LETTERS

• “Dialogue Gala” Levi Peterson, vi

ARTICLES

• “The Making of a Steward”: Zion, Ecclesiastical Power, and RLDS Bodies, 1923–31 David J. Howlett, 1

• Samuel Tyler Lawrence: A Significant Figure in Joseph Smith’s Palmyra Past Rich Troll, 38

• “A Particular Favorite”: Sara Alexander of the Old Salt Lake Theatre Margaret Finlayson Maxwell, 87

• Contesting the LDS Image: The North American Review and the Mormons, 1881–1907 Matthew J. Grow, 111

• Substance versus Superficiality: Women’s Prescribed Roles in Early Territorial Utah, 1850–70 Kami Wilson, 139

• A Sacred Code: Mormon Temple Dedication Prayers, 1836–2000 Samuel Brown, 173

• “Vindicating the Right . . . of the Twelve”: Elias Adams’s Letters Concerning Succession Robin Scott Jensen, 197

REVIEW ESSAYS

• Recent Mountain Meadows Publications: A Sampling Richard E. Turley Jr., 213

• Biographers and the Mormon “Prophet Puzzle”: 1974 to 2004 D. Michael Quinn, 226

REVIEWS

--Richard Lyman Bushman with the assistance of Jed Woodworth, Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling H. Nicholas Muller III, 246

--Edward Leo Lyman, The Overland Journey from Utah to California: Wagon Trail from the City of Saints to the City of Angels Robert A. Clark, 250

--Thomas Cottam Romney, The Mormon Colonies in Mexico Fernando R. Gomez, 252

--Fernando Rogelio Gomez Paéz, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Lamanite
Conventions: From Darkness to Light Kent Larsen II, 255

--Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University Libraries, The Collected Leon and Arrington Mormon History Lectures Val Hemming, 258

--Patricia Rushton, Lynn Callister, and Maile Wilson, comps. and eds., Latter-day Saint Nurses at War: A Story of Caring and Sacrifice Rick Jepson, 262


--Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism Boyd Jay Petersen, 267

--James L. Bradley, The Eternal Perspective of Zion's Camp Samuel J. Passey, 272

BOOK NOTICE

--Craig K. Manscill, ed., Sperry Symposium Classics: Doctrine and Covenants., 274

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JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

Summer 2006
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The Mormon History Association is an independent organization dedicated to the study and understanding of all aspects of Mormon history. We welcome all who are interested in the Mormon past, irrespective of religious affiliation, academic training, or world location. We promote our goals through scholarly research, conferences, awards, and publications.

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

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## CONTENTS

### LETTERS

*Dialogue Gala*  
*Levi Peterson*  

### ARTICLES

**“The Making of a Steward”: Zion, Ecclesiastical Power, and RLDS Bodies, 1923–31**  
*David J. Howlett*  

**Samuel Tyler Lawrence: A Significant Figure in Joseph Smith’s Palmyra Past**  
*Rich Troll*  

**“A Particular Favorite”: Sara Alexander of the Old Salt Lake Theatre**  
*Margaret Finlayson Maxwell*  

**Contesting the LDS Image: The *North American Review* and the Mormons, 1881–1907**  
*Matthew J. Grow*  

**Substance versus Superficiality: Women’s Prescribed Roles in Early Territorial Utah, 1850–70**  
*Kami Wilson*  

**A Sacred Code: Mormon Temple Dedication Prayers, 1836–2000**  
*Samuel Brown*  

**“Vindicating the Right . . . of the Twelve”: Elias Adams’s Letters Concerning Succession**  
*Robin Scott Jensen*  

### REVIEW ESSAYS

**Recent Mountain Meadows Publications: A Sampling**  
*Richard E. Turley Jr.*  

**Biographer and the Mormon “Prophet Puzzle”: 1974 to 2004**  
*D. Michael Quinn*  

---

*iv*
CONTENTS

REVIEWS

Richard Lyman Bushman with the assistance of Jed Woodworth, Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling
H. Nicholas Muller III 246

Edward Leo Lyman, The Overland Journey from Utah to California: Wagon Trail from the City of Saints to the City of Angels
Robert A. Clark 250

Thomas Cottam Romney, The Mormon Colonies in Mexico
Fernando R. Gomez 252

Fernando Rogelio Gomez Paéz, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Lamanite Conventions: From Darkness to Light
Kent Larsen II 255

Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University Libraries, The Collected Leonard Arrington Mormon History Lectures
Val Hemming 258

Patricia Rushton, Lynn Callister, and Maile Wilson, comps. and eds., Latter-day Saint Nurses at War: A Story of Caring and Sacrifice
Rick Jepson 262

Ronald O. Barney, ed., The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847: Norton Jacob’s Record
David L. Bigler 265

Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism
Boyd Jay Petersen 267

James L. Bradley, The Eternal Perspective of Zion’s Camp
Samuel J. Passey 272

BOOK NOTICE

Craig K. Manscill, ed., Sperry Symposium Classics: Doctrine and Covenants. 274


**LETTERS**

**Dialogue Gala**

As a member of the Mormon History Association, I am proud of the *Journal of Mormon History*, which continues to illuminate the Mormon past with scholarship of an undeviating high quality. In another role, that of editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, I often contemplate the fact that the two journals complement, rather than compete with, each other. Both of them contribute substantially to the flourishing state of Mormon studies, an area of scholarship receiving much favorable national attention.

For that reason, I would like, in behalf of *Dialogue’s* board of directors and editorial team, to invite our friends in the Mormon History Association to attend a celebration of *Dialogue’s* fortieth anniversary. This gala event will be held at the Little America Hotel in Salt Lake City on Friday, September 22, 2006, at 6:30 P.M. The event will feature a dinner, speeches, a brief video on the history of *Dialogue*, and a joyous reunion of writers, readers, and supporters of *Dialogue*.

Advance reservations are required. The price for each person is $40. For reservations, please visit www.dialougejournal.com or call (801) 274-8210. Mail orders may be sent to P.O. Box 58423, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-0423.

*Levi Peterson*

*Issaquah, Washington*
ON JULY 8, 1923, 350 MEMBERS of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints gathered to watch an ordination ceremony in the rural community of Cameron, Missouri. It was no ordinary ordination service. RLDS Prophet Frederick Madison Smith, the grandson of Joseph Smith Jr., and Presiding Bishop Benjamin McGuire jointly laid hands on six men to set them apart as new men in a new covenant. “You have already entered into the covenant of baptism,” declared Smith to the six men. Now they had “indicated your willingness to enter into the covenant of stewardship.” Smith then solemnly read to the stewards the covenant agreement that they were about to make:

DAVID J. HOWLETT (david-howlett@uiowa.edu) is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religious Studies at University of Iowa. Portions of this text are revised from his thesis, “The Body of Zion: Community, Human Bodies, and Eschatological Futures among the Reorganized Latter Day Saints” (M.A. thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2004). The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints adopted the new name of Community of Christ in April 2001, but this article uses the historic nomenclature. He thanks the following individuals who read earlier versions of this essay: Gary L. Ebersole, Andrew S. Bergerson, and Bryan LeBeau, all of the Department of History of the University of Missouri-Kansas; Steven L. Olsen of the Family and Church History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Ronald E. Romig, archivist of...
Do you, now standing before this branch of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and before the general authorities thereof, and in the name of the Master, solemnly affirm and covenant that you are willing whole-heartedly and unreservedly to become stewards according to the doctrine of stewardship in harmony with the laws of the church . . . that is, to improve your talents to the maximum of your ability, holding your surplus contributable to the church, after your just wants and needs according to your circumstances have been provided; that you will continuously seek the interests of your neighbor and in every way in your power contribute to the welfare of mankind, seeking thus to build up the kingdom of God and establish his righteousness, that all you are, all you have, and all you hope to become and all you hope to have are consecrated to the service of God and his church, that you will ever strive to show your love of God by love of neighbor and service to your fellow man; and all this in accordance with the articles of agreement you have already made?

With the men’s affirmative answer, Smith then stated “I declare you stewards of God and the church. May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenant.”

Together, Bishop McGuire and President Smith prayed over each man to confirm his setting apart. Thus, six men entered into a new type of membership in the RLDS Church, the covenant of stewardship.

Frederick Madison Smith and his associates looked with the greatest seriousness on the new ordinance and “office” they had initiated. As one of the inheritors of the utopian dreams of his grandfather, Frederick Madison Smith stood at the head of a 100,000-member church centered mainly in the Midwest. Painfully aware of the confusion in the public mind over his own church and the much larger LDS Church headquartered in Salt Lake City, Smith by 1923 had moved his church away from a nineteenth-century identity centered on opposition to LDS polygamy (which effectively had ended by 1905) toward an identity rooted in the syncretic experience of social gospel Christianity and Mormon scripture that bespoke Zion, the coming kingdom of God. For the stewardship investiture ceremony, Smith had written a covenant that reflected words and phrases from the Community of Christ; and the journal’s anonymous reviewers.

2. Ibid., 651–52.
Like the RLDS marriage ceremony, stewards’ ministry was only “for time.” Yet stewards were given power by their community that could actually initiate eternity. They were to help build up the kingdom of God on earth and thus, according to RLDS eschatology, prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus Christ and his millennial reign.

By the act of ordination, the six stewards entered into a realm of what religious studies scholar Mircea Eliade called “mythic time.” They were empowered to complete the task that Joseph Smith Jr.’s nineteenth-century followers had attempted though without success. They were to find land and property where they could ini-

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3RLDS Doctrine and Covenants 111:2d, 1970 edition; all further citations are from this edition. This section is not in the current LDS edition (1979) of the Doctrine and Covenants.

