Brewerton quoted Mark E. Petersen to assert that “the descendants of Laman and Lemuel . . . are found from pole to pole.”<sup>136</sup> Five years later, on the cusp of the new millennium, Walter F. Gonzalez (then an area authority Seventy, later a member of the First Council of Seventy) cited Spencer W. Kimball’s definition of

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*Church News*, May 3, 1997; Gordon B. Hinckley, “Look to the Future,” *Ensign*, November 1997, 67; and “President Hinckley Tours Mexico and Belize,” *Ensign*, February 1998, 77. Hinckley employed the same image when, as a counselor in the First Presidency, he dedicated the Lima Peru Temple in 1986. Quoted in Glen V. Holley, “Lehi’s Children Blessed by Lima Temple,” *Church News*, January 27, 1990. See also temple dedicatory prayers by Hinckley, Monson, and Faust for 1999–2000, quoted in Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe*, 38–39.

<sup>134</sup>“Mexico Welcomes Prophet’s Visit.”

<sup>135</sup>See the following *Church News* articles: Vira H. Blake, “Dedication Honors ‘Ancient Ones,’” January 30, 1988; John L. Hart, “Call Is in Keeping with Ancient Promise,” July 1, 1989; Elayne Wells, “A Land of Prophecy,” February 17, 1990; Craig A. Hill, “New Facility Evidence of Growth,” July 18, 1992; Julie A. Dockstader, “Spiritual Foundation Set Early in Life,” August 8, 1992; and “Eight New Missions Announced,” March 6, 1993.

<sup>136</sup>Ted E. Brewerton, “The Book of Mormon: A Sacred Ancient Record,” *Ensign*, November 1995, 30, emphasis his. Brewerton nuanced his hemispheric identification with an acknowledgment that “many migratory groups came to the Americas,” but he nevertheless maintained that peoples throughout the Americas were blood descendants of Book of Mormon peoples: “The blood of these people flows in the veins of the Blackfoot and the Blood Indians of Alberta, Canada; in the Navajo and the Apache of the American Southwest; the Inca of western South America; the Aztec of Mexico; the Maya of Guatemala; and in other native American groups in the

Lamanite as including "all Indians and Indian mixtures."<sup>137</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that Lamanite discourse in the post-Kimball years was more likely to appear in the *Church News* than in the *Ensign* and to come from Seventies or mission presidents than from apostles. In other words, official discourse at the highest tiers was comparatively more reserved about identifying contemporary peoples as Lamanites except for ceremonial contexts like temple dedications.

One aspect of Lamanite identification that seems to have actually disappeared, not just declined, from Church discourse at the highest levels is the identification of Pacific Islanders as Lamanites. As noted earlier, the Introduction to the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon was silent about whether Pacific Islanders are descended from Book of Mormon peoples. In a similar way, Church leaders speaking in the Pacific Islands since the 1990s omitted allusions to Book of Mormon descent in settings where such allusions would have been likely had the audiences been Latin American. When Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Kona Hawaii and Suva Fiji temples in 2000, or the rebuilt Apia Samoa temple in 2005, his prayers made no reference to peoples of the Pacific being children of Lehi.<sup>138</sup> Such references were likewise missing from *Church News* coverage of Hinckley's tours of New Zealand in 1997 and of various Pacific Islands in 2000,<sup>139</sup> as well as from coverage of a number of milestone events such as the sesquicentennial of the Mormon presence in the Pacific or the organization of the 100th

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Western Hemisphere and the Pacific islands" (30–31).

<sup>137</sup>Walter F. Gonzalez, "Book of Mormon Has Direct Message for Children of Lehi," *Church News*, January 1, 2000, 6, 13.

<sup>138</sup>The dedicatory prayer for the Kona Hawaii Temple is published as "Here to Taste the Sweet Refreshment of the Holy Spirit," *Church News*, January 29, 2000. Excerpts from the Suva Fiji Temple dedicatory prayer appear in "May Be Blessed with Peace," *Church News*, June 24, 2000; full text available at <http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/suva/prayer> (accessed June 14, 2007). For the dedicatory prayer of the rebuilt Apia Samoa Temple, see "'A Sacred House' Again in Samoa," *Church News*, September 10, 2005.

<sup>139</sup>"Pres. Hinckley Visits New Zealand," *Church News*, May 17, 1997; "We Have Been on a Long Journey—But It Was a Great Occasion," *Church News*, July 1, 2000.

stake in the Pacific Area.<sup>140</sup>

Possibly Church leaders at these events made allusions to Lamanite identity that the *Church News* reports did not include; still, the omission stands out given that Lamanite identification appeared in *Church News* coverage of similar events in Latin America around the same time. It is true that Hinckley told American Samoans that they were “a choice and delightful . . . people” who had been “born with a great and precious birthright,” and his dedicatory prayer for the Apia Samoa Temple stated that “in these islands of Samoa” the Lord had remembered his “ancient promise ‘unto them who are upon the isles of the sea’ (2 Ne. 10:21).”<sup>141</sup> But these were at best ambiguous affirmations of Book of Mormon ancestry. If Church leaders deliberately refrained from identifying Pacific Islanders as Lamanites, they may have done so because they were conscious of the ethnic diversity of the Church’s membership in these islands, which included descendents of European and East Asian immigrants.<sup>142</sup> At the same time, a pageant produced by the Kauai Hawaii stake in 1996 reflected a continued attachment to the idea of descent from Hagoth’s people.<sup>143</sup>

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, additional motives have arisen

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<sup>140</sup>*Church News*: John L. Hart, “Celebrating 100 Years in Tonga,” August 31, 1991; Sarah Jane Weaver, “Pacific Area Reaches Milestone with 100th Stake,” July 19, 1997; Scott Lowe, “Thousands Honor ‘Pioneers of Pacific,’” October 18, 1997; “50 Years in Fiji,” December 18, 2004.

<sup>141</sup>“We Have Been on a Long Journey”; “‘A Sacred House’ Again in Samoa,” *Church News*, September 10, 2005.

<sup>142</sup>See, for example, references to the Church’s ethnic diversity in New Zealand: “Pres. Hinckley Visits New Zealand,” *Church News*, May 17, 1997; “Steadfast in Faith from One Era to the Next,” *Church News*, July 26, 2003; “Pageant Reflects Heritage,” *Church News*, October 2, 2004. In “Pres. Hinckley Visits New Zealand,” Hinckley told one New Zealand audience that their ethnic diversity demonstrated the principle that God is no respecter of persons.

<sup>143</sup>Julie A. Dockstader, “Hawaiian Saints Keep ‘Promise’ to Touch Lives,” *Church News*, September 7, 1996. A few years earlier, the *Church News* had dedicated an entire article to a Sperry Symposium paper by emeritus BYU religion professor Robert Parsons, who affirmed that “there have been enough semi-official statements by prophets of the Lord to leave little doubt that the Church believes that the Polynesians are direct blood relatives of Lehi’s colony and that Hagoth’s lost ships provide at least one con-

for Church leaders to avoid Lamanite identification. First, since the mid-1990s, the correlation impulse and the challenges of managing diversity in the international Church have intensified leaders' desire for uniformity.<sup>144</sup> This impulse has translated into an insistence that members subordinate their ethnic and cultural identities to their identities as members of Christ's church. In the campaign to subordinate cultural diversity to gospel unity, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland specifically targeted Lamanite identity. At a pioneer sesquicentennial conference for Native Americans in 1997 and again at a conference held in 2006 on the Navajo reservation, Holland called on American Indians in the Church to relinquish Lamanite identity as their primary identity—a reversal of the message they had received during Kimball's presidency. "We do not emphasize racial, or cultural distinctions, including Lamanite or tribal distinctions, in the Church," Holland preached. "We are moving toward that millennial day where . . . there are no more -ites among us." To diminish the special role in salvation history that past LDS teachings had assigned to Lamanites, Holland recast those teachings into a context of Christian universalism. The going forth of the gospel to the Lamanites was a sign that the gospel was again going forth to *all* people. The promised blossoming of the Lamanites referred to individual spiritual growth, not to the dramatic, wholesale restoration of a people. In lieu of special Church programs such as Indian Student Placement, Holland explicitly recommended "a new placement program—placing ourselves within the covenants, ordinances and promises of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Holland was trying to produce major changes in how Indian Saints understood and esteemed Lamanite identity. However, on both occasions his new vision for Lamanite identity competed with reiterations of older teachings by other speakers who were not General Authorities. These speakers affirmed that Native Americans "are a mixture of the seed of" the Hebrew tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah, and that Christ had visited the ancestors of conference attendees.<sup>145</sup>

The second motive—a potential one, at least—for avoiding Lamanite identification in official discourse is the controversy

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nection between the Americas and Polynesia." "Hagoth Believed To Be Link Between Polynesia and Peoples of America," *Church News*, July 25, 1992.

<sup>144</sup>Duffy, "New Missionary Discussions," 38–39.

<sup>145</sup>See *Church News*: "All Cultures are Children of One God," August

over Lamanite DNA that began in 2000–01. Coverage of the controversy in well-respected national venues such as the *Los Angeles Times*<sup>146</sup> prompted some FARMS writers to elaborate more fully than had been done previously the implications of limited geography for Lamanite identity: to assert that Book of Mormon peoples were actually a very small group who migrated to an already populated continent and were eventually absorbed into the existing populations, thus leaving behind no discernible DNA trace. Because the long history of hemispheric Lamanite identification in LDS teaching could not be entirely dismissed as folklore or speculation, some writers proposed that the terms “Lamanites” or “children of Lehi” could be appropriately applied to peoples of native ancestry throughout the Americas in a nonlinear sense—for instance, as a term designating all non-Nephites in the New World or indicating the adoption of non-Israelite individuals into the gospel covenant.<sup>147</sup>

The Church has stopped short of officially endorsing these arguments. However, Elder Dallin H. Oaks has indicated that he personally favors a limited geography model,<sup>148</sup> and links to FARMS scholars’ arguments provided on the Church’s official website have given the argu-

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2, 1997, 5; “Native People Descendants of Abraham,” August 2, 1997, 2; and Gerry Avant, “Children of Lehi: Gospel Is First Loyalty,” March 25, 2006, 6–7.

<sup>146</sup>William Lobdell and Larry B. Stammer, “Mormon Scientist, Church Clash over DNA Test,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 2002, A21; William Lobdell, “Bedrock of a Faith Is Jolted,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 2006, A1.

<sup>147</sup>Sorenson and Roper, “Before DNA,” 11; Meldrum and Stephens, “Who Are the Children of Lehi?”; Roper, “Swimming in the Gene Pool.”

<sup>148</sup>Oaks explains that, as a lawyer, he finds the limited geography model attractive because it is more defensible than a hemispheric Book of Mormon geography. The sweeping claim that the Book of Mormon is “a history of all the people who have lived on the continents of North and South America in all ages of the earth” is extremely vulnerable to contradiction: a single counterexample suffices to disprove the claim. In contrast, the more modest claims of a limited Book of Mormon geography are virtually impossible to disprove, retaining plausibility despite a lack of hard evidence for Hebraic ancestry or cultural influence. With a shift from hemispheric to limited geography, “the burden of argument changes drastically.” Dallin H.



ments an aura of Church approbation in addition to raising awareness of limited Lamanite identification among Latter-day Saints.<sup>149</sup> The DNA controversy appears, also, to have effectively silenced public support for hemispheric Lamanite identification. No major LDS writer has cited prophetic authority to counter FARMS's limited Lamanite identification, even though such an argument could be made easily and is a natural corollary to the doctrine of lineal Israelite descent that Robert Millet, for example, championed as recently as 2000.<sup>150</sup> The absence of a prominent defense of hemispheric Lamanite identification suggests that the status of antimodernism has sharply declined within the Church and that more progressive "faithful scholarship" currently enjoys the leadership's favor.

Has the DNA controversy prompted senior Church leaders, reared in the early twentieth century, to reconsider what they grew up believing about the extent to which contemporary peoples are lineal descendants of Book of Mormon peoples? It is impossible to know, barring some kind of highly unlikely public self-disclosure by Church leaders, who have long been reticent to explicitly contradict the teachings of their predecessors. Nor are they likely to see any virtue in disturbing the faith of members who believe themselves to be lineally descended from Lehi. Holland, while downplaying and metaphorizing the significance of claims to Lamanite identity, does not deny those claims. A chief attraction of the limited Lamanite identification as elaborated by FARMS writers is that it allows Church leaders to go on applying the term "children of Lehi" to the same peoples to whom apostles and Church presidents have applied the term since the 1850s: the term remains valid even if it no longer means lineal descent. Church leaders thus have the option of retaining traditional Lamanite discourse—for example, at temple dedications—while tolerating or encouraging a shift away from hemispheric identification.

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Oaks, "The Historicity of the Book of Mormon," in *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, edited by Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2001), 238–39. FARMS scholars have, naturally, quoted Oaks's supportive position. See Sorenson and Roper, "Before DNA," 6–7; Roper, "Nephi's Neighbors," 92–93.

<sup>149</sup>See, for example, "Comments on the News: DNA and the Book of Mormon," *Newsroom.LDS.org*, <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1-18078,00.html> (accessed April 1, 2004).

<sup>150</sup>Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet*, 255–75.

The solution is to be ambiguous about the meaning of Lamanite identification, in much the same way that official discourse has become ambiguous about the meaning of declarations of lineage in patriarchal blessings.

Recent Church-sponsored events for Hispanic Saints offer hints about the direction that official Lamanite discourse may be headed. Since December 2002, the Church has held a number of Spanish-language devotionals in its Salt Lake City Conference Center, in recognition that Spanish-speakers will soon surpass English-speakers as the Church's largest language group. The General Authority addresses delivered at these devotionals have not been published, but coverage of the events in Church-owned media reported, as of 2005, no instances of Lamanite identification.<sup>151</sup> As we have seen, a similar silence is found in the reportage of Church leaders' addresses to Pacific Islanders. Whether the silence means that speakers actually refrained from discourse about Lamanites or that reporters opted not to include such discourse in their coverage, the silence is a striking departure from the prominence of Lamanite identification in Church discourse directed to Hispanic Saints as recently as a quarter century ago.

It is also noteworthy that these most recent events for Hispanic Saints have targeted a group of Church members defined by language (Spanish) and geographical region (Latin America) while, during Kimball's tenure, these same members would have been grouped with American Indians and Pacific Islanders under the rubric "Lamanite." Possibly Church leaders are sensitive that Lamanite identification is not applicable to all Hispanic Saints since not all have Indian ancestry. The *Church News's* coverage of a 2004 Hispanic cultural festival staged in the Conference Center only hinted at Lamanite identification. The reporter described a Mesoamerican pyramid that dominated the stage as a "Book of Mormon-themed set," while Seventy Jay E. Jensen, who in other settings has been clear about his conviction that Latin Americans are children of Lehi, offered oblique tes-

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<sup>151</sup>Jason Swensen, "Cling to Roots, LDS Hispanics Urged," *Deseret News*, December 9, 2002, <http://deseretnews.com/dn/print/1,442,450019520,00.html> (accessed December 9, 2002); Jason Swensen, "Hispanic Growth in Church a 'Miracle,'" *Deseret Morning News*, September 19, 2005.

timony that "the Book of Mormon is Israel's book."<sup>152</sup> These are muted, ambiguous echoes of a discourse that in Spencer W. Kimball's day took the form of bold prophetic declaration.

### CONCLUSION

Lamanite identification has served different functions over the course of LDS history: as the basis for apocalyptic scenarios of Indian violence against unrepentant whites; as part of a broader worldview assigning religious significance to lineage and race; as an account of the peopling of the western hemisphere grounded in scriptural literalism; as a presupposition undergirding popular Book of Mormon apologetics; as a motivation for missionizing and an explanation for missionary success; as a rhetorical appeal to counteract prejudice against native peoples; as the foundation for an inspiring concept of one's "true identity." Different functions have had greater significance at different periods, and Lamanite discourse has had greater prominence during different periods. Nevertheless, for the first 150 years of LDS history, Church presidents and apostles consistently identified Lamanites as the literal ancestors of the native peoples of both American continents, as well as (an identification with a somewhat shorter history) the Pacific Islands.

Very quickly after 1985, Lamanite identification declined in official discourse because Church leaders came to place less value on the functions that Lamanite identification had historically served. The need to promote unity in a culturally diverse church, greater investment in a universal Christian message, and shifting social attitudes about race all worked to make Lamanite identification a liability in the eyes of Church leaders. At the same time, hemispheric Lamanite identification became indefensible in the eyes of many "faithful scholars," leading them to promote instead limited Lamanite identification as a strategy for affirming the intellectual credibility of belief in the antiquity of the Book of Mormon. Recognizing the apologetic value of limited Lamanite identification, Church leaders have, at a minimum, tolerated

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<sup>152</sup>Jason Swensen, "Celebration: Luz de las Naciones," *Church News*, November 20, 2004, 10. See also Jay E. Jensen, quoted in Julie A. Dockstader, "Spiritual Foundation Set Early in Life," *Church News*, August 8, 1992, where he expressed excitement that he and his wife would soon "go back to Latin America . . . where we can work with the children of Israel, Father Lehi's children, and serve them."

it; one could even argue that they have given it their tacit approval.

It is not clear, however, to what extent commitment to hemispheric Lamanite identification has declined outside the circles of intellectuals orbiting around organizations such as FARMS. Many Saints now living have been taught to believe either that they themselves are Lamanites or that the Lord has called them to work among Lamanites. They have been taught this concept not only by parents and/or teachers of Church classes but also through channels that Saints often regard as revelatory: the sermons of Church presidents and apostles, patriarchal blessings, the settings apart of missionaries, temple dedications, and so on. Leaders they revere as prophets have told them that “there is no *pea* about” their Lamanite identity (Joseph F. Smith) or that the Book of Mormon “fully answer[s]” the question of the origin of Native Americans (Spencer W. Kimball). Some Saints have received what they understand to be testimonies of their own Lamanite identity or the Lamanite identity of people they serve. For others, Lamanite identification has been bound up in their faith in prophecy or in the superiority of revealed knowledge to secular learning. How will the retreat from Lamanite identification affect Saints such as these? How will they react to declarations by LDS researchers—advertised on the Church’s website—that scientific findings have disproved hemispheric Lamanite identity?

Church leaders may be able to avoid these potential dilemmas by pursuing a strategy in which they quietly pull back from Lamanite references in official discourse or employ ambiguous references, while encouraging all Saints everywhere to embrace a common identity based on Christian discipleship and membership in a worldwide union of Saints. Evidence that Church leaders may, in fact, be pursuing such an approach includes recent remarks by Jeffrey R. Holland and Jay E. Jensen delivered to Native American or Latin American audiences, together with the disappearance of discourse about the Book of Mormon ancestry of Pacific Islanders. In the past quarter century, Church leaders have used similar strategies to shift official discourse away from doctrines of lineage and expectations of an imminent Second Coming. Those past successes seem to bode well for the current effort to deemphasize Lamanite identification.<sup>153</sup>

On the other hand, Margarito Bautista and George P. Lee are reminders that the potency of Lamanite identity could overflow the

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<sup>153</sup>As this article was going to press, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported a

bounds set by Church leaders. Over thirty years ago, Harold Brown's *Ensign* article, "What Is a Lamanite?", alerted English-speaking Saints to the diverse attitudes that Latin American Saints have developed toward Lamanite identification. As Latin Americans become the numerical majority in the Church, their attitudes toward Lamanite identity could yield persistent tensions, both among Latin American Mormons themselves and in relation to changing attitudes toward Lamanite identification among whites, who continue to dominate Church leadership. Alternatively, questions about exactly who is a Lamanite and what that means could be relegated to the category of folklore or doctrinal mystery. Only time will tell. What is clear, though, is that the future of Lamanite discourse depends on much more than the outcome of debates over DNA.

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newly ordered revision to the 1981 Introduction to the Book of Mormon, which appeared in October 2006 Doubleday's second edition (first edition 2004). Henceforth the introduction will read that Lamanites "are among the ancestors of the American Indians," not their "principal ancestors." The new language is broad enough to accommodate both nuanced hemispheric and limited understandings of Lamanite identity. This change thus provides additional support for my argument that Church leaders are pulling back from assertions of hemispheric identification in favor of ambiguity. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Single Word Change in Book of Mormon Speaks Volumes," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 8, 2007, [http://www.sltrib.com/lds/ci\\_7403990](http://www.sltrib.com/lds/ci_7403990) (accessed November 11, 2007).

# YESHARAH: SOCIETY FOR LDS SISTER MISSIONARIES

*Kylie Nielson Turley*

ON NOVEMBER 11, 1928, members of the University of Utah Friars Club journeyed to Brigham Young University to persuade members of BYU's "YDD Club" (Young Doctors of Divinity) to become a Friars' chapter, a negotiation that had been three years in the making.<sup>1</sup> A few problems existed: the Friars was an all-male Christian service club while BYU's YDD was a combined gender club for Latter-day

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<sup>1</sup>The group included the Friars' general president, representatives from the University of Utah Chapter, the editor of the *Friar News*, and the student body president from the University of Utah. Friars, a fraternity that began in 1921 at the University of Utah, spread to other Utah colleges during the 1920s. "B.Y.U. Invited to Join; Y.D.D. Club on Y. Campus Nucleus for Friars' Club," *Friar News* 3, no. 2 (December 1928): 1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections). See also William G. Hartley, *Delta Phi Kappa Fraternity, a History: 1869–1978* (Salt Lake City: Delta Phi Kappa Holding Corporation, 1990), 30. Hartley summarizes, "Delta Phi was born in 1869, disappeared in 1904, revived as the Friars in 1920, received its Delta Phi name back in 1931, changed its name to Delta Phi Kappa in 1961, and died in 1978" (267). Also Hartley notes that the BYU chapter participated in the national convention in 1973 and was mentioned in a 1974 report, although "chapter reports in 1975 included

Saint returned missionaries. The fact that the YDD was solely LDS was not a large obstacle, as the Friars were nondenominational, including any "Christian" who had spent at least six months in "exclusive service" for God.

However, the gender issue stalled negotiations. The *Friar News* recorded, "A plan was suggested that would include the ladyfolk as an auxiliary," but the "lady missionaries" seriously objected to the proposal and, with the votes of some male members, defeated the motion. Notwithstanding this defeat, the University of Utah club pressed forward, claiming that as "far as the men were concerned," a representative group had not been present and so another vote had to be taken. The December issue of the *Friar News* projected that the current "movement" would clear the way for BYU to join "its sister institutions in Friarism order," a rather ironic wording given the fraternal proposal.<sup>2</sup>

BYU President Franklin S. Harris intervened and dictated that the Friars could organize only if the "lady missionaries" re-formed as well. Thus, before the male majority officially voted on January 17, 1929, to dissolve the YDD and exclude the women, the "lady missionaries" made other arrangements.<sup>3</sup> Under the direction of Barbara Maughn Roskelly, a teacher at BYU's Elementary Training School, the returned sister missionaries invited female alumnae missionaries to meet at the Provo home of Amanda Inez Knight Allen, locally famous as the first single sister missionary. There, probably during December 1928, the women formed the "Y Missionary Women," electing Inez Allen as the first president.<sup>4</sup> In 1932, the women changed their society's name to "Yesharah,"<sup>5</sup> a Hebrew adjective (feminine form) suggested by noted BYU professor Sidney Sperry meaning "straight,

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nothing from BYU." Presumably the Y chapter disbanded that year (251).

<sup>2</sup>"B.Y.U. Invited to Join," 2.

<sup>3</sup>Hartley, *Delta Phi Kappa*, 31.

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth Souter, "A Brief Historical Sketch of YESHARAH (Returned Lady missionaries organization)," 1, Yesharah Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University (hereafter cited as Yesharah Collection). Yesharah documents reflect both 1928 and 1929 as formation dates, although the most probable date seems to be December 1928.

<sup>5</sup>See "Presidents of Yesharah list," holograph, Yesharah Scrapbook ,



right, upright, just, righteous, good or pleasing.”<sup>6</sup>

The Y Missionary Women quickly developed mission-oriented ideals and established service objectives that have been maintained to the present, acting in ways both similar to and different from their LDS contemporaries. The formation of a female religious association was obviously not new to the LDS Church; the Relief Society had been organized in 1842. However, the Relief Society has done its work to the present “not as an independent organization but as an integral part of the Church,” while Yesarah, though with definite ties to the LDS Church’s Brigham Young University, has always been outside the official LDS hierarchy.<sup>7</sup> That these women, many of them prominent in the LDS Church, formed a club outside the Church’s official umbrella, was not particularly unusual in those pre-correlation days. Numerous Utah women—from general Relief Society presidents to sisters in rural towns—joined associations, especially after the national “women’s club movement” reached Utah during the 1890s.<sup>8</sup> Still, forming a women’s missionary association was unique in the LDS culture and remains exceptional to this day, though it is fairly unremarkable in terms of early twentieth-century trends in American religious club trends.<sup>9</sup>

The Yesarah women departed from a strictly religious focus

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Yesarah Collection. This book is not paginated; however, someone has lightly penciled in the years that various pages are highlighting. When possible, I include this year.

<sup>6</sup>Sidney B. Sperry, Letter to Georgia Maeser, March 18, 1942, Yesarah Collection.

<sup>7</sup>Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 1.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 155; see also Jill Mulvay Derr, “‘Strength in Our Union’: The Making of Mormon Sisterhood,” in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 153–207.

<sup>9</sup>See Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood, and Shirley Ardener, eds., *Women and Missions: Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions* (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993); Dana L. Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002); Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in Amer-*

during the 1930s and early 1940s, becoming more of a secular women's club; but they returned to their missionary focus within a few years and maintained that motivation throughout the twentieth century. A sense of sisterhood developed and became a significant factor in Yesharah's continued existence, as it was for many women's clubs.<sup>10</sup> Simultaneous growth in membership and growth away from university ties challenged the society in the 1950s and 1960s, while a gradual but pervasive decline in membership during the last two decades of the twentieth century became the greatest challenge in recent years. This paper presents the history of the Yesharah Society in the context of both the Protestant female mission movement and the American clubwomen movement.

### FORMATION

Protestant married women in America began serving missions in the early 1800s, with single women following by the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>11</sup> A century later, the national mission movement was vast; the Ecumenical Conference of 1900 held in New York City was "the most popular missionary conference in history." It openly encouraged Christian women missionaries, praising the "over four hundred female missionaries [who] mounted the stage at Carnegie Hall, while thousands waved handkerchiefs."<sup>12</sup>

In contrast, the LDS Church had sent a total of 220 women missionaries, all married, during the fifty years since Louisa Barnes Pratt had been called to serve with her husband in 1850.<sup>13</sup> The first single sister missionaries to be officially called, set apart, and given missionary certificates, Amanda Inez Knight (Allen) and Lucy Jane

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*ican History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

<sup>10</sup>Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868–1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 69, 71, 118.

<sup>11</sup>Cecillie Swaisland, "Wanted—Earnest, Self-Sacrificing Women for Service in South Africa: Nineteenth-Century Recruitment of Single Women to Protestant Missions," in *Women and Missions*, 75. Some scholars date women's missionary activity from biblical times, continuing though the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Deborah Kirkwood, "Protestant Missionary Women: Wives and Spinsters," in *ibid.*, 23.

<sup>12</sup>Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, 10.

<sup>13</sup>Maxine Hanks, "Sister Missionaries and Authority," in *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism*, edited by Maxine Hanks (Salt Lake

("Jennie") Brimhall (Knight), received their momentous calls to the British Isles in 1898, and the number of single, young Latter-day Saint female missionaries gradually grew in number after that.<sup>14</sup> Thus, in a sense, LDS married and single female missionaries lagged about a half-century behind their Christian contemporaries.

American Christian women formed mission societies as early as 1800, typically comprised of former missionaries and middle-class churchwomen.<sup>15</sup> By 1900, in some joint male/female mission societies, women outnumbered men.<sup>16</sup> A survey of forty denominational mission society membership rolls in 1915 counted more than three million women actively engaged in spreading the message of Christianity; yet the movement was "unable to sustain either its appeal to a massive constituency or even its continued institutional existence after the First World War."<sup>17</sup> Ironically, in 1915, just as the national female mission movement hit its height and began fading, the First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith, Anthon

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City: Signature Books, 1992), 317. See also Calvin S. Kunz, "A History of Female Missionary Activity in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1898" (M.A. thesis, Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1976), <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cgi-bin/docviewer.exe?CISOROOT=/MormonThesesI-KBCISOPTR=4296> (accessed June 15, 2005). Although Kunz agrees that Louisa Barnes Pratt is traditionally given credit for being the first LDS sister missionary, he argues that female missionary service began when Lucy Mack Smith and her niece, Almira Mack, accompanied Hyrum Smith (called on June 3, 1831, in Kirtland, Ohio) to go to Missouri, dedicate the temple, and preach the gospel as he traveled (11, 18–19). Moreover, Kunz notes that while Pratt reported being "set apart," official Church documents do not record the event; rather, the first woman to appear in official documents as "set apart" was Mildred E. Randall, May 15, 1865 (19–20, 30).

<sup>14</sup>"The Yesharah Society," 1. See also Calvin S. Kunz,

<sup>15</sup>Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 171.

<sup>16</sup>Peter Williams, "'The Missing Link': The Recruitment of Women Missionaries in some English Evangelical Missionary Societies in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women and Missions, Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, edited by Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood, and Shirley Ardener (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993), 43.

<sup>17</sup>Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Ar-

H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose) announced that they were “greatly in need of lady missionaries in the United States Missions.”<sup>18</sup> Though nationally, the “mission movement . . . faded into obscurity in the 1920s,”<sup>19</sup> there was an increase in the number of LDS women serving missions during that time period. Had the LDS female mission movement followed national trends and lost momentum in the 1920s, a Mormon sister missionary society would have had difficulty forming or maintaining membership and certainly could not have spread as Yesarah eventually did. The influx of returned “lady missionaries” made it possible for the women to form a society of their own once they were excluded from the YDD.

Unlike clubwomen of the same time period who often “consciously and willfully excluded themselves from male associations,”<sup>20</sup> the Y Missionary Women did not voluntarily separate; they vigorously fought the separation until it became clear that they would be voted out of the YDD, regardless of their personal wishes.<sup>21</sup> Though the sour experience was ameliorated over time by the success of Yesarah, Editha Booth recalled the moment in her life sketch written decades later: “One of the reasons I wanted to go on a mission was so I could join the YDD[.] I met with them for about one quarter and then the men formed their own organization.”<sup>22</sup> Asked to speak about “Sad Phases” in Yesarah’s history at the “30th Annual Breakfast” in 1958, Editha Booth again evoked the time when the “Elders at the Y joined ‘Friars’ and left lady missionaries with no organization.”<sup>23</sup> A short anonymous history of Yesarah also describes how the men’s organization “left out” the

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bor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 3.