4Eliade’s classic statement of this well-known concept may be found in Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954).
tiate colonies of Zion. Thus, stewards reentered “the beginning time” of their church’s narrative. Importantly, the stewards received an authoritative ordination from the Church’s president and its highest financial officer, the Presiding Bishop. In this way, the stewards symbolically received both spiritual and temporal powers. Their ordination represented a sanctification and a new birth, like baptism, just as Smith implied in his articulation of the covenant. Stewards were now to see all of their actions in all realms as holy kingdom-building efforts.

Bishop J. A. Koehler, then bishop of the RLDS Far West Stake, explained to the congregation that the stewards had agreed to “aid and assist the worthy and the poor . . . in obtaining employment and homes.” Stewards were to “help the sick and afflicted and unfortunate in times of need” and “to promote temperance, culture, morality, and equality, and provide against all social evils of every sort for the good of the individual and the community.” This charge, in essence, made stewards benevolent guardians of middle-class morality, social gospel ideals, and RLDS values. In a sense, stewards were to live mythic time while dwelling simultaneously in the hustle and bustle of the “real world.” With their new spiritual and temporal powers, the stewards were to sanctify, purify, and purge the community of “all social evils” that afflicted either individuals or the stewardship community. In a real sense, in short, stewards were to be agents of modern Christian “bio-power.”

In his influential work on what he termed “bio-power,” French critical theorist Michel Foucault revealed how the human body in modernity has been a site for contested power. Other critical theorists like Pierre Bourdieu have also noted that social reformers often try to focus on the body as a place for reform—that is, the “deculturation” and “reculturation” of the body also entails a new way of seeing the world. While a substantial body of historical literature has applied critical theory focused on the body, relatively few historians of Mor-

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5 In some ways, the stewards’ reentry into Eliade’s “beginning time” mirrors the concepts explicit in the temple endowment ceremonies practiced by their LDS cousins.

6 “Stewardships Installed,” 651.

monism have done so. Yet, Mormonism, a faith founded on the cusp of modernity, provides an interesting case study for understanding how ecclesiastical organizations attempted to reform the bodies of their members as part of the larger Western dream for a perfected society. Specifically, early twentieth-century Reorganized Latter Day Saints focused much of their reform efforts on the body itself in the


9Historian Heiko Stoff notes that political systems in the 1920s and 1930s were fundamentally utopian in nature, whether they were capitalist, fascist, or communist. See his “Comment on Part Four: Utopian Thinking between Producerism and Consumerism. What Distinguishes the American New Deal from the German Volksgemeinschaft?,” in *Visions of the Future in Germany and America*, edited by Norbert Finzsch and Hermann Wellenreuther (New York: Berg, 2001), 447–57. See also Peter Fritzche, “Nazi Modern,” *Modernism/Modernity* 3, no. 1 (1996): 1–22. Fritzche argues that during the inter-war period (1919–39), “modernism” could be defined as the “present increasingly experienced as brand-new, completely different from the confines of the recent past, but it was itself doomed to be merely transitory.” Ibid., 10. To allay the fears brought on by new risks, Western politicians and philosophers on “the Left and the Right” sought for the “authoritative management of contingency” through social engineering. Such leaders “groped for a new totality” with which to structure so-
hopes that they would build new bodies to live in the kingdom of God. The RLDS “stewardship movement” sought to teach new habits to RLDS members, thus bringing them into the middle-class Protestant culture of respectability and offering members a particularistic vision for a more just, utopian future.

To better understand the RLDS effort to re-form its membership into modern expressions of the kingdom of God on earth, this paper focuses on the hierarchical selection process of RLDS stewards who were to live in model communities that would, they hoped, bring forth the kingdom. I argue that the process of “reculturation” implied in the selection process was significantly altered by the lay members themselves who remade the homogenizing, hierarchical discourse into one which included them within ecclesiastical discourse. In short, RLDS members, not only leaders, defined the ways in which the body would be known, accepted, and regenerated.

I contextualize the RLDS stewardship movement within a brief summary of the RLDS movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I then explain the theoretical foundation for understanding the Foucaultian theories of bio-power, balanced by the insights of critical theorist Pierre Bourdieu. This study then narrates the general “bio-power” practices that preceded the stewardship selections in the 1920s, with particular attention on the 1925 “Supreme Directional Control” crisis that resulted in a purging of Church membership. Finally, I explain the narrative of the stewardship selection process and suggest how careful observation of this process can yield much more nuanced definitions of how power “works” in ecclesiastical organizations.

**Origins of the RLDS Stewardship Movement**

In 1860, a group of Midwestern Saints met in Amboy, Illinois, to accept the leadership of Joseph Smith III, the oldest son of the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. In the 1870s, Saints in this group designated themselves the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Early RLDS members largely defined themselves in opposition to their Utah cousins, the LDS Church. As RLDS historian Roger Launius has noted, RLDS prophet Joseph Smith III spent...
much of his presidency reacting against or repudiating the Nauvoo legacy, while Utah Latter-day Saints memorialized Nauvoo as the quintessential image of Mormon community.\textsuperscript{10} Suspicious of the Nauvoo image of a gathered fortress community, Joseph Smith III conservatively urged his followers to delay gathering to a single community to await the coming of the Lord. Instead, as Launius noted, Joseph Smith III counseled RLDS members “that the millennial kingdom of God could only be initiated through personal righteousness and moral perfection, and would reach fruition only if the righteous attacked evil in society.”\textsuperscript{11} Among these evils was, of course, LDS polygamy, and much of the RLDS organizational identity was proclaiming that Joseph Smith Jr. had never been involved in the practice. While LDS communities negotiated complex social kinships and loyalties based partly upon polygamous unions and loyalty to an ecclesiastical hierarchy, RLDS members proclaimed that Zion was neither polygamous nor authoritarian.\textsuperscript{12} Through alternate visions of Zion, the RLDS and LDS churches contended over the legitimacy of their succession stories and the shape that their organizations would take.

Joseph Smith III’s emphasis on slow moral perfection and social reform paralleled the changing millennial vision of mainstream American Protestants in the same era. As Ralph Luker, a historian of the social gospel movement, has noted, antebellum reform movements like abolitionism that emphasized “immediatist social perfectionism” gave way to “the social gospel’s evolutionary kingdom building.”\textsuperscript{13} Joseph Smith III eventually acquiesced to his followers’ wishes and allowed for limited experiments in a renewed “Order of Enoch,” loosely modeled after his father’s communal order. By 1906, Smith had


\textsuperscript{12}“Brighamism Hindered,” \textit{Saints’ Herald} 37 (February 8, 1890): 85.

moved to Independence, Missouri, which his father had designated as the “New Jerusalem.” Here RLDS Saints had again begun gathering in anticipation of the second coming.\textsuperscript{14} Yet Smith, then age seventy-three, charted a less apocalyptic millennial vision of Zion for his followers even with the RLDS Church’s renewed gathering to the “center place.”

In a 1909 revelation, Smith counseled his followers that new communal stewardship organizations had to be “effected and the benefits to be derived therefrom be enjoyed by the Saints, in such enjoyment they can not withdraw themselves so completely from a qualified dependence upon their Gentile neighbors surrounding them as to be free from intercommunication with them” (D&C 128:8a). In other words, Smith counseled against self-sufficient communities isolated from the rest of the world. He further broadened the vision of Zion by urging his members to live and act “honestly and honorably before God and in the sight of all men, using the things of this world in the manner designed of God, that the places where they may occupy may shine as Zion, the redeemed of the Lord” (D&C 128:8c). Even while gathering to help build up an RLDS community, Smith emphasized that the Saints needed to transform whatever space they inhabited into Zion. Smith reaffirmed the importance of the material realm for the Saints’ lived experience, issued a call to live Jesus’s teachings in everyday life, and urged the Saints to apply those principles to the society in which they lived. Such teachings mirrored the social gospel emphasis in mainline American Protestant churches of the era.

Viewed broadly, RLDS members in the nineteenth century participated in what might be termed “Social Christianity.”\textsuperscript{15} Nineteenth-century Anglo-American Christians pursued two routes to the kingdom of God. One attempted to form Christian colonies and thus

\textsuperscript{14}Launius, Joseph Smith III, 185.

\textsuperscript{15}This term comes from Paul T. Phillips, A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity, 1880–1940 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996). While Phillips’s own account of “Social Christianity” is restricted to white, middle-class Protestants, he persuasively identifies a trans-Atlantic community in England, Canada, and the United States that engaged in Social Christianity through the 1930s. Previously, most historians of the social gospel saw the movement as ending after World War I. See, e.g., Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel
change space, while the other attempted to engage broader society at the level of laws and societal practices. Both strands—utopian colonies and societal reform—appear in the RLDS movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most RLDS members tried to “build the kingdom of God” through limited experiments in communal organizations while a few directly engaged the political realm.16

By the turn of the twentieth century, a growing number of RLDS members began to study the work of Protestant social gospel theologians. For instance, a 1919 RLDS Sunday School class in Lamoni, Iowa, published a study outline in the Church’s official magazine, the Saints’ Herald. The class secretary reported that they had been reading books by social gospel theologians like Walter Rauschenbusch and Charles Ellwood.17 Thrilled by wider Christianity’s emphasis on the kingdom of God, RLDS members approached post-World War I America with a hope of realizing their kingdom-building dreams.