<sup>18</sup>First Presidency, quoted in Hanks, “Sister Missionaries and Authority,” 319.

<sup>19</sup>Hill, *The World Their Household*, 3.

<sup>20</sup>Darlene Rebecca Roth, *Matronage: Patterns in Women’s Organizations, Atlanta, Georgia, 1890–1940* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson Publishing, 1994), 6.

<sup>21</sup>“B.Y.U. Invited to Join,” *Friar News*, 2.

<sup>22</sup>Editha Booth, “Sketch of the Life of Editha Booth,” Book of Remembrance: Histories of Members Chapter I and Chapter II Yesarah, chap. 15, not paginated, Yesarah Collection.

<sup>23</sup>“30th Annual Breakfast,” 1947–1960 Minute Book, 118, Yesarah

women.<sup>24</sup> Historian Anne Firor Scott argues that voluntary organizations have “a somewhat different meaning for women than [they] have for men”—that the women involved in nineteenth- and twentieth-century organizations were personally invested and attached to that association whereas men were typically engaged for practical reasons. As such, associations “constituted a small part of [the male] members’ lives” while female members found deep friendships and strong emotional bonds.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps this gender difference explains why some took the YDD segregation so much to heart.

The women’s poignant disappointment likely was tied as well to their missionary service. A poem read at the 1931 Annual Breakfast highlights the women’s perceptions of their missions:

The elders were many and the sisters were few  
But it didn’t take long to show what we could do  
In preaching and tracting, on street and in halls  
We gladly responded and honored our calls  
We don’t want to brag but we know this is true  
We accomplished the most though our numbers were few.  
Y women, Y women, now keep up the pace  
With faith in your hearts and a smile on your face.<sup>26</sup>

The Y Missionary Women (Yesarah) “honored their calls” yet also felt honored by those calls. At the April 21, 1950, meeting, Jennie Knight recalled, “It was 52 years today since the first lady missionaries registered at Mission Headquarters in Liverpool England.” Besides remembering the specific day her overseas mission began, Sister Knight tied her experience to a special spiritual experience. She told the women about “a Mutual meeting in Provo Fourth Ward, at which the prophecy was made that women would yet be called to preach the gospel. From that group came the first women to enter missionary

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Collection.

<sup>24</sup>“The Yesarah Society,” 1.

<sup>25</sup>Scott, *Natural Allies*, 177.

<sup>26</sup>Untitled poem, Yesarah Scrapbook, items for 1932–33, not paginated.

work.”<sup>27</sup> These early sister missionaries felt especially called of God to perform a unique and necessary work.

Yesharah members were also set apart by their elite numbers. For example, in 1900, only 17 sisters—counting both married and single women—served missions, in contrast to 796 men.<sup>28</sup> Many of the early married sister missionaries served as mission president’s wives rather than as proselyting sisters. The total number of sisters rose to 44 in 1910, while 933 men served during that year. By 1925, 151 sisters served missions, comprising 13.4 percent of the total LDS missionary force.<sup>29</sup> In other words, charter Yesharah members were part of a select group of LDS women. Not only were they part of the minority of LDS faithful who served missions but, of the missionaries, they were in a double minority as women. Yesharah sisters felt singled out—for good reason.

The 1931 poem notes an element of competition between the “many” elders and the “few” sisters. That the women “show[ed] what they could do” and “accomplished the most” despite the uneven gender ratios may be poetic hyperbole—or it may be a fairly accurate assessment of the women’s endeavors. In either case, it denotes the women’s psychological state; in their minds, they successfully fulfilled their callings of sharing the gospel despite the newness of the task, the competitive atmosphere, and the disproportionate gender ratios. To have thrived in the mission field seemingly placed them on equal grounds with the men of YDD; their association was formed around a common belief (the gospel) and a common experience (serving missions). Dissolving YDD and forming the Friars elevated concerns for gender segregation above the shared experience of missionary service. After succeeding in the mission field, being abandoned by their missionary service club was, at least for some, a stinging rejection.

Yet the women rallied “with faith in our hearts” and formed

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<sup>27</sup>“April 21, 1950,” 1947–1960 Minute Book, 30.

<sup>28</sup>Tally Payne, “‘Our Wise and Prudent Women’: Twentieth-Century Trends in Female Missionary Service,” in *New Scholarship on Latter-day Saint Women in the Twentieth Century: Selections from the Women’s History Initiative Seminars, 2003–2004*, edited by Carol Cornwall Madsen and Cherry B. Silver (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History/BYU Studies, 2005), p. 127, Table 1.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

their own association based on missionary service, perhaps becoming even more committed than previously to religious ideals. Indeed, had female companionship been their main concern, the women easily could have joined one of the other numerous BYU women's clubs (e.g., the Ladies' Glee Club, the Val Norn, Nautilus, or the Cesta Ties Club).<sup>30</sup> Had the male/female social dynamic drawn the women to YDD, the former missionaries could have joined combined-gender collegiate clubs, perhaps one of the plethora of "geographic" clubs (e.g., the Uintah, Arizona, Idaho, or Juab) or clubs based on particular interests (e.g., the Studio Guild, Y Chemical Society, Y News staff, student council, or Provo Drama Center).<sup>31</sup> Instead, they formed the Y Missionary Women (later Yesarah), inviting new members to focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ and missionary service.

#### DEFINITION OF A POSITIVE IDENTITY

The women who made up this society were an eclectic set of independent and deeply religious women. Charter members included Inez Knight Allen and Jennie Knight, her former missionary companion and later sister-in-law, as well as Ella Pearl Snow, Elizabeth Souter, Editha Booth, Lila Hatch, Georgia Maeser, Margaret Bigelow, and others.<sup>32</sup> Tracking the early members is difficult as records for the first years were kept sporadically. At least forty women joined the Y Missionary Women in its first few years.<sup>33</sup> I was unable to trace nine. Of the remaining thirty-one, twenty-five were single at the time they joined the society while six were married, signifying a high likelihood

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<sup>30</sup>Glenn S. Potter, ed., *The Banyan*, Vol. 15 (Provo, Utah: Associated Students of the Brigham Young University, 1928), 128, 203, 218, 220. This is only a sampling of all-woman clubs; in my brief perusal of the 1928 *Banyan* I counted at least thirteen.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 201, 208, 214, 214, 209, 213, 115, 208. This is only a sampling of the many combined-gender associations.

<sup>32</sup>"30th Annual Breakfast," 1947–60 Minute Book, 118, Yesarah Collection; "A Short History of Margaret Meldrum Bigelow," Book of Remembrance, 4. Georgia Maeser's surname also appears as "Maesar" as, for example, in Loren A. Anderson, Editor, *BYU 1914–1915 Banyan* (Provo, Utah: New Century Printing for the BYU Student Body, 1915), 14, in the Ellen Heloise Day Collection, Perry Special Collections.

<sup>33</sup>A complete list of charter members is not extant. Perhaps the most comprehensive list of early members comes from the 1929–32 Minute



that those twenty-five served missions as single sisters. Of the twenty-five, seven did not marry, five eventually married, and the rest were among those I could not trace further. Inez Knight and Jennie Brimhall served their missions before their marriages. Even if all nine untracked women were married at the time of their missionary service, an unlikely probability, the society was still heavily comprised of women who had served their missions as single sisters.

That the majority of early Y Missionary Women were single may simply reflect that many were BYU students. However, that so many served missions as young single sisters is an interesting anomaly, given that the vast majority of women serving missions in the early 1900s were married and serving missions with their husbands and that the Yesharah Constitution allowed for any woman who had served a mission to join.<sup>34</sup> These women likely stood out among their peers, given their service as young single missionaries.

Founding members of American female clubs often stand out for their social prominence and social status. As Darlene Rebecca Roth notes, “The close ties between membership in women’s clubs and social status in American communities is so familiar that it hardly needs comment.”<sup>35</sup> The connection holds true for Yesharah. Inez Knight Allen was humanitarian Jesse Knight’s daughter, while Jennie Brimhall Knight was the daughter of BYU President George Brimhall. Jennie Knight worked as BYU’s matron of women students and served on the Relief Society General Board for more than eighteen years. That the society took pride in its prominent members

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Book, Yesharah Collection. It is a list of members who paid dues for an unknown year, likely 1930, and includes: Edna H. Bentwet, Vilate Elliott, Eliza Smith, Hilda Widdison, Lucy B. Sudweeks, Mary Crafts, Georgia Maeser, Mrs. Inez Allen, Pearl Snow, Catherine Decker, Alice L. Reynolds, Erma Bennett, Agnes Clayson, Flora Fisher, Mary A. Hansen, Mrs. Jennie Knight, La Preal Aagard, Jennie Jensen, Jennie Campbell, Hope Chapman, Barbara Maughn, Marvel Atwood, Grace Hall, Eva Peterson, Della Jones, and Mrs. Snell. The *1931 Banyan Yearbook* adds a few more names: Della West, Myrtle Brown, Ann Holt, Emma S. Jensen, Florence Jorgensen, Hannah Prusse, Edme Dotson, Ethel Strauser, Grace Cheever, and Florence Miller. Farrell R. Collett, ed., *The Banyan* (Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis for the BYU Associated Student Body, 1931), 121.

<sup>34</sup>Payne, “Our Wise and Prudent Women,” 126.

<sup>35</sup>Roth, *Matronage*, 90.

seems obvious; in her 1976 history, Elizabeth Souter singled out Inez Knight (Allen) and Jennie Brimhall (Knight), noting their fathers' respective careers and their status as the first single sister missionaries. Souter also mentioned Vilate Elliott, a "prominent Domestic Art teacher at the University."<sup>36</sup> Zola Peterson's life sketch suggests that some of the women were famous solely for serving their missions. Born and raised in Colorado as "a daughter of pioneers of the wild San Juan Mission," she later recorded:

At the age of six I first became absecessed [sic] with the idea of a mission. Two beautiful young women from Provo, Utah, enroute to Bluff to take teaching positions stopped over night at my father's house. I shall never forget the childish thrill of that evening as I listened to none other than our own Jennie Brimhall Knight and Miss Vilate Elliott as I listened to the stories of life beyond our simple valley. The Brigham Young Academy, missionary life, the big temple—yes, that would be my escape—I would go on a mission.<sup>37</sup>

Like Jennie Knight, Yesarah member Anna Boss Hart served on the Relief Society General Board. Hart, Georgia Maeser, and Barbara Maughn Roskelly were BYU elementary training school teachers. Alice Louise Reynolds also joined Yesarah soon after it began. Though Reynolds did not serve a proselyting mission, she was set apart for "a mission" when she left for Ann Arbor to attend the University of Michigan in 1892.<sup>38</sup> Reynolds's prominence is well known; she was the first woman to teach a college-level class at BYU as well as the first woman full professor at BYU. She also served on the Relief Society General Board and on the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association board of Utah Stake.<sup>39</sup> Grace Cheever Milner served for a number of years on the MIA General Board. Though this list is not inclusive, the sampling shows that many founding members were prominent in the Church, their professions, and/or society.

Despite their frustrations at being excluded, the Y Missionary Women plagiarized word-for-word the Friar's lofty intentions to "keep

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<sup>36</sup>Souter, "A Brief Historical Sketch of Yesarah," 1.

<sup>37</sup>Zola A. Peterson, *Book of Remembrances*, 28. She wrote this sketch December 10, 1955.

<sup>38</sup>Kunz, "A History of Female Missionary Activity," 47.

<sup>39</sup>(No author), "Alice Louise Reynolds," <http://www.lib.byu.edu/friends/alr.html> (accessed October 16, 2004).

ever paramount in the lives of its members the high and worthy ideals which they have promulgated while active in the missionary field” and to “promote educational, cultural, and social development in the members of the organization.”<sup>40</sup> However, Yesharah rejected the Friars’ secret membership balloting. While the Friars blackballed candidates who received even one negative vote from the standing membership, Yesharahs allowed any woman to join who met the objective criteria of being “regularly called to and honorably released” from an LDS mission, maintaining “good standing” in the Church, and having some affiliation with BYU.<sup>41</sup> With their emphasis on missionary service and individual development in place, the women also rejected the term “club,” determining that their association should “never be called a club but a missionary organization with chapters.”<sup>42</sup>

This missionary focus was evident in main topics of early meetings: typically a report on a specific mission by a society member. For example, in February, Jennie Campbell reported “what is being done in the Northwestern States Mission,” followed the next month by Georgia Maeser on the Southern States Mission while, in April, Pearl Snow told about a “convention” held at the Hill Cumorah with more than 14,000 attendees. Even “games” played at these early meetings were serious missionary endeavors. In January 1934, after hearing a lecture on church history by Brother A. B. Anderson—apparently the first time a male (and a non-clubmember) addressed the group, “games were played in the form of Yesharah competitive poems, Street Meetings, and tracting.”<sup>43</sup> In the early years of Yesharah, “fun” meant being “bearers of truth and light,” a motto adopted from the nuanced definition of “Yesharah.”

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<sup>40</sup>“Constitution of the ‘Y’ Missionary Women—1932,” Yesharah Collection, 1.

<sup>41</sup>“Friars’ Club Constitution,” 5, Yesharah Collection. The Friars also had objective membership criteria (i.e., six months of being “exclusively engaged in religious work”); “Constitution of the ‘Y’ Missionary Women—1932,” 1, Yesharah Collection. The constitution originally mandated at least a “quarter” of work at BYU, although this requirement was changed, probably in 1949 when the minutes record a nonbinding vote to admit “all ladies who had been on missions.” “August 18, 1949,” 1947–1960 Yesharah Minute Book, 21.

<sup>42</sup>Souter, “A Brief Historical Sketch of YESHARAH,” 1.

<sup>43</sup>1929–32 Minute Book: minutes for meetings held February 6, 1930,

Despite their mission-focused goals, Yesarah seemed similar to other women's clubs in some respects. As Annette Baxter argues in her preface to Karen Blair's *The Clubwoman as Feminist*, "retaliation at male exclusiveness hardly furnish[es] more than the initial motive for organization, it was the rewards of sisterly communion that offered the incentive for continued association." Baxter explains that nearly all women's clubs—whether professional, religious, literary or other—"strengthened collective confidence and afforded their members a more complete sense of individual identity." Clubs, in a word, promoted "sisterhood."<sup>44</sup> A Yesarah poem, set to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" and likely composed during the 1932 school year, verbalizes the cause that drew the lady missionaries together and hints at a growing sense of sisterhood:

Should mission memories be forgot and never brought to mind?  
Should we forget the days we spent in service to mankind?

[Chorus:]

Oh, no, we'll strive our very best to ever keep in mind.  
The lessons we to others taught, the way of life to find.

And here's a vow, my sisters true we'll make anew this day  
That we shall teach in faith and love the truths that point the way.

[Chorus:]

Oh, yes, at home we all shall serve and let our light so shine  
That others seeing our good works may seek the light divine.<sup>45</sup>

This hymn poses the rhetorical question so that Yesarah members can answer by publicly reiterating their high ideals. Interestingly, the poem also solidified the women as "sisters," a term used generally for women in the LDS faith as well as specifically for LDS female missionaries, although "lady missionaries" seems to have been the more common term before World War II. The listeners are referred to as a group and then asked to renew their vow together, signifying their collective goals and communal purposes.

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March 6, 1930, April 3, 1930, and January 4, 1934. This last meeting was held "at the home of Mrs. Anson Hatch."

<sup>44</sup>Annette K. Baxter, "Preface," in Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist*, xiii.

<sup>45</sup>"Lest Ye Forget poem," Yesarah Scrapbook, 1932–33 page.

### ARTICULATION OF IDEALS

Yesharah's first set of specific, non-constitutional goals reflect this same sense of female community. In February 1930, the women resolved to "remember miss[ionaries] in fields from Y.," "give tokens to departing miss[ionaries]," "have a day in temple," and have only "one party & breakfast." The last entry in the list is "no eats at meeting"—a cryptic notation leaving it mysterious whether the women planned to avoid the social ritual of serving refreshments or whether someone simply forgot to bring treats to this specific meeting.<sup>46</sup> In any case, the women were clear that they meant these goals to "continue their missionary activities" and to "foster the sisterhood of the mission field," thus tying strong female friendships with the society's most basic missiological purposes.<sup>47</sup>

Yesharah members followed through on these goals (except for "no eats." Minutes regularly report "tray luncheons" and other refreshments.) To support BYU missionaries "in fields," the women typically used their Christmas party to write encouraging letters to missionaries in the field—noting in 1933 that their letters went to "lady missionaries now laboring in the various fields of the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Hawaiian Islands."<sup>48</sup> Significantly, the "missionaries" being remembered and receiving "tokens" were exclusively female. Continuing the tradition for years, the women occasionally included something extra, such as a dollar bill in 1947<sup>49</sup> or a poem in 1936. The poem, composed by recently deceased Yesharah member Sina Chipman, again explicitly links sisterhood and missionary work:

Should mission memories be forgot  
And never brot to mind?  
Should joys and thrills of tracting days  
Be dimmed or lost with time?  
Oh, no we'll cherish those days  
We spent with companions in the field,  
We'll carry on those Friendships dear  
Until to death we yield.

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<sup>46</sup>"Business meeting held Feb. 6, 1930," 1929–32 Minute Book.

<sup>47</sup>"The Yesharah Society," 1, Yesharah Collection.

<sup>48</sup>"Thur Dec 7, 1933," 1933–47 Minute Book, 3.

<sup>49</sup>"21 Nov 1947," 1947–60 Minute Book, 3.

And here's a hand to our missionaries  
 A clasp that's strong and true,  
 Will [sic] help each other live and serve  
 In all the things we do.<sup>50</sup>

Using the exact words of the 1932 “Lest Ye Forget” poem, Sister Chipman questions rhetorically, “Should mission memories be forgot and never brot to mind?” The answer is obviously “no,” as it was in 1932, yet the reasoning is fascinatingly different. Rather than invoking spirituality, faith, and letting the “light so shine,” Sister Chipman evokes images of sister missionary “companions” and the “Friendships dear” that sustain women in “all the things we do” until “death.” Notably, “Friendship” is the only capitalized word beyond the introductory words to the lines. While missionary work is evident in both poems, the 1936 poem moves sisterhood and friendship to the forefront.

The focus is even more evident in a 1944 poem by Yesarah member Minnie Kodapp:

Yesarah, O, Yesarah,  
 Fair bond of sisterhood!  
 Light bearers and truth sharers  
 Meek messengers of good.  
 Behind our footsteps flowers,  
 And brightly blooming bowers,  
 We've sown in toilsome hours,  
 Hail, beauteous sisterhood!<sup>51</sup>

With Kodapp's explicit references to sisterhood—two in this first stanza alone—the focus of the society seems clear. Although the gospel message and the women's goal to spread that message are still pervasive, missiology is framed (literally in this case) by the references to the “fair bond of sisterhood” and a salute to “beauteous sis-

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<sup>50</sup>“28 May 1937” 1933–47 Minute Book, 25. Line breaks standardized. Although the minutes identify Chipman's first name as “Zina,” Fern Chipman Eyring's biographical sketch, Book of Remembrance, [26], names her mother as Sina Nielson Chipman.

<sup>51</sup>Minnie I. Kodapp, “Yesarah,” “Love Thy Neighbor” Breakfast Program (June 7, 1944), 2, Anna Boss Hart Collection, Perry Special Collections (hereafter Hart Collection).

terhood.” A noticeable shift in feeling—from disappointment over the YDD fiasco to strength in sisterhood—seems to have occurred. While the experience of being excluded from YDD likely cemented relationships among many of the first Yesharah sisters and was clearly the impetus for the group’s organization, the poems show that the society was not based on nor perpetuated by bitterness about gender-based exclusion but rather on the mutual experience of women sharing the gospel.

Yesharah reached out to other women, especially LDS missionary women, supporting “departing missionaries” (one of the February 1930 goals) by speaking in sacrament meetings. In her 1976 history, Elizabeth Souter notes that, under Amos Merrill, president of Utah Stake, Yesharah members “were assigned to speak at Sacrament Meetings in Wards of the Stake once a month.”<sup>52</sup> Lila M. Hatch recalled that the speaking assignments called for immense dedication: “We drove through rain, sleet, snow, fog and sunshine to these meetings.”<sup>53</sup> Good humor abounded, however, as the “Yesharahs” (as they called themselves) commandeered an old hearse-like ambulance to haul all the members to the ward meetings.<sup>54</sup> The women not only supported missionary work, they did so in a way that fostered camaraderie, traveling together through inclement weather in their battered vehicle.<sup>55</sup> The records do not clarify how long this particular project lasted.

Yesharah’s goal of attending the temple, instituted in 1930, became easier after 1934. In that year, the newly formed Salt Lake (University of Utah) Chapter began inviting the Provo group to attend the temple and dine at the Lion House, a springtime tradition that con-

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<sup>52</sup>Souter, “A Brief Historical Sketch of Yesharah,” 2.

<sup>53</sup>“Lila M. Hatch,” Book of Remembrance, 29.

<sup>54</sup>“30th Annual Breakfast,” 1947–60 Minute Book, 118. See also “To Yesharah Presidents Breakfast—1954,” Yesharah Scrapbook, 1953–54 page.

<sup>55</sup>Though none of the Yesharah women mentioned it, the returned missionary men of the BYU Friars’ chapter were also speaking in sacrament meetings. For the 1933–34 school year, the Friars’ “sixty members representing twenty-two missions” were sent to “various wards in the Provo area.” Due to a serious “concern for quality sacrament meetings,” the men spoke in literally hundreds of sacrament meetings over the next five decades. Whether the Friars and Yesharahs encountered each other in their speaking assignments is unknown. Hartley, *Delta Phi*, 50, 57.



tinued until it was disrupted by gasoline and tire rationing during World War II.<sup>56</sup> The other 1930 goal of an annual breakfast actually had begun at the home of Inez Knight Allen in the spring of 1929.<sup>57</sup> The breakfast became an absolute directive in the 1932 Constitution: the “missionary reunion breakfast” was to be held on “BYU Commencement morning.”<sup>58</sup> These yearly celebrations underscored Yesharah’s primary goals of missionary work and spirituality and likely promoted unity and sisterhood as they were repeated each spring for decades.

While sisterhood could be found throughout women’s clubs, Yesharah women—like other Christian missionary clubwomen—believed they had specific, God-ordained work to perform. Anne Firor Scott notes that many historians see religion as an “instrumental choice” whereas “nineteenth-century women would have said they were following the dictates of divine truth.” To contextualize a female missionary society solely in terms of women’s clubs is to overlook the “enormously energizing concepts” of “saving” souls and “bring[ing] people to Christ.”<sup>59</sup> Patricia Hill also notes that “missionary ladies” saw themselves as separate from nonreligious clubwomen and believed they were engaged in a higher employment. As a woman missionary in Trenton, New Jersey, explained in 1898, “We have no quarrel with the women’s clubs, literary, social, philanthropic or patriotic. Many a woman, finding her voice in them, has brought it back to her Master’s service.”<sup>60</sup> The notion that Yesharah and other missionary societies viewed their work as spiritually superior to other women’s clubs should not be understated. Yesharah had a self-aware, specific aim to “foster the sisterhood of the mission field.”<sup>61</sup> Zola Peterson, in her short life sketch, took the claim a step further when describing her reasons for joining Yesharah. She claimed that Yesharah provided “a splendid opportunity to keep [her]self in tune with the ‘spirit’ of missionary work and with a great sister-hood the like of which only a mis-

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<sup>56</sup>“4 April [1935],” 1933-47 Minute Book, 11.

<sup>57</sup>“Breakfasts,” a list after the “Presidents of Yesharah” list, Yesharah Scrapbook.

<sup>58</sup>“Constitution of the ‘Y’ Missionary Women—1932,” 3, copy with marked changes for Yesharah Society, Yesharah Collection.

<sup>59</sup>Scott, *Natural Allies*, 182.

<sup>60</sup>Jessie W. Radcliffe, quoted in Hill, *The World Their Household*, 56.

<sup>61</sup>“The Yesharah Society,” 1, Yesharah Collection.

sionary system can produce.”<sup>62</sup> For Peterson, the communal feeling of Yesharah occurred because the women were doing God’s work; it was a special sisterhood that could be formed “only” by their shared service as missionaries.

In her study of the American women’s foreign mission movement, Patricia Hill concluded that female mission societies believed their high and noble work was both to support and to educate. The groups typically supported missionary work in three ways: “financial, emotional, and spiritual” while promoting two types of education: “informing themselves” and “educating the young.”<sup>63</sup> Anne Firor Scott also identified these activities of mission societies: they “raised money, supported missionaries, fought for the right of single women to serve abroad, [and] tried to promote intercultural understanding.”<sup>64</sup> From their small yet meaningful Christmas dollar bills (financial) to their personal letters (emotional), and temple attendance (spiritual), Yesharah’s mission activities echoed the supportive nature of a wider female mission movement. From their foreign missionary lecture-meetings to their sacrament meeting talks, Yesharahs educated both themselves and others about the world and the gospel of Christ, seeing themselves as distinct in their special calling from God, even though their actions fit into the broader American mission movement.

For a while, Yesharah women participated in elaborate initiation ceremonies, which also reinforced their spiritual exclusiveness. The November 2, 1933, minutes record:

The new girls were initiated in a beautiful ceremony. Sister Hortense Snow and Irene Haynie lighted candles around the room [in the Manavu (Provo) Ward Chapel] while Sis. Hedwig Snell played the organ. The new girls were each presented with a lighted candle and wore white veils. They slowly walked up the aisles to where Pres. [Catherine Richards] Lund waited by the shield. She had them in a semicircle before her and after a solemn and beautiful talk where in she charged them to live up to all the things which Yesharah stands for they promised and then the old and new members joined hands in a circle of

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<sup>62</sup>Peterson, *Book of Remembrance*, 28.

<sup>63</sup>Hill, *The World Their Household*, 62, 64.

<sup>64</sup>Scott, *Natural Allies*, 86.

sistership. The new members were given an emblem of the club.<sup>65</sup>

The ceremony invokes mystical elements in its use of candlelight, symbolic emblems, and formality. Interestingly, the ceremony explicitly creates and emphasizes "sistership," having the women literally join hands and form a circle. Hints of the LDS temple ceremony echo through the initiation, reinforcing the symbolic equation between gospel truth and sisterhood in the society. How long such initiation ceremonies were practiced is not clear, though a ledger entry for the 1934–35 school year notes the purchase of "10 yds of cheese cloth for initiation scarfs" (cost 87 cents), in October 1935, for what was later called an "impressive initiation ceremonial,"<sup>66</sup> and "President Lila Hatch" officiated at an initiation ceremony a year later in October 1936. Further ceremonies are not recorded.<sup>67</sup> While ritualistic initiations in Greek societies were not unusual and may deemphasize the seeming similarities to LDS temple ritual, such ceremonies certainly set Yesharah apart from mainstream female literary clubs or professional societies. Yesharahs believed they had a distinctive role, which they reinforced with the explicit statement of high ideals, missionary actions, and sisterhood. Further, Yesharah took steps to create a sense of spiritual uniqueness through initiation ceremonies during early years.

#### **"FALL" AND "REFORMATION OF 1942"**

Despite the seriousness of their goals and their dedication to keeping them, the Yesharah women also had fun, sponsoring, for ex-

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<sup>65</sup>"Minutes of the Yesharah club held Thursday Nov 2 1933," 1933–1947 Minute Book, 2, Yesharah Collection.

<sup>66</sup>"Acct. of Yesharahs 1934 & 35," Yesharah Ledger 1935-51, 1, Yesharah Collection; "Minutes of the Yesharah Club held Thursday, October [1935]," 1935–1947 Minute Book, 13.

<sup>67</sup>During the same period, Yesharah's male counterparts, the Friars, were also participating in ceremonies "filled with ritual and symbols," though the male initiations tended to include extreme physical hazing as well, a long-term matter of concern for the general officers. Hartley, *Delta Phi*, 26–27. Hartley details a number of initiation ceremonies and such hazing rituals as the "brutal paddling," which caused Whitney Smith to develop a kidney condition in 1930 (32), and the "paddling circle," [a] potent mixture of lard and alum, 'Delta Phi Colors' pills, and pantomimes" during the 1939 ceremony (78).

ample, a 1930 fishing trip and a 1931 “January Thaw” party.<sup>68</sup> In the late 1930s, the Provo Yesharah began to emphasize the “fun” aspect of their society, seemingly more than their missionary zeal. Rather than the steady reports on missions, the minutes record baby showers and bridal showers, often including seemingly frivolous details.<sup>69</sup> When members lectured on foreign missions, they emphasized culture rather than missionary work.<sup>70</sup> Though a secretary had at times inadvertently referred to Yesharah as a “club” in early years, by 1936 (in spite of the organizers’ insistence on correct vernacular) the minutes consistently label the association as “club” and members as “Miss” or “Mrs.” rather than “Sister.”

Members eventually felt dissatisfied with their movement away from holiness. In February 1942, the society voted to “junk” the constitution and have a new one written. The committee [members] who wrote the original constitution were re-appointed to write a new one,” as all three—Georgia Maeser, Jennie Knight, and Pearl Snow—were still active members of Yesharah. While an entirely new constitution was not created, a few changes were made, most notably allowing women who were serving or had served on “General or Stake Boards of the L.D.S. Auxiliary Organizations” to be members even if they did not fill the university affiliation requirement.<sup>71</sup> In their revivalist zeal, Yesharahs returned to their roots, writing directly to Dr. Sperry

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<sup>68</sup>“Meeting held April 3, 1930,” 1929–32 Minute Book. See also “Women’s Missionary Club Entertains for Members,” newspaper clipping, Yesharah Scrapbook. This clipping has “1930” written on it, but it is pasted on the 1931–32 scrapbook page. The 1929–32 Minute Book, which has notes only for the 1930–31 school year, lists expenses for the “January thaw” party, which probably occurred in January 1931.

<sup>69</sup>The minutes record gifts for Leona Booth White’s baby on September 18, 1938. “Minutes of September Yesharah Club [September 18, 1938],” 1933–47 Minute Book, 33; and the “special bride’s cake” at Sister Ethel Strausser Paul’s January 1939 bridal shower. This cake, made for the “unmarried girls,” contained a “small token” in each piece, causing “great merriment.” “Yesharah Club Meeting—Jan 20 1939,” 1933–47 Minute Book, 39.