In December 1914, a new era in RLDS history was marked when Joseph Smith III died, to be succeeded in May 1915 by his forty-one-year-old son, Frederick Madison Smith. The concept of

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Zion was vibrant and alive. Church members talked about it incessantly. More than a spiritual concept, Zion was a way of expressing an incarnational reality of God’s progressively more manifest presence. The adjective “Zionic” blessed and transformed all activities into kingdom-building. RLDS leaders and laity alike wrote novels about Zion; they experimented with Zionic “stewardship” business, educational, and agricultural cooperatives; they drew up plans for ideal Zionic communities and authored numerous articles in Church periodicals about the subject. “I have been looking up all I can find on the subject of Zion,” declared a character in a 1922 RLDS novel. “The theme has a never-failing attraction for me—perhaps because, as Mr. Blake told me once, I am a dreamer.” The dream of Zion, and how to make it a reality, animated much of RLDS action.

Yet RLDS members were not only building a new community—they also actively strove to build new people. “Stewardship builds MEN!” emphatically declared RLDS Bishop J. A. Koehler in a 1927 church pamphlet. In response to the question, “What will I do to build Zion?,” an RLDS second-grade boy wrote, “I must clean my teeth everyday, clean my body, eat vegetables . . . must not drink tea, coffee, or lie. Must not smoke.” RLDS member Leonard Rhodes wrote, “We need strong, clean bodies to help our souls. . . . Without a people of the highest excellence physically, as well as spiritually, Zion

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20 For a sample blueprint of RLDS community, see J. A. Koehler, *A Study Outline in Community Stewardships* (Independence: Herald Publishing House, circa 1930). The literature on Zion contained the *Saints’ Herald*, the official RLDS magazine, is immense. Nearly every issue during the era under consideration mentioned Zion in some way.


22 J. A. Koehler, *Problems of Industrial Zion* (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1927), 126. At this point, Koehler was bishop of Holden Stake, which included the Atherton, Missouri, community.

23 “Notes from Children, 1927,” Frederick Madison Smith Papers, P45, f41, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
in its most ideal sense can never become a reality.” On the page facing Rhodes’s article, the First Presidency reported on the construction of the mammoth copper-domed auditorium in Independence, where the Saints could gather for worship and annual conferences in Zion. RLDS literally linked building bodies and building Zion.

**Foucault and Bourdieu: Bio-power Theories**

To better understand why focusing on the body became so important in building the RLDS Zion, the thought of French critical theorists Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu is helpful. While this excursus into theory may seem unnecessary, both theorists help explain the types of reform efforts that RLDS sought to implement to build a physical kingdom on earth. They also help explain the much broader process by which Western peoples in the early twentieth century re-formed the bodies of members from all classes.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault developed and defined the analytic concept of “bio-power.” According to Paul Rabinow, Foucault claimed that bio-power was formed as a result of transforming the modern state into an institution that fostered the “life and growth and care of the population.” Bio-power, Foucault stated, “brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life.” Bio-power was a particular dimension of knowledge-power, one focused on the human body: “the body approached not directly in its biological dimension, but as an object to be manipulated and controlled.” By objectifying the body, modern “disciplinary technologies” arose to forge a “docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.” Institutions as diverse as schools, prisons, workshops, and hospitals all developed “disciplinary technologies”—“drills and training of the body, through standardization of actions over time, and through control of space.” Bio-power, then, aimed at forming new bodies that could be effectively controlled.

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Foucault’s contemporary, French critical theorist Pierre Bourdieu, also emphasized the importance of understanding the body’s relationships to power structures. The human body, he asserts, is the locale for negotiating the most basic concepts of self and society: “If all societies . . . that seek to produce a new man through a process of “deculturation” and “reculturation” set such store on seemingly insignificant details of dress, bearing, physical and verbal manners, the reason is that, treating the body as a memory, they entrust to it in abbreviated and practical, i.e. mnemonic, form the fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of the culture. The principles em-bodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of the consciousness, and cannot even be made explicit.”\[^{26}\] In other words, reformers remade the habits of the body to remake an individual’s world.

Bourdieu claimed that such bodily reforms were “capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysics, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as ‘stand up straight’ or ‘don’t hold your knife in your left hand.’”\[^{27}\] The practices of bodily reform, then, had stunningly important consequences; bodily reformers remade the reformed into completely new people by giving them a new reality—and thus a new range of imagined possibilities.\[^{28}\]

Like other organizations that were part of the Enlightenment

\*ish: The Birth of the Prison, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 198.\[^{26}\]

\*Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, 94.\[^{27}\]

\*Ibid.\[^{28}\]

\*Following the insights of Bourdieu, anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff have demonstrated how Europeans colonized the bodies of the Tshidi in South Africa by changing the people’s habits. Similarly, Andrew Bergerson showed how changing the habits of everyday life aided the Nazi revolution in Germany. See John and Jean Comaroff, Ethnography and the Historical Imagination (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992), 70–90, 292–93, and Andrew Stuart Bergerson, Ordinary Germans in Extraordinary Times: The Nazi Revolution in Hildesheim (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2004). While most scholars would see the results of these “reforms” as very negative, certainly “positive” reform efforts could be deduced by particular moral communities from other efforts of bodily reform in different contexts. For instance, Comaroff and Comaroff, Ethnography and the Historical Imagination, 80, see very positive, “healing” effects from bodily regeneration in Tshidi rituals in Zionist churches.
project of “moral cultivation,” religious bodies like the RLDS Church engaged in bio-power practices to reform their members and achieve the utopian dream of an ordered yet humane society. While Foucault and Bourdieu often emphasize the coercive elements of bio-power, agents of bio-power often saw themselves as societal reformers attempting to build more just systems for humanity. Of course, the results of these reform efforts were ambiguous. Like all human stories, the narrative of RLDS members seeking to build a perfected community through perfected bodies proves to be a very messy story, filled with coercion and consent, creativity and cultural kitsch.

**RLDS Bio-power Practices, 1922–30**

As RLDS members began to enter the emerging world of modernity, RLDS leaders attempted to implement bodily reform practices on many different levels. Like their LDS cousins, Protestant mainline churches, Catholics, and Jews, RLDS leaders attempted to reform the body by building an extensive recreation and exercise program for its members. Tellingly, the youth organization known as “Zion’s Religio and Literary Society” was transformed in 1922 into the “Department of Recreation and Expression.” RLDS members organized Church-affiliated Boy Scout troops where khaki-clad ado-

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lescents built up their bodies in nature.33 Articles began to appear in the Saints’ Herald emphasizing the need for physically fit bodies in the kingdom.34 Significantly, the most popular class at the 1930 centennial conference was “Keeping Fit,” conducted by the ordained “church physician” A. W. Teel.35 For RLDS members, these new bodies were to occupy space in Zion. During the 1920s and 1930s, RLDS members built a modern hospital for the community of Independence,36 taught sociology classes to working-class adults,37 centralized the RLDS bureaucracy and power structures into more “efficient” models,38 and expelled members who disagreed with hierarchical

33Ibid., 7:266.
34In 1930, A. W. Teel, the ordained Church physician, noted that “a pleasant breath is the result of good digestion and a clean mouth and accessories of tonsils, teeth, the uncoated tongue, and an uninfected nose. Vigilance in these matters is the price of freedom from unpleasantness, and it is a duty to be agreeable.” See A. W. Teel, “Hygiene of Beauty for Women and Handsomeness for Men,” Saints’ Herald 77 (April 9, 1930): 424.
36For general references on the Saints’ construction of the Independence Sanitarium (now the Independence Regional Health Center, no longer owned by the Community of Christ) see History of the RLDS Church, 6:205–24.
37Advertisement, Independence Examiner, October 19, 1925, by the RLDS Church: “Are You Interested in Economics of Sociology? These classes are just starting and will be organized at the Campus Building [owned by the RLDS Church] Tuesday evening, 7:30 p.m. See M. A. Etzenhouser [head of the RLDS Department of Social Services].” These classes reflected a general trend by RLDS leaders to educate Church members (and nonmembers) in both religion and “applied religion” that could be practiced in Zionic communities.
Perhaps the most ambitious attempt was the conscious construction of the steward, a new type of person who would build Zionic communities.

In all of these acts, RLDS members engaged in “dividing practices” defined in Foucaultian terms as “modes of manipulation that combine the mediation of science (or pseudo-science) and the practice of exclusion” in the social and the spatial sense. J. A. Koehler had such exclusion in mind when he wrote in 1927, “If the church will free itself from material that is unfit for church membership, that obstructs the functions of the body and diverts its energies into unprofitable channels; if it will cleanse the body and make it the ‘habitation of God through the Spirit,’ it can, it will be done! . . . . The church will wait for Zion only until its membership is composed of Zion builders.”

Purging, then, was a deliberate strategy exercised in the project of building perfected people who would initiate the kingdom. Zion was to be a place where perfected, purged, celestial bodies occupied celestial space.

**The Supreme Directional Control Crisis, 1923–26**

After the 1923 ordination of stewards in Cameron, Missouri, Frederick Madison Smith and his associates turned their attention toward a larger battle over Church governance in what became known as the Supreme Directional Control crisis. According to historian Ken Mulliken, the controversy centered on several interrelated issues.