<sup>70</sup>For example, in January 1940, Mrs. Wylie Sessions displayed the “workmanship of different Indian [sic] tribes” in South Africa, while on May 4, 1940, Flora Fisher lectured on “Art in Mexico.” “Jan. 20, 1940,” 1933–47 Minute Book, 52; and “May 4, 1940,” *ibid.*, 56.

<sup>71</sup>There is no indication that a new constitution was ever created, de-

about their name. The women explained that, “in the intervening time, the exact meaning seems to have grown rather vague.” The discord the organization was experiencing is suggested by the women’s plea: “Would you be kind enough to write us a brief definition or explanation of our name that we can attach to our constitution, so that we will not have so much difficulty and disagreement in the future in making ourselves understood?”<sup>72</sup>

Elizabeth Souter, who had been acting as Yesarah “General President,” was elected president of the local Provo Chapter for the 1942–43 school year. Under her direction, the society’s missiological purposes flourished again. Meetings were titled “Be Ye Doers of the Word” and “Once a Missionary, Always a Missionary,” the latter featuring a discussion that “placed emphasis on our responsibility as returned missionaries to continue our labors at home.”<sup>73</sup> In February 1943, the Provo Yesarahs took a pledge reaffirming their dedication to missionary service and then mailed the pledge to the other Yesarah chapters.<sup>74</sup> Yesarah once again became a “society,” and its members “sisters.”

Yesarah’s focus on missions and spirituality generally remained stable for the rest of the twentieth century, although historical events and cultural movements affected the group. During World War II, for example, service projects no longer meant speaking in sacrament meetings and writing letters but buying defense stamps and bonds, and visiting “war sorrowed homes.”<sup>75</sup> Meeting topics such as “Our Japanese Neighbors” in November 1943 and “Love for Our Conquered Neighbors” in March 1944 may seem surprisingly broad-minded, given the rac-

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bated, or ratified. A “February 1942 Constitution” shows only a few penciled changes from the 1932 Constitution. Moreover, the 1989 Constitution used by the Orem Yesarah remains largely the same as the 1932 Constitution. Orem formed its own chapter only in 1972 and took that year’s constitution with them, further suggesting that a new constitution was never created. “1949 Revised Constitution,” 1, Hart Collection.

<sup>72</sup>Yesarah, letter to Dr. Sydney [sic] B. Sperry, March 11, 1942.

<sup>73</sup>“Oct. 16, 1942,” 1933–47 Minute Book, 82; “Feb 19 [1943],” *ibid.*, 87.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.* “Dear Sister,” Letter, February 19, 1943; loose sheet in 1933–47 Minute Book, 139.

<sup>75</sup>“16 April 1942,” 1933–47 Minute Book, 79; and “April 1945,” *ibid.*, 133.

ism, relocation camps, and xenophobia of the World War II years; however, Hazel Robertson had served a mission to Japan with her husband from 1921 to 1924 and numerous Yesharah sisters had served foreign missions.<sup>76</sup> In this respect, Yesharah seems like the denominational Christian mission societies studied by Anne Firor Scott, which typically “studied geography and history, listened to returned missionaries, and made extraordinary efforts to understand cultures different from their own.”<sup>77</sup> The 1950s brought another interesting turn: for the first time, a meeting focused on “the influence of women in the home,” suggesting the national post-war emphasis on domesticity, although the same meeting also discussed women’s “responsibility in life and community.”<sup>78</sup> Still, the two known functioning Yesharah Chapters—Logan and Orem—both continue the historic emphasis on missionary work, with programs such as “Missionary Work in Bosnia & Napal [sic],” “Vietnam Humanitarian,” and “Mission to Martin’s Cove” for the 2003–04 season.<sup>79</sup>

### GROWTH AND DECREASING UNIVERSITY TIES

Even with stabilized goals, other adaptations were necessary, especially in relation to BYU. The Yesharahs originally saw themselves as having clear and solid ties to BYU; the first entry in the 1929–32 Minute Book records: “The president must be a registered student and not a faculty member of the B.Y.U.” Furthermore, the “project” for 1929–30 was the enrollment of “100% of the lady missionaries attending BYU.”<sup>80</sup> The society explicitly functioned around BYU’s semester schedule and attempted to

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<sup>76</sup>“19 November 1943,” 1933–47 Minute Book, 104–5; “18 March 1944,” *ibid.*, 111; “History of Hazel M. Robertson,” Yesharah Book of Remembrance, 44.

<sup>77</sup>Scott, *Natural Allies*, 87.

<sup>78</sup>“25 September 1958,” 1947–60 Minute Book, 119.

<sup>79</sup>“2003–2004 Yesharah Directory,” Orem Chapter, in my possession. According to Marie Holst of the Logan Yesharahs, their meetings most often consist of “returned missionaries, especially couples talking about their mission.” Telephone interview, March 19, 2004.

<sup>80</sup>“Minutes of a business meeting held November 25, 1929,” 1929–32 Minute Book, Yesharah Collection. This minute book is not paginated.

place an annual picture in the university's yearbook, *The Banyan*.<sup>81</sup> The "missionary reunion" breakfast instituted at the home of Inez Knight Allen in the spring of 1929 and mandated by the 1932 Constitution continued to be held for years on "BYU Commencement morning."<sup>82</sup> The original membership was drawn from the local BYU and Provo community.

Yet as early as 1931, women attending the annual Yesarah breakfast included those from Ogden, Salt Lake City, Beaver, and Mount Pleasant in Utah, and places as distant as Driggs and St. Charles, Idaho.<sup>83</sup> The 1932 name change from "Y Missionary Women" to "Yesarah" came about because the women needed a "less restrictive name" to appeal to a broader membership.<sup>84</sup> That broader membership came in part from the University of Utah and Utah State Agricultural College (now Utah State University), two colleges where the Yesarahs actively recruited as early as September 1933.<sup>85</sup> By 1934 the society boasted 155 scattered members, and the breakfast was a statewide occasion, drawing such notable guests as Augusta Winter Grant, wife of President Heber J. Grant, May Booth Talmage, widow of Elder James E. Talmage, and numerous members from the newly formed chapters at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and Utah State University in Logan.<sup>86</sup> In fact, Church President Heber J. Grant attended the breakfast on more than one occasion, as did Apostles John A. Widstoe and Albert E. Bowen, a feat that evidently pleased the Yesarahs immensely and garnered positive newspaper public-

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<sup>81</sup>The women appear consistently in the *Banyan* until 1937.

<sup>82</sup>"Breakfasts" list, following "Presidents of Yesarah list," holograph, Yesarah Scrapbook; "Constitution of the 'Y' Missionary Women— 1932," 3, copy with penciled changes, Yesarah Collection, 3.

<sup>83</sup>List of names, 1929–32 Minute Book. This list, not labeled, most likely pertains to the 1931 annual breakfast list as all other entries in the Minute Book pertain to the 1930–31 school year.

<sup>84</sup>"The Yesarah Society," 1.

<sup>85</sup>"Minutes of the Yesarah Club held September 28, 1933 at the home of Georgia Maesar [sic]," 1947–1960 Minute Book, 1, Yesarah Collection.

<sup>86</sup>"September 28, 1933," 1947–1960 Minute Book, 1; "College Women Missionaries of Church to Hold Reunion," *Deseret News*, June 2, 1934, pasted on "1934" page in Yesarah Scrapbook.



ity.<sup>87</sup> More than forty years later, Elizabeth Souter told how society members had preserved “newspaper pictures and write-ups of these cherished events,” indicating the thrill Yesharahs felt at being so honored.<sup>88</sup> These “celebrity” visits appear to stop after 1939, and attendance generally declined during the difficult World War II years.

While the attendance of the prophet, apostles, and their wives delighted Yesharah members at annual breakfasts during the 1930s, it likely had additional, though less tangible, effects—such as ameliorating guilt and granting quasi-authoritative approval of the society. On the national scene, some clubwomen experienced shame, feeling that they could not justify “meet[ing] for self-improvement without guilt” because it was selfish and outside their domestic duties.<sup>89</sup> Yesharah’s stated goal to “promote educational, cultural, and social development in the members of the organization”<sup>90</sup> could have caused similar feelings. If so, the General Authorities’ attendance gave tacit approval to Yesharah. Of course, religious societies generally felt less guilt than the more “frivolous” clubwomen because of their high-minded focus on missionary and benevolent work. As Patricia Hill summarizes, Christian women felt they had found their “highest calling” in the “wide enterprise that claimed ultimate significance,” a work that was “entirely consistent with their ideology of home and motherhood and their theology of sacrificial ser-

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<sup>87</sup>President Grant attended numerous breakfasts in the 1930s. See “7 June 1939,” 1933–47 Minute Book, 48; envelope of newspaper clippings in Yesharah Scrapbook, 1933–36 page, including “Yesharahs Will Serve Breakfast,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 3, 1935; “Women Honored by Church Head,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 6, 1935; “Missionary Group Invites Church Leader,” [*Deseret News?*], June 7, 1935. There is no record of such notable guests after 1939. According to June 7, 1939, 1933–47 Minute Book, 48, “There were 84 present including members, guests of the U. of U. chapter of Salt Lake City, special guests Apostle and Mrs. John A. Widstoe, Apostle and Mrs. A. E. Bowen, mission mothers, local members and guests.”

<sup>88</sup>Souter, “A Brief Historical Sketch of Yesharah,” 1.

<sup>89</sup>Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, 66.

<sup>90</sup>“Constitution of the ‘Y’ Missionary Women—1932,” 1.

vice.”<sup>91</sup> Still, many female denominational religious societies clashed with male leaders over issues such as self-governance and representation in patriarchal hierarchy, and these clashes contributed to the overall decline of the American woman’s missionary movement during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>92</sup> Yesarah seemed to get the best of both worlds; the Church president’s attendance granted theological and authoritative legitimacy to their society—relieving any potential feelings of guilt—while their “club” status granted distance from the mainstream Church hierarchy and, hence, distance from potential conflicts with authority. Yesarah seemed “official” while maintaining autonomous control of their association.

For a while, Yesarah sought to maintain its quasi-official relationship with BYU. Despite the growth, name change, and celebrity guests, early Yesarah directories and programs show a clear link to BYU. The society’s emblems of a “candle and olive branch” typically took the form of the well-known BYU “Y,” at times featuring candles rising out of the Y or olive leaves surrounding the Y. At the 1934 breakfast, the tables were even arranged in a “Y.” The first Yesarah Directory (1938) specified that Yesarah was the “‘Y’ Lady Missionaries” in parenthesis on its front cover.<sup>93</sup>

Eventually growth prompted the Provo chapter to reconsider its BYU relationship. In January 1948, the Provo chapter began investigating the towering goal of “dividing Yesarah into Chapters (Churchwide).”<sup>94</sup> A major growth impediment was the explicit connection to colleges and the implicit connection to BYU. The January

<sup>91</sup>Hill, *The World Their Household*, 60.

<sup>92</sup>Scott, *Natural Allies*, 86–87; see also Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, 10.

<sup>93</sup>“1938–39 Directory,” Yesarah Scrapbook, 1939–40 page; photograph of Roberts Hotel, Yesarah Scrapbook, 1934 page. It is unclear when this photograph was actually taken. The same photograph is pasted into the front cover of the Yesarah Book of Remembrance with the label “1937 Breakfast.” Mrs. Stephen L. Chipman’s copy. While the “Y” table design could conceivably refer to “Yesarah,” I have found no indication that the society ever referred to itself or abbreviated its name in this fashion. The Yesarah “emblems” (candles and olive branch) were instituted during the early 1930s, although I have found no documentation on their meaning or representation.

<sup>94</sup>“16 Jan 1948,” 1947–60 Minute Book, 5.

28, 1949, meeting, featured “considerable discussion” about membership and the formation of new chapters, a debate that continued through the year. The Provo chapter voted 17 to 4 in January 1950 to strike the constitutional article mandating attendance at a university.<sup>95</sup> With the expectation of Church-wide growth, the society produced a 1949 directory solely emphasizing the candle and leaf emblems without any indication of a “Y” or nomenclature of “Y Missionary Women.”<sup>96</sup> When Georgia Maeser wrote her life sketch in the early 1950s, she noted without equivocation that Yesarah had “become independent of the University.”<sup>97</sup>

Interestingly, however, Yesarah emblems have remained unvarying. In early years, the candle took different forms, as did the olive branches (sometimes just leaves) and their placement around, behind, or beside the candle. The current image of a lighted candle with olive branches at its base first appeared in 1953 and has remained unchanged to the present, a physical indication that, by the early 1950s, Yesarah had clearly defined its purpose, primary associations, and aims and that they have remained relatively constant in the intervening years.

Georgia Maeser was evidently not referring to BYU’s Beta Pi club when she wrote of Yesarah’s independence from BYU. As early as 1939, Beta Pi, a female mission society, had been organized and was running itself, composed solely of BYU female students.<sup>98</sup> At first Yesarah defended its BYU ties and questioned the validity of Beta Pi. As a committee, Georgia Maeser, Jennie B. Knight, and Pearl Snow wrote BYU President Harris in March 1942: “Are we not right in considering ourselves the alumni women missionaries of Brigham Young University?”<sup>99</sup> President Harris immediately wrote back explaining that there was to be “only one organization with two types of member-

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<sup>95</sup>“20 May 1949,” “18 Aug 1949,” “16 Dec 1949,” “20 Jan 1950,” 1947–1960 Minute Book, 17, 21, 25, 27.

<sup>96</sup>“1949–50 Yesarah Directory,” Yesarah Scrapbook, 1949–50 page. The 1953–54 Directory emblems look almost exactly like those on the modern directories.

<sup>97</sup>“Georgia Maeser,” Book of Remembrance, 1.

<sup>98</sup>“Minutes of Yesarah Club Meeting—Apr 1939,” 1933–47 Minute Book, 43.

<sup>99</sup>Georgia Maeser, Jennie B. Knight, and Pearl Snow, Letter to Presi-

ship.”<sup>100</sup> Thus, Yesarah originally saw Beta Pi as a “junior chapter” with a “different type of membership” while Yesarah was “BYU’s missionary society.” Yet Beta Pi elected its own leaders, maintained its own membership, and functioned without Yesarah oversight. By 1950, when Georgia Maeser said Yesarah was “independent” of BYU, Beta Pi was flourishing with a membership of more than sixty BYU women student members.

Beta Pi’s strength may have reflected the stunning 1945 statistical spike that, of the total 400 missionaries, 212 were sisters—53% of the total.<sup>101</sup> If Yesarah women came together in part because of a sense of missiological uniqueness, then perhaps this new generation of sister missionaries felt similarly unique and invigorated by their relative numbers during World War II. Yesarah and Beta Pi had at least minimal contact. For example, on March 15, 1950, the young BYU sisters hosted the older Yesarah membership, although the contact lessened as Beta Pi declined.<sup>102</sup>

By at least 1960, Beta Pi had ceased to function, likely from a combination of cultural and Church-related factors during the 1950s. According to historian Nancy Woloch, the 1950s nationally were a time of “a new outburst of domestic ideology, a vigorous revival of traditional ideals of woman’s place.” The traditional ideal of women’s sphere diminished the appeal of women in public life; generally speaking, “the assertiveness needed to pursue any course in public affairs was in low repute in the 1950s,” and this trend affected ecclesiastical leadership as well.<sup>103</sup> Maxine Hanks suggests that, during the thirty years following World War II, “missionaries were equated with men in official church discourse.” Hanks quotes *Improvement Era* advice to “Missionaries and Their Girlfriends” and an article suggesting: “One reason why so few women are missionaries might be that [their] first calling is to stay home and write to

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dent Franklin S. Harris, March 2, 1942, Yesarah Collection.

<sup>100</sup>Franklin S. Harris, Letter to Georgia Maeser, 3 March 1942, Yesarah Collection.

<sup>101</sup>Payne, “Our Wise and Prudent Women,” p. 27, Table 1. The numbers of both male and female missionaries decreased dramatically during World War II; 1945 was a one-time aberration in gender reversal.

<sup>102</sup>“15 Mar 1950,” 1947–60 Minute Book, 29, Yesarah Collection.

<sup>103</sup>Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 493, 496.

them!”<sup>104</sup> BYU female students apparently heard the counsel. Beta Pi last appeared in the *Banyan* in 1955, while Shomrah Kiyel, the club for women “seriously waiting for a missionary,” began, ironically, that same spring.<sup>105</sup>

This new “missionary” society had no contact with Yesarah. Thus, while Yesarah explicitly cut ties with BYU in 1950, it maintained a tenuous connection for another decade via Beta Pi. By 1960, however, Beta Pi was defunct, and Yesarah had no connection with BYU, except through personal connections.

Without the need to form around university students, Yesarah growth flourished. In her study of women’s clubs in Georgia, Darlene Rebecca Roth analyzed patterns of organizational development. Though she does not claim that her pattern is nationally observable, it also fits Yesarah. She points out that clubs typically spread to “major cities” first, a pattern repeated in Yesarah’s growth to Salt Lake City and Logan.<sup>106</sup> From that point, Roth’s women’s clubs in Georgia “grew out from the cities to the small towns.”<sup>107</sup> Though Roth does not define what she meant by “small towns,” Yesarah’s growth from the university-based “cities” of Provo, Salt Lake, and Logan, to the “smaller towns” of Smithfield, Spanish Fork, Payson, Ogden, and Pleasant Grove, Utah, as well as to Malad, Idaho, seems to fit the pattern.<sup>108</sup> Yesarah also had a chapter in Mesa, Arizona, by the end of the 1950s.<sup>109</sup> After city and rural expansion, Roth noted that membership “dispersed again, chiefly to additional metropolitan and suburban areas.” Georgia clubs spread from Atlanta to towns throughout the state, then back to Atlanta and its suburbs, between 1890 and

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<sup>104</sup>Hanks, “Sister Missionaries and Authority,” 320.

<sup>105</sup>Lynn Staheli, ed., “Beta Pi,” *The Banyan 1955* (Provo, Utah: Associated Students of Brigham Young University, 1955), 238; see also Lynn G. Hale, ed., “Shomrah Kiyel,” *The Banyan 1960* (Provo, Utah: Associated Students of Brigham Young University, 1960), 196–97.

<sup>106</sup>Roth, *Matronage*, 55.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>108</sup>Souter, “A Brief Historical Sketch of Yesarah,” 1; see also “The Yesarah Society,” 1. Souter does not mention the Pleasant Grove chapter, but it appears in Provo’s minutes as early as “18 Oct 1952,” 1947–60 Minute Book, 52.

<sup>109</sup>Souter, “A Brief Historical Sketch of Yesarah,” 1; see also “The Yesarah Society,” 1.

1940. Similarly, Yesharah saw growth in cities, then towns during the 1950s, then an increase in Provo membership that prompted a split in 1959 into the Provo I and Provo II chapters, with an Orem chapter splitting off from the Provo I chapter in 1972.<sup>110</sup>

Presumably membership peaked during the 1960s and 1970s with the participation of several hundred returned sister missionaries, though the chapter records are not specific enough to define total membership. Clearly, however, the society attracted loyal members who participated for years. Charter member and first vice president Jennie Brimhall Knight attended meetings into the 1950s, as did charter members Georgia Maeser and Pearl Snow.<sup>111</sup> Charter member Elizabeth Souter was actively involved for at least fifty years,<sup>112</sup> while charter member Editha Booth—perhaps the longest Yesharah member to date—maintained her membership for at least fifty-eight years, serving as secretary-treasurer of the Provo chapter in 1985–86.<sup>113</sup>

A comparison of the Provo membership in 1967–68 and 1977–78 shows that fifteen members (out of 41 in 1977–78—approximately 37 percent) had been involved for that full decade or longer.<sup>114</sup> The loyalty of Yesharah women is similar to the general trend found in

<sup>110</sup>Roth, *Matronage*, 55; “9 November 1972,” Orem Yesharah Minute Book, 2, Yesharah Collection.

<sup>111</sup>“Yesharah Hears Talk, Elects Heads,” [*Provo*] *Daily Herald*, May 24, 1953, A-4, Yesharah Collection.

<sup>112</sup>Souter, “A Brief Historical Sketch of Yesharah.”

<sup>113</sup>“Yesharah Breakfast 1985,” booklet, pasted into Yesharah Minute Book, Orem Chapter, unpaginated, Yesharah Collection.

<sup>114</sup>This does not count Editha Booth who is not listed in the “1976–77 Directory,” Yesharah Scrapbook, for unknown reasons. See also “1967–77 Directory,” Yesharah Directories, Yesharah Collection. Of the fifteen who maintained a ten-year membership, six can be traced even further: Elaine Bentwet had been a member at least since the early 1950s, following in the footsteps of one of the earliest members, her mother, Edna Bentwet. Elaine Bentwet, “Life Sketch,” Yesharah Book of Remembrance, 35. Veda Williams had been a member at least since the late 1950s. “26 Feb 1959,” 1947–60 Minute Book, 125. Florence Valgardson attended the Payson Yesharah after her 1939–41 mission to the Northern States, then joined Provo Yesharah after 1946 marriage and remained until the Provo chapter dissolved in 2000. Florence Valgardson, telephone interview, March 24, 2004. Mavis Duke, Florence’s mission companion, joined Yesharah in 1947

other American women's clubs. According to Karen Blair, "Great numbers of women joined a club and stayed in it year after year," often bringing in family members as well.<sup>115</sup> Roth's Atlanta study also noted longevity in clubwomen, with numerous women remaining active "over two, three, four, even five decades" while 25 percent "were active over a period of two decades." Roth argues that a "ten-year period of active involvement . . . was already a clear indication of commitment and leadership of a type that constituted a long-term, adult pursuit—in a word, a career." While Yesharahs probably would not call their missionary work a "career," they certainly saw it as, in Roth's terms, a "long-term, adult pursuit" and an on-going calling that they should magnify. Like the women in Roth's study, Yesharah women were "personally, seriously, [and] heavily committed" to their organization.<sup>116</sup> Yesharah women felt dedicated to missionary work, and many measured it by dedicating years to their missionary society.

### GRADUAL DECLINE

Despite this marked loyalty, Yesharah declined at the end of the

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and also remained involved until Provo dissolved. Mavis Duke, telephone interview, March 10, 2004. Anna Boss Hart is listed "Roll 1942–43," Yesharah 1935–51 Ledger, 30. Vera Freckleton attended her first meeting in 1951, served in various Yesharah leadership positions (she was president in 1987–88, 1995–96), and is the only Provo chapter member who actively attended the Orem Yesharah after the Provo chapter dissolved. Vera Freckleton, telephone interview, April 5, 2004.

<sup>115</sup>Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, 63. I observed that Yesharah members also showed a proclivity toward recruiting relatives and close associates, in this case, mission companions. For example, Fern Chipman Eyring reported that her mother, Sina Nielson Chipman, "was a member and she too appreciated this wonderful organization. She was very anxious that I join." Eyring, *Book of Remembrance*, [26]. Leona Booth White was the sister of charter member Editha Booth. *Ibid.*, 39. Editha Booth and Erma Bennett were cousins; their mothers, Mary Ashworth Booth and Elsie Ashworth Bennett were sisters. Modern Yesharah women report that they invite former mission companions and other women who served in the same mission to join.

<sup>116</sup>Roth, *Matronage*, 79. Roth studied 508 women, 125 of whom she was unable to trace further. She found that 131 members "were active over a period of two decades."



twentieth century. Historian Anne Firor Scott notes that “it is not always clear” why “some associations adapt” while “others become obsolete and fade into obscurity,”<sup>117</sup> and the Provo chapter’s slow disintegration is a case in point. The two Provo chapters seemed active and responsive during the 1960s and 1970s, adapting to variable factors such as decreasing university ties and increasing chapters and membership. A 1962–63 Provo I Directory claimed sixty-two members and listed exotic lectures on the Far East, India, Iran, New Zealand, and Samoa missions.<sup>118</sup> The 1965–66 Provo I Directory lists 61 members and meetings that discussed the “many facets” of LDS “culture,” such as drama, art, poetry and “culture through missionary callings.”<sup>119</sup> That the 1976–77 membership directory still lists forty-one members, even after a large group left to attend the Orem chapter formed in 1972, seems remarkable.<sup>120</sup>

Yet membership was slowly waning. The local chapters typically met for an annual “open session” in October, a combined Christmas party, and the spring breakfast. The Orem chapter, Provo II chapter, and Salt Lake chapter attended a 1974 open session in Provo, yet Salt Lake members are never mentioned again in the Orem chapter’s minutes.<sup>121</sup> Though the Provo II chapter hosted the 1981 annual breakfast, the group apparently dissolved during the next year, as it did not attend the 1982 breakfast nor is it listed again in the Orem minutes.<sup>122</sup> The Spanish Fork chapter is mentioned at four different events, the last being a 1994 Christmas party.<sup>123</sup>

The charter Provo chapter was floundering by the late 1980s. Vera Freckleton served as president for both 1987–88 and 1988–89, a

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<sup>117</sup>Scott, *Natural Allies*, 180.

<sup>118</sup>“1962–63 Directory,” Yesharah Directories. This small book, bound by Perry Special Collections, includes membership directories from 1956–57, 1957–58, 1962–63, 1964–65, 1965–66, 1966–67, and 1967–68.

<sup>119</sup>“1965–66 Directory,” Yesharah Directories.

<sup>120</sup>“1976–77 Directory,” Yesharah Scrapbook.

<sup>121</sup>“19 Oct 1974,” Orem Yesharah Minute Books, unpaginated, Yesharah Collection.

<sup>122</sup>“Yesharah Club Install at Breakfast,” clipping from unidentified newspaper, Orem Yesharah Minute Books, unpaginated. See also “Club News,” clipping from unidentified newspaper clipping, *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup>“11 Oct 1985,” “18 October [1986],” “18 October 1988,” and “5 Dec 1994,” Orem Yesharah Minute Books.

departure from the usual pattern. Vera recalled in an interview that the Provo group “didn’t try too hard to get new [members],” which caused a gradual membership decline as the women grew older. Eventually presidents had to serve for two-year terms because the membership was so small.<sup>124</sup> In 1995 Provo did not participate with Orem in an October “open session” or a combined Christmas party, though the Provo group did attend the annual breakfast in 1996 and 1997.<sup>125</sup> It continued to meet for a few more years and then dissolved, likely in the spring of 2000, after a seventy-two-year history.<sup>126</sup>

The 2004–05 Orem Yesharah chapter is an anomaly with its thriving membership of fifty and its steady stream of new—mainly older—members.<sup>127</sup> More typically, the Logan chapter, like other Yesharah chapters, is “barely going,” according to MelRee Anderson, secretary-treasurer for 2003–04. Fewer than twenty regularly attend meetings.<sup>128</sup> Marie Holst, who served as president of the Logan Yesharah in 1961–62, commented in a March 2004 interview, that the society has been functioning on its own for as long as she can remember; it probably lost contact with the other chapters during the 1970s.<sup>129</sup> However, the membership of the Logan Yesharah is aging, and even its dedicated members find it difficult to attend meetings during winter months. Without an influx of “young sister missionaries”—who are either “too busy” or who want to associate with “younger” women—Holst believes that the Logan Yesharah will fade away.

Roth’s analysis of the “institutionalization” of Atlanta’s clubs can perhaps shed light on Yesharah’s decline. While admitting that an organization becomes “permanent” in a “complex process,” Roth postulates that two factors are essential: a long-lived “ruling class” must develop and “ownership [of] and identification . . . with actual

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<sup>124</sup>Vera Freckleton, telephone interview, April 5, 2004.

<sup>125</sup>“16 October 1995,” “4 Dec 1995,” and “1 June 1996,” Orem Chapter Minute Book; see also “7 June 1997,” *ibid*.

<sup>126</sup>Minute books are not available, and my interviewees do not recall the exact year. I estimated the date based on Vera Freckleton’s continual activity in Yesharah. She began attending meetings at the Orem Chapter and attended all nine meetings for 2000–01.

<sup>127</sup>Vera Freckleton, telephone interview, April 5, 2004.

<sup>128</sup>MelRee Anderson, telephone interview, March 19, 2004.

<sup>129</sup>Marie Holst, telephone interview, March 19, 2004.

physical sites” must occur.<sup>130</sup> Yesarah developed a long-standing “ruling class,” if that term can appropriately be applied to the women who dedicated years and decades to Yesarah. Perhaps what Yesarah lacks is property—whether it takes the form of buildings and sites used for “clients’ or constituents’ purposes (such as day nurseries and schools),” for “their own purposes (such as chapter houses and head-quarter offices),” or for “general public view and for commemorative purposes” (such as monuments).<sup>131</sup> Yesarah does not own any “physical property,” according to Roth’s definition; and that may have hastened its decline; without a physical location, the society is rootless.

The decline may also have to do with authoritative LDS rhetoric, which encourages LDS girls to make marriage their primary responsibility and has likely persuaded returned sister missionaries to focus their attention on marriage and family rather than continuing missionary service.<sup>132</sup> Supporting that hypothesis is the fact that the returned missionaries attending the healthy Orem Yesarah are all older sisters who served with their husbands as couple missionaries; many members speculate that young women do not join Yesarah because they are busy with families. However, this change in membership dynamic may have little to do with the LDS stance on women serving missions, as Darlene Roth found a similar trend from young charter members toward elderly women members in the non-sectarian Georgia clubs.<sup>133</sup>

Another explanation for the decline could reflect the decline of

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<sup>130</sup>Roth, *Matronage*, 56.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>132</sup>Hanks, “Sister Missionaries and Authority,” 320; see also Tania Rands Lyon and Mary Ann Shumway McFarland, “‘Not Invited, But Welcome’: The History and Impact of Church Policy on Sister Missionaries,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 71–101.

<sup>133</sup>Roth, *Matronage*, 89. Roth compares a sampling of women “entering” clubs in the late 1800s with women in those same organizations during the 1930s and 1940s. She concludes, “Briefly stated, the early group could be described as a collection of tightly knit, relatively young, educated women of society, while the later group of women were less tightly knit, older, still educated, but whose social standing was considerably lower. In addition, the early group was very generalized in its activities, the later group more specialized; the early group contained many prominent female

the national female mission movement. Though “specific causes” are “hard to pinpoint,” a variety of reasons pushed women’s missionary societies to “integrate” into the “larger structures of the churches” and caused a “broadening of women’s interests in the mainline churches” during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>134</sup> Yesarah was never officially part of the mainstream church and has gradually become less so, yet it seems possible that Yesarah membership has declined because of an “integrating” of female missionaries into the mainstream LDS culture. Perhaps the feelings of uniqueness that drew the first LDS female missionaries together (with, as a second wave, sister missionaries of World War II) have naturally faded as more LDS women have served (over 11,000 in 2002<sup>135</sup>). Perhaps that special sense of exclusivity has faded as more members have come to view women’s missionary service as an ordinary choice in their lives rather than as a distinctive feature.<sup>136</sup>

A final hypothesis about Yesarah’s decline is rather ironic. Perhaps cutting ties with BYU, the process which made possible the membership growth of the 1950s, inadvertently separated Yesarah from thousands of younger sisters who would have liked to participate in Yesarah—had they known it existed. Yesarah has become an isolated society in two locations, rather than a centralized group with official BYU ties and semi-official links to the LDS Church. Without means to publicize its activities through “official” channels or a social presence on campus to reach a younger generation of sister missionaries, the Orem Yesarah relies on word of mouth, mainly drawing members from a set geographic area or from previous personal or mission friendships.