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41Koehler, *Problems of Industrial Zion*, 66.
42Aware of how statements like these would sound to social-democrats like T. W. Williams (at that point a former apostle), the bishop stressed that “individual adjustments in Zion are voluntary adjustments. Zion’s band is not held together by political pressure, but by the love of the good.” Ibid., 146.
43I have yet to find any record of what the ordained stewards at
Most conspicuously, RLDS apostles and full-time ministers clashed with Frederick Madison Smith over his role as president of the Church. Smith desired that all “appointees” (full-time, paid priesthood) send him weekly reports while he assigned apostles to jurisdictions as he saw fit. Through force of office and the threat of his own resignation at the 1919 RLDS conference, Smith succeeded in centralizing the authority of the presidency.\(^{44}\)

Over the next five years, Smith ousted and replaced several apostles through revelation (1922), sought the right to select RLDS congregational officers over the traditional nomination rights of local branches (1923), and fought to bring Saints’ Herald editorship under his pen.\(^{45}\) In all but the Herald fight, Smith won decisive victories and even then, after the 1925 conference, Smith won back the editorship of the Saints’ Herald.

At the start of the 1924 conference, Smith attempted to push through a legislative “Document on Church Government” authorizing the First Presidency to control church monies between conferences.\(^{46}\) Smith felt that this step was necessary to coordinate the Church’s experiments in Zionic living; but for some members, he had gone too far. In reaction to Smith’s goals of “centralization,” a protest movement developed between 1923 and 1925. Led by several prominent RLDS priesthood officers, it became a sort of popular front that united such diverse members such as Apostle T. W. Williams, a socialist, the pentecostal millennialist Seventy Daniel MacGreggor, and Smith’s own brother Israel A. Smith, the conservative counselor to the Presiding Bishop. As the senior financial officer of the church, Presiding Bishop Benjamin McGuire, who had stood with Fred M. Smith in ordaining the first stewards, now took a strong stand in opposition to him. McGuire felt that Smith had no right to allocate Church finances without the consent of either the conference or the bishopric.

After jockeying for supremacy, Smith and McGuire faced each other in public at the 1925 conference. The three members of the Presiding Bishopric and twenty-one other prominent RLDS leaders pre-

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Cameron actually accomplished beyond the formality of ordination.


\(^{45}\) Ibid., 102–8.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 109–10.
sented a document authored by Apostle T. W. Williams that protested Frederick M. Smith’s controversial policy. In the debate that followed, Smith and his supporters outmaneuvered the protesters. Fearful that the RLDS Church might implode, conference delegates passed the 1924 “Document on Church Government” 919 to 405. Apostle John Rushton, who had socialist sympathies, resigned his post. The conference voted to not sustain T. W. Williams in his calling as an apostle. The entire Presiding Bishopric, including Fred M.’s brother, Israel, attempted to tender their resignations, but the conference would not allow them to resign and moved that President Smith seek the Lord’s will. After doing so, Smith announced a revelation stating: “It is wisdom that the brethren of the Presiding Bishopric be released from further responsibility in that office.” He continued, “It is well that the documents from the joint council of April, 1924, have been approved” (D&C 135:1–2a). Thus, through divine utterance, Smith removed his opponents and commended his controversial policy. The conference approved this revelation 351 to 97. Smith’s victory seemed complete.

Yet Smith’s victory was costly. Many formerly devoted members dissociated themselves decisively from the Church, especially members who expressed their faith through overtly pentecostal expressions. As historian Grant Wacker has noted, early twentieth-century pentecostal Christians had a “distinctive ability to mix ecstasy with ideology. . . . Visions, reinforced by Scripture functioned as polemical weapons in themselves.” The RLDS movement was founded on prophetic revelation and spiritual gifts; thus, many RLDS members similarly looked to personal revelatory experiences to confirm their beliefs or to denounce their enemies. Even as Fred M. Smith used revelation to force the 1925 conference to underwrite his will, opponents used revelations to exorcise Smith from their own personal spiritual universes. “Purging” could be enacted by both parties.

Seventy-two-year-old Joseph Luff, a former apostle and the for-

mer Church physician, was particularly adept at issuing poetic and polemical revelatory utterances in the name of the Lord. A former Methodist minister, Luff had completed his training as a homeopathic doctor and had been ordained as the first “church physician” in 1906 by Joseph Smith III. In that capacity, Luff directed the new RLDS-operated Independence Sanitarium which opened its doors in 1909. Concerned by professionalization trends that marginalized homeopathy, Luff resigned at the same 1915 conference that ordained Frederick Madison Smith. After nearly a decade spent fuming at Smith’s innovations, Luff put his revelatory gift to good use in an extended revelation pronounced April 5, 1925, during the contentious RLDS conference. He pronounced this revelation at a morning prayer meeting convened by protest group members at a home in Independence. Luff shared the revelation with anyone who asked but did not publish it until 1930, the Church’s centennial year.

“Unto those who have ears to hear,” began the voice of the Lord through Luff, “your zeal for my cause is pleasing unto me and your present travail for my Church shall bring forth according to my pleasure.” The revelation commended those who had been “loyal to me [the Lord] and therefore have arisen against usurpation by man in my church,” by which, of course, he meant Frederick M. Smith. One of Smith’s innovations had been replacing the admittedly unhygienic common cup used in communion with separate cups, and Luff’s revelation chastised Smith for varying from the “ordinances” as a sign that he “seeketh not to build up my kingdom, but his own.” The keenest divine displeasure was reserved the fact that Smith had earned a Ph.D. in psychology in 1916 and had encouraged other leaders to also pursue higher education: “I [the Lord] have not been trusted, nor have my provisions been accounted sufficient, and my people have returned to the world for their equipment and to make effective their instruments of accomplishment.”

Luff’s revelation further condemned Church leaders for spending “the revenues of my church to promote pursuits that are secular and interests for which no provision is made in my law,” by which Luff probably meant that Church leaders had turned his beloved Sanitarium into a community hospital instead of reserving it exclusively for

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50 History of the RLDS Church, 7:68.
the Saints. As a sign of the Church’s modern degeneracy under its negligent leaders, RLDS “houses of worship” were disturbed by “sounds of revelry and mirth and human dogmas and philosophy,” including adult education classes on sociology and youth socials. Luff did not stop with blaming Fred M. but also attacked Joseph Smith III: “If unto one [Joseph Smith III] belongs the right to lessen the sacredness of any of my institutions,” declared Luff, “then belongs it also unto another [Frederick Madison Smith] to pervert the purposes of my law as his inclinations and ambitions may lead.” He then called upon all “who have ears to hear” to implement the solution: “If ye desire a celestial harvest,” proclaimed Luff, “purge yourselves of terrestrial longings and set your affections on things above.” In practical terms, he was calling them to “purge” relationships with “usurpers” like Frederick Madison Smith from their religious experience.52

In many ways, Luff’s “revelation” captures the larger resistance to modernity of American fundamentalism with its claims of unchanging doctrine and its suspicion of philosophy and science. At first glance, such attitudes seem decidedly anti-modern, yet a closer analysis of both fundamentalism and Luff’s remarks reveal both as decidedly modern reactions to particular forms of bio-power. American modernists, like Frederick Madison Smith and Protestant social gospel figures like Walter Rauschenbusch or Lyman Abbott, fully embraced science, including modified scientific theories of evolution and sociology.53 In his criticism of modern evolutionary science, Luff embraced a type of Baconian belief in unchanging absolutes more

52Ibid., 10–11. I have heard Luff’s pamphlet quoted from Restorationist pulpits. (Restorationists are fundamentalist and conservative RLDS who meet separately from the Community of Christ.) Instead of reading the revelation as a condemnation of Frederick Smith, however, some Restorationists see it as proof of the apostasy of Wallace B. Smith, Frederick’s nephew and RLDS prophet-president during the 1984 crisis generated by ordaining women to the priesthood. Excommunicated RLDS fundamentalist Richard Price publishes and sells the Luff pamphlet at his Independence bookstore.

53Theologians like Abbott and Rauschenbusch accepted social Darwinism’s emphasis on evolutionary change in the species (progress) but rejected Herbert Spencer’s “survival of the fittest” doctrine of morality and the application of Darwin’s theory of sex selection in human mate selection. Instead, they embraced Henry George’s reasoning that “moral man”
akin to the intellectual fundamentalists of his age and natural philosophers of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{54}

In contrast, Fred M. Smith believed in a much more evolutionary view of truth. In a 1913 Saints’ Herald article, Smith announced that it was the “duty of the religious teacher to restate dogmas of the church or truths of the universal religion in terms of modern thought, that those truths might be properly coordinated with present-day knowledge.”\textsuperscript{55} Smith believed in universals but also believed that such universals needed restatement in every generation in light of new secular knowledge. In all of Smith’s revelations to the RLDS Church, the prophet spoke for the Lord in the third person (D&C 132–138), thus suggesting that the Spirit inspired the prophet but required Smith’s human vocabulary for expression.\textsuperscript{56} In contrast, Luff claimed direct plenary revelation in which God spoke through him in the first per-

could intervene and play an integral part in the evolutionary process, both for good and ill. Therefore, human beings could choose to build the kingdom of God. Janet Forsythe Fishburn, \textit{The Fatherhood of God and the Victorian Family: The Social Gospel in America} (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1981), 61–62. Affected by both social gospel theologians and scientific literature, Frederick M. Smith appears to have also embraced evolution in the sense that humans could aid society’s progress.


\textsuperscript{56} Hunt, \textit{F. M. Smith}, 259. Smith believed that revelation could come to him in multiple ways. In a 1918 prayer published in the Zion’s Ensign, Smith wrote: “If thou, O God, art desirous of revealing thy will to us, or to me, be it far from me to say how. If it be that thou desirlest to write across the arch of heaven those words that thou shalt see fit to transmit to thy people, then give me the wisdom to read. . . . If thou dost choose to utilize those powers with which thou hast by nature endowed me, quickened by thine own processes of development, to transmit through them the message that thou hast to give to thy people, then my pen shall be ready.” F. M. Smith, “Some Church Ideals,” \textit{Zion’s Ensign} 29 (November 7, 1918): 5–7, quoted in Hunt,
son, requiring no mediation. Though Smith’s position might seem to possess more epistemological humility, in practice Smith and Luff were equally dismissive of one another and equally sure that the other was eternally wrong.

With opposition effectively “purged” by 1926, Frederick Madison Smith and his supporters looked optimistically toward their kingdom-building experiment. Troubled by the confusion and instability of the RLDS Church in the early 1920s, members longed for an end to social fragmentation. Reflecting on the contentious 1925 conference, Smith’s cousin, Elbert A. Smith, penned a hymn that painted a picture of solace in the future through a renewed, strong body of believers:

When the ministers of Jesus,  
Be they small or be they great,  
From the prophets to the deacons bow the knee,  
Bishops, teachers and apostles  
Have more love and less debate,  
What a strong and happy people we shall be!57

Zion seemed to promise the achievement of peace, strength, and contentment to this body of believers.

Some of Frederick M. Smith’s associates, though, believed that purification still lay ahead for the RLDS Church. Bishop Koehler as late as 1944 was repeating: “The body must be purged. . . . It [the Church] should plan to free itself of its undesirables.”58 Yet no one wanted a repetition of the overt institutional conflicts of the mid-1920s. Instead, Church leaders attempted to construct Zion by building well-regulated communities with well-regulated people. Almost twenty years earlier, Koehler had explained that the Church wanted members who would be “organs, not receptacles; not mere

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F. M. Smith, 259.


parts, but *vital, functioning parts.*”

RLDS leaders planned to begin with three new stewardship communities. The first—and only real stewardship community of the era—was a farm and poultry yard at Atherton, Jackson County, Missouri, organized in 1929. At the second, also organized in 1929, five stewards were ordained to manage land in Onset, Massachusetts; members lived on it for part of the year, developing facilities to be used for summer camping and church “reunions.” During the rest of the year, several families lived on the land as a small community. At the third, in Taney County, Missouri (in the Ozarks), the Church brought in a family of Oregon sheep ranchers in 1930 to develop a ranch that could provide employment for other RLDS members.

**THE MAKING OF A STEWARD**

Before the 1930 Centennial Conference, Frederick Madison Smith issued a pamphlet, *The Making of a Steward,* which outlined the steps for selecting and ordaining stewards. Smith hoped that the screening process would identify and appeal to the very best stewards who, in turn, would establish model communities and businesses to which others would gather. Drawing on but updating older Latter Day Saint models for “gathering to Zion,” Smith constructed a complex, bureaucratized stewardship application process. A steward first submitted an application to the First Presidency, which included a

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59 Koehler, *Problems of Industrial Zion,* 63–64; emphasis his.
63 Frederick Madison Smith, “The Making of a Steward” (Independence: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, September 1929), Pamphlet Collection, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
64 For early LDS stewardship applications, see Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and
promise to abide by the “laws of stewardship.”  

Both men and women could apply for being set apart as stewards; husbands and wives had to apply to separately. The presidency signed the steward’s application and sent the applicant a four-page “Request for Information.” This questionnaire collected information on applicants’ marital status, dependents, level of education, ability to teach school, their ability to translate languages, and past employment his-
Revealingly, one question was: “Have you or your family defects which would affect your capacity for work?” Smith and his associates wanted to make it clear that there would be “no idlers” in Zion. Applicants also provided the names of three elders to recommend their ordination. The First Presidency had these elders fill out another form.

Next, the stake bishop (in the RLDS Church, this officer is a financial agent) certified that the world-be steward had paid his or her tithing. The final bureaucratic step was for the First Presidency, on receipt of the completed paperwork, to approve the applicant and set him or her apart through the laying on of hands to be a steward assigned to a particular community. Stewards received a certificate “good for one year, the renewal of it depending upon the yearly com-

68 Stewardship Applications and Correspondence, 1930s, P75–4, f32, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
69 J. A. Koehler, Problems of Industrial Zion, 97.

pliance with the law by the steward.” Ordination to the office of steward, then, was not necessarily a permanent, eternal office.

As applications began to pour into Church headquarters, Smith eagerly screened all of them personally to find the fittest bodies to dwell in the initial manifestations of Zion. For example, Smith learned from the elders’ recommendations that sixty-one-year-old

71Ibid., 5.
72The application process was begun long before September 1929 when Smith issued his pamphlet. As early as 1923, individuals who asked permission to “gather to Zion” received similar forms from the Presiding Bishops to fill out and return. Yet the larger RLDS push to “gather to Zion” did not take place until the closing years of the 1920s, due mainly to the intervening power struggles described above. At the 1928 RLDS Conference, Smith solemnly called upon the RLDS faithful to gather to Zion and establish stewardship communities. “Independence Makes Ready as Latter Day Saints Begin Their Great Movement to ‘Zion,’” Kansas City Star, October 1928, in Newspaper Clippings, 1924–31, microfilm 923, Community of Christ Library-Archives. Two hundred requests for information exist. More than a thousand people (including children) applied to be part of communities.
Oklahoma salesman Tom Skinner “used tobacco.” Although the RLDS Church includes the Word of Wisdom in its canon of scriptures (D&C 86), as a general practice, members today are not usually denied privileges or opportunities to serve if they do not keep it strictly. During the early twentieth century, however, priesthood (who constituted a minority of the adult male members, unlike the LDS practice of more universal male ordination), could be “silenced” or have their ministerial licenses revoked if they did not abstain from alcohol and tobacco.\(^73\)

Given this information, Frederick M. Smith took the extraordinary step of writing to the pastor of the Skinner’s congregation: “We wonder if this brother is not willing to make the effort to remove this as an objection that he [sic] may be urged by some toward his going upon a higher plane of membership activity which is comprised in the condition of stewardship.” Smith further asked the pastor to “confer with this brother” and “report to us in detail later.” In other words, using the carrot of stewardship ordination, Smith hoped to motivate Skinner to change his habit. The subsequent correspondence lasted more than three months with the pastor reporting regularly to Smith. Skinner first protested the pastor’s request, stating that “some would have to quit their coffee and that coffee was as bad as tobacco.” The pastor then showed Skinner Smith’s letter which he read and “passed it back to me without comment.” Skinner was speechless at Smith’s direct intervention. Smith retorted to the pastor that coffee was only implied in the Word of Wisdom while tobacco was specifically prohibited. The pastor dutifully passed on this message. A month after the first correspondence, Skinner told his pastor that he would quit using tobacco. A jubilant Smith queried the pastor: “Do you think on the strength of this promise we had better go ahead and O.K. his application for stewardship?” A few weeks later, the pastor sadly reported that, despite the applicant’s promise to quit tobacco, “I learned that he has not done so.” He added hopefully: “We will try to watch the case and keep you informed. I believe he will yet quit tobacco.”\(^74\)

Unfortunately, the available records provide no more information on this case.

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\(^{73}\)See, for example, Apostle Ulysses W. Green, Independence, Letter to F. L. Sawley, Centralia, Illinois, July 16, 1919; original typescript and carbon copy, P13, f1334, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

\(^{74}\)‘S’: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f42, Community of Christ
To sum up, then, even under direct pressure from his church’s president and surveillance from his pastor, Skinner could not discipline his body to eschew tobacco. Although this case was not typical of all applicants, it demonstrates Smith’s intense interest in the physical habits of one applicant and his willingness to employ surveillance and social pressure to cause bodily change. This strategy was typical of broader societal trends. Following Michel Foucault, social theorist Anthony Giddens has argued that “modern” societies are marked by “heightened surveillance” among other modalities of power. Authority figures of all types in the 1920s disciplined the bodies of their citizens, employees, or Church members through unprecedented levels of social pressure. As Skinner learned, RLDS leadership was no exception to the norm.

While the “bio-power” of the RLDS Church hierarchy seems at first glance to be totalizing, the complicated negotiations between would-be steward Tom Skinner and F. M. Smith reveal the complexity of power relationships. Foucault himself had a nuanced definition of power: “Power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere.” He conceived of power as a dynamic process in which all participated in its transfer and formation. Power was “something that circulates” and was “produced one moment to the next.” Rather than being a simplistic top-down relationship, it was distributed through complex social networks that relied upon the actions of “peripheral agents” to enforce or subvert the actions of a dominant agent. Throughout any power network were points of resistance that challenged and trans-

Library-Archives. While a majority of the applicants I quote are more than fifty years old, half of the total stewardship applicants were unmarried adults, families with children, and married spouses under fifty without children. Caution should therefore be taken in generalizing these examples to apply to applicants in general.

75Anthony Giddens, The Nation State and Violence, Vol. 2 of A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism (Cambridge, Eng.: Polity Press, 1985), 5. Giddens also lists “capitalistic enterprise, industrial production and the consolidation of centralized control of the means of violence” as markers of modernity. Certainly, Giddens would not deny the presence of surveillance in “traditional” societies; he simply argues that the intensity of surveillance is heightened in “modern” societies.

formed the hegemony of a dominant group. “Power is not something present at specific locations within these networks,” notes Foucault scholar Joseph Rouse, “but it is instead always at issue in ongoing attempts to (re)produce effective social alignments, and conversely to avoid or erode their effects, often producing various counteralignments.”77 Just as the Oklahoman Saint attempted to reinterpret the Word of Wisdom with Frederick Madison Smith, power, too, is always constantly renegotiated as agents in networks find ways to turn systems of subordination to their own betterment.