### CONCLUSION

The society will never be completely forgotten, in large measure because Yesarah members saved an eclectic collection of “physical property” in the form of constitutions, directories, annual breakfast programs, handwritten poems on loose sheets of paper, mementos,

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leaders, the later group very few.”

<sup>134</sup>Robert, *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, 10.

<sup>135</sup>Payne, “Our Wise and Prudent Women,” Table 1.

<sup>136</sup>Lyon and McFarland, “Not Invited, But Welcome.”

and newspaper clippings.<sup>137</sup> The mementos are sometimes labeled with a scribbled name—Jennie Knight, Editha Booth, Georgia Maeser, Mrs. Stephen L. Chipman—suggesting that dedicated members treasured their association and saved it as bits of their personal history. They then returned the memorabilia to be placed in the Yesharah scrapbook or tucked between pages of the minute books, signifying the value they placed on the public, communal history of their society. The Yesharah women knew they were making history and seemed determined to preserve it, eventually donating their memorabilia to BYU Special Collections sometime during the 1970s.

These women valued the association, linking it to their missions, faith in the LDS Church, and sisterhood. In 1956, Fern Chipman Eyring commented, “I have always cherished my membership in the Yesharah Organization wherein the spirit of missionary work is perpetuated and where the gospel is the common bond which holds us together in love and understanding.” Florence Martineau said that “one of my greatest desires was to have the privilege of going into the mission field” while Sarah Shipley Clark spoke of her “joy” in Yesharah, noting especially the “choice women” with whom she had worked. Jennie Jensen Hancock remarked that words could not “express how each of the dear sisters in Yesharah has enriched my life and strengthened my faith and testimony of the gospel.”<sup>138</sup> The strength gained from sisterhood, the faith prompted by monthly missionary lectures, and the spirituality acquired by service can be measured by the years that many members spent actively attending Yesharah meetings.

Contemporary Orem Yesharahs are much like the “upright,

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<sup>137</sup>Interestingly, the Y Missionary Women did not have the same sense of history. The 1929–1932 Minute Book has entries only for the 1929–30 year, ledger entries begin in 1935, and the Yesharah Scrapbook’s 1928–29 and 1929–30 pages are blank, while the 1930–31 year contains only the 1932 Constitution. The scrapbook truly begins with the photograph and newspaper clippings saved on the 1931–32 page, which is the last year before the Y Missionary Women became Yesharah, a group that memorialized, maintained, and transmitted its history.

<sup>138</sup>“Fern Chipman Eyring,” Special Bulletin of Yesharah Members, 1, no. 5 (April 26, 1956): 1, in “Hart, Anna Boss” folder, Yesharah Collection; also “Florence Martineau,” 56; “Sarah Shipley Clark,” 4; “Jennie Jensen Hancock,” 1.

righteous, good and pleasing” Yesharah founders; they unite with their sisters and draw strength from contemporary “bearers of truth and light,” though few of these modern members know their rich history. Vera Freckleton does; she attended her first Yesharah meeting in March 1951<sup>139</sup> and has continued a half-century’s dedication to Yesharah. She stays, she says, because of the “friends” she has made; yet when her former companion and other friends dissolved the charter chapter, Vera became the lone Provo member to transfer her activities to the Orem chapter.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, she gathered all the memorabilia she could and brought the trove with her, tangibly passing on and maintaining the communal history of a seventy-eight-year-old female mission society. She, like the Yesharah founders and many American women in mission societies, felt called of God and honored by the opportunity to teach his gospel. That feeling, perhaps more than ownership of physical property, more than service goals or even sisterly friendship, explains the existence of Yesharah.

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<sup>139</sup>“Roll Call, 1950–51,” Yesharah 1935–51 Ledger, 74.

<sup>140</sup>Freckleton, telephone interview, April 5, 2004.

# BACKCOUNTRY MISSIONARIES IN THE POST-BELLUM SOUTH: THOMAS EPHRAIM HARPER'S EXPERIENCE

*Reid L. Harper*

*"Every elder in the South was exposed to extreme danger and each carried his life in his hands."*

—B. H. Roberts, 1884, Chattanooga, Tennessee

THE MISSIONARY DIARIES<sup>1</sup> OF THOMAS EPHRAIM HARPER, heretofore unknown to LDS historians, reveal much about Mormon proselytiz-

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<sup>1</sup>The extant journals (371 pages) cover from May 30, 1885, to January 1, 1887. Two volumes are available, "Record No. 2" (Harper's label) and its immediate sequel, Journal 3. Journal 1 is lost and probably a fourth journal also. The two holographs are in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (MSS 3181) (hereafter Perry Special Collections). A typescript and a searchable CD-ROM version in Word are in Perry Special Collections and in the LDS Family and Church History Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives), and also



ing in the American South in the 1880s, likewise providing a view of the milieu in which the work was done. This paper introduces the diaries, briefly reviews the story of violence against Mormon missionaries in the Southern States Mission, questions the “backcountry” nature of LDS missionary work in the South, and examines Harper’s experiences with mob actions.

Harper served from October 27, 1884, until March 12, 1887, one of twenty-four elders called to the Southern States Mission in 1884, a low for the decade; the average was fifty-three.<sup>2</sup> When he left home for his mission to Virginia and West Virginia (the Virginia Conference), he was a twenty-seven-year-old widower with three sons under age five.

He was one of the eleven children born to Thomas Harper of Call’s Fort (immediately north of Brigham City, Utah), and Hannah Jones Harper. Their last child was born in 1880 when Thomas Ephraim, their second child and first son, was twenty-three. Thomas Sr. was the settlement’s bishop for thirty-three years, from 1866 until his death in 1899. In 1906 the ward became Harper Ward and the bucolic community is known today as Harper.<sup>3</sup> In 1883, less than a year before Thomas Ephraim’s mission call and forty-four days after the death of his wife, Ellen Van Orden, Bishop Harper entered into his only polygamous marriage with seventeen-year-old Rachel Lewis of Albion, Idaho, who had been raised in a polygamous family. This marriage was a part of the “last major revival” of polygamy “which reached its height in 1884 and 1885,” possibly as a Mormon reaction to the Edmunds Act of 1882 by the national government. Rachel and Bishop Harper had six children, the last four born after the 1890 Manifesto.<sup>4</sup>

Polygamy was a vitally live issue during Thomas Ephraim

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in Reid L. Harper, comp. and ed., *A Harper Heritage: A Collection of Source Documents, Images, and Sound for the Posterity of Renaldo Earl [Harper] and Mary Darley Harper* (N.p.: privately printed, 2000), 24 copies. I cite Harper’s holograph journals by volume and page parenthetically in the text.

<sup>2</sup>Heather M. Seferovich, “History of the Southern States Mission, 1875–1898” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1996), Table 3.27.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick M. Huchel, *A History of Box Elder County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society/Box Elder County Commission, 1999), 347–51.

<sup>4</sup>Stanley S. Ivins “Notes on Mormon Polygamy,” quoted in D. Michael



*Thomas Ephraim Harper probably helped build this rock home in the early 1870s with his father, Thomas, a rock mason and bishop at Call's Fort. Changes to the home include an extension on the north, the covered porch, a new roof, and new windows. Photo by Leslie K. Harper, ca. 1997. Used by permission.*

Harper's mission, possibly *the* central problem for missionary work in the Southern States during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Of the twenty-one missionaries who served with or under Harper (he became president of the Virginia Conference March 10, 1886) thirteen, including him, were either polygamists or the sons of polygamists or both.

Harper's journals dramatize the issue. He and one companion had a discussion about polygamy with a Dr. Loving that ended when finally the doctor said, "damm you Men, you have got good Faces, you

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Quinn, ed., *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 172. Ivins also wrote: "The typical polygamist, far from being the insatiable male of popular fable was a dispassionate fellow, content to call a halt after marrying the one extra wife required to assure him of his chance at salvation" (173). For pressure on local Church leaders to enter polygamy, see B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 51-52.

let Polygamy alone and you will get to heaven Il be damned if you wont, You will Be allright" (2:8). Later a different doctor "interrogated" the missionaries about their "Belief on Polygamy." After a "prolonged conversation" the doctor was advised to "get the Discussion Between the Rev. Dr J.P. Newman and Apostle Orson Pratt. Delivered in Salt Lake City" (2:51-52).<sup>5</sup> Mr. Crist, a postmaster, "after a long conversation" told the missionaries "'he could not Believe that there were any Prophets and Apostles in Our day' and that Polygamy was rong entirely rong" (2:64). On another occasion, word reached the elders of a mob threat: "the people had become indignant at our teachings and was determined that we should not associate with their Daughters, or families, that we should not Be permitted to teach to them our Polygamaus Doctrine. Said they would not molest us that night, But would see that we would not stop in the vicinity annother night" (2:114).

### EVALUATING THE DIARY

In seeking context for Harper's diary, I read several journals kept by other Southern States missionaries of the same period. I'm forced to agree, for the most part, with the appraisal of David Buice, "Dozens of nineteenth-century diaries kept by missionaries who served in the Southern States Mission are now available to researchers in church archives in Salt Lake City. Unfortunately, many of them are . . . little more than skeletal narratives of the number of miles walked, meetings held, and tracts distributed."<sup>6</sup> An exception is the missionary diary of J. Golden Kimball, who served from April 10, 1883, to March 25, 1885, and who returned in 1891 as mission president,

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<sup>5</sup>John Philip Newman (1826–1899) was a Methodist and, at the time of the debate, chaplain to the U.S. Senate. Their "discussion" occurred in Salt Lake City on August 12, 13, 14, 1870, and was published as *Great Discussion! Does the Bible Sanction Polygamy? Held in the New Tabernacle at Salt Lake City, August 12, 1870*. A reprint edition was published as *The Bible & Polygamy. Does the Bible Sanction Polygamy? A Discussion between Professor Orson Pratt . . . and Rev. Doctor J. P. Newman . . .* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Steam Printing, 1874). See also Carmon B. Hardy, ed., *Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy, Its Origin, Practice, and Demise* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2007), 253–59.

<sup>6</sup>David Buice, "'All Alone and None to Cheer Me': The Southern States Mission Diaries of J. Golden Kimball," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon*

where he served until 1894. Harper, his companion, Lamoni Call, and Kimball were together for only nineteen days (December 26, 1884–January 13, 1885). Kimball, who was serving as mission secretary, had come back to Virginia from mission headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for a change of pace and a chance to visit his half-brother, Hyrum H. Kimball. However, Kimball had worked extensively in Virginia’s Amherst and Nelson counties, from December 30, 1883, till April 17, 1884, both of which figure prominently in Harper’s diary entries.

Thus, the two diaries supply glimpses of some of the same people in these areas. For example, on Christmas day, 1884, Kimball climbed up the west slope of the Blue Ridge, describing it as “very tedious and required energy and perseverance to accomplish it but after resting, puffing and blowing a good many times arrived at Paulus Lawhorns all right.” Eleven months earlier, Kimball had baptized Lawhorn on January 13, 1884, in the presence of hostile neighbors. “Sang two appropriate hymns,” recorded Kimball, adding with satisfaction, “After the baptism these mobbers came to the house and asked us to please sing those hymns over.”<sup>7</sup> Harper records that Lawhorn was ordained a priest and called to preside over the Oronoco Branch, in the absence of the elders (2:61). As another example, Kimball wrote on December 31, 1884, “Elder Harper and I . . . arrived at the widow Mrs. Steel. Mrs[.] Steel believes the gospel, but for some unknown reason procrastinates.” Almost two years later, Harper recorded Mrs. Steel’s baptism on October 10, 1886.

Harper’s account is interesting but his stoic narrative lacks Kimball’s ironic wit. Where Harper typically describes the endless trudging as “wending” his way or going “back over” mountain trails, Kimball adds more vivid details. For example, on May 25, 1883, he “continued my journey over the Walker Mt. (it took a good walker to get over) until noon, then tried three places for dinner; but was refused. Took a bath for lunch and walked on until that was exhausted. Then took a sleep . . . distance walked 16 miles.” Harper mentions

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*Thought* 24 (Spring 1991): 37.

<sup>7</sup>J. Golden Kimball, Journals, 1883–87, holograph, MS 1354, LDS Church Archives, in *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, [Dec. 2002], 1:38, on dates in text. Hereafter cited from this source by date in text.

many breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, and some times adds that they were “good,” or “warm,” or “real nice” (one was “splendid”), sometimes recording how thankful he was. However, he never mentions the specific food. In contrast, on March 26, 1884, Kimball wrote that he had “dry bread and cabbage, straight, no seasoning of any kind” and, on December 28, 1884, “cornbread and Rabbit.” On January 1, 1885, the Carr family in Irish Creek, Virginia, fed the elders a “splendid good dinner, the greatest treat was a well cooked wild turkey.”

Harper mentions “splendid” beds on a few occasions, especially at the end of an arduous day, but Kimball frequently provides details. On January 11, 1884, Kimball and his companion were given shelter at a house in Amherst County where he “could not stand erect. . . . They had two beds and nine of us to store away. It was accomplished, but how I cannot tell.” On the same night as the “cornbread and Rabbit” Kimball “retired to a bed about two feet too short.” On January 10, 1885, Kimball, Harper and Lamoni Call slept “three in one bed” at “Bro. Lawhorns” in Oronoco. The next morning, they “climbed the hill, arriving wet with perspiration.”<sup>8</sup> Harper records similar unstinting hospitality. He and Call arrived at a member’s home so late one evening that “[we] found them in Bed with the exception of Mrs. Ramsey; they got up and fixed us up A Bed, or rather fixed themselves one and gave us theirs” (2:29). Such hospitality was not infrequent, and he never records hearing a complaint from the host. A traceable part of Harper’s journals (May 29–June 30, 1885) shows that for twenty-four nights out of thirty-three he slept in a different bed than the night before. Eighteen of those thirty-three nights were at the homes of six different church members; the balance of the nights were with friends. The pattern seems to be typical for his mission. Harper did not routinely keep a record of miles walked.

He seems to have spent little time dwelling on his Utah home and his motherless children. Only once does he mention the “Little Boys” at home—and that was in a letter from a sister-in-law (2:137). He only once mentions an African American (“a small negro Boy”), but they are otherwise invisible. His journals also document eleven baptisms, two rebaptisms of excommunicates, two ordinations to priests, and three naming and blessings of children—including Finley Golden

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<sup>8</sup>Kimball, Journal, January 10–11, 1885.

Layton, obviously a tribute to J. Golden Kimball.<sup>9</sup>

### SOUTHERN STATES ANTI-MORMON VIOLENCE

Missionary work in the Southern States Mission has received considerable attention from historians because it was sometimes accompanied by violence and frequently by the threat of violence.<sup>10</sup> On July 21, 1879, missionary Joseph Standing was killed at Varnell's Station, Georgia, by a mob. He and his companion, Rudger Clawson, had been captives of the mob for some time. Standing, by their permission, was allowed to get a drink at a spring in the forest. Three members of the mob, who were on horseback, had left the group for an hour, then returned and said, "Follow us." According to Clawson, Standing "suddenly 'leaped to his feet[,] . . . brought his two hands together with a sudden slap and shouted in a loud clear voice—'surrender.'" Standing was instantly shot in the face "and fell without a groan." Clawson was allowed to go for help.<sup>11</sup>

Other missionary deaths occurred at Cane Creek, Lewis County, Tennessee, on August 10, 1884, two months before Harper's departure for the mission field. A small congregation was gathering

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<sup>9</sup>Apparently both Kimball and Harper had babies named after them. Little Finley, thirteen months old, died from burns five weeks after falling into a fireplace, and David Harper Shiflett, born in 1888, died at age five months. Both families moved west. The John Layton family of Irish Creek, Virginia, immigrated to Manassa, Colorado, and the Ashby Jackson Shiflett family of Bacon Hollow, arrived by 1892 in Mormon settlements in Arizona, where the family reached its ultimate size of twelve children. On David Harper Shiflett's name: see Larry Shiflett, email to Reid Harper, February 12, 1999, printout in my possession. I am particularly indebted to Julia Cross, webmaster of <http://www.shiflettfamily.org/>, Eugene Powell, and Larry Shiflett for their unflagging assistance. There are many variant spellings of the Shiflett name.

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Lamar C. Berrett, "History of the Southern States Mission, 1831–1860" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960); Seferovich, "History of the LDS Southern States Mission," and William W. Hatch, *There Is No Law: A History of Mormon Civil Relations in the Southern States, 1865–1905* (New York: Vantage Press, 1968).

<sup>11</sup>B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1930; rpt., Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 5:558–67.

for morning services when a mob of “12 or 14 masked men . . . rushed upon the home,” and seized the homeowner, James Condor, who shouted for his son and stepson to fight back. In the fight between nineteen-year-old Martin Condor and one of the attackers over a rifle, Martin was shot, two missionaries (William S. Berry and John H. Gibbs) were killed, and stepson James R. Hudson was shot just after he had killed the mob leader, David Hinson. One missionary escaped; another, who arrived late, was left in the charge of one attacker. This man, alarmed by the shooting, “permitted his prisoner to escape, accompanying him through a cross country run to a trail” leading into the next county.”<sup>12</sup>

William W. Hatch hypothesizes that these two attacks may have stopped short of fatalities if the Mormons had not escalated the action.<sup>13</sup> Buice and Hatch summarize: There were no missionary deaths by violence in any part of the United States except in the South where, between 1879 (Standing’s death) and 1900 (the murder of Elder John Dempsey in Mingo County, West Virginia), five Mormon missionaries and three local members were killed.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to fatalities, missionaries suffered numerous acts of violence in the South. One missionary received “fifteen lashes,” another “forty lashes.” A half tub of pitch and tar was poured over one elder. A meetinghouse was burned to the ground. An Elder Alexander was captured, “tied to a tree, and shot at by the mob, one bullet piercing the straw hat he wore.” He was otherwise unharmed but the incident “so shattered his nerves that it was felt necessary to return him to

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 6:90–93.

<sup>13</sup>Hatch, *There Is No Law*, 95–96, comments: “Standing died partly by choice, for his faith, and partly as a result of his reckless behavior.” Hatch also argues that the mob’s behavior prior to the shooting showed no murderous intent.

<sup>14</sup>David Buice, “‘A Stench in the Nostrils of Honest Men’: Southern Democrats and the Edmunds Act of 1882,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Autumn 1988): 102; Gene A. Sessions, “Myth, Mormonism, and Murder in the South,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 75 (Spring 1976): 213. Hatch, *There Is No Law*, 95, summarizes “major incidents.” The deaths of Standing, Berry, and Gibbs were due to missionary work. The motive for Alma P. Richards’s lonely, brutal death in Mississippi in 1888 is unknown. Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson supposes he was murdered for plunder.



his home.”<sup>15</sup> These are just a few examples.

Because of the Cane Creek murders and other incidents in 1884, Church authorities considered closing the Southern States Mission. Mission President John Morgan, who was temporarily in Salt Lake City, wrote to B. H. Roberts, assistant mission president, cautioning Roberts “not to be impulsive in resistance to mob violence for there was divided opinion among the leading brethren as to whether the work in the South should be continued or not. Many felt that the elders should be entirely released from the Southern States. . . . [and] if any more martyrdoms occurred we [Morgan and Roberts] might be held responsible for the fate of the brethren.” The doughty Roberts, who had gone in disguise to bring out Berry’s and Gibbs’s bodies Standing’s, answered: “Every elder in the South was exposed to extreme danger and each carried his life in his hands.” Church President John Taylor “sent word officially back to the mission that while due care was to be used as far as possible to protect the lives of the elders from mobs, there was to be no abandonment of the missionary labors. However, the injunction of Christ was to be observed that if they persecute you in one city flee unto another. With this word received from the president of the church, the embargo of activity on the part of the elders was lifted.”<sup>16</sup> In February 1885 Morgan and Roberts sent a letter “To the Presidents of Conferences, and Traveling Elders” of the Southern States Mission, which read in part:

Some of our brethren have fallen in the struggle, and sealed their testimony with their blood. Their names and memory will be held sacred by the Saints, the true, the honest, the good and the liberty-loving everywhere, but it is our place to move calmly forward, discharging every duty at whatever cost, and leave the result in the hands of Him who doeth all things well.

Avoid placing yourselves in the power of wicked and ungodly men; seek to preserve yourselves and limbs from danger; strive for the spirit of your Mission and calling.<sup>17</sup>

Harper, who had been on his mission four months at this point,

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<sup>15</sup>Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 6:100–101, Gary James Bergera, ed., *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 156.

<sup>16</sup>Bergera, *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts*, 156–57.

<sup>17</sup>Quoted in Arthur M. Richardson and Nicholas G. Morgan, *The Life and Ministry of John Morgan* (Salt Lake City: n.pub., 1965), 403–5.

subsequently wrote: “[L]eave the result in the hands of Him who doeth all things well” on three different occasions: twice when confronted by mobs and once when he was called to replace Hyrum H. Kimball, as Virginia Conference president.

### SOUTHERN HONOR, HOSPITALITY, HOSTILITY

“The [Southern] ethic of honor,” according to historian Heather Seferovich, “was designed to prevent unjustified violence, unpredictability, and anarchy. Occasionally it led to that very nightmare. Apparently it was this sense of honor that led Southerners to harbor as well as harass Mormon missionaries.”<sup>18</sup> The Civil War had ended for the North in 1865; but for the South, in many ways it was far from over during the 1880s. The tragic assassination of President Abraham Lincoln ended his policy of “malice toward none, with charity for all.” The Congress under Radical Republicans ignored the conciliatory approach of Lincoln and his successor, Andrew Johnson, and ushered in the Reconstruction, an era (1865–77) that signally failed to respond to Abraham Lincoln’s hope that it would “bind up the nation’s wounds.” W. J. Cash, the noted southern historian, writing in 1941, said the era resulted in a trend toward violence—“in no other field was the effect of Reconstruction more marked.” Yankee manipulation of the newly freed but still unfortunate African Americans generated a terrible new hatred for ex-slaves. He asserted that “for ten years the courts of the South were in such hands that no loyal white man could hope to find justice in them as against any Negro or any white creature of the Yankee policy.” Justice continued “at least doubtful” for at least another twenty years. Cash also identifies “the central status” of southern white women which, according to him, was “identifi[ed] with the very notion of the South itself.”<sup>19</sup> Although Cash does not mention polygamy, the topic was frequently before the American public in the 1880s in newspapers and in lurid novels; pre-

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<sup>18</sup>Seferovich, “History of the LDS Southern States Mission,” 9.

<sup>19</sup>W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (1941; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954 printing), 128, 125, also reprinted in 1991, its fiftieth anniversary. Illustrative of the era, Mission President John Morgan, speaking in Salt Lake City, December 18, 1881, commented that a few weeks earlier in Nashville, he, a newspaper editor, and some twenty-five “ladies and gentlemen” were forced to leave a first-class passenger car and enter a smoking second-class car because an “old negro woman” was “entitled

sumably to a southern gentleman with his reverence for white women, Mormon missionaries, who were identified with the despised practice, were attacking southern women.

David Hackett Fischer, in discussing the folkways of the "backcountry" populated by Appalachian settlers, indicates similar traits: "The people of the southern highlands would become famous in the nineteenth century for the intensity of their xenophobia, and also the violence of its expression." He adds: "Despite talk of a 'new South' after 1876, young southerners (both white and black) continued to learn the old folkways."<sup>20</sup> Harper and his fellow "traveling missionaries" in the southern highlands were obviously on a collision course with historical forces. Sheldon Hackney, history professor and president of Tulane University, then the University of Pennsylvania, wrote: "From the southern past arise the symbiosis of profuse hospitality and intense hostility toward strangers and the paradox that southern heritage is at the same time one of grace and violence."<sup>21</sup>

### BACKCOUNTRY MISSIONARY WORK

Historian William Whitridge Hatch commented that Mormonism lacked "appeal to the high bred Carolinian or the aristocratic Virginian" but took root and gather[ed] strength in areas west of the Appalachians." Balancing this charge was the accusation that "Mormon elders always preferred the more remote and backward areas to proselyte because of the general ignorance of the people." The elders claimed "that they had earlier been attacked in cities; therefore they

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to a seat there, having procured a ticket, according to the provisions of the civil rights bill." Morgan then addressed the newspaper editor: 'Mr. Editor, twenty-five years ago, had a man dared to do what this negro woman has done, you would have hung him to a lamp-post. Now, I will dare say, there is not a paper in the city of Nashville that will venture to write one line, in condemnation of this piece of impudence.' He acknowledged there was not. The negro slave of [Wendell] Phillip's day is the sovereign citizen of to-day." John Morgan, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1854-86), 23:42-43.

<sup>20</sup>David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 650-51, 863.

<sup>21</sup>Sheldon Hackney, "Southern Violence," *American Historical Review* 29 (February 1969): 925.

sought the protection that the countryside provided.”<sup>22</sup> This claim lacks any factual foundation. Because of the missionary concentration in the country, obviously that was where Mormon congregations could be found and, therefore, where Mormon missionaries could find hospitality and kin networks of members. Missionary work in Virginia and West Virginia (created in 1868) started in the Appalachians in the 1830s and was still there sixty years later. George S. Ellsworth explains the “spontaneous missionary impulse of converts in taking the gospel to former homes, old friends and relations” that the Prophet Joseph Smith encouraged.<sup>23</sup> A weekly Southern States Mission newspaper, at the close of the 1890s when the custom had been entrenched for more than half a century, obviously responded to the first charge by saying missionaries avoided “the worldly spirit prevailing in the cities” that “worked against the success of the gospel.”<sup>24</sup> However, this argument is circular and supplies no data. Gene Sessions correctly observes, “Nearly every case [of violence] which befell the Mormons in the South in the last century occurred in the backwoods. . . . [I]ndeed, the elders eschewed towns and cities and proselyted among ‘country folk.’”<sup>25</sup> Hatch’s *There Is No Law* recites at least twenty-two incidents of mob violence between 1878 and 1888, ten of them in 1884. Not one of them occurred in a city or town of any

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<sup>22</sup>William Whitridge Hatch, “A History of Mormon Civil Relations in the Southern States 1865–1905” (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 1965), 3, 16–17. Similar ideas appear in Ted S. Anderson, “The Southern States Mission and the Administration of Ben E. Rich, 1898–1908, Including a Statistical Study of Church Growth in the Southeastern United States during the Twentieth Century” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976) 67–68.

<sup>23</sup>George S. Ellsworth, “History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1951), 249.

<sup>24</sup>David Buice, “Chattanooga’s *Southern Star*: Mormon Window on the South, 1898–1900,” *BYU Studies* 28 (Spring 1988): 10. Buice’s article, “When the Saints Came Marching In: The Mormon Experience in Antebellum New Orleans, 1840–1855,” *Louisiana History* 23 (Summer 1982): 221–37, has considerable detail about the use of New Orleans as port and trans-shipping point for Mormon emigrants but does not indicate any significant violence against missionaries.

<sup>25</sup>Sessions, “Myth, Mormonism and Murder,” 221.

size or consequence.<sup>26</sup> Why, then, did missionaries work in such high-risk locales, especially given such relatively little success? It seems inconceivable that concentrating the missionary force in urbanized areas would have failed to produce at least a comparable number of baptisms.

J. Golden Kimball, in late February 1885, traveled to New Orleans from Chattanooga with his brother, Elias, who had also been called on a mission to the South. He lists the populations of Montgomery, Alabama (30,000); Atlanta, Georgia (60,000); and New Orleans (216,000).<sup>27</sup> Apparently no missionaries served in any of these cities. Leonard J. Arrington hypothesizes that missionaries in the South “traveled ‘without purse or script.’ . . . Heavily dependent upon the hospitality of local residents, they clung tenaciously to any foothold they could locate. . . . Within several months or a few years they were succeeded by other missionaries, who then continued to concentrate their efforts in localities already explored by their predecessors.”<sup>28</sup> The areas they chose or were called to were, in many instances, localities where the missionaries were still trying to harvest souls during the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s.

Perhaps backwoods missionary work was due to food and shelter and perpetuation of past practices. Perhaps some of it was Jeffersonian agrarianism at work.<sup>29</sup> Although the bulk of British converts came from industrialized areas, the horror with which the 1840s missionar-

<sup>26</sup>Hatch, *There is No Law*, 29–36.

<sup>27</sup>Kimball, Journal, February 25–March 9, 1885. Sample populations, ca. 1890, are: Salt Lake City, 45,000; Ogden, 15,000; Provo, 5,000; Richmond, 81,000; Lynchburg, 19,000; Roanoke, 16,000; Norfolk, 34,000; and Danville, 10,000. Missionaries during Harper’s mission worked in the Allegheny and Blue Ridge mountains. When he reassigned missionaries, it was either north or south along these mountain chains.

<sup>28</sup>Leonard J. Arrington, “Mormon Beginnings in the American South,” *Task Papers in LDS History*, No. 9 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976), 2.

<sup>29</sup>“The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body.” Thomas Jefferson, had said in his 1785 “Notes on the State of Virginia,” quoted in Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, 6 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), 1:384. Jefferson softened his tone later when he saw a necessity of manufacture.

ies viewed English manufacturing cities was undisguised. Joseph Smith's reaction to New York City in 1832 also betrayed dire forebodings about cities. After walking "through the most splended part of the City," he launched into a judgmental prophecy: "Because they Give him [God] not the Glory therefore their iniquities shall <be> visited upon their heads and their works shall be burned up with unquenchable fire the inequity of the people is printed in every countenance and nothing but the dress of the people makes them look fair and butiful all is deformity there is something in every countenance that is disagreeable with few exceptions."<sup>30</sup> Possibly another contribution was that Harper and his fellow missionaries were practically all from small communities and therefore felt more comfortable in the country. On August 10, 1883, J. Golden Kimball mentions a conference with seventeen elders. One was from Salt Lake City, another from Logan, and all the rest were from small farming communities.

Morgan and Roberts's February 1885 letter to the elders cautioned, "The number of miles walked is not always an indication of success in missionary labors, and fields traveled over should not be so extensive but what they can be easily reached."<sup>31</sup> This at least may show some concern over the type of area that the elders in the backcountry of the south were covering. But even when working in the mission office in Chattanooga, J. Golden Kimball "often ventured out into the countryside alone to bear his witness and preach."<sup>32</sup> George A. Smith (1817-75), in a missionary letter dated January 13, 1838, wrote: "I am spending this winter among the hills of Virginia, where the Elders have . . . a small branch of the Church, consisting of sixty or seventy members who are scattered over this country within a distance of about 40 miles. This country is very rough and thinly settled. . . . The people here are . . . quite enlightened, except in learning which is at a low ebb. . . . children growing up ignorant of the alphabet knowing little or nothing . . . parents being as ignorant as themselves. The spirit of persecution rages here to a great degree."<sup>33</sup>

However, the question remains unresolved why Mormon missionaries failed to approach the thousands in major southern cities

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<sup>30</sup>Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 252-53.

<sup>31</sup>Richardson and Morgan, *The Life and Ministry of John Morgan*, 407.

<sup>32</sup>Buice, "All Alone and None to Cheer Me," 46.

<sup>33</sup>Berrett, "History of the Southern States Mission," 142. In Bacon

during nineteenth century's last three decades or when, why, and how the shift occurred. J. Golden Kimball recalled in 1932: "When I was president of the Southern States mission, after a year's time (ca. 1892) I concluded that I would try to hold a conference in a city. Up to that time we had always kept out of cities."<sup>34</sup> He does not say what kind of success they had. David Buice dates the decision "to begin preaching in the towns and cities of the South" to "the spring of 1896."<sup>35</sup>

Andrew Jenson, assistant Church historian, wrote that in 1930 Virginia had four branches: "namely Danville, Norfolk, Richmond and Roanoke, and besides, Sunday schools at Mt. Lake, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Scholfield, Vinton and Oilville."<sup>36</sup> All were cities or suburbs, with the possible exceptions of Mountain Lake and Scholfield.

I hypothesize that the change in proselytizing patterns followed other larger trends. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the practice of polygamy ceased, missionaries moved their activities to cities, and converts were not encouraged to move west to Zion.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUTHERN STATES PROSELYTIZING

As the Roberts-Morgan letter indicates, mountain missionary work had walking as a chief component. In fact, Harper called missionaries "Mormon pedestrian[s]." A trip to the post office might be twelve miles away. Combined with calls en route, it could take two days. Frequently, the next house was anywhere from five to fifteen miles down or up a steep trail. According to Kimball's diary, between May and November 1883, he walked an average of 201 miles per month. Harper received a letter from Hyrum H. Kimball on June 17, 1885, and sympathetically recorded that Kimball "was somewhat tired, having just traveled on foot, A distance of two hundred and thirty nine miles. Said he felt footsore and tired" (2:16). On September 21, 1885, Harper and Lamoni Call

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Hollow, Greene County, Virginia, the 1880 census shows that only eight out of forty parents could write. The forty parents sampled are the nearest neighbors of Joseph Garland Knight.

<sup>34</sup>*Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 9, 1932 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 78.

<sup>35</sup>Buice, "Chattanooga's *Southern Star*," 10.

<sup>36</sup>Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing, 1941), 917.



started out for Indian Creek. A distance of About 8 miles, and had already walked Between 10 and 17 miles through the rain and still raining With my feet allmost raw, being Goulded [galled] and Blistered[.] about an hour and a half after dark we stopped at A house to see if we could get entertainment[.] the Lady of the house seemed willing to take us in But Said her husband was not at home. We asked her if there were any neighbors near that we could stop with, She said there were and gave us directions to the house, Sending A small negro Boy part way with us, we called at the house the residence of A Mr Stanley Campbell. his mother, A widow, living with him, and his Wife went to work and prepared us A nice warm supper, at about 9 P.M. the first we had eaten since about 6.30, in the morning and having walked near 25 miles. (2:95–96)

On August 17, 1886, after a lengthy walk, he confesses: “My feet were very sore . . . I took off my Shoes and washed my feet and Mrs. Kimball [no apparent relation] got me some mutton tallow to rub on them. She said she could not see how I managed to walk with my feet in such a sorry condition. But this Mutton Tallow helped them wonderfully” (3:91).

Not only were there a lot of miles walked, they were frequently difficult miles. Harper saw his first companion, Lamoni Call, off on his way home after working with him a little over a year. “On the road down [from Irish Creek], there were 6 men followed us, whooping and yelling, at the top of their voices. Mormons, Mormon Preachers, Etc and continued it after reaching Vesuvius.” Call took the train and “my mind went home in Spite of me. it was as hard for me to part with Bro Call as it was for me to part with any of my own Brothers or Sisters. He was A noble companion True to his God and his country and faithful in the discharge of his duty. One that had been valient in the testimony of Jesus. after seeing him off we then had 8 miles to walk up the ridge to Bro Carrs who was along with his team. But the road was so rough and steep that we could not ride (2:146–47).<sup>37</sup>

Harper labored mainly in the Virginia counties of Amherst and Nelson and some thirty air miles due north in Greene County. All

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<sup>37</sup>Lamoni Call left the Mormon Church in the late 1890s and wrote anti-Mormon tracts. He apparently lost his belief in Mormonism because of text changes in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. See David J. Whittaker, ed., *Mormon Americana: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1995), 680; and Lamoni Call,



*Missionary companions Lamoni Call (left) and Thomas E. Harper, probably in 1885. Photo in possession of Thomas Harper. Used by permission.*

three have as their western boundary the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the first two counties, Harper had two serious mob threats. The first occurred September 20, 1885, at a Sunday evening gathering at the home of Nathaniel Campbell near Shoe Creek Flat. A “mob” had sent a message to inform the Campbells that “we would not be permitted to hold another meeting at that place and that it would not be well for us to come down near the Piney River Church again. As we would be mobbed if we did. Our friends notified us of the evil intentions of the People as regards us, and they all . . . wished us to make another appointment there for the fourth Sunday in October and they said they would see us through if they had to fight for it.”

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“Evidence Not Slander,” November 1928, 2:22, microfiche M230 C156M, LDS Church Archives.

Harper and Call thanked them but assured them that missionaries had a "Sacred trust. Which it would have been Better far Better had We never Been Born, than to prove recreant to. . . . [W]e desired to do our duty . . . let the consequences Be what they may, and cautioned our friends as to making threats of what they would do. As we were perfectly willing to place our trust in him who doeth all things well" (2:90–93).

They kept this appointment without incident. The next day, they went down Piney River because they had received a second-hand invitation from a Mr. Quinn, a store owner at Rose Mill. They "were not molested in any way, [although] several shouted in derision at us." At the store, Quinn told them that they "had Been misinformed" about the alleged invitation. Quinn, "a rough sort of A man, very plain spoken, and not religious inclined," had attended one of their preaching services and been impressed, telling others "'that if that was not Bible Doctrine he had never heard [preaching] . . . that was.'" But he was also candid about the missionaries' lack of popularity "and Said in these words (using an oath), 'You don't know how you are hated By the majority of the People.'" The elders talked with him and some others in the store, then departed, leaving a copy of the *Deseret News* and some tracts (2:93–95).

The second mob threat occurred a month later on Indian Creek, "over the mountain" from Shoe Creek at the home of Henry Campbell, perhaps Nathaniel's relative. Neighbors believed that the elders were teaching their polygamous doctrine and warned Campbell to tell the elders "not to stop in the vicinity another night." Again, Harper's reaction was calm. He and Call thanked their hosts for the information, then advised them "that we had violated no law, trampled on no ones rights . . . could walk the Public highway whenever we saw fit . . . nobody had any authority to deprive us of that right." The elders then:

counselled together as to what course to pursue and went and called upon the lord, and asked for his guidance, and that he would rule and Over rule all things for the good of his cause. Dedicated ourselves to his care and keeping. and spent the day with them [the Campbells] talking and reading. We took into consideration the condition of our Field on Shoe Creek, the Threats already made there, and that if we started to run at the mandates of the Devil or his emissaries, we knew full well, that they would continue to issue Edicts until we would be compelled to Vacate the Field. We knew that this would be the result,

if we did not take A firm stand and we felt that it would Be better to take it at first than last. As we felt there was some fruit in this neighborhood, especially on Shoe Creek. We asked Mr. James P. Campbell if he felt like entertaining us under the Circumstances, when he replied yes, you are welcome to Stop at my house when ever you Choose to do So. So we remained and the Lord took the will for the deed and they [the hostile neighbors] did not put in an appearance. (2:113–17)

On February 20, 1886, Harper learned that he was “appointed to take charge” of the Virginia Conference as Hyrum Kimball’s replacement. Harper was appalled: “My feeling when I read this I will not attempt to describe as I could not do it” (3:22). He saw Hyrum Kimball off on the train on May 11, then “slowly wended my back to Oronoco feeling like I had lost My Father and Mother & every friend I had on earth” (3:28–29).

On May 22 things got worse. Elders Josiah Burrows and John T. Hales were working in Bacon Hollow, Greene County, Virginia, sixty miles away from Harper by air in Irish Creek, but much longer on foot. Burrows was on his way to Nortonville to pick up the mail, a trip of between three and eight miles, depending on the starting point in the hollow, when he was “surrounded by A mob of about 12 armed men and accosted with ‘Well Sir, We are out hunting Mormons.’” Burrows replied: “‘Well Gentleman you have found one of them.’ The mob then informed Elder B. that they did not wish to harm him but were determined that the Elders should leave the Co” (3:32–33). The group, which grew to “about twenty men,” located Hales and “marched” the two missionaries “west a distance of five miles across the line of Greene Co. into Rockingham Co. where they were turned adrift and informed that they had better not come back; that if they did they would have to take what followed.” The two elders went to Elkton, caught a train for Vesuvius, and then walked eight miles to Irish Creek (3:35). Thinking “over the situation” and “the prospect of serious trouble there,” Harper decided that only he and Burrows should return to Greene County, leaving Hales at Irish Creek. Harper wrote to President Morgan explaining that they “deemed it their duty to return and perfect A Branch organization and if possible maintain our position there” (3:35–36).

Bacon Hollow can be considered typical of many hollows in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Drained by Roach River, the hollow runs southeasterly, extending from Powell Gap, elevation 2,295 feet at the ridge, for about five miles to the little community of Pirkey (750 feet)



*The lower part of this storage shed, Bacon Hollow, Virginia, was once the home of Thomas Knight, with whom Harper spent "the better part of a day." Photo by Ray Harper, April 2, 1999. Used by permission.*

at the hollow's mouth. One student of the area describes his reconstruction of the hollow in the 1880s: "A scattering of log cabins and log barns, rail fences, dirt road down the center near the creek, orchards, at each home, fields planted in corn and everyone with a home garden. The people who lived there then were very self-sufficient." Today the old wood cabins are being torn down or used as storage sheds.<sup>38</sup> Frederick W. Neve, an Episcopal minister doing mission schools, spent twenty-seven years (1888–1915) here and wrote that the mountain people lived in "rough log cabins . . . without windows,

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<sup>38</sup>Eugene Powell, email to Reid L. Harper, March 10, 1999, printout in my possession.

sometimes without a chimney—often with not more than two rooms,” and “on account of their isolation, ignorance and superstition prevailed to a large extent in these mountain communities.”<sup>39</sup> Greene County did not have a newspaper until 1903.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, frontier Palmyra, New York, had a succession of newspapers starting in 1817.

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<sup>39</sup>Dexter Ralph Davison, Jr., “Frederick W. Neve: Mountain Mission Education in Virginia, 1888–1984” (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1982), 35. Neve first met a “group of Mormon missionaries who were persuading some of the local people to join them” in the Ragged Mountains about eight miles west of Batesville. He “felt a sense of ‘competition,’ or at least a sense of responsibility for leading the people away from ‘error’” (61). I thank Larry Shifflett, who loaned me this dissertation. As an example of prevailing superstition, Harper recorded that John Carr, presiding priest at Irish Creek Branch in Virginia had a child “suffering severely” with head pains. The elders administered to him, “after which He Became Easy until about 1 O clock at night.” Then the “pains came Back.” Later in the same day, he had another session of backsliding somewhat but later still was “well and looks Bright. It was something that I could not account for.” Then Sister Carr admitted that she had heard the elders “were witches and that we had to have running water from the south in Order to witch anyone; and We called for some water to wash our hands prior to administering and she took it from that, that we were really witches.” She later “went to the woods and asked the Lord to take all evil thoughts from Her. When there was unity of Faith the Child was Blessed at Once” (2:80–82).

<sup>40</sup>Larry Shifflett, “Greene County Newspapers,” [www.shiffletfamily.org/PS/hotgreene.html](http://www.shiffletfamily.org/PS/hotgreene.html) (accessed March 11, 2004). Another reported excerpt from the era and the area reads:

“Would you suppose for a moment, Mr. Editor, that the rural districts of the glorious old counties of Nelson, Amherst, and Rockbridge are cursed with Mormon Elders. Yes sir, the emissaries of Salt Lake are in our midst, skulking about here making converts to their horrid, murderous rite. They will take our countrymen to a stream in the midst of an ivy thicket and baptize them. Then follows the laying on of hands, and, as they say, the receiving of the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost. Then the recipient becomes infallible, &c.,—cannot be hurt. Will wonders never cease. What kind of strange fanaticism is this?

“Please tell Mr. Tucker we hold him responsible for the failure of the Blair educational bill, but to work away on his amendments to the Edmunds bill, and he can repay us somewhat by helping us out on the Mormon ques-

On May 27 the two missionaries reached the home of Joseph Garland Knight at about 11:00 P.M., "almost tired out." Harper reported in his diary on May 29 that "all is quiet up to day . . . though there may be a Change on the programe at any moment as there appears to Be an under current to the tide. though they may not be able to muster A sufficient force as the general sentiment of the people of the Co. appears to be in favor of justice to all And partiality to none."

The next evening on Sunday, May 30, the two missionaries visited William Iverson Knight, Joseph's older brother, where they heard reports that "the Mobs were again mustering their force and that they said they were going to have blood this time[. W]e took a little trip over to the residence of Bro. and Sister Crawfords and found out for ourselves that there was something in the wind. We then returned to W. I. Knights who were true and tried friends and were greatly concerned over our welfare." They called briefly at the home of another member, Sleyton Shifflett Jr., then went on to Joseph Knight's home "where we remained all night and studied well the situation" (3:37-38).<sup>41</sup>

As a result of their "study," the elders walked ten miles on Tuesday, June 1, to Stanardsville, the county seat, where they put their case before the "Commonwealths Attorney," John T. Bray. He spent "about one hour or one and a half hours perhaps" with them, impressing Harper that he was a "pretty reasonable man." Disappointingly, he was "sorry that such an occurrence had transpired" but warned "it would be A difficult matter to get A jury that would look the matter square in the face, and render a verdict accordingly. on account of the vast majority of the People being so bitterly prejudiced against us." With bitter irony, Harper quoted Joseph Smith's account of what U.S. President Martin Van Buren had said in response to a similar petition: "In fact what I was enabled to understand from the tenor of his remarks was simply this 'Your cause is just but I can do nothing for

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tion." In "Montebello Items," *Valley Virginian* (Staunton, Virginia), June 21, 1886, quoted in Larry Shifflett, email to Reid L. Harper, December 21, 1998, printout in my possession.

<sup>41</sup>William Knight, though not a member, had a daughter, Lucy, ("maimed," according to the 1880 census) who had been baptized in 1885 at age twenty-eight.



you.”<sup>42</sup> The missionaries returned to Bacon Hollow before dark “feeling tired and careworn” (3:38–40). They spent the night with the Sleyton Shifletts. The next morning, they picked up a letter of instruction from President Morgan at Joseph G. Knight’s that warned: “Should anything happen the responsibility will rest where it rightly belongs and that will be upon Thomas E. Harper.” Harper copied into his diary part of a letter from President Morgan:

Do not be deceived as to what they will do for they would kill you without the least compuction [sic] of conscience, and Maltreat you as would savage Indians; so do not trust anything to their mercies.

In view of these well known facts, it is not wise to rush into the face of almost Certain death, when little or no good can be accomplished, and much pain and sorrow might result to loving and true hearts at home. It would be the wiser course, to, give back, before the angry waves of religious prejudice and wait until a cooler and calmer judgement came to those who seek to persecute you.

A mob spirit will not listen to reason, and has murder in it[.] Jesus told his disciples “If they persecute you in one City flee ye to another” and that is good counsel to day and it is such as we feel to give the Brethren to act upon. (3:40–42)

Morgan was obviously leaving the decision up to Harper by counseling him to seek another field of labor but simultaneously to “move calmly forward, discharging every duty at whatever cost, and leave the result in the hands of Him who doeth all things well.” Thus, Harper could, depending on what he chose to stress, feel that he was obeying counsel whether he stayed or left.<sup>43</sup> His personal feelings, expressed earlier, were that to retreat in the face of threats would only invite more territory made unavailable to the missionaries, but he

<sup>42</sup>Joseph Smith personally petitioned Van Buren for redress for the Missouri persecutions in November 1839 and in February 1840. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 158–59.

<sup>43</sup>Two years later, the Church leaders gave much more definite instructions, telling William Spry, then the mission president, “to pursue a conciliatory policy and to do everything in our power to allay prejudice and to quiet down hostility,” including pulling elders out of hostile areas. Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 87, quotes this letter from Wilford Woodruff, written on June 15, 1888, as a decision about the best way to respond to reports from Mormon agents working for the sixth (un-

does not record whether he still felt the same way.

That same day, Wednesday, June 2, the elders heard that the hostile neighbors were “going to come on Saturday night.” These threats were repeated on Saturday, although he adds, “but nothing Certain.” On Sunday, June 6, “reports came thick and fast to the effect that we were going to Be driven out and that they were going to treat us pretty rough ‘Cutt and hang’ this time.” Friends suggested that the missionaries “better leave the place for A time.” They did not take this advice and on Wednesday and Thursday, June 9–10, heard that “they were banding and that there was 60 of them.” Another rumor was that Bray had advised the mob “to not Kill us, but to take hickory withes or rawhides and whip us almost to death, and to do it on our faces and hands so that the marks would show, go where we would.” Harper obviously assumed that this rumor was true since he bitterly added, “This from A man whose duty is to try and maintain peace, and preserve order.” His assumption of Bray’s guilt may show the degree to which his nerves were fraying. On Thursday afternoon June 17 the two elders packed “small valises ready to start at a moments warning should we find it really necessary.” Rather boldly, they “took a little walk out through the neighborhood but found all quiet except the excitement caused by the threats” (3:44–45).

On Friday, June 18, Milo Hendricks, another elder, arrived. Harper does not explain why he came, and his presence is something of a mystery since, on his arrival in the field a month earlier, he had been assigned to work with John T. Hales near Irish Creek. It must have been a war of nerves. On Wednesday, June 23, Harper recorded “that there were 150 men going to form a mob on Sat the 26th and drive us out.” Harper’s response was to schedule a meeting for Sunday, June 27, at the Jackson Morris residence. Although Morris had previously hosted at least one preaching service, now “he did not care to permit us oweing to the threats.” They rescheduled at Joseph G. Knight’s.

On Thursday, they found a notice tacked to a tree: “June 1886 The Mormons are G – D hypocrites, and H – l eat any man that takes up for them, he is a G – d – rascal. Tell them to go away from here, if

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successful) effort at statehood who explained that “some southern senators and congressmen . . . desired to support the Utah statehood movement, but were confronted with letters from constituents adamantly opposed to any aid to Mormons.”

they don't they will Be killed.' Signed — John R. Hall." Harper does not explain who Hall was or how seriously he took this signed threat, merely recording supper with the Crawfords and another night at Joseph Knight's. On Friday evening, June 25, "I advise Bro Burrows and Hendricks to take a walk up on the mountain and remain in Seclusion the most of the day on Saturday." They apparently obeyed, and Harper stayed that night at William Knight's (3:49–50). Harper does not explain why he decided to send his two companions into hiding at this point, after three weeks of threats.

Saturday morning at 9:00, thirty-seven heavily armed men gathered outside William Knight's. Knight, standing inside the fence, told them not to trespass on his property. "They then endeavored to agitate him and cause him to strike them, or one of them, over the fence that they might have some pretext to make a start," Harper recorded. "[F]ailing this they gave the word of command to shoot him But Mr. Knight still stood his ground and informed them that they had better remain on the outside of the fence." Another neighbor, John Lawson "(who had seen them gathering up in the morning,) came along. and for the purpose of defending us as he passed through the crowd he asked them what it all meant they said 'They were going to drive out the G-D- Mormons.' there was a few words exchanged and two of the party drewed their Guns on him to Shoot him But did not. He then came to the house. He was a rather rough kind of a man. But was a firm and true friend to me for which he will receive his reward. as he was willing to lay down his life in my defence" (3:51–52). Harper recorded the names of all thirty seven.

Negotiations then began between the parties by passing notes back and forth. Harper was in the home with the family, while the father, William, was out at the front fence. Harper wanted discussions to occur at Bray's office. The mob countered: "Place yourself in our hands, or before the morrow Sun. We will take you and your friends regardless of consequences." Harper

studded the matter over and came to the conclusion that It was about the only way to save trouble and perhaps life to accompany them to Stanardsville this would, I knew, be placing Myself in their hands, and at their mercy. But I felt that it would be better to do this than to have them slaughter the whole family. I wrote a note to Bro. J. G. Knight requesting him to accompany me. Which he cheerfully did. Also one of the Sons of W. I. Knight, Named William [twenty one years old]. this was Manly of him, as he just volunteered and acted <the> part of a true man and firm friend and the kindness and firmness of Bro Knight on

this short but eventful trip I can never forget. As soon as I decided to go to Stanardsville I walked out into the street and said to the mob. "How do you do Gentlemen, this is the first time we have met and this under rather peculiar circumstances."

I then proceeded on down the road and was followed by this mob a distance of ten miles, through the heart of Greene Co., to the above named place which is the County seat. I was commanded to halt when near the center of the town and the mob encircled me with their guns all in the position called "carry arms." Soon the people of the town gathered around on the outside of this circle of braves. and had a look at one of the wonderful Mormons. they however did not seem to approve of such a mode of procedure but dare not (for fear of becoming unpopular) speak a word in defense of that which they new [sic] to be right. I stood here perhaps 15 or 20 minutes when I was marched to the office of the commonwealths Attorney (Jno. T. Bray.) who said that this "was an uncommon and irregular procedure". They then asked him if I had any rights here, which question was answered in the affirmative. this instead of Settling the matter as was the agreement. seemed to enrage them the more. And a great many of the party raised up and said "We are going to kill him." and I firmly believe that they were intending to do so, on the return trip. But Me and My two friends did not leave untill some time after the mob left when we took annother road and reached home in safety. On the way to town they fired near about 90 shots and one of them must have taken pretty good aim at me as it seemed that the bullet went about 6 inches to the right of my head. (3:54-59)

Apparently the elders did not hold the scheduled Sunday meeting, and on Monday, June 28, Harper sent Burrows and Hendricks to another field of labor in the Blue Ridge, either in Page or Warren counties. For himself, he remained in Bacon Hollow for another month "occupied in reading and talking to the people. done all in my power to get them to see the necessity of gathering to the place appointed by the Lord, as the gathering place of his Chosen people" (3:60-61). His emphasis on the gathering suggests that he was not proselytizing at large as much as working with the local Latter-day Saints.

On July 13, Harper received a note from Christena Francis Knight, William's younger daughter, which he copied into his journal:

Dear Sir I seat myself to drop you a few lines. to let you know that it is my will and desire to be baptized. and Mother and Father is not willing to it, and what do you think about it? I think it is right. and no other way is right. Lucy says she is going away from here. If she has to

walk the first chance she gets. I would like to go with her. and if I am not allowed to join the Church here, I would do so directly I got there; and I want you to let me know what you think is best. as I am under age. I will be 19 this November. And please answer this note before you go away. (3:64)

On the same day, Harper heard again that a mob was planning to kill Harper and Joseph Knight that very night: "And that they had tacked up a notice to a large tree Near a school House in this vicinity Notifying all the Saints and friends to leave the place, and that if they did not. they would be driven." Harper "prepared for the worst" by having a "large mallat Near my bed and a six shooter near at hand. . . . I prayed fervently to the Lord that I would not be compelled to use them." He sat up until almost 1:00 A.M. "and no one came, so I went to bed and rested until morning" (3:65). On July 19, more threats followed. On July 20, Harper discussed at length (his journal entry is four pages long) Christena's wish to be baptized with William Knight and his wife. They remained unconvinced. "They seemed to be desirious of evading persecution and did not like to have the finger of Scorn pointed at them" (3:70–71).

Knight and Harper had several heated exchanges in late July and again in November and December. On July 28, Harper went into the Alleghenies of West Virginia to work with the elders there, returning for a conference on September 11–12 attended by the mission president, John Morgan, who split off the West Virginia Conference (west of the Alleghenies) from the Virginia Conference. Harper was back in Bacon Hollow by November 5 where he was when 1886 ended. His last extant journal entry reads: "Among friends, during the hollidays did not travel much knowing the Bitter hatred that certain parties here had towards me and did not know what they might do when drinking. Jan 1st [1887] all is well" (3:190). Twenty-three days later, according to mission records, Harper baptized John Wesley Knight, the twenty-year-old son of Joseph G. Knight. Harper was released from his mission March 12, 1887.<sup>44</sup> At that point, Christena was still not baptized.

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<sup>44</sup>Harper married Celia Ann Phippen in 1888. They became the parents of eight more children. Their fifth was my father, Renaldo Earl Harper. Thomas Ephraim settled in Albion, Idaho, where he served as county probate judge (1898–1920), bishop of Albion Ward (1900–15), and stake patriarch (1915–23). He died in Ogden, Utah, on October 15, 1923, and was bur-

### SOME REFLECTIONS

Information about the mountain hollows in this era is very limited; and this essay is circumscribed because we are looking at the missionary experience through the tiny keyhole of diaries like Harper's and Kimball's. William I. Knight could not read or write. His younger brother Joseph could, according to the 1880 census, but Harper records Joseph asking Harper to write a letter for him (3:19). A second problem was that most of these diaries dealt with daily life situations, only rarely considering whether to flee from a threatening county or persist in the work. The fact that this quandary received almost no attention unless there was an active threat, I think, indicates exactly how dutiful and faithful these missionaries were. They did not thirst for or court martyrdom, but neither did they intend to abandon their mission, even when they had reason to believe their lives were at risk.

A third consideration must be speculative. If polygamy had not been an issue, how successful would the Mormon message have been in these hollows? Certainly, it had produced a significant harvest of converts for missionaries before 1852 when the practice became public.

A fourth but related question was the level of violence aroused in the local neighborhood, sometimes taking the form of mob actions. Such actions could not be predicted but rested on contingencies of personality, incidents, the willingness of supportive neighbors to resist such threats, and other complex dynamics. A missionary's life was frequently not "in his hands."

And finally, after the turn of the century when missionaries were working in cities, most were surrounded by an outer fringe—not fully rural but not exactly urban. Such transitional zones were not modern suburbs, but would they have been more productive of food and shelter? The blanket assumption that cities were inhospitable to the Mormon religion seems doubtful. When that assumption was finally tested, it was proved wrong. However, this brief essay should not

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ied in the Harper cemetery, near the grave of his father and my father. Bacon Hollow saw a number of "excommunications due to apostasy" in 1895–96, perhaps related to the return of several unhappy converts who left Colorado in 1889 and advised the local members to "turn against the Mormon church." Hatch, "There Is No Law," 36. John Wesley Knight and other Knight relatives are listed among those who apostatized in the mission records, but not all of the records are legible.

be the final word on nineteenth-century Mormon missionary work in the South's backcountry. Much remains to be done.



# “THE ASSAULT OF LAUGHTER”: THE COMIC ATTACK ON MORMON POLYGAMY IN POPULAR LITERATURE

*Richard H. Cracroft*

FOR THE LAST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (and, indeed, well beyond), the Mormon practice of polygamy, or plural marriage, officially and publicly acknowledged by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1852,<sup>1</sup> evoked incessant waves of moral outrage throughout the United States. Although the nation had been so deeply divided over slavery that the argument had been resolved

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<sup>1</sup>LDS Apostle Orson Pratt, at Brigham Young’s request, made the an-

only by civil war, the nation was virtually united in opposition against Mormonism and polygamy—synonymous evils in the public mind. In 1856, “the Mormon Question” received national attention when the newly founded Republican Party included in its platform a resolution asserting that it was the right and duty of Congress “to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism—Polygamy and Slavery.”<sup>2</sup>

The Mormon Question centered on two issues: (1) polygamy, popularly considered to be an affront to a modern, civilized, Christian nation and a “violation of Christian morality”; and (2) the de facto and unchecked political independence of the Mormon Church in Utah Territory, an egregious “antithesis of American political pluralism.”<sup>3</sup> The elimination of polygamy in Utah Territory and the political submission of the Mormon Church to U.S. sovereignty became, over the next forty years, the subject of countless public lectures, meetings, sermons, newspaper editorials, and exposés,<sup>4</sup> and the avowed goal of traditional Christian churches, reform societies, and the emerging women’s rights movement, all of whom believed that no woman would willingly subject herself to a polygamous marriage, and that no God-fearing, civilized nation should allow it.

Between 1852 and 1890, the public demand for resolution of the Mormon problem led the U.S. Congress to consider and enact sev-

nouncement in a sermon defending the religious and social superiority of polygamy at a conference in Salt Lake City on August 23, 1852. Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1996), 108.