Not surprisingly, many other RLDS members actively worked through their own networks of power to negotiate a Zion for their own betterment. Although the selection process seemed to favor the hierarchy’s desires, applicants did not lack agency. Presumably, they selected three elders whom they thought would be likely to write positive recommendations. In addition, applicants asserted their own agency both in what they included on and what they omitted from their questionnaire. While the First Presidency, by creating a detailed form, attempted to standardize the content, applicants supplied information idiosyncratically. Some applicants left entire sections blank while others dutifully filled out the entire form.

Many applicants felt embarrassed at their lack of formal education. Ethel Beebe, a middle-aged widow from Kansas City with a sixth-grade education, wrote, “Truly I feel that [sic] my inability very much probably due to the lack of chance and encouragement of study when I was younger.” But she added, “Yet I realize [in] our discovery and communion with God we work out ourselves.”78 Beebe thus argued that she had ways of knowing just as valuable as formal education. A Kansas City divorcée with a similar educational background, Lela Butler wrote, “I only have a common school education but have traveled quite a lot & have had experience in different lines of work.” Butler was thus asserting that common people could also be cultured and skilled.79 A Connecticut widower, Thomas Whipple, similarly argued that he had a “reasonably good education” and then listed his

77Quoted in ibid., 109–10.
78“B,” Stewardship Applications and Correspondence, 1930s,” P75–4, f32, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
79Ibid.
occupations: store owner, farmer, and general contractor.\textsuperscript{80} James Conyers, an Independence blacksmith who applied with his wife and three children, wrote: “We are just common hard working people not overburdened with education but of a common nature also are willing to do our part as we are able to see to do it.”\textsuperscript{81} He seems to suggest that too much education could actually hamper a person in the practical aspects of day-to-day work. In short, applicants were aware of their perceived educational weaknesses, but they also structured arguments to convince their leaders that such “weaknesses” could actually be strengths.

Just as RLDS members negotiated with the Church hierarchy over their intellectual capacities, some applicants exhibited anxiety over the condition of their physical bodies. A forty-seven-year-old Wyoming store owner, J. Albin Anderson, admitted that he used a wheel-chair while his young wife was also in poor health. He quickly added, however, that he owned property, operated a store, and held the position of town postmaster. In other words, the disabled store owner promoted his body as worthy of inclusion in the kingdom because of his financial resources.\textsuperscript{82} Other would-be stewards were not as fortunate in material goods. Augusta Hyatt, a sixty-three-year-old widow and German immigrant caring for a six-year-old adopted child, wrote that she could no longer “work out[side]” due to her age and “poor health.”\textsuperscript{83} Another sixty-three-year-old Independence woman, Mary Leibold, admitted that her “health is not good” but “I can still care for chickens.”\textsuperscript{84} Claud McAlister, a twenty-nine-year Aaronic teacher, had “suffered a serious illness caused by an infected liver and colon” two years earlier that had left him unable “to do heavy work.” However, he carefully noted that he had filed his tithing inventory, providing the

\textsuperscript{80}“V-X”: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f44, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
\textsuperscript{81}“C”: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f33, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
\textsuperscript{82}“A”: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f31, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
\textsuperscript{83}“H-I”: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f38, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
\textsuperscript{84}“J-L”: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f39, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
exact file number, and then he listed his worldly possessions on the comments section of the application. Limited body and all, McAlister was ready and willing to give all that he had to the kingdom. A Canadian World War I veteran, Clarence Smith, admitted that he had “lost left leg and [had a] nervous disorder,” yet desired greatly to do missionary work and had “a pension that would partially care for my family.” Though concerned about their physical health, each applicant attempted to maintain his or her personal worth, value, and dignity.

Many applicants also fretted over the bodily weakness of sick spouses or dependent children. A fifty-seven-year-old Independence carpenter, John Blakesley, had a wife whose “spinal trouble” caused him “to leave my work at times and is a constant worry.” A sixty-five year old Welsh immigrant, Evan Lloyd, proudly listed his children and all of their accomplishments. His youngest daughter was “very deaf and is greatly handicapped and is a dependent.” She had been “deserted by her husband last summer” and now resided in his home along with his “invalid wife.” Lloyd frankly revealed these details both to honestly explain his family situation and to gain the compassion of the hierarchy for his difficult living conditions but balanced these admissions with placing on the record the educational achievements and occupational accomplishments of his other adult children who held jobs ranging from teachers to telegraph operators. Perhaps Lloyd wanted to assure the RLDS hierarchy that physical “defects” did not run in the family. In this period before any government health care or “social security,” stewardship applicants obviously sought deliverance from their bodily “defects” in a community of healing called Zion.

Applicants with this level of need almost certainly were not what F. M. Smith considered to be the ideal steward. While some appli-

86“S’: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f42, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
89Ibid.
cants negotiated with the hierarchy over the Church’s authority to exclude them from the future Zion, others took themselves out of the selection process. One Independence man submitted his “Request for Information Form” without answering the question: “Have you or your family defects which would affect your capacity for work?” A few days later, he wrote candidly to the First Presidency, explaining that, because “I could not answer in a few words” about his physical condition, “I did not answer it at all.” But “as my condition is more evidently growing worse, and there is little prospect of my being successful temporally, at least by my seeking to be, I think I should say so.” His candor was motivated by fear that he might “discredit stewardships” by his ordination. “I think too much of the principle. I want to help its success instead of its failure, which is why I am reporting my exact physical condition at the present time.”

F. M. Smith did not have to defer the man’s ordination; the Independence man had measured his body and found it unfit for Zion.

F. M. Smith envisioned that “the rich, the learned, the noble, and the wise”—in other words, the richest, most talented members of the RLDS Church—would apply for church stewardships. Yet the opposite seemed to be happening. On July 24, 1930, President Smith forwarded to the Presiding Bishopric an application with his note: “This presents an interesting problem which is likely to become more or less common, viz., what to do with the average family.” As a pragmatic matter, Smith was forced to approve Saints who did not meet his ideal expectations. For instance, Smith approved the ordination of a Canadian stockman working for Sears and Roebuck Company in Kansas City, despite a recommending elder’s frank statement that the man was “a cripple” and lacked financial resources. More tellingly, Smith approved the ordination of an Independence salesman and

90“F-G’: Stewardship Applications,” P75–4, f37, Community of Christ Library-Archives. He did not specify his ailment.


93“Approved Stewardship Applications,” P54, f234, Community of
hatchery expert who was described by two of his recommending elders as “unstable,” “not reliable,” and “the money chasing type—gets what he can and liar!” Smith’s brother and future successor, Israel A. Smith, wrote the third recommendation and had commented: “He has been handling a heavy load, but I think he can be relied upon.” In forwarding the approved application to the Presiding Bishopric, F. M. Smith wrote: “Here is a man that will need counsel and advice in his business affairs.” Referring to Jesus’s parable of those who would be found on the right hand of favor and the left hand of disfavor, Smith commented wryly that the “recommendations given in accompanying are rather left-handed.” Nevertheless, Smith was optimistic. “I suggest you see him personally and see if he is willing to organize his business according to your [the Presiding Bishopric’s] plans.” The struggling stewardship community at Atherton, Missouri, needed a hatchery, so Smith was obviously willing to ordain even a somewhat wayward Saint.

The Joseph Smith Jr. quotation which Fred M. used whenever he explained how the kingdom of God would be established outlined two steps: “First the rich, the learned, the noble, and the wise,” would lay the foundations of Zion, and then and only then would “the blind, the lame, the halt, and the dumb” be invited to the “feast of fat things.” The applicants, however, fundamentally changed this process. Through written acts of commission and omission, applicants negotiated with the hierarchy to prove that ordinary people could be noble, learned, wise, and even modestly rich. Those who were literally halt, lame, blind, and dumb tried to recircumscribe their bodies as celestial vessels fit for entrance into the kingdom in its initial manifestations. In the process, they argued for redefining the RLDS Church’s ex-

Christ Library-Archives.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
clusive vision of the coming celestial city, urging that Zion—and for that matter, the Church and society in general—should include them in the channels of power for shaping the future. Responding in turn, Church leaders like Frederick Madison Smith pragmatically approved their applications. Ordinary people, not just Church leaders, set the standards by which their bodies would be regulated in real and imagined stewardship communities. In sum, RLDS laity demonstrated how the actions of a subordinate ecclesiastical group could fundamentally alter the actions and discourse of a dominant hierarchy.

By the time the First Presidency issued an internal memo on the stewardship program on September 23, 1930, nearly seventy-three applicants out of a pool of 1,133 applications had been fully processed and approved for ordination.100 Hundreds of applicants waited for word from the hierarchy that they could gather to a stewardship community. About fifteen men and their families had been living in community at Atherton, Missouri, for nearly a year, farming or raising poultry. Historian Larry Hunt noted that at Atherton, “the President, the Presiding Bishop, and the church were willing to settle for less than fully qualified, knowledgeable, talented or affluent individuals that were intended to compose the new Zion.”101 My research of stewardship applications, unavailable to Hunt during his research in the late 1970s, confirms his basic insight. Church members and hierarchy subordinated ideal standards in compromised but real-world expressions of their hopes. Yet neither the reform-minded hierarchy nor the hopeful applicants could extricate themselves from the larger social and economic forces that were about to dash their hopes for a new, physical community.