<sup>2</sup>James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 297. Republican presidential candidate John C. Frémont lost the 1856 election to Democrat James Buchanan, who, pressured to demonstrate that the Democrats were not soft on Mormon issues, replaced territorial governor Brigham Young with Alfred Cumming; acting on the mistaken belief that Mormons were in rebellion, Buchanan then sent a large military force to ensure Cumming’s acceptance and authority, thus launching the Utah War (297–98).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>4</sup>Anti-Mormonism in fiction began as early as 1848, with Frederick Marryat’s *Monsieur Violet*. Rampant anti-Mormonism had already found non-fictional literary expression in “more than 200 pamphlets, articles, and exposés.” Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 124.

enty-nine anti-polygamy bills and petitions.<sup>5</sup> Four acts of Congress—the Morrill Antibigamy Act (1862), the Poland Act (1874), the Edmunds Act (1882), and the Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887)—gradually tightened “federal controls over the executive, legislative, and judicial processes in [Utah] territory” and eroded the Mormon legal defense of polygamy based on First Amendment guarantees of religious freedom.<sup>6</sup>

Confronted by the political consequences of these acts, threatened by the even more draconian Cullom-Strubble Bill, and disheartened by decisions of the Supreme Court upholding anti-Mormon laws, LDS President Wilford Woodruff, who had long resisted compliance and accommodation,<sup>7</sup> issued the Manifesto on September 24, 1890, officially withdrawing support for new plural marriages and bringing the membership of the Church into reluctant (albeit gradual) compliance.<sup>8</sup>

Although the law of the land ended the LDS practice of polyg-

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<sup>5</sup>Gustive O. Larson, “The Crusade and the Manifesto,” in *Utah’s History*, edited by Richard D. Poll, Thomas G. Alexander, Eugene E. Campbell, and David E. Miller (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 274. Richard D. Poll, “The Twin Relic: A Study of Mormon Polygamy and the Campaign by the Government of the United States for Its Abolition, 1852–1890 (M.A. thesis, Texas Christian University, 1939), lists the bills and petitions; see also Poll, “The Mormon Question Enters National Politics, 1850–1856,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 25 (April 1957): 117–31.

<sup>6</sup>Larson, “Government, Politics, and Conflict,” 249–50. See also Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy, and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992); B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Brian C. Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006).

<sup>7</sup>In 1880, Wilford Woodruff, then the senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve, had received a revelation which reaffirmed the sanctity of polygamy and condemned oppressors; on January 19, 1881, in a solemn assembly, Church President John Taylor dedicated Woodruff’s revelation to the Lord, called upon the Lord to protect the Saints, and petitioned the Lord to foil those (listed by name) who opposed his work. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*, 196.

<sup>8</sup>Official Declaration—1 in the LDS Doctrine and Covenants (p. 292), reads: “I [Wilford Woodruff] publicly declare that my advice to the Lat-

amy, hastened Mormon accommodation, and eventuated in statehood (1896), these huge upheavals in Mormonism came principally, as President Woodruff said in explaining his reasons for issuing the Manifesto, because of the loud, vigorous, and sustained "opposition of sixty millions of people."<sup>9</sup> The assault against Mormonism occurred on many fronts besides the legislative and legal: the moral crusading of preachers, social activists, newspaper editors, cartoon writers, and popular novelists.<sup>10</sup> Popular humorists and comedians of the era also played a significant role.

American comedians of the late nineteenth century tickled the popular funny bone and reflected the interests and opinions of a literate nation of avid readers.<sup>11</sup> In itinerant stand-up-comedic performances and "lectures," and in newspaper columns collected into books, they wisecracked about many timely and timeless topics in-

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ter-day Saints is to refrain from conducting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land." During the congressional investigation which followed Apostle Reed Smoot's 1903 election as U.S. Senator, Smoot's opponents disclosed that a number of post-Manifesto plural marriages had occurred with the approval of General Authorities and local leaders. The national clamor over the continuing practice of polygamy, including shock at Church President Joseph F. Smith's public disclosure of his own continued cohabitation with his plural wives, caused him to issue in April 1904 the so-called Second Manifesto, which stated that members of the Church who took additional wives would be excommunicated.

<sup>9</sup>In explaining his decision to halt LDS polygamy, Woodruff rhetorically asked the Saints of Cache Stake on November 1, 1891: "Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to continue to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the nation against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people, . . . or to cease the practice and submit to the law?" "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto," *Doctrine and Covenants* (1981), 292–93.

<sup>10</sup>See Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy, and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth*, 97–152; Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834–1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983); Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22 (Summer 1968): 243–60.

<sup>11</sup>Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth*, 98, points out that the American

cluding—where Mormon polygamy was concerned—hardships, domestic budget, the battle of the sexes, childrearing woes, and the elusiveness of connubial bliss for the overly married male Mormon.

Late nineteenth-century comics, like their twentieth-century counterparts (Will Rogers, Bob Hope, or Jerry Seinfeld, or newspaper humorists Erma Bombeck, Art Buchwald, or Dave Berry), identified, reflected, and expressed the attitudes of their era about the absurdities of the human condition. By exaggerating and distorting the commonplace, they transformed the solemn, remote, and sinister into the familiar, benign, and ludicrous. The incongruity itself evoked laughter.

Mormons and their exotic marital practices were fair game for a comedy of exaggeration; and they soon became the nineteenth-century equivalent of the twentieth-century traveling salesman, polack, and dumb blond. Typically, comedians poking fun at Mormon marriages took the problems of monogamy and exaggerated them, particularly the surfeit of wives, children, and mothers-in-law. Observing contemporary standards of public decency, they exercised circumspection in making overtly sexual references while still hinting at the titillation and fantasy of multiple wives.

Near the conclusion of Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*, Satan (the Stranger) explains the effect of mockery in reducing cherished human institutions to rubble: "Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand."<sup>12</sup> It is impossible to quantify how much anti-Mormon comedy contributed to the eventual toppling of polygamy; but what is clear in this record of what the public laughed at is its seemingly uniform implacable opposition. Such reading also suggests the enormous pressure that the nation exerted on the Latter-day Saints, against which they were virtually defenseless.

### THE ASSAULT OF HUMOR

The humorous assault on Mormon polygamy first surfaced in the mid-1850s and continued unrelentingly through the remainder of the century—and into our own day. Even otherwise serious writers could not resist. Richard F. Burton, in his generally admiring *The City*

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Revolution made newspaper reading "a habit for many Americans," and describes the post-1840s as "the Golden Age of journalism."

<sup>12</sup>Mark Twain, *The Mysterious Stranger* (Paine-Duneka version), *The Portable Mark Twain*, edited by Bernard DeVoto (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 716.

of the Saints and across the Rocky Mountains to California (1862), wittily reports the dilemma of the much-married (and harried) Mormon husband who desires to attend a dance but is nonplussed about which wife to invite.<sup>13</sup> Albert D. Richardson, in his otherwise sober-sided account of Vice President Schuyler Colfax's expedition to the West in 1865, chuckled at the apparent relief of a Mormon whose wives had all run away.<sup>14</sup>

By the late 1850s, newspaper humorist George D. Prentice was studding his popular humor columns in the *Louisville Journal* and the *New York Ledger* with jokes about Brigham Young, whose name was already synonymous in the public mind with both Mormonism and polygamy. In response to a widely quoted statement attributed to Young that Utah's greatest resources "are her women," Prentice quipped, "It is very evident that the prophet is disposed to *husband his resources*."<sup>15</sup> Prentice also twitted Apostle Orson Hyde, who boasted that he would soon "have sons enough to make a regiment by himself." Retorts Prentice, "We have all heard of the 'daughter of the regiment,' but the father of a regiment will be something quite new in our land."<sup>16</sup>

George Washington Harris (1814–69) wrote humorous stories for the *New York Spirit of the Times* under the name, "S–l" and the "Sut Lovengood Papers" for Nashville papers (1858–61), some of which

<sup>13</sup>Richard F. Burton, *City of the Saints*, edited by Fawn M. Brodie (1862; rpt., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 254. Brodie also authored *The Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967).

<sup>14</sup>Albert D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi* (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing, 1867), 345. Schuyler's visit also resulted in a loftier exchange. Speaking in Salt Lake City in October 1869, he asserted, "No assumed revelation justifies anyone in trampling on the law," to which Apostle John Taylor responded, "Allow me, sir, here to state that the assumed revelation referred to is one of the most vital parts of our religious faith; it emanated from God and cannot be legislated away." Quoted in Larson, "Government, Politics, and Conflict," 250.

<sup>15</sup>George D. Prentice, *Prenticeana, or, Wit and Humor in Paragraphs* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), 294; emphasis his.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 31. He was alluding to the popular comic opera (1840), *The Daughter of the Regiment* (*La fille du régiment*) by Gaetano Donizetti. Marie, a foundling, is raised by an entire loving regiment whom she serves as *vivandière* and is later discovered to be of noble blood.

were collected in 1867 as *Sut Lovengood's Yarns*. The homespun Sut is attracted to a girl who seems to welcome his attention. He congratulates himself: "I was beginin to think I wur just the greatest and comfortablist man on yearth, not exceptin Old Buck [President James Buchanan] ur Brigham Young, . . . with all his saddil culled wrinkled wimmen, cradles full of babies, and his Big Salt Lake thrown in."<sup>17</sup>

In 1865, popular comic pundit Josh Billings (Henry Wheeler Shaw)<sup>18</sup> insisted, in a comic essay on the proud and polygamous rooster: "In Utah it is konsidered a disgrace tew speak disrespekful of a rooster. Brigham Young's coat ov arms is a rooster, in full blast, crowing till he is almost bent over double backwards."<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, Billings wrote that Mormons "marry *young* and often. The produkshun ov the countrv iz Mormons. They believe in a hereafter, but it iz generally a hereafter of wimmin."<sup>20</sup> He also compared a wily but inept fox to the bungling Union General Benjamin Butler and overly married Brigham Young: "He [the fox] wuz a poet, skoller and sage before the days ov Homer and Herodotus, and now, in our time, he is the Ben Butler ov diplomacy an the Brigham Young ov matrimony."<sup>21</sup>

By the time John Kendrick Bangs published his comic *Autobiography of Methuselah* in 1909, Mormon polygamy was passé in the pub-

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<sup>17</sup>George Washington Harris, *Sut Lovengood's Yarns* (1867), quoted in Milton Rickels, *George Washington Harris* (New York: Twayne, 1965), 73.

<sup>18</sup>Josh Billings (Henry Wheeler Shaw) (1818–85) was, after Mark Twain, the most famous American humor writer and lecturer in the last half of the nineteenth century. Billings dispensed phonetically spelled wit and common-sense wisdom in an informal voice full of popular slang and phonetic spellings. His several books include *Farmers' Allminax*, *Josh Billings' Sayings*, *Everybody's Friend*, and *Josh Billings' Trump Kards*.

<sup>19</sup>Billings, *The Complete Works of Josh Billings* (New York: G. W. Dillingham, 1876), 113.

<sup>20</sup>Billings, *Josh Billings, Hiz Sayings* (New York: Carleton Press, 1865), 183; emphasis mine.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 116. Butler was notable for the number of Civil War battles he lost. As Northern commander in New Orleans, he was declared a "felon and an outlaw by President [Jefferson] Davis, denounced in Parliament, and finally removed from his post in consequence of diplomatic protest. But, alas, this was not the end to his military career." Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 641.



lic mind, despite a brief revival of interest in connection with the U.S. Senate's lengthy investigation of Senator/Apostle Reed Smoot. Bangs's ancient character Methuselah warns contemporaries, in a culturally embedded image of polygamy which doesn't even mention Mormons or Brigham Young (who hadn't, of course, been born yet), that if men don't stop marrying so many wives there will sooner or later be "a great scarcity of nuptial raw material."<sup>22</sup>

Among the foremost popular humorists of the United States and Great Britain during the late nineteenth century are six literary comedians who shared humorous treatments of the Latter-day Saints: Artemus Ward (Charles Farrer Browne), Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens), Bill Nye (Edgar Wilson Nye), Robert Williams Buchanan, Max Adeler (Charles Heber Clark), and Samantha Allen (Marietta Holley). Books by all six are still available in libraries and, increasingly, on the internet. Given humor's topical nature, it is understandable that Nye, Buchanan, Adeler (Clark), and Allen (Holley) are virtually forgotten. Ward is little known except through Mark Twain's occasional references, but Twain is still in print, widely read, and enduringly influential. During the height of the anti-Mormon crusade (ca. 1856–96), however, all six authors were household names, popular cultural reflectors, purveying and shaping popular opinion in lecture halls and newspapers, their quips repeated around the dinner tables and spittoons of millions of Americans and Britons.

#### ARTEMUS WARD (CHARLES FARRER BROWNE)

The foremost American humorist of the Civil War era was Charles Farrer Browne (1834–67), better known as Artemus Ward. Ward began as a scribbler of comic letters and gained national attention as a humor columnist for the Cleveland *Plaindealer* (1858–60), editor of *Vanity Fair magazine* [sic], a New York humor weekly, and finally a comic lecturer (called today a "stand-up comedian"). He took his act to England where, in 1866–67, he became a hit as a comic lec-

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<sup>22</sup>John Kendrick Bangs, *Autobiography of Methuselah* (New York: B. H. Dodge & Co., 1909), 171. Bangs (1862–1922) was an American humorist, satirist, and creator of Bangsian fantasy (which sets the plot partially or wholly in the afterlife); he was associate editor of *Life* magazine (1884–88), editor of the humor departments for *Harper's Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Harper's Young People*, editor of *Harper's Weekly*, and editor of *Puck* (1904–06), the foremost American humor magazine of the period.

turer and as a popular contributor to *Punch*. Ward died of tuberculosis at Southampton, England, on March 6, 1867, at age thirty-two, at the height of a career which has since been likened to that of Will Rogers.

Ward's success and influence were prodigious. He was Abraham Lincoln's favorite author. Before presenting the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet on September 22, 1862, Lincoln read to them Ward's latest episode, "High-Handed Outrage at Utica."<sup>23</sup> Once, after reading a piece by Ward, Lincoln reportedly said, "For the genius to write these things I would gladly give up my office."<sup>24</sup>

Projecting the persona of a feckless, droll, eccentric, unlettered frontier humorist, Ward moved from cacographic (wrenched spelling) and ungrammatical newspaper letters to lecture-circuit brilliance. His motifs rapidly became definitive in the comic treatment of Mormon polygamy, influencing Mark Twain and most of his humorist contemporaries in their selection of comic voice, style, and techniques.<sup>25</sup>

Ward's several volumes of published writings and lectures were collected posthumously as *The Complete Works of Charles F. Browne, Better Known as "Artemus Ward"* (1878).<sup>26</sup> His three most acclaimed lectures were, "Babes in the Woods" (which rambled humorously through a welter of subjects and never got around to the "Babes in the Woods"), and two lectures on the Mormons—"Artemus Ward—His Travels among the Mormons," an imaginary account of a blundering innocent's encounter with man-hungry "femiale Mormonesses,"<sup>27</sup> and "Artemus Ward, His Panorama," which grew out of his month-long visit to Salt Lake City in January and February 1864.

"Artemus Ward, His Panorama," his final lecture (1864–67), was profusely and colorfully illustrated by a large canvas panorama

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<sup>23</sup>David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 374.

<sup>24</sup>Abraham Lincoln, quoted in Constance Rourke, *American Humor* (1931; rpt., New York: Doubleday & Co., 1953), 177.

<sup>25</sup>Cracroft, "Ten Wives Is All You Need," 202.

<sup>26</sup>See *Artemus Ward, His Book* (1862), *Artemus Ward, His Travels* (1865), *Artemus Ward in London, and Other Papers* (1867), and *Artemus Ward's Panorama* (1869), available online in *Early American Fiction Collection* (EAF), University of Virginia Library.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 76.

roll of professionally painted scenes which unrolled continuously on stage as Ward narrated his lecture. Capitalizing on public curiosity and fantasies about polygamy's alleged lascivious pleasures, Ward single-handedly and famously transformed Mormon matter into comic fodder. In his two Mormon lectures, delivered with poker-faced sobriety and impervious innocence, he convulsed audiences with his outrageous tales of the grave dangers in venturing unattached among the Mormons.

During his stay in Salt Lake City, Ward apparently met briefly with Brigham Young but was officially hosted by T. B. H. Stenhouse, a prominent LDS journalist, who told him that Young's library had Ward's book containing his first Mormon lecture. (Stenhouse did not say whether Young had read it.) On February 8, Ward fell deathly ill with typhoid fever, was treated by the post surgeon at Camp Douglas, Dr. Jonathan H. Williamson, and was nursed by the second plural wife of his host, James Townsend, landlord of the Salt Lake House. During his convalescence, Ward received daily gifts of fruit and wine from Brigham Young. Upon recovering, Ward was finally able to deliver his "Babes in the Woods" lecture to a full house in the Salt Lake Theatre. After proclaiming his undying thanks for manifold Mormon kindnesses, he promised he would never again speak ill of the Latter-day Saints—a promise which he kept at least until his next lecture—in Denver later that month. On returning to New York, Ward wrote and began performing his immensely popular second Mormon lecture, "Artemus Ward among the Mormons," to which he eventually added his panorama.<sup>28</sup> He included a few positive observations, such as, "Among the Mormon women there are some few persons of education—of positive cultivation,"<sup>29</sup> but he carefully assured his audiences that he stood with them in opposition to polygamy: "This wife-system they call plurality [illustrated on the panorama]—the world calls it polygamy. That at its best it is an accursed thing—I need not of course inform you—but you will bear in mind that I am here as a rather cheerful reporter of what I saw in Utah—and I fancy it isn't at all necessary for me to grow virtuously indignant over something we all

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<sup>28</sup>Richard H. Cracroft, "Distorting Polygamy for Fun and Profit: Artemus Ward and Mark Twain Among the Mormons," *BYU Studies* 14 (Winter 1974): 272–88, esp. 280 note 8.

<sup>29</sup>Ward, *Complete Works*, 100–101.

know is hideously wrong."<sup>30</sup> Such agreement with public sensibilities was praised by an unidentified *London Times* reviewer, who commended Ward's lecture on the Mormons as "utterly free from offence, though the opportunities for offence given by the subject of Mormonism are obviously numerous [sic]."<sup>31</sup>

Ward's antipolygamist comedy, begun in his first Mormon lecture in the early 1860s, was both original and funny. It was so well received that it virtually set the canons of outrageous exaggeration used by other comics. Because his platform persona is so ostentatiously naive, the humor does not communicate malice. Even Brigham Young might have been amused.

For example, Ward reported that Brigham Young "loves not wisely—but two hundred well" and deadpanned that "in Utah all the pretty girls mostly marry *Young*."<sup>32</sup> In an aside, Ward also pointed out that Heber C. Kimball, Young's counselor, boasted of possessing "one thousand head of cattle and a hundred head of wives."<sup>33</sup> He ponderously "interviews" the Mormon prophet:

"You air a marrid man, Mister Yung; I bleeve?"  
 "I hev eighty wives, Mister Ward. I sertinly am marrid."  
 "How do you like it as far as you hev got?" sed I.<sup>34</sup>

When Young confesses that he usually sleeps alone in a little chamber behind his office, Ward commiserates: "I don't blame him. He must be bewildered. I know very well that if I had eighty wives of my bosom I should be confused, and shouldn't sleep anywhere. I undertook to count their long stockings on the clothes-line in his

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<sup>30</sup>Ward, *The Complete Works of Artemus Ward—Part 6: Artemus Ward's Panorama*, 17, [www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk\\_files=2695&pageno=17](http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=2695&pageno=17) (accessed April 2007).

<sup>31</sup>Quoted in Artemus Ward, *The Complete Works of Charles F. Browne* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), 391. In *Betsy Jane Ward, Her Book of Goaks* (1866), which is included in *Complete Works*, Ward capitalizes on the interest in Mormon polygamy by creating Betsy Jane Ward, Artemus's "wife," who writes a "book" in which she castigates her wayward husband for supposedly sealing himself, for a few days at a time, to some forty-five Mormon women. Ward, *Complete Works*, 274–78.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 377; emphasis mine.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.

back-yard one day, and I used up the multiplication table in less than half an hour. It made me dizzy—it did.”<sup>35</sup>

Another Ward-devised Mormon dilemma is the persona of a generous man, trapped by circumstance into marrying whole families of women. Artemus himself barely escaped when “seventeen young widows—the wives of a deceased Mormon—offered me their hearts and hands.” When he refused, the widows cried, “O cruel man! This is too much—oh! too much!” Retorted Artemus, “I told them that it was on account of the muchness that I declined.”<sup>36</sup>

This situation captures the comic dilemma to which antipolygamous humorists since Ward have repeatedly returned: the paradoxical incongruity between Mormondom’s marital plurality versus the monotonous singleness of Gentiledom. Brigham Young, complaining that his generous nature is too often taken advantage of, confides to Artemus:

Artemus, my boy, you don’t know how often a man marries against his will. Let me recite one case out of a hundred that has happened to myself. About three months ago a family arrived here—they were from Hoboken—everybody knows how beautiful the Jersey girls are. . . . Well, this family consisted of four daughters, a mother and two grandmothers, one with teeth, the other without. I took a fancy to the youngest of the girls, and proposed. After considerable reflection she said: “I can’t think of marrying you without you marrying my three sisters as well.” After some considerable hesitation I agreed, and went to the girl’s mother for her consent,—“No objection to your marrying my four girls, but you’ll have to take me as well.” After a little reflection, I consented, and went to the two grandmothers for their consent”—“No objection,” said the old dames in a breath,” but you’ll have to marry us as well. We cannot think of separating the family.” After a little cosy hesitation on my part, I finally agreed to swallow the two old venerable antiquities as a sort of sauce to the other five.<sup>37</sup>

From a muchness of wives, it is only a short step to the problem of multiple mothers-in-law. Ward reported seeing Young’s mother-in-law in Utah: “I can’t exactly tell you how many there is of her—but it’s a good deal. It strikes me that one mother-in-law is

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 236.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 379–80.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 517.

about enough to have in a family—unless you're very fond of excitement."<sup>38</sup>

It was also Ward who first mined the comic possibilities between a man's desire for domestic peace and the uproar inherent in a plural household. He reports that Brigham had confided that he was going to stop marrying: "[Brigham] says that all he wants now is to live in peace for the remainder of his days—and have his dying pillow soothed by the loving hands of his family. Well—that's all right . . . , but if *all* his family soothe his dying pillow—he'll have to go out-doors to die."<sup>39</sup>

Ward also originated the use of the comic miscommunication: the babble of beloved wives and the bewilderment for the Gentile writer trying to make grammatical sense of polygamous confusion. The epitome of such literary confusion is found in Ward's four-page romance crafted in the condensed novel tradition made famous by Bret Harte.<sup>40</sup> Ward's condensed romance, *Reginald Gloverson*, relates how Reginald, a Mormon mule-skinner, is blessed with "Twenty young and handsome [childless] wives." Before taking his yearly trip to Omaha, he gathers his clutch of weeping wives around him and expresses his premonition that something might happen to him, then scoffs:

"Why should I fear? . . . I know that every night, as I lay down on the broad starlit prairie, your bright faces will come to me in my dreams, and make my slumbers sweet and gentle. You, Emily, with your mild blue eyes: and you, Henrietta, with your splendid black hair: and you, Nelly, with your hair so brightly, beautifully golden: and you, Mollie, with your cheeks so downy, and you, Betsy, with your wine-red lips—far more delicious, though, than any wine I ever tasted: and you, Maria, with your winsome voice; and you, Susan, with your—with your—that is to say, Susan, with your—and the other thirteen of you,

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 377.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 377–78; emphasis his.

<sup>40</sup>A renowned fiction writer who popularized California mining life, Bret Harte complimented Brigham Young and the industrious Saints. But as U.S. Consul in Germany, he reported on the absence of Mormon-style polygamy (which he equated with sexual excess) among the frugal and industrious Germans, commenting that their spare lives left "little room for the play of the lower passions." Bret Harte, *Tales of the Argonauts* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1872), xii.

each so good and beautiful, will come to me in sweet dreams, will you not, Dearistists?"<sup>41</sup>

Reginald dies, and his entire weep of widows follow his coffin to the grave "twenty-abreast." Two years later, a "manly Mormon" woos and wins the collective hand of the Widow(s) Gloverson: "Madam . . . I have seen part of you before! And although I have already twenty-five wives, whom I respect and tenderly care for, I can truly say that I never felt love's holy thrill till I saw thee. Be mine—be mine!" [he cries fervently] ". . . and we will show the world a striking illustration of the beauty and truth of the noble lines, only a good deal more so—'Twenty-one souls with a single thought, / Twenty-one hearts that beat as one!'"<sup>42</sup> Ward concludes this compacted romance by writing, in the kind of mock-confusion which will dominate anti-polygamy humor through the rest of the century: "Gentle reader, does not the moral of this romance show that—does it not, in fact, show that however many there may be of a young widow woman—or rather, does it not show that whatever number of persons one woman may consist of—well, never mind what it *shows*. Only this writing Mormon romances is confusing to the intellect. You try it and see."<sup>43</sup>

#### MARK TWAIN (SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS)

If Artemus Ward was the most stylistically influential and original of the antipolygamy humorists, it is Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835–1910) in his persona of Mark Twain, who remains the most enduringly popular. Perhaps if Ward had lived a longer life, he, like Twain, would have made the transition from humorous letters and newspaper sketches to crafting novels and essays of enduring worth.

Twain had longstanding quarrels with God and with all organized religion,<sup>44</sup> but spent relatively little time on Mormonism. This is perhaps a blessing, since his few pithy but telling chapters on

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 280.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 284.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 284; emphasis his.

<sup>44</sup>His *Christian Science* (New York: Harper, 1907), was a humorous but scathing dissection of Mary Baker Eddy and her belief system; and his *Letters from the Earth*, compiled by Bernard DeVoto, was so stark in its expressions of disbelief that it was published posthumously. See Jude V. Nixon, "God," in *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia*, edited by J. R. LeMaster and James



the subject in *Roughing It* (1872) still linger in American literature and Mormon sensibilities—especially his quip about the Book of Mormon (“chloroform in print”—playing off the book of Ether) and, of course, polygamy.<sup>45</sup> While his panning of the Mormons and especially the Book of Mormon is often uneven and heavy-handed, his treatment of polygamy is comically brilliant—mostly because he employs and improves upon methods he learned from Artemus Ward, whom he first met in Virginia City, Nevada, in December 1863. For example, he picks up and extends Ward’s device of the Mormon who is compelled to marry an entire family, creating a scene that is faultlessly ludicrous:

Some portly old frog of an elder, or a bishop, marries a girl—likes her, marries her sister—likes her, marries another sister—likes her, takes another—likes her, marries her mother—likes her, marries her father, grandfather, great grandfather, and then comes back hungry and asks for more. And how [sic] the pert young thing of eleven will chance to be the favorite wife, and her own venerable grandmother have to rank away down toward D4 in their mutual husband’s esteem, and have to sleep in the kitchen, like as not.<sup>46</sup>

Twain also surpasses Ward in showing the comical difficulties of maintaining marital harmony when Brigham, in a moment of weakness, gives a breastpin to “his darling No. 6,” only to find the other jealous wives filing in, singly and in groups, to complain about their husband’s injustice and insisting upon immediate recompense in a pin of similar or better quality. The budget-conscious prophet then confides to his astonished monogamous Gentile listener the compounded financial woes of much-married life: huge bills for laundry, cough syrups, and papa’s watches for the babies to play with; and he recounts futile attempts at keeping his nuptials economical by des-

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D. Wilson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), 322–28; Richard H. Cracroft, “[Mark Twain’s] Reflections on Religion,” *ibid.*, 624–25.

<sup>45</sup>Richard H. Cracroft, “The Gentle Blasphemer: Mark Twain, Holy Scripture, and the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 11 (Winter 1971): 119–40. See also my “Distorting Polygamy for Fun and Profit,” and my “Ten Wives Is All You Need.”

<sup>46</sup>Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (1871; rpt., New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 102–3.

ignating “one set of bridal attire for all occasions.”<sup>47</sup>

Confounding conventional expectations, Twain concludes his recital of Brigham’s woes with a hilarious sketch of the prophet’s attempt at economizing by replacing dozens of costly bedsteads with one conjugal bed, seven feet long by ninety-six feet wide. Alas, confesses Brigham, the experiment failed because the snoring of his wives caused a rhythmic buckling and swelling of the walls, which threatened both the structure and his sleep.

Also built upon a foundation laid by Artemus Ward is Twain’s satire of plural wives’ alleged ugliness. Twain brilliantly satirizes the conventional zeal to write yet another book urging moral reform of the Mormon establishment, while pitying the polygamist husband as a self-sacrificing masochist:

Our stay in Salt Lake City amounted to only two days, and therefore we had no time to make the customary inquisition into the workings of polygamy and get up the usual statistics and deductions preparatory to calling the attention of the nation at large once more to the matter. I had the will to do it. With the gushing self-sufficiency of youth I was feverish to plunge in headlong and achieve a great reform here—until I saw the Mormon women. Then I was touched. My heart was wiser than my head. It warmed toward these poor, ungainly, and pathetically “homely” creatures, and as I turned to hide the generous moisture in my eyes, I said, “No—the man that marries one of them has done an act of Christian charity which entitles him to the kindly applause of mankind, not their harsh censure—and the man that marries sixty of them has done a deed of open-handed generosity so sublime that the nations should stand uncovered in his presence and worship in silence.”<sup>48</sup>

*Roughing It* has never gone out of print; Twain’s chapters on the Mormons (12–17) and two appendices, “The Mountain Meadows Massacre” and “History of the Mormons,” remain for many readers introductory and instructive about Mormonism—a gem of antipolygamous humor.

Brigham Young’s final counsel to his young Gentile visitor highlights Twain’s aptitude for comic exaggeration, extended from Ward’s technique: “[Don’t] encumber yourself with a large family,” advises Young. “. . . In a small family, and in a small family only, you

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 104–5.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 101.

will find that comfort and that peace of mind which are the best at last of the blessings this world is able to afford us, and for the lack of which no accumulation of wealth and acquisition of fame, power, and greatness can ever compensate us. Take my word for it [he admonishes], ten or eleven wives is all you need—never go over it.”<sup>49</sup>

### BILL NYE (EDGAR WILSON NYE)

During the last third of the nineteenth century, Edgar Wilson Nye (1850–96), who borrowed his soubriquet of “Bill Nye” from a character in a popular poem, “Ah Sin,” by Bret Harte, was probably as well known as Artemus Ward and Mark Twain. However, his humor has proved less enduring and is virtually unknown today. After moving from Maine to Laramie, Wyoming, Nye, an attorney and Laramie City postmaster, began to write humorous letters for the *Laramie Boomerang*, which he founded and edited. He collected his numerous newspaper sketches into four popular volumes: *Bill Nye and Boomerang* (1881), *Forty Liars, and Other Lies* (1883), *Baled Hay* (1883), and *Remarks by Bill Nye* (n.d., rpt. 2003), all of which contained comic anti-Mormon sketches; two additional books without Mormon content are *Bill Nye’s Comic History of the United States* (1894) and *Bill Nye’s History of England* (1896).