Unfortunately for the RLDS Church, the financial uncertainty generated by the Great Depression cut short the experiment in “making stewards.” In early 1931, the RLDS hierarchy realized that the Church faced a serious financial crisis. Construction of the gigantic Auditorium in Independence had accumulated a debt to that point of $1,876,000.102 To preserve the Church’s financial solvency, leaders had to take drastic measures. In desperation, F. M. Smith went to

100“Stewardship Applications for Steward as Approved by F. M. Smith, 1930,” P54, f234, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
101Hunt, F. M. Smith, 192. In 1985, an individual cleaning out a storage closet in the RLDS Auditorium in Independence found the long-forgotten stewardship applications.
102Ibid., 368.
Atherton and asked the stewards to mortgage the Church-owned land as part of a Church-wide financial retrenchment program. “Well, President Smith, do you know what this means to this project?” asked a steward. “Well, hum,” admitted Smith, “it means the game is up. Well, we’re sorry, but the church is in a tight spot and we just have to do it.”

Both the stewards and President Smith were distressed by the turn of events. All stewardship selections were placed on hold indefinitely and Church funding for communities was diverted to pay off the massive debt.

Leaders and laity alike hoped that their program could begin again as soon the financial crisis passed; and as the Great Depression ground on, would-be stewards dreamed of the coming “feast of fat things.” It never materialized, but RLDS members clung to the hope that celestial bodies of all shapes, sizes, and abilities could find rest in their celestial city. Even as the world economic crisis deepened, would-be stewards waited for the resurrection of the body of Zion.

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103 J. A. Koehler, untitled address, 1957, delivered at a “Seminar on Zion” in Independence, typescript in J. A. Koehler file, Biographical Folder Collection, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
SAMUEL TYLER LAWRENCE:
A SIGNIFICANT FIGURE IN
JOSEPH SMITH’S PALMYRA PAST

Rich Troll

INTRODUCTION

In the 1820’s, Joseph Smith Jr., the future Mormon prophet, was a “very intimate acquaintance” of Samuel Lawrence, a man nearly two decades his senior. Their bond stretched from the impressionable years of Smith’s late teens to his early twenties, but his role and possible influence received little attention, even from contemporary

Rich Troll graduated from the C. W. Post Center of Long Island University (1987) with a BFA in filmmaking and encountered the Samuel Lawrence mystery while working on a body of work tentatively titled “The Burned-Over Novellas.” He researched the identity and roles of the various Samuel Lawrences in the Palmyra-Manchester area of New York off and on for more than four years before his death on February 13, 2005. He dedicated this work to Palmyra historian Robert Lowe, whose decades-long research into Palmyra’s history provided Rich with a deep source of material, along with his heartfelt admiration and gratitude. The Journal sincerely appreciates the permission of Rich’s parents, Lucille and Fred Troll, and the efforts of his literary executor Donald Mullen, in bringing this article to publication. The Journal also expresses appreciation for the donation of the original article and all of the accompanying photographs, a selection of which illustrate this article to the Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives), and to the Library-Archives, Community of
sources. Furthermore, he is consistently confused with other Sam Lawrences in the same area. This article first identifies the four “other” Samuel Lawrences, then lists the seven contemporary individuals who mentioned Samuel Lawrence in connection with Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith’s Samuel Tyler Lawrence was born in New Jersey, and his cousin/adopted sister Fanny married Abner Cole—possibly the reason Samuel moved to Palmyra where he became known as a treasure seeker. This activity brought him into contact with Joseph Smith and, hence, into Mormon history.

Christ, in Independence.

1This characterization was made by their mutual friend, “Lorenzo Saunders Interview, 12 November 1884,” in Early Mormon Documents, edited by Dan Vogel, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2:148.
THE "OTHER" SAMUEL LAWRENCES

This section lists the four other men also named "Samuel Lawrence" but who were not the Samuel Tyler Lawrence of early Mormon history. To avoid further confusion, I identify each by full name or by a unique designator.

1. Samuel Townsley Lawrence was born in Stillwater, Saratoga County, New York, August 26, 1823, making him too young to fit into the Mormon timeline. When he was four, his family moved to Albion, New York, about forty-five miles west of the Palmyra area. On his thirty-eighth birthday, he left his wife and children to enlist in the Union Army in 1861. Near the war's end, Lawrence was a corporal in Company E of the Fiftieth New York Engineers; he took part in major actions of the Civil War, including the battle of Gettysburg and the surrender of General Robert E. Lee. In 1871 Lawrence moved to Chicago but returned to Rochester in 1900 where he died March 14, 1922, at age ninety-eight. His advice for achieving a long, healthy life was the liberal use of vinegar on everything, providing it did not spoil the food’s taste.2

2. Sheriff Samuel Lawrence could not have been the Sam Lawrence who was Joseph Smith’s friend because he was in his fifties when the 1830 Palmyra census has a “Samuel F. [sic] Lawrence” in his forties; furthermore, he lived miles away in Yates County.3 I found no record in which he used a middle name or middle initial, but possibly because he was a public figure, Samuel Tyler Lawrence continued us-

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2“City’s Oldest War Veteran Is Taken by Death,” Democrat Chronical (Rochester, N.Y.), March 15, 1922, 21; “Oldest Veteran Answers the Last Great Summons,” Post Express (Rochester, N.Y.), March 15, 1922, 7; “Oldest Civil War Veteran Passes Away,” Rochester Times-Union, March 15, 1922, 9. D. Michael Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View, 2d ed. rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 474 note 231, identifies him as “Townley” (instead of “Townsley”), the incorrect middle name coming from an untitled, undated, two-page biography in the Kings Daughters Free Library, Palmyra. Its anonymous author drew his or her data from “Memory Covers 65 Years of City,” Post Express, August 23, 1916, 5, which does not mention Lawrence’s middle name. This suggests that the unknown writer’s additional research yielded the near-correct “Townley.”

ing “T.” to differentiate himself. Sheriff Lawrence was born about 1778, almost certainly in New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts. His father, John Lawrence, moved his family to Ontario County, New York, and purchased his first piece of property there in July 1789. He continued buying and selling land, becoming a wealthy man. A Quaker, he wore their garb and used plain speech but was associated to some degree with the prophetess Jemima Wilkinson (the “Publick Universal Friend”). A desire to be close to her probably motivated his move to upstate New York. Sheriff Lawrence’s first wife, Anna, belonged to the Jemima Wilkinson’s society.\footnote{For biographical sketches of John Lawrence and his son, Sheriff Samuel Lawrence, see Stafford C. Cleveland, \textit{History and Directory of Yates County, Containing a Sketch of Its Original Settlement by the Public Universal Friends, the Lessee Company and Others, with an Account of Individual Pioneers and Their Families; Also of Other Leading Citizens. Including Church, School and Civil History. And a Narrative of the Universal Friend, Her Society and Doctrine} (Penn Yan, N.Y.: S. C. Cleveland, Chronicle Office, 1873), 639–40, 642. “John Lawrence” is listed as a member of this religious group in Herbert A. Wisbey Jr., \textit{Pioneer Prophetess: Jemima Wilkinson, The Publick Universal Friend} (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964), 211.}

As sheriff, Samuel Lawrence seized and resold Abner Cole’s land (discussed below),\footnote{He is listed as sheriff, although the record does not state positively that he was present. \textit{Simeon Westfall vs. Abner Cole}, in Supreme Court records, 1821–28, March 4, 1822, Ontario County Department of Records, Archives and Information Management, Hopewell, New York.} but they may have had political and social associations as well. They both held public office in Ontario County and were aligned with the Democratic Party.\footnote{For Sheriff Lawrence’s party affiliation and offices overlapping with Abner Cole’s 1814–18 public service, see \textit{Geneva (New York) Gazette}: “The Election,” April 19, 1815; “Appointments, by the Council of Appointment,” May 3, 1815; “Ontario Appointments & Removals,” May 24, 1815; “Appointments by the Council,” March 19, 1817; “Ontario Co. Democratic Assembly Nomination,” April 2, 1817; “Election,” May 14, 1817.} It is rumored, but not confirmed, that Cole was a Freemason, and Sheriff Lawrence definitely was.\footnote{W. H. McIntosh, \textit{History of Ontario Co., New York, with Illustrations Descriptive of Its Scenery, Palatial Residences, Public Buildings, Fine Blocks, and Important Manufactories, from Original Sketches by Artists of the Highest Ability}
usually high number but one that obviously benefited the delinquent
landowner. Although there is no evidence that Lawrence did it as a per-
sonal (or fraternal) favor, it would have been the kind of partiality
Anti-Masons were suspicious of in the late 1820’s.

3. The Honorable Samuel Lawrence was also not Joseph Smith’s
friend because he was in his fifties at the time of the 1830 Palmyra
census.® Furthermore, he lived too far south, near Catharine, New
York. Much material is available on this wealthy and influential fam-
ily, thus making him easily confused with Sheriff Samuel Lawrence’s
family. For instance, their fathers’ names were, respectively, Jonathan
and John, and both Samuels had long-term and highly visible careers
as public officials.®

The house he built in 1815 overlooking Cayuta Lake is well-pre-
served and currently is a bed-and-breakfast inn with its original name,
the Lawrence Homestead.®

4. Samuel A. Laurence appears in three Ontario County land
transactions. In 1800 he was described as a merchant in New York
City. Twenty-three years later, he was described the same way. Al-

8I calculated his age from his gravestone obelisk, Lawrence Chapel
Cemetery, Catharine, New York, which gives his birth as May 23, 1773.