“Rare” Bill Nye, as he was often introduced, achieved national popularity with his brief, witty, highly opinionated essays on a wide range of topics, and, later in his career, because of his friendship with such notables as poets Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley, and horticulturist Luther Burbank. From 1886 to 1890, Riley and Nye performed together on the national lecture circuit and jointly authored two books of humorous and poetic miscellanea. Nye also traveled and lectured with Luther Burbank.

Nye took a different tack than the naive innocence of Ward and Twain. Acerbic and sarcastic, he called Mormonism “polygamy, bigamy, trigamy and pigamy.”<sup>50</sup> He sneered at the “objectionable stench” of a trainload of Mormon emigrants, leered at the “chronic and insatiable desire” which induces a man to marry “the

<sup>49</sup>Twain, *Roughing It*, 108–9.

<sup>50</sup>Bill Nye, *Forty Liars, and Other Lies* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co., 1883), 150. Nye lifts this line, slightly varied, from Artemus Ward’s lines, “bigamy, Brighamy and ninnygavinny” and “Bigamy, Trigamy, and Brighamy.” Ward, *Complete Works*, 219, 515.

whole broad universe and a portion of [New] York State,” jeered at the Mormon temple ceremony, and greeted Brigham Young’s death with mock concern for keeping Young’s grave green, salted as it is by the buckets of tears of the “assembled widow” and “swollen by the [collective] orphan”; meanwhile, Young “is probably the tickledest immortal soul that looks down over the battlements of the skies.”<sup>51</sup> Historian Leonard J. Arrington, himself a notably tolerant man, dismissed Nye’s harsh castigation of the Mormons as “contemptible.”<sup>52</sup>

In Nye’s numerous newspaper columns on the Mormons, he urged the government to repress polygamy and force Mormon political submission to U.S. sovereignty, applauding the anti-Mormon *Salt Lake Tribune* and Territorial Governor Eli H. Murray (1880–86) in their efforts to destroy “the hydra-headed monster” of Mormonism. “When Murray gets an act of congress at his back,” he wrote, “and a squad of nervy, gamy, law-abiding monogamous assistants . . . to knock crosswise and crooked the . . . revelations of Utah and Mormondom, you will see the fur fly” in Utah. Left unchecked, “their fraudulent religion may populate Utah and invade adjoining territories with their herds of ostensible wives and prattling progeny, while they can bring in every year . . . thousands of proselyted paupers from every pest house of Europe, and the free-love idiots of America.” Nye longed to join Murray and the free press in rotten-egging “the bogus Temple of Zion till the civilized world, with a patent clothes pin [o]n its nose, would come and see what was the matter.”<sup>53</sup>

In a parody of biblical language, Nye mocked George Q. Cannon’s difficulties in being seated as Utah’s territorial representative to Congress: “Now in those days, over against Jordan and in the land which is called the land of the Danites and the land of the Polygs,

<sup>51</sup>Bill Nye, *Bill Nye and Boomerang* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co., 1881), 34; Nye, *Forty Liars, and Other Lies*, 149, 36–37.

<sup>52</sup>Leonard J. Arrington, “The Many Uses of Humor,” 14, unpublished paper, Last Lecture Series, Brigham Young University, January 17, 1974; photocopy in Mormon Humor Archive, compiled by Shirlene H. Bartholomew, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

<sup>53</sup>Nye, “Murray and the Mormons,” *Remarks by Bill Nye*, 71–72, (n.d., rpt., ebooks, Project Gutenberg: [http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk\\_files=18119&pageno=123](http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=18119&pageno=123) (accessed April 2007).

and the land of the numerous wife, and where dwelleth the Mormon whose family is like unto the sands of the sea for multitude, there arose a man whose previous name was George and whose subsequent name was Cannon, and the letter which stood in the midst of his name was Q."<sup>54</sup>

In another anti-Mormon essay, "Polygamy as a Religious Duty," Nye snarled that Mormonism was "the great national abscess" and protested the Church's hypocrisy in hiding behind the Constitution while "in open rebellion against the laws of God and man." Vociferously, he claimed:

I may be a radical monogamist and a rash enthusiast upon this matter, but I still adhere to my original motto, one country, one flag, and one wife at a time. Matrimony is a good thing, but it can be overdone . . . , [and] he who wears out his young life making a collection of wives . . . should be looked upon with suspicion.

It seems funny to us . . . that a thick-necked patriarch in the valley of the Jordan should be sealed to thirteen or fourteen low-browed, half human females, and that the whole mass of humanity should live and multiply under one roof.

He further claimed, extravagantly, that all of Mormonism was imbued with the "same mercenary, heartless lunacy that runs through the sickly plagiarism of the Book of Mormon, [and] pervades all this . . . [with the] flavor of bilge water, and the emigrant's . . . all-pervading fragrance of the steerage."

He holds out some hope, for "education is the foe of polygamy," and "many of the young who . . . complete their education in the East, [become] apostate." But—despair again—"Utah, even with the Edmunds bill, is hopelessly Mormon," and all of the adjoining States and Territories "are already invaded by them." Toward the end of the sketch, Nye undertakes to lighten his tone by admitting that he is inclined "to be sectarian in my views" when confronted by a strange religion "that involves from three to twenty-seven old corsets in the back yard every spring, and a clothes line every Monday morning that looks like a bridal trousseau emporium struck by a cy-

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<sup>54</sup>Nye, *Forty Liars*, 21. Cannon, an LDS apostle (1860–80), served as a counselor in the First Presidency (1873–74, 1880–87, 1889–1901). He also served as Utah's Congressional delegate but was expelled after passage of the Edmunds Act (1882). Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon, A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999).

clone.” However, being “slapped across the features by one pair of long wet hose on your way to the barn” and having “a whole bankrupt stock of cold wet garments . . . fold their damp arms around your neck, as you dodge under the clothes line to drive the cow out of the yard, is wrong.” He agrees that “it is not good for man to be alone but why should [that man] yearn to fold a young ladies’ seminary to his bosom?” He concludes: “The doctrine that requires me to be sealed to a whole emigrant train, seems unnatural and inconsistent.”<sup>55</sup> Nye has his comic moments, but he betrays his political agenda, and his vitriolic tone is frequently unpleasant.

### ROBERT WILLIAMS BUCHANAN

Scottish poet Robert Williams Buchanan (1841-1901) is the lone foreigner among this sextet of antipolygamous humorists. A poet, novelist, essayist, literary critic, and dramatist, Buchanan wrote a number of successful narrative poems,<sup>56</sup> among which is his long-since-forgotten work, *Saint Abe and His Seven Wives: A Lively Tale of Salt Lake City*, published in London and New York in 1872.

This 169-page poem, written in jog-trot couplets which are only a cut or two above doggerel, shows two aspects of Mormon polygamy. One is the sadness of old men marrying young wives and breaking young hearts. Joe Wilson, a forlorn cowboy, loses his beloved Cicely Dunn to the importunings of Mormon Apostle Hiram Higginson. Flattered by the attentions of this leading Saint, Cicely forsakes Joe and marries Higginson. Still shattered several years later, Joe comments:

I’ve heard from many a one that Ciss  
Has found her blunder out by this,  
And she’d prefer for company  
A brisk young chap, tho’ poor, like me,  
Than the sixth part of him she’s won—  
The Holy Hiram Higginson.<sup>57</sup>

The second comic situation is the ironic tale of a polygamist

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<sup>55</sup>Nye, “Polygamy as a Religious Duty,” in *Remarks by Bill Nye*.

<sup>56</sup>Buchanan’s poems were collected into three volumes in 1874, into one volume in 1884, and into two volumes as *Complete Poetical Works* in 1901.

<sup>57</sup>Robert Williams Buchanan, *St. Abe and His Seven Wives* (New York:

who falls in love with one of his wives and is driven to forsake the many for the one. Abraham Clewson, or St. Abe, is Brigham Young's right-hand man but errs in wedding six wives. Five of them are "the wildest set of gals that ever drove man silly, / Each full of freaks and fal-de-lals, as frisky as a filly." The sixth is the stolid, older Tabitha Brooks. He then becomes the guardian of teenage Anne, the daughter of a deceased friend, whom he marries when she reached eighteen. Consequently, all the others "appear[ed] like tapers wan, / In the mellow sunlight of Sister Anne."

One evening the six other wives of Abraham Clewson file into Brigham Young's presence to report: "We are widows broken-hearted / Abraham Clewson has departed." Indeed, St. Abe has eloped with his darling Anne. In a poignant, tear-stained letter to Brigham Young, Abe professes continued faith in the Church, but complains of marital overload:

*One* wife for me was enough, *two* might have fixed me neatly,  
*Three* made me shake, *four* made me puff, *five* settled me complete,—  
 But when the *sixth* came, though I still was glad and never grumbled  
 I took the staggers, buck'd, went ill, and in the traces tumbled.

Praising Brigham as worthy of being "Father to a *nation*," he confesses with shame that, for love of Anne, he must be "labell'd on every feature, / A wretched poor *monogamist*, a most inferior creature." Five years later, the narrator meets Abe in the East and spends a pleasant evening with him. When he asks if Abe is happy, the fallen Saint replies:

"Happy?" Abe said with a smile,  
 "Yes, in his *inferior* style,  
 Meek and humble, not like them  
 In the New Jerusalem."<sup>58</sup>

Deathless verse it is not, but Buchanan is original in presenting the repentant polygamist who gives up several wives for the love of one, even though St. Abe becomes an object of (ironic) pity by forsaking the higher state of polygamy for the lesser state of monogamy.

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George Routledge & Sons, 1872), 32–33.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 51, 68, 112, 124, 146, 164; emphasis his.



**MAX ADELER (CHARLES HEBER CLARK)**

Charles Heber Clark (1847–1915), better known as Max Adler, was a highly successful journalist who wrote humor columns for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in the 1870s. Although Clark later forsook writing for business, as Max Adler he delighted a large national audience with well-written sketches, which he collected as *Out of the Hurly-Burley* (1874), which sold over one million copies, and the almost-as-popular *Random Shots* (1876). Both books were translated into several languages.

Two of Adler's longest (and best) tales are his mostly forgotten but still-funny Mormon antipolygamy farces, "Bishop Potts," and "The Tragedy of Thompson Dunbar," which incorporate the familiar elements of exaggeration, straight-faced burlesque, and satire.

"Bishop Potts," published in *Out of the Hurly-Burley* (1874), is, wrote Adler, a tragedy "which comes as the result of excessive marriage."<sup>59</sup> A faithful Latter-day Saint, Bishop Potts has only three wives and fifteen children, a moderate-size Mormon family. He goes to San Francisco to purchase Christmas presents for his brood but, on his return, is met by twenty-one recently widowed women who tearfully explain that Brigham Young has "had a vision in which he was directed to seal" the whole lot to the good bishop, who is thus instantly blessed with an additional bundle of wives and 144 more children. He stoically accepts his lot and returns to San Francisco for more toys. Awaiting him on his return is a passel of sixty-four additional children who inform him that Brigham Young has sealed Potts to twenty-seven more wives. Potts quickly writes Brigham, asking him "as a personal favor to keep awake until after Christmas" and thus avoid further visions. Yet while the bishop is off toy-shopping, the relentless Young seals fifteen more widows and eighty-two more children to him. The bishop becomes deranged and boards the first steamer for Peru, "where he entered a monastery and became a celibate." Brigham promptly seals the entire congregation of wives and children to the local physician, who is soon institutionalized for insanity and, at the tale's end, is estimating the number of his instant posterity by "ciphering with an impossible combination of the multiplication table and algebra."<sup>60</sup>

Even more complicated and funnier is Adler's forty-seven-page farce, "The Tragedy of Thompson Dunbar: A Tale of Salt Lake City,"

<sup>59</sup>Max Adler, *Out of the Hurly-Burley* (Philadelphia: Stoddart, 1874), 245.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 245–53.

published in *Random Shots* (1876). The story begins with an overheard argument between two young Mormons, Thompson Dunbar and Arbutus Jones, who are rivals for "Mrs. Ballygag's Boarding School for Young Ladies." Declares the impassioned Arbutus to the equally smitten Thompson:

"Yes sir: I shall marry them: clean out the school. I have had a special revelation: the entire senior class has been sealed to me, and I am going to marry the other classes so as to make a complete job of it."

"But the senior and junior classes have engaged themselves to me," replied Dunbar. "I proposed to them yesterday, and they said that they could love me alone."

"Can't help that," said Jones[.] "I have arranged the matter with the Prophet and the parents. The entire concern has been offered me in marriage, and I am now on my way to see Mrs. Ballygag, and to get her to wind up the term and graduate them at once."

But Thompson Dunbar gets the jump on his rival and returns that evening with eight carriages and a rope, assists the thirty-two damsels to elope with him, and drives through the night to Ogden, where the entire concern is married to him by Bishop Potts. Mrs. Ballygag and an irate Arbutus Jones arrive too late; and Dunbar, on advice from the shrewd bishop, also marries Mrs. Ballygag for a bargain twenty-five cents extra. The weird entourage returns to Salt Lake City in wedded bliss, whereupon Max Adeler cheerfully borrows (without giving credit) Artemus Ward's line from his condensed novel, "Reginald Gloverson": "thirty-four souls with but a single thought—thirty-four hearts that beat as one."

Complications arise. A sailor, Thompson Dunbar departs on a voyage and is shipwrecked on a desert island, where he remains, accompanied only by miniatures of his thirty-three wives (including Mrs. Ballygag), for fifteen lonely years. Dunbar's grief is especially deep, for, as Adeler points out, "Only those who have learned from a sad experience what it is to lose three-and-thirty wives at a blow, can realize the depth and intensity of the suffering of this unhappy young man."

Meanwhile, back home, the widows at length give up straining their sixty-five eyes (Ethelberta had a cataract) for Dunbar's return and marry Arbutus Jones. Jones becomes embroiled in multiple mother-in-law difficulties but shrewdly contrives to get them all sealed to the unhappy city coroner, who vows revenge. Dunbar is rescued, returns incognito from his island exile, admits his true identity

to the coroner, and dies. The relieved coroner, protesting that the marriage of Dunbar's widows to Jones (and thus his marriage to the collective-mothers-in-law) was null and void, takes revenge on Jones by getting Brigham to seal Jones's wives to the coroner's delighted brother, Joe. The suddenly single Jones departs, cursing everything Mormon. The forlorn widows die one by one, miserable in their mis-marriage(s) to Joe, who ends up footing the bill for an entire acre in the cemetery.<sup>61</sup>

In these tales Max Adeler imaginatively crafted two of the best, funniest, and longest antipolygamy comic farces, the inanities of which illustrate the imaginative lengths (and depths) to which later nineteenth-century humorists went in mining the comic ore of Mormon plurality.

#### SAMANTHA SMITH (MARIETTA HOLLEY)

The sixth of these half-dozen humorists is Marietta Holley (1836–1926), known to a large national readership as “Samantha Smith, Josiah Allen’s Wife.” Taking the conventional position that Mormon plural wives are enslaved by the evil system of polygamy, she boldly wielded the weapon of laughter against it.<sup>62</sup>

Holley, daughter of a New York farmer and a life-long spinster, turned to writing at age thirty-seven. In her ensuing career of forty-one years, she captivated the American imagination with a series of delightfully funny books offering serio-comic opinions and instruction on timely national topics under the pseudonym of “Samantha Smith, Josiah Allen’s Wife.” Samantha of Jonesville (nicely located at the center of the United States) married Josiah, who had been left a widower with two small children. After giving them her undivided attention for fifteen years, she finally gains a measure of freedom from these domestic responsibilities and feels ready to an-

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<sup>61</sup>Adeler, *Random Shots* (1876; rpt., Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 159–206.

<sup>62</sup>Women’s rights groups were enraged by petitions from Mormon women expressing support for plurality and audaciously urging Gentile women to enlist in their cause. Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Women’s Suffrage,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1572–73; see also Madsen, *An Advocate for Women: The Public Life of Emmeline B. Wells, 1870–1920* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2006).

nounce her considered and absolute opinions on every subject from U.S. foreign policy and child rearing, to alcohol consumption, women's rights, displays at the Chicago World's Fair—and, of course, the pernicious doctrine of Mormon polygamy.

Pontificating in a style which she called "episoddin' and allegorin'," Samantha burst into public attention with her book, *My Opinions and Betsey Bobbet's: Designed as a Beacon Light, to Guide Women to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, But Which May Be Read by Members of the Sterner Sect, without Injury to Themselves of This Book*, by Josiah Allen's Wife" (1873). The success of *My Opinions and Betsey Bobbet's* so firmly established Samantha Smith in the American imagination that Holley published nearly twenty more "Samantha" books, including *Samantha at Saratoga or Flirtin' with Fashion* (1887), *Samantha among the Bretheren* (1890), *Samantha at the World's Fair* (1893), *Samantha in Europe* (1895), *Samantha on Children's Rights* (1909), *Samantha on the Woman Question* (1913), and *Josiah Allen on the Woman Question* (1914). Holley's outspoken views on contemporary issues, and especially on women's rights ("Wimmen is my theme, and also Josiah"<sup>63</sup>), both reflected and influenced American public opinion of the time. Often called the "female Mark Twain" by contemporaries, Holley became a friend and political ally of suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Victoria Woodhull, Susan B. Anthony, and Clara Barton. In her preface to *My Opinions and Betsey Bobbet's*, Samantha tells of hearing an inner voice commanding, "Josiah Allen's wife, write a book givin' your views on the great subject of Wimmen's Rites. . . . The great publick wheel is a rollin' on slowly, drawin' the Femail Race into liberty; Josiah Allen's wife, put your shoulder blades to the wheel."<sup>64</sup> Biographer Kate H. Winter saw Holley's great contribution to American letters as using "humor for a new end—propaganda for the feminist movement,"<sup>65</sup> while literary historian Walter Blair observed, "I think that there can be no doubt that Samantha did more [in voicing her serio-comic opinions] for the cause [of women's

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<sup>63</sup>Marietta Holley, *My Wayward Pardner; or, My Trials with Josiah, America, the Widow Bump, and Etcetery*, by Josiah Allen's Wife (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing, 1881), title page.

<sup>64</sup>Holley, *My Opinions and Betsey Bobbet's* (1872; rpt., Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing, 1890), vi.

<sup>65</sup>Kate H. Winter, *Marietta Holley: Life with "Josiah Allen's Wife"* (1984; rpt., Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 2.

rights] than many hard workers ever accomplished by serious speeches and arguments.”<sup>66</sup>

Although anti-Mormon feelings had run high for decades in Holley’s upstate New York community of Adams, polygamy had acquired particular salience in 1870 in the neighboring community of Pierrepont Manor, when a Mormon missionary converted, then courted and married a “buxom” young widow. When the new wife, who had been told to follow her new husband west, made inquiries, she learned that he already had two wives in Utah. Her conversion faded rapidly.<sup>67</sup> Her plight underscored the Grant and Hayes administrations’ ineffectiveness in bringing down polygamy. Then, in 1876, one of Brigham Young’s plural wives, Ann Eliza Webb Young, published a popular exposé, *Wife Number Nineteen; or, The Story of a Life in Bondage*. Capitalizing on the continuing national furor and Congressional debate about “the Mormon Question,” Holley published *The Lament of the Mormon Wife, A Poem* (1880), the first and least successful of her two attacks on Mormonism.

A book-length poem in a richly illustrated gift volume, *The Lament*, was a maudlin piece that did not feature the sarcastic Samantha. In it, a Mormon wife’s baby dies. Her missionary husband makes other female converts, one of whom beguiles him “with honied lies.” “With her beauty and subtler art,” she supplants the first wife, marries the Mormon, and bears him two sons. The older wife, still sorrowing for her child, is shunted off to the attic, eats with the servants, and prays for death. She laments: “Deserted, unloved wife, yet loving him, loving him still! / I think that a modern saint is better without a heart.”<sup>68</sup>

Holley’s second treatment of Mormonism is more successful, both as literature and propaganda. In *My Wayward Pardner: or, My Trials with Josiah, America, the Widow Bump, and Etcetery* (1881), Samantha Smith mounts a sharp-tongued, serio-comic attack on polygamy. The insidious Elder Judas Wart, a Mormon missionary, has been encouraging her husband Josiah to consider the complaisant Widder Bump as a possible addition to the Allen household. But Josiah, the Widder,

<sup>66</sup>Walter Blair, *Horse Sense in American Humor* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1942), 238–39.

<sup>67</sup>Winter, *Marietta Holley*, 70.

<sup>68</sup>Holley, *The Lament of the Mormon Wife: A Poem Lament* (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing, 1880), n.p.

and Elder Wart have not reckoned on Samantha, a formidable opponent. When she confronts Wart with evidence of his skullduggery, the conniving elder shows his hand too boldly: "You are a very smart woman, and you could do wonders in the true church if you was married to some leadin' man,—to me, for instance." Josiah, who actually has begun wooing the Widder, now realizes his error and is frightened half out of his wits, but Samantha masters the situation and shows her errant husband—and her many readers—"the nefariousness and heinousness of Mormonism, in it's [sic] true light."<sup>69</sup>

Wart admits that he has already sealed the Widder to himself, and the irate Samantha challenges the elder to a duel of doctrines, which he confidently accepts. For nearly 150 pages, Samantha refutes Elder Wart's doctrines, point by point, couched in comically ungrammatical and homely upstate New York dialect. She arrays every possible argument against polygamy and, furthermore, methodically anticipates and counters the elder's defenses of the Mormon marital system. Samantha rises to a rhetorical high point in praising the institution of the family:

This most wholesome restraint [of the family], this strongest of ropes that is stretched firm and solid between safety and old Error, you [Mormons] are tryin' to break down. But you'll find you can't do it. No sir! You may all get onto it,—the whole caboodle of you, Mormons, Oneida Communities, Free Lovers, the hull set on you,—and you'll find it is a rope you can't break!

. . . Uncle Samuel (after I have hunched him up) will hold one end of it firm and strong, and Principle and Public Sentiment the other end of it; and if necessary, if danger is at hand, . . . Samantha . . . will lay holt of it, too.

A critical strategy is strengthening the federal government to take decisive action. Samantha declares that, with the assistance of the wife of President Rutherford Hayes,<sup>70</sup> she is going to stir up Uncle Sam. The old Uncle "needs a good, strong friend," she says. "He wants to have somebody tell him the plain truth, to get his dander completely up." Uncle Sam hasn't realized, she insists to the outclassed Elder Judas Wart, how the sin of Mormonism has been allowed "to

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<sup>69</sup>Holley, *My Wayward Pardner*, 401–2.

<sup>70</sup>In fact, Lucy Hayes was honorary president of the national Anti-Polygamy League, which built the Industrial Christian Home to shelter refugee wives and their children. Thomas Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*, 191.

undermind [sic] and beat down the walls of home." She plans to

use sharp reason, and, if necessary, irony and sarcasm. And I shall ask him (usin' a ironicle tone, if necessary) how he thinks it looks in the eyes of the other nations to see him, who ort to be a model for 'em all to foller, allow such iniquity as Mormonism to flourish in his borders. To let a regular organized band of banditty murder and plunder and commit all sorts of abominations right under his honest old nose . . . . How insignificant and humiliatin' it must look to 'em to see him allow a man [George Q. Cannon] in Congress to make laws that will imprison a man for havin' two wives when the same man has got four of 'em, and is lookin' round hungry for more.

Given her crushing arguments and impassioned speech—"how eloquent I had been," she exclaims—Samantha is dismayed that Wart "wuzn't convinced. I don't s'pose anybody would hardly believe that a man could listen to such talk, and not be proselyted and converted. But he wuzn't. After all my outlay and expenditure of eloquence and wind and everything, he wuzn't convinced a mite."

Wart counters by declaring polygamy as the "main pillow in the Mormon church," then patronizingly reminds her: "A woman can't be saved unless some man saves 'em, some Mormon. That is one reason . . . why I would have bore my cross, and married you; obtained an entrance for you in the heavenly kingdom. But now it is too late. I won't save you." Sputters Samantha, "Wall, I rather think you won't."

Josiah is galvanized by this admission of designs on *his* wife and indignantly attacks with that archetypal woman's weapon, a broomstick. He drives Wart, first to his knees and then from the premises. Samantha underscores the point to her husband: "You feel awfully to have that doctrine jest throwed at your pardner. . . . And look at the thousands of wimmen that have to submit to the humiliation and degradation of this belief, live in it, and die in it." She concludes "in fervid axents": "Oh! if Uncle Samuel, that dear, blunderin', noble old man, would only hit old Polygamy jest another such a blow, jest as sudden and, unexpected, and bring him down on his polluted old knees. Oh! What a day that would be for America and Samantha. What feelin's we should feel, both on us." Josiah agrees: "Yes . . . , I wish it could be did."

Samantha is well satisfied with Josiah's response: "He was perfectly and entirely convinced of the awfulness and vile horrors of Mormonism," she says. Relieved that the storm has passed, Josiah meekly observes to his good—and only—wife, "I could relish a little



briled steak and some mashed-up potatoes." And dutifully, Samantha complies.<sup>71</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Although these humorists' influence on ending Mormon polygamy cannot be measured, each played a part in bringing about the Mormon retreat from plural marriage. Each humorist "professedly preach[ed]," as Mark Twain insisted humorists always do,<sup>72</sup> thereby adding his or her voice to the *vox populi* in upholding and perpetuating the moral (and marital) norms of a Christian nation by focusing, venting, and expressing the popular rejection of Mormonism. The long and hearty laughter incited by these six humorists, among many others, and shared by the American people aided in shrinking and diminishing the threatening Mormon heterodoxies and in weakening the resolve of the Latter-day Saints until they finally submitted to the implacable national will.

The afterclap of the nineteenth-century assault on Mormonism still resounds. In modern, high-tech, monogamous Mormon Zion, chuckles about the polygamous past and popular indignation and curiosity about its practice among fundamentalists remain the lot of modern-day Saints, who, despite authoritative denials, are still defined in the national mind by the practice. Fundamentalist LDS prophet Warren Jeffs was, for a time, Number One on the FBI's most-wanted list. Secretive dealings of the FLDS Church attract media attention and prosecution. The HBO television series, *Big Love*, about a contemporary polygamous family of Mormon roots, is in its second season. Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney, of polygamous ancestry, had to answer questions on the topic in the summer of 2007. A Gallup poll conducted in late February 2007 put "polygamy" at the head of the list of things that first came to the minds of respondents (18 percent), while Joseph Smith, the Tabernacle Choir, and Brigham Young University racked up only 2 percent, behind Mitt Romney, who came to mind first for 3 percent of the respondents.<sup>73</sup>

Although the anti-Mormon prejudice and "assault of laughter"

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<sup>71</sup>Holley, *My Wayward Pardner*, 401–2, 459, 461–62, 468.

<sup>72</sup>Twain, "How to Tell a Story," 7–8.

<sup>73</sup>Dennis Romboy, "Opinions Are Diverse on 'Those Mormons,'" *Deseret Morning News*, March 3, 2007, A1, A10.

## REVIEWS

Lowell C. Bennion, Alan T. Morrell, and Thomas Carter. *Polygamy in Lorenzo Snow's Brigham City: An Architectural Tour*. Salt Lake City: College of Architecture and Planning, University of Utah, 2005. 81 pp. Photographs, drawings, bibliography. Paper: \$10.00. For ordering information, contact the first author at [lcbscb@mstar2.net](mailto:lcbscb@mstar2.net).

*Reviewed by Alan Barnett*

Few issues were as central to the Mormon world of the nineteenth century as the practice of plural marriage, and few have aroused as much discussion among students of Utah and Mormon history. Nevertheless, despite much debate, the full story of nineteenth-century Mormon polygamy remains to be told. This brief study offers an “architectural tour” of polygamy in Brigham City during the period that Apostle Lorenzo Snow presided over the community (1853–93). The “tour” employs architecture as a tool for probing into the day-to-day reality of polygamy. The study is based on the idea that examining the houses polygamous families built and lived in can offer insights into how families handled living arrangements in an unconventional family structure.

The book begins with an introduction by Tom Carter, professor in the University of Utah’s College of Architecture and Planning, outlining the purpose of the study and the challenges of studying and interpreting the architecture of Mormon polygamy. Alan Morrell provides a chapter laying out the historical context of Brigham City as a unique Mormon community. He emphasizes the key role played by Lorenzo Snow as spiritual and temporal leader of the community for forty years and the development of the cooperative movement that figured so prominently in the town’s economic and social life. In a chapter focusing on polygamy in Brigham City, Bennion, geography professor emeritus at Humboldt State University, offers an overview of polygamy’s place in the community, using U.S. census data to document

how many residents were members of polygamous families and what percentage of community leaders were polygamists.

After these overviews, Morrell, Bennion, and Carter take the reader on the promised “architectural tour,” consisting of case studies of eight plural families with a focus on the homes they occupied and the varied living arrangements they adopted. These include the polygamous families of Lorenzo Snow, William L. Watkins, Peter A. Forsgren, Valentine Valentinsen, Christian and Willard Snow Hansen, James P. Thompson, Mads Christian Jensen, and John H. Bott.

The greatest contribution this short book makes is that it brings architecture to the table as an untapped resource for understanding the nineteenth-century Mormon world. While rare homes stood out as distinctly polygamous structures, Carter points out in his introduction that polygamists’ homes were more typically derived from traditional house forms common among monogamous Mormons and the broader American population. Carter notes: “To find regional distinctness in Mormon domestic architecture, one must look for more subtle signs of specifically LDS behaviors. One of these is the way in which familiar house designs were adapted to polygamy” (3). He argues that homes of polygamists are essentially indistinguishable from those of their monogamous counterparts based on mere observation, but that examination of the houses in the context of the historical record reveals a variety of approaches to housing the multiple branches of a polygamous family. As Carter points out, the search for insight that architecture can provide about the practical aspects of living arrangements among polygamous families is long overdue.

In addition to this welcome foray into the architecture of polygamy, this study also offers an interesting perspective of polygamy by carefully placing it within the context of a defined local community. Morrell helps us understand that this town was not only a unique geographical place, but a group of people who were interconnected religiously, economically, and socially. His use of an 1875 drawing of the town as a way to tell the town’s background history adds a visual element that helps the reader understand how the physical layout of the town reflected the structure and ideals of the community that produced it.

Bennion’s effort to quantify the impact of plural marriage in Brigham City is striking in its ability to convey ideas that anecdotal evidence can’t match. Bennion gleaned information primarily from census records, land records, and family pedigrees to attach numbers to the practice of plural marriage in the community. He estimates, for example, that at the time of the 1870 federal census “at least” 36 percent of Brigham City residents lived in polygamous households, a far cry from the traditionally vague “3 percent” figure often cited by Latter-day Saints. Graphic representations of

where polygamists lived and the involvement of town leaders in polygamy further clarify the role of polygamy in a Mormon community. Because this study is devoted to exploring the three-dimensional reality of the polygamous world, the extensive drawings and illustrations are integral to the authors' message. The drawings rendered by Tom Carter's architectural students are particularly eloquent in explaining the polygamous homes in a straightforward way that words alone never could. Such drawings distill the three-dimensional complexities of structure, form, and spatial relationships into simple two-dimensional visual representations that are immediately comprehensible to the reader.

The weaknesses I found in the study are in some ways related to its strengths. The collaboration of three knowledgeable scholars offers valuable breadth to the discussion. At the same time, the book at points feels like the product of a committee. Each author seems to be pushing his own agenda; and without a clear central thesis for the book, these agendas never coalesce into a unified message. The guiding hand of an editor might have steered the book toward a more coherent goal. In addition, the book is so packed with information that it can be difficult to digest it all. At times, clear explanations of terms are offered. At other points, short-cut explanations are tossed in, and yet at other times no background is provided at all. For example, terms like "Saint," "ward," "stake president," and "sister-wives" are not defined, while "Brother Brigham" is specifically identified and the YWMA is obscurely referred to as the "organization for Young Women." A more coherent and consistent approach to an appropriate intended audience would have strengthened the presentation of the study. Furthermore, the vast array of facts in the book is aimed at the reader in a somewhat shotgun fashion. Particularly in the crucial case studies of the eight polygamous families, while information about the people involved is often relatively scarce, the stories of extended, multi-wife, multi-generation, and multi-house families over a period of a lifetime can be quite dense and complicated. Nevertheless, there is little interpretation to assist the reader in evaluating how the various stories relate to each other or to the broader picture of polygamy. Most importantly, despite all the thought-provoking information provided in the book, the reader is left with minimal guidance in analyzing what is to be learned from it all. A concluding summary about what the Brigham City evidence tells us and what questions remain unanswered would have strengthened the book considerably. The study more than delivers on its promise of an interesting architectural tour, but the information is too dense for the casual polygamy "tourist" to digest, yet leaves the more serious student of history unsatisfied.

Despite any shortcomings, this book makes an unquestionable contribution to the study of polygamy, community, and architecture in early Utah.

It is a work that deserves to be built upon and is something that should be read by anyone looking for insight into nineteenth-century Mormon communities, plural marriage, and the architecture of early Utah.

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Reid L. Neilson and Ronald W. Walker, eds. *Reflections of a Mormon Historian: Leonard J. Arrington on the New Mormon History*. Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2006. xvi, 360 pp. Foreword by Susan Arrington Madsen, preface, prologue, chronology, photographs, epilogue; "Leonard James Arrington (1917–99): A Bibliography" by David J. Whittaker, index. Cloth: \$36.95; ISBN 0-87062-348-6

*Reviewed by David Earl Johnson*

As a nonprofessional historian, I approached this review with some misgivings, not only about my own qualifications but also whether this book would say anything that Arrington hadn't already said in his delightful autobiography *Confessions of a Mormon Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998). I was also taken aback to see not only a foreword, but a preface, a prologue, and a chronology, before ever getting to Arrington's essays.

My misgivings vanished upon reading the first page. Each of the introductory sections was wonderfully insightful and, in some ways, more engaging than the essays themselves. Susan Arrington Madsen begins the book with a Foreword describing her father's rich family life. "While he was busy helping to found the Mormon History Association, I was happy to have him critique or edit my English essays. While he was reconciling in his own mind faith and history, my brother Carl was simply delighted to have Dad as his little league baseball coach. And, while Dad was busy adding to one of the most impressive and voluminous bibliographies the West has ever seen, James could count on Dad to be near the front of any audience that gathered to see a school theater production in which James performed" (10).

Ronald W. Walker's prologue not only reveals a personal glimpse of Arrington but also provides an important summary of the current state of the new Mormon history. Walker reveals in a subtle yet powerful way his own very emotional viewpoint about some of the Mormon history written during the Arrington years: "During the 1970s and 1980s, religious educators repeated the concerns of Elder Benson and Elder Packer, but because many of them isolated themselves by publishing in non-refereed publications and

participating in professional groups of their own making, their voice was at the intellectual margins" (34).

Of the many photographs in the book, a 1976 group photograph of personnel in the LDS Church History Division stands out. It is a gentle reminder thirty years later of how many influential voices in Mormon history were associated with Arrington. Even though their planned works were not all published according to schedule, their faces reminded me of just how much outstanding work eventually came from that group—with more, doubtless, still to come. I could not help hoping that the Joseph Smith Papers project, in bringing together such an energetic group of seasoned scholars and young professionals, is sowing exactly the same kinds of seeds that Arrington did in the 1970s.

Arrington's essays themselves are unexpectedly insightful, although unavoidably slightly repetitive in a few (very few) places. Several essays are previously unpublished papers: Chapter 6 (155): "Clothe These Bones: The Reconciliation of Faith and History," presented at the 1978 retreat of the Church History Division; Chapter 8 (191): "The Questing Spirit in Mormon History," 1995 Washington, D.C., Sunstone Symposium; and Chapter 13 (287): "Marrow in the Bones of History: New Directions in the Writing of Mormon History," a 1975 paper presented at the Western University Press Banquet.

The editors do a very nice job of beginning with essays about Arrington's life, then seamlessly move on to include his reflections on writings about Mormon history, and finally the actual craft of Mormon historical writing. The book significantly expands from Arrington's autobiography with new material. Like all of my very limited meetings with Arrington, the essays remind me of just how gracious, optimistic, and enthusiastic he was. In "The Founding of the Historical Department" (111–28), Arrington acknowledges the tension that resulted in having the History Division staff relocated from Church headquarters to BYU. But while it has almost universally been seen in scholarly circles as a purging and demotion for those involved, Arrington points out: "President Kimball sincerely believed he was protecting us and giving professional recognition . . . where we could continue to do research under academic rather than ecclesiastical supervision . . . to allow responsible historians greater freedom. . . . Second, in all fairness, the move to BYU had some real benefits. For one thing, the Church was embarrassed about the salaries we were being paid. . . . From this standpoint it was logical for the Church to transfer us to BYU, where, I might add, administrators immediately raised our salaries" (125–26).

In "The Search for Truth and Meaning" (141–58) Arrington points out the biases that have influenced Mormon history. Church leaders are human beings, not "marionettes in a puppet show with God pulling the

strings" (147). The essay also notes that, while LDS Church history may have a male-centered bias, "anyone who spends a substantial amount of time going through the materials in the Church Archives must gain a new appreciation of the importance and indispensable role of women in the history of the Church—not to mention new insights into Church history resulting from viewing it through the eyes of women" (149).

Throughout the entire book the debate between faith and intellect is present. Arrington is a fine example of one who maintains strong faith throughout his life, all the while deeply immersed in the intellectual pursuit of finding truth in Mormon history. Arrington was involved in a much greater breadth of research and reading than one would expect from a historian. In Chapter 1 (69), "Historian as Entrepreneur: A Personal Essay," Arrington reviews his well-known path into economics as his first career choice. But Chapter 4 (129): "Myth, Symbol, and Truth," recalls the many authors in world religions, philosophy, and evolution he studied during his own personal quest for truth. Besides having read the Bible through when he was thirteen (131), Arrington systematically read most of the world's great writers, listing both fiction and nonfiction.

In "Scholarly Studies of Mormonism" (239–56), he mentions that this trait is not uncommon to history professionals, who often come from other fields of study. His testimony of gospel principles is reinforced, not only in the tone of his writing, but also his charitable treatment of others. But Arrington is emphatic in pointing out that this does not mean one should hide the truth. He quotes President Harold B. Lee: "The best defense of the Church," he said, "is the true and impartial history of its life" (159).

One of Arrington's more insightful comments is to remind us how important journal accounts are in defining real history. "If the purpose of history is the reconstruction of the past, these first-person, intimate accounts we are using are the sine qua non of history, the one thing necessary to the re-creation of how it really was. It was in the family, in each canvas tent, or log shelter, or adobe home, or frame shelter, or Georgian castle our roots were planted. . . . It is of the honest, intimate accounts of the lives of all the people that history of the people is written. These records are the marrow in the bones of history" (298).

"Reflections of a Mormon Historian" is a gentle, yet invigorating trip, taking its readers through the many peaks and valleys that accompany a career in Mormon history. While the debate on just how much access the Church should grant to researchers is in many ways now subdued, thanks in no small part to the kindly leadership of Richard E. Turley and Elder Marlin K. Jensen, Arrington's plea that the incredible volume of diaries and journal entries filed in the Church archives desperately needs to be researched surely must still hold true. Above all, Arrington urges, "Somehow we must



recognize and keep alive the storytelling or myth-forming part of our culture. We are an argumentative and reasoning community, but we are also a storytelling community, and we receive spiritual uplift and enjoyment from the exchange of experiences of faith. There is a time for critical history and argument; there is also a time for testimony" (166). This book is the embodiment of that statement.

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Will Evans. *Along Navajo Trails: Recollections of a Trader, 1898–1948*. Edited by Susan E. Woods and Robert S. McPherson. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005. xv, 264 pp. Photographs, map, notes, appendix, index. Paper: \$21.95; ISBN 0-87421-606-0

*Reviewed by Ronald O. Barney*

Mormon autobiography is expansive and multi-faceted but rarely published by established presses. Absent the hook of celebrity or notoriety, most personal biographical expressions from the LDS culture remain obscure. While not a rule, it seems that the farther away from education, citification, affluence, and commercial or religious success a person is, the less chance his or her story will find a place among our established literature. A fine exception to the norm is found in the now-published memoir of William ("Will") Evans (1877–1954), a Welsh emigrant who with his parents gathered to Zion in 1892 only to find themselves within the vast southwestern landscape of the Four Corners region where in Fruitland, New Mexico, Will's father, Thomas, resumed life as a coal miner. Not finding mining or farming to his liking, as Will matured he gravitated to the trading business among the Navajo Indians on the northern Navajo Reservation.

After serving an LDS mission to Maine, Will went to work again for a trading company supplying Navajos with food and goods and, increasingly, acting as an outlet for products created by the locals. With his wife, Sarah Luella Walker, and a young family, Will embarked on his own in 1917 and purchased the Shiprock Trading Company, a post he ran for the rest of his career until retirement in 1948. Among the Navajos he found captivating the beauty of their complex culture woven between the natural and supernatural worlds. Not unlike his more famous fellow nineteenth-century churchmen who befriended the Navajos, Evans's interest was in lifting and benefiting his Indian associates. But Evans carried it a furlong farther. Though re-

maining devoted to Mormonism throughout his life, he determined to capture visually (through replication of Navajo sand paintings) and literarily (through his writings) what he could of the Navajo way of life.

Beginning in 1924, Evans initiated an amateur career-of-sorts by writing a series of essays and articles about his customers and friends. His column, "Navajo Trails," appeared in the Farmington, New Mexico, newspaper, until his death in 1954. Witnessing the evanescent nature of Navajo traditions that were diminishing in durability all around him, Evans thereafter became a chronicler of the Navajos; in his mind, his were the last eyes to see a vanishing culture, an outsider doing what he saw the insiders could not do. He eventually intended to publish a book of his work. Not alone among the several dozen traders who served the Navajos who also wrote about them, he was the only Latter-day Saint to communicate the Navajo story relative to Mormonism for posterity.

More anecdote, Navajo biographical sketches, and native lore than narrative history, enhanced by Evans's skill as a storyteller, his selection of tales from the Navajos was calculated to laud and preserve features of life on the reservation by provoking empathy for the Native Americans in the Anglo readers to whom he wrote. A humble holiday celebration proves the case.

Christmas Day [1898] dawned clear and cold. When the sun had risen high in the sky, groups of Navajos trooped toward the store. A few wore shoes, most had none, their feet and lower legs wrapped in burlap or pieces of Navajo blanket which they later dried over campfires to make ready for their next trip.

My friends smiled as they recited their well-practiced singsong greeting of the day: "Meely Ke'eshmish, Melly Ke'eshmish!" They expected gifts, which posed a problem since my stock was practically gone. Fortunately, in the sweets department there was a pail of old-fashioned barber-pole striped stick candy. I also had a box of cookies with a hole in the center and covered with coarse, multi-colored sugar. There was also a box of small cull apples called Indian Apples. I decided to share what I had for as long as it lasted.

The children came in with their feet wrapped in rags, their thinly clad bodies shivering with cold, and their noses running. I gave each a stick of candy and cookie. The older people happily accepted an apple. Their shy smiles showed that my small gifts were genuinely appreciated, knowing as they did of my limited supplies. The last of my calamity-stricken neighbors came in just as the sun dipped toward the western mountains. Once they left, my stock of apples, candy, and cookies was gone. What remained around the stove was an aura of peace on earth and goodwill to men. (44)

An excellent introduction by Susan Evans Wood, a granddaughter of Will, and Robert McPherson, scholar-in-residence of southeastern Utah, prepares the contextual environment to appreciate the important story illuminated by Will Evans. Dozens of photographs throughout the volume, por-

traying both Evans and his work and his Navajo friends, add immensely to the editors' effort to transport Will's experience to the present. The reader should know that, while this compilation is based on documents in the Will Evans Collection at BYU's L. Tom Perry Special Collections, this book is not, and does not claim to be, documentary editing. It is composed as a collection of stories and sketches, organized to form the text. As a result, it fails somewhat in illuminating the larger story which Will Evans tried to tell, with "much of his Mormon theology and comparisons" to Navajo belief being "left out" of *Along Navajo Trails* (27). Also, the composite nature of this work's construction, with parcels of the text coming, for example, from 1928 (140), 1938 (143), 1949 (125), and 1951 (203, 209) prevents the reader from comprehending the scope of Evans's thinking about the story he hoped to tell. Despite this weakness, this is an important volume for both Mormons and Navajos interested in the maintenance and recovery of the past.

RONALD O. BARNEY {barneyro@ldschurch.org} is the editor of *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847: Norton Jacob's Record* (Logan: Utah State University, 2005) and is presently an editor of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (forthcoming).

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Terryl L. Givens. *The Latter-day Saint Experience in America*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004. xxi, 347 pp. Photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$57.95, ISBN 0-313-32750-5

*Reviewed by Jacob W. Olmstead*

In the tradition of Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton's *The Mormon Experience*, Terryl L. Givens, in this volume, provides a sweeping and well-written expedition into the world of Mormonism in the United States. A volume in the AMERICAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE SERIES, the series editor Philip Goff explains that works in this series are intended to "introduce readers to the basic faith traditions that characterize religious life today" (x). Based on these objectives, Givens exceeded my expectations. Surpassing previous single-volume forays into Mormonism's past, Givens not only explains the major developments and features of Mormon history and theology but also provides a glimpse into Mormon culture and how American Mormons view themselves.

The author uses a topical framework to explore his subject. Following the first chapter, which offers a brisk recitation of Mormon history with an emphasis on the nineteenth century, Givens explores other subjects in further depth. Subsequent chapters largely focus upon the history of Mormon doctrines and practices and their facilitation of a unique Mormon culture.

Examples are chapters on the development of the LDS canon, Mormon bureaucratic organization and forms of worship, and the Church's sponsorship of education and the arts. Although the use of a topical organization results in some repetition, it allows the author to isolate and explain the subtleties of the Mormon faith.

Like any introductory historical work written expressly for non-Mormon readers, its content is likely to provoke negative and positive responses from both Mormons and non-Mormons. Though Givens strikes a middle ground when relating the major features of Mormonism's past, some readers might find the narrative too favorable toward the Mormons. Contrary to the tone of such recent Mormon histories as Richard Lyman Bushman with the assistance of Jed Woodworth, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling, a Cultural Biography of Mormonism's Founder* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005) and D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), the historical narrative is written from the perspective of the believer with the supernatural origins of Mormonism presented as fact. Moreover, some may find the discussion of the Book of Mormon and other LDS scripture too apologetic.

Though Givens mentions most of the controversial historical issues such as Joseph Smith's practice of folk magic, the Danites, and the Mountain Meadows Massacre, some readers may feel he does not provide enough analysis of such controversial subjects. For example, when discussing post-Manifesto plural marriages, he writes, "When the church officially abandoned the practice in 1890, a period of some uncertainty followed; several secret polygamous marriages were countenanced over the next decade or more, leading some members to believe that the official announcement ending the practice was for public consumption only" (252). Such a characterization not only minimizes the extent to which post-Manifesto marriages were contracted, but also fails to accurately depict the spiritual crises many Mormons experienced over the issuance of the Manifesto.<sup>1</sup>

Givens is at his best when explaining modern Mormon practices and beliefs. On subjects such as race and the priesthood, homosexuality, and feminism, Givens provides wonderfully succinct explanations. The writing style is clear, insightful, and frank. For example, when relating some of the lesser known requirements of the Word of Wisdom, Givens notes: "If the past is any predictor, perhaps at some future time leaders will move Lat-

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<sup>1</sup>A compact discussion is Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (1986; paperback rpt., Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 143–63. An extensive discussion of this complex topic is B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1992), 206–43

ter-day Saints to embrace more fully the quasi-vegetarianism the law mandates as they did in the case of the other prohibitions—but at present Mormons probably consume Big Macs and steaks at the national average” (123). On several occasions, Givens draws comparisons with other mainstream faiths including Protestants, Jews, and Catholics to illuminate aspects of the more distinctive Mormon practices and beliefs. In one instance, Givens uses quantifiable data to juxtapose Mormons with other denominations. Mormons “attend church more regularly than Catholics and Protestants, and evangelicals, attending Sunday school twice as often as Baptists and three times as often as Seventh-[d]ay Adventists. They share their faith with others more often than Lutherans and Methodists, and read the Bible as often as members of the most Bible-studious groups—Assemblies of God, Pentecostals, and nondenominational Protestants” (xvii).

Though devoid of an overarching interpretive argument, three distinct themes emerge from the text. First, Mormonism’s claim to authenticity is directly intertwined with the validity of Joseph Smith’s story regarding his boyhood epiphany and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. As such, Givens argues, the Mormons will never reject the teachings of its founder or the origins of the Book of Mormon. Second, Givens continually asserts the fundamental importance of literal and continuing revelation to Latter-day Saints. “Theology, simply stated from the Mormon perspective,” he writes, “is what happens when revelation is absent” (93). Finally, Mormonism’s emergence in the twentieth century as an American religion has created a challenge for Latter-day Saints to maintain their uniqueness while achieving greater levels of acceptance within mainstream America. Maintaining a balance between respectability and peculiarity, Givens argues, will be an ongoing struggle into the twenty-first century. However, with a sense of optimism, he notes: “In the nineteenth century Brigham Young and the Mormons were a curiosity as attractive to notable visitors as any exhibit of P. T. Barnum. In the twenty-first, it is Mormons that have become the comfortable travelers. And so far, Mormon culture, even as it becomes ever more geographically diffuse, continues to demonstrate remarkable solidarity and resilience to schism” (260).

The volume also contains several helpful appendices and additional resources including biographical sketches of nearly two dozen notable Mormons, a timeline, a glossary, and an annotated bibliography organized by subject. Despite the first-rate content and analysis, I was mystified by the retail cost. At just under \$60 the asking price is not likely to appeal to the “curious reader” and “informal students of religion in America” (xi)—a large percentage of the volume’s intended audience. Nevertheless, *The Latter-day Saint Experience in America* would serve as an ideal text for college courses in Mormonism or American religious history. Far from simply tracing the facts

of Mormon history and doctrine, Givens has accomplished the much more difficult task of capturing the essence of Mormon culture and illuminating the complex struggles within a movement considered by some scholars to be the next world religion.

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Colleen Whitley, ed. *From the Ground Up: The History of Mining in Utah*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006. xiv, 506 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index, glossary. Cloth \$34.95 ISBN-13: 978-0-87421-639-4

*Reviewed by Shannon P. Flynn*

I believe the clearest and most succinct introduction to *From the Ground Up: A History of Mining in Utah* can be found in the preface's first paragraph: "Despite mining's importance to Utah's people and their economy, a single-volume history of the industry in the state does not exist. This book fills that void, providing an overview of major mining ventures and guideposts to further research" (xiii). Colleen Whitley, the book's editor and author of the preface, has put together an admirable volume that fulfills this mandate.

The volume is divided into three major sections. Part 1, "The Ground of Utah Mining," has chapters on the state's geology by William T. Parry, the economic impact of mining in Utah by Thomas G. Alexander, a short biography of General Patrick E. Connor by Brigham D. Madsen, and an excellent overview of the folklore and stories of miners and mining by Carma Wadley. Part 2 consists of four chapters that look at four major minerals: salt, coal, uranium, and beryllium by J. Wallace Gwynn, Alan Kent Powell, Raye C. Ringholz, and Debra Wagner, respectively. Part 3 has eight chapters devoted to the major mining regions of the state: "Iron County" by Janet Burton Seegmiller; "Bingham Canyon" by Bruce D. White Whitehead and Robert E. Rampton; "Silver Reef and Southwestern Utah's Shifting Frontier" by W. Paul Reeve; "Alta, the Cottonwoods, and American Fork" by Lawrence P. James and James E. Fell Jr.; "Park City" by Hal Compton and David Hampshire; "Tintic Mining District" by Phillip F. Notarianni; the "San Francisco Mining District" by Martha Sonntag Bradley-Evans; and "Uinta Basin" by John Barton. While space precludes commenting on each chapter, here are several that I think give the book's feel and flavor.

Brigham Madsen's fascinating look at General Patrick E. Connor tells

the story of a famous thorn in the side of Brigham Young from Connor's point of view. Madsen covers most of Connor's life, not just the period of his interaction with the Mormons of Utah. That section, however, makes it clear that Connor was not frightened by Mormon influence in the territory:

On 13 May he dispatched Captain David J. Berry to the Meadow Valley Mining District in southwestern Utah to "afford protection to the miners from Mormons and Indians. . . . You will thoroughly explore and prospect the country over which you travel, and if successful in finding placer diggings, you will at once report the fact to these headquarters." Connor kept his superiors informed about directing "soldiers to prospect the country and open its mines. . . . [to] peacefully revolutionize the obvious system of church domination which has so long bound down a deluded and ignorant community." (61)

While Connor had little patience with the Mormons, that conflict did not dominate the rest of his life. He remained very active in mining throughout the West; some ventures paid well, but others took their toll. The essay bogs down toward the end in descriptions of lawsuits and court cases, but perhaps there was less primary source material to work with. Overall, the essay adds much to the understanding of mining history and Utah/Mormon history.

Chapter 5 by J. Wallace Gwynn describes Utah's "Saline Minerals." The Great Salt Lake is one of the state's most dominant and distinctive topographical features, and who knows how many tourists have taken home some souvenir salt crystals? This chapter sketches the salt mining and extraction operations, beginning in 1847 as soon as the Mormon pioneers arrived. The essay describes in some detail the means and methods of extracting salt from the waters of Utah's inland sea. Unfortunately, much of it is a tedious recitation of salt company mergers, dissolutions, and reincarnations: one company buying another, operations lying dormant, companies changing names, etc. While the author's diligence and thoroughness is commendable, I believe the average reader will find a good portion of this chapter somewhat monotonous.

I think this chapter illustrates one of the major problems in writing economic/business history. It seems to me that the authors get off on the wrong foot if they start with the premise that they are writing about inanimate objects: buildings, currency, ledger books, etc. If that is their subject, it will be boring to most people. Humans like to read about other humans, almost regardless of what they are doing. If economic historians would write about the human beings engaged in business/economics, it would bring the subject into an arena that a greater number of readers can understand and relate to. "ABC Company buys XYZ Company" is pretty dry stuff. "John Doe spends his last dime trying to take over James Roe's company" makes much more engaging reading. It seems that, outside the sciences, almost every-



thing in history is ultimately about human relations I realize that historical records are sometimes too sparse to provide human insights, but a new perspective from the outset has great possibilities for enlivening the discussion.

Chapter 7, "The Uranium Boom" by Raye C. Ringholz, was a pleasant surprise. I began the chapter with low expectations of its interest but found it so well written that, by the end, I was rooting for some of the very colorful prospectors to strike it rich. One of them, Charlie Steen, is a good example. He was only twenty-eight when he left Texas, wife, and children, headed for southern Utah, and violated all known mining wisdom of the time. True, he spent several tedious years prospecting with few results: "Then on 1 December, his 31st birthday, he got the present of a life time. The drills reached the 68-foot level and bottomed into 14 feet of gray, primary pitchblende. A later radiometric assay indicated 0.34 to 5.0 percent uranium. It was the biggest strike in the history of the Colorado Plateau. The public furor over Charlie Steen's discovery was just what the AEC needed to get its domestic uranium program rolling. Its office was flooded with hopeful ore hunters seeking hot tips on how to prospect and where to look" (154).

For some time after World War II, southern Utah was the national focus of federal efforts to secure a source of the raw material to fuel the nuclear age. This chapter contains several more stories like Charlie Steen's and is a compelling essay on the story of uranium mining in Utah.

The chapter on copper in "Bingham Canyon" by Bruce D. Whitehead and Robert E. Rampton traces the discovery and development of precious metals and mining in a canyon on the western edge of the Salt Lake Valley. The first mining claim ever filed in Utah Territory was for a parcel in Bingham Canyon on September 7, 1863. That claim eventually encompassed a huge (not specified in this chapter) area and "the stage was set for what was to become one of the most amazing mining ventures the world has ever known" (222). Interestingly, Bingham Canyon is unusual in Utah's history, because it not only had a big impact in the past (as did such locales as Park City and Eureka) but is still a lively mining center today, one of few in the United States. Engagingly written, this chapter is a great introduction and overview of the Kennecott behemoth and its powerful impact on the state. The authors summarize: "The Bingham Canyon Mine has been the financial resource that has fed more families, educated more people, and contributed more jobs than any other nongovernmental business in Utah" (249).

Probably the weakest chapter is on beryllium, mined in Juab County by Brush Resources, Inc. This chapter, written by Debra Wagner, is essentially a modest expansion of the company website, displaying neither the depth nor good writing found in many of the other chapters. The editors might have been better off to have omitted it or at least tried to improve it.

Overall I believe that this book has accomplished its purpose. The reader who knows little about mining in Utah will find this book a good introduction with plenty of maps, illustrations, and historic photographs. Its bibliography will lead those interested toward a more in-depth study. Some parts of the book have such detailed information on science and geology that some readers may find those sections slow going or outside their area of interest. For those whose primary interest is Mormon history, several chapters provide interesting perspectives on Utah. Many Mormons have worked in the state's mines and a few, like Jesse Knight, have made great fortunes. Knight's philanthropy toward Mormon causes is well known. The Silver Reef chapter explores the influence of Mormons on mining in the St. George area and the eventual placement of the Utah-Nevada state line. "Saline Material" fails to explore the Mormon connection, even when, in this case, President Joseph F. Smith was grilled during the Reed Smoot hearings on the Church's interest. Nevertheless, this book can find a place on the shelves of many who recognize mining's tremendous impact on the history of Utah.

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## BOOK NOTICE

The *Journal of Mormon History* invites contributions to this department, particularly of privately published family histories, local histories, biographies, historical fiction, publications of limited circulation, or those in which historical Mormonism is dealt with as a part or minor theme.

Michael Austin, comp. and ed. *A Voice in the Wilderness: Conversations with Terry Tempest Williams*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006. ix, 196 pp. Interviews, appendix, index. Paper: \$19.95, ISBN: 10-0087-421-634-6.

*A Voice in the Wilderness* showcases "some of the most extensive and valuable conversations that Terry Tempest Williams has had with scholars, critics, journalists, readers, and friends during her literary career. The 17 interviews in this

collection were drawn from some 40 print or radio interviews that Williams has given since 1989" (2). These documents reveal Williams's passion for the land and her relationship with it. She contributes to environmentalist theory by writing of the poetics of place, the politics of place, and the erotics of place. By "erotic," Williams means "in relation," and explains that "pornographic" relationships are one directional while erotic relationships are shared and engaged (5). Maintaining a two-way relationship with the land, according to Williams, will contribute to living a more engaged life in both personal relationships and politics.

But the problem, Williams explains, "is our addiction to speed and time. How can we have any sense of stillness when we have an insatiable appetite, when we have a big void inside because we've forgotten what we're connected to, we've forgotten where the source of our power lies? Everything becomes a substitution, with that hunger never being filled.

So we build more houses, cut more trees, rape more women, thinking that will satisfy the yearning. But it only creates a deeper depression of the soul. Nothing is coming in—it's the one-way affection that becomes pornographic—because it's not a dance, it is an assault, an attack, the oppressor" (41).

Williams describes herself as a non-orthodox Mormon woman whose upbringing and heritage play a key role in her relationship with the land (53). "What I can tell you about my home is that I live just outside of Salt Lake City in a place called Emigration Canyon. It's on the Mormon trail. When Brigham Young came through with the early Mormon pioneers in 1847 and said 'This is the place,' that's the view we see every morning when we leave the Canyon and enter Salt Lake Valley. So I feel deeply connected, not only because of my Mormon roots, which are five or six generations [deep], but because of where we live" (51–52).

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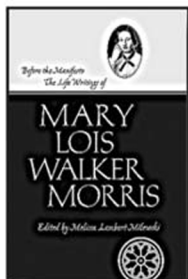
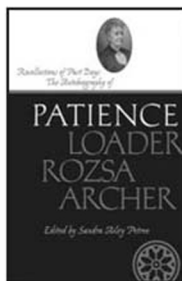
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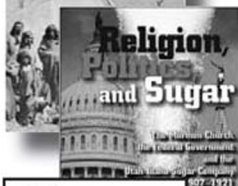
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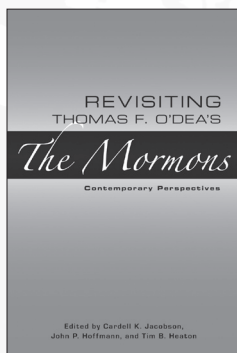
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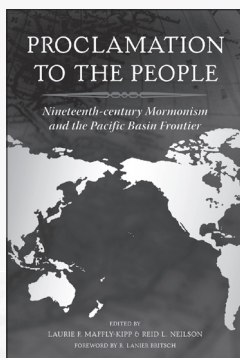
SHANNON A. NOVAK

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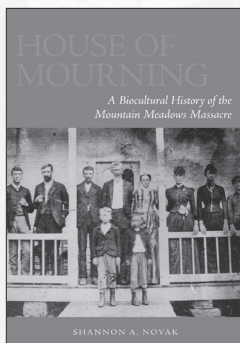
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