9I used the following source to reconstruct this family’s history: Mary
Louise Catlin Cleaver, The History of the Town of Catharine, Schuyler County,
Arlina Hamm, Famous Families of New York: Historical and Biographical
Sketches of Families Which in Successive Generations Have Been Identified with
the Development of the Nation: Volume I (1902; reprinted, New York: Heraldic
Publishing, 1970), 236; Arthur H. Richards, “Memorial Chapel Near Kaya-
tah Lake Recalls History of Pioneer Family,” Sunday Telegram (Elmira,
N.Y.), October 22, 1939, A–6; Charles H. Weygant, The Sacketts of Amer-
ica: Their Ancestors and Descendants, 1630–1907 (Newburgh, N.Y.: Journal Print,
1907), 76–77. I designate him as “The Honorable,” from “Married,” El-
mina (N.Y.) Gazette, February 23, 1843: “the late Hon. Samuel Lawrence.” The
obituary of Sheriff Samuel Lawrence’s father, “Died,” Geneva Gazette and
Mercantile Advertiser, May 29, 1833, also refers to Sheriff Lawrence among
John Lawrence’s survivors as the “hon. Samuel Lawrence,” but I have desig-
nated him “Sheriff” because that was arguably how Palmyra/Manchester
knew him.

10I stayed at this inn May 13–14, 2003, and the next morning was
treated to a tour of this historic site.
though obviously involved in land speculation, he may never have set foot in Ontario County and apparently died in New York City between 1830 and 1840.11

**Contemporary References to Samuel Tyler Lawrence**

Only seven contemporaries of Samuel Tyler Lawrence mention him in their accounts or reminiscences of early Mormonism, but their main focus was Smith himself. The references, consequently, are fleeting and incomplete, but this essay develops a fuller picture of his family background.

1. Joseph Capron, interviewed on November 8, 1833, by Eber D. Howe, called him, incorrectly, Samuel F. Lawrence.12

2. Willard Chase, interviewed on December 11, 1833, also by Howe, referred, correctly, to Samuel T. Lawrence.13

3. Joseph Knight Sr., writing what he called his “Manuscript of the History of Joseph Smith,” ca. 1835–47, mentions a Sam or Samuel Lawrence.14

4. Lucy Mack Smith, dictating her memoirs in 1844 and 1845, called him “Sam Lawrence” or “Mr. Laurence.”15

5. Martin Harris, interviewed by Joel Tiffany in 1859, called him Samuel Lawrence.16

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11The three deeds are housed in the Ontario County Department of Records, Archives & Information Management, Hopewell, New York: (1) From Joshua Isaacs of New York City, January 6, 1800, Liber 6, 658–60; (2) From Joshua Isaacs of New York City, November 24, 1800, Liber 7, 129–30; (3) To Samuel Boyd and Matthew Clarkson [both of New York City], August 1, 1823, Liber 53, 167–68, which also identifies a wife, Catherine. He appears in Jackson and Teeples, 1830 Census, 400, as “LAWRENCE, SAMUEL A. NEW NYC 8TH,” but is absent from Jackson and Teeples, 1840 Census. However, the 1840 record identifies his possible widow: “LAWRENCE, CATHARINE NEW NEW YORK” and/or “LAWRENCE, CATHARINE NEW NEW YORK” (p. 533).


6. Pomeroy Tucker published a book about Mormonism in 1867 in which he referred to him as Samuel Lawrence.  

7. Lorenzo Saunders mentioned Samuel Lawrence four times: three times in 1884 interviews (September 17 and September 20 by William H. Kelley, and on November 12 by E. L. Kelley) and again two months later on January 28, 1885, by Charles A. Shook.

**SAMUEL TYLER LAWRENCE’S FAMILY**

D. Michael Quinn recently hypothesized that Samuel Tyler Lawrence, like the Smiths, may have moved to New York from Vermont. This is not the case. In 1831, the *Wayne Sentinel* of Palmyra, possibly as a courtesy to resident Samuel Tyler Lawrence, published a notice about the deaths, only two days apart, of Samuel’s father, Sylvanus, and Samuel’s niece, Jemima D. Lawrence. Both deaths occurred roughly three hundred miles away in New Jersey.

The family history has been traced to 1661 when Johannes

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20“Died,” *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, New York), September 13, 1831: “DIED—In Randolph, Morris co. N. J. on the 16th ult. Mr. Sylvanus Lawrence, aged 86 years.—At the same place on the 22d, Miss Jemima D. Lawrence, aged 22 years.” The *Sentinel* seems to repeat, with two possible corrections, the August 31, 1831, edition of *The Jerseyman*, now lost, but quoted in Frederick Alexander Canfield, ed., “Death Notices Copied from Newspapers Published in Morristown, New Jersey 1798–1849” (Morristown, N.J.:
Lowrentz was born in Bellheim, Germany. In 1691, he married Anna Margaretha Heiliger (born 1671). Their first six children were baptized at Bellheim’s Catholic Church, but evidently between the birth of the sixth in 1704 and that of the seventh in 1707, the parents underwent a change of faith, and the seventh child was baptized at Bellheim’s Reformed Church. History suggests they were persecuted for their beliefs, culminating in the family’s departure with the second emigration of Huguenots. Shortly after their arrival in New York in 1710, the family became aligned with the Dutch Reformed Church.

By the time son Daniel was born in 1713, they had settled in Peapack, a small community in northern New Jersey about ten miles southwest of Morristown where they operated a mill and became respected landholders. In 1744 at age eighty-three, Johannes went to Germantown, Pennsylvania, now part of Philadelphia, to purchase a German-language Bible. This episode suggests, not only his vigor at this advanced age but his commitment to his faith. It also suggests that some, maybe all, family members were still speaking and reading German. He died the next year. His house was reported still standing on Main Street in 1981.21

One of Daniel Lawrence’s sons was Sylvanus (born 1751), the man whose death notice was published in the Wayne Sentinel. Sylvanus married Jemima Dickinson (birth date unknown) on December 30,

n.p., 1926), TD, [microfilm], 193: “In Randolph, on the 16th inst. Mr. Sylvester [sic] Lawrence, aged 86 years. At the same place, on the 22d. Miss Jemima D. Lawrence, daughter of Mr. Daniel Lawrence, aged 29 [sic] years.—Consumption.”

1770, in a Presbyterian church. They moved to Mendham, seven miles west of Morristown, and became one of the first families there to convert to Methodism. By 1799 their Methodist society had built a meetinghouse, which they relocated to a more suitable location near the crossroads, adding a stone house which doubled as a school. Inscribed above this building’s doorway was the name “Lawrenceville.” Possibly they experienced some form of discrimination for their beliefs, since, in 1801 in nearby Dover, “Methodist preachers tried to make an appointment to preach . . . but were driven out by threats of a riot.”

Samuel Tyler Lawrence, later Joseph Smith’s “very intimate acquaintance,” was born November 21, 1786, the second or third son of Sylvanus and Jemima. “Samuel Tyler” was the name of an uncle by marriage on his mother’s side who was entrusted with some financial matters. As will become evident, Samuel Tyler Lawrence inherited the name, but not the gift for managing money. Samuel was close to a first cousin, Frances (“Fanny”) Wickham Darling, about four years his senior. Their mothers were sisters, and for unknown reasons, Jemima

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26Baker, *Dickerson & Dickinson*, 265-66, has Mary Dickinson married to Samuel Tyler, who administered his father-in-law’s estate and was co-executor of the estate of his brother-in-law Philemon Dickinson. Lawrence, “Continuing the Line of Doty-Lawrence Family,” 49, lists a renunciation by Sarah Dickerson in favor of Samuel Tyler, her son-in-law.
and Sylvanus Lawrence raised Fanny as their own daughter. She took “Lawrence” as her surname, and Samuel regarded her as his sister.\(^{27}\)

Whether she was already a Methodist or was converted by the

\(^{27}\)Fanny was born ca. 1781 to Lot Darling and Hannah Dickinson Darling. Her middle name and approximate birth year are in three obituaries, all under the heading “Died”: (1) *Ontario Messenger* (Canandaigua, New York), October 24 1855: “In this village, on Friday night the 19th inst., at the residence of her daughter Mrs[.] Frances A. Parburt, Mrs. FANNY WICKHAM LAWRENCE, relict of the late Abner Cole, Esq., formerly of Palmyra, aged 73 years.” Since the phrasing remained largely unchanged, this notice must have served as the source for the death announcements published by her sons, James M. Cole and L. W. Cole, in, respectively, *Ann Arbor (Michigan) Journal*, November 7, 1855, and *Albion (Michigan) Weekly Mirror*, November 8, 1855. According to Baker, *Dickerson & Dickinson*, 265, Fanny’s parents married February 19, 1767; Sarah Dickinson’s will (proved August 21, 1798) mentions “granddaughter Fanny Lawrence.” See also Lawrence, “Continuing the Line of Doty-Lawrence Family,” 45, 49; Lowrance, *From the European Continent to American Colonist & Citizen*, 413.

*Stone barn on Chester Road, erected ca. 1796. Daniel Lawrence used it for Methodist services. It was destroyed by fire in 1914. Charles D. Platt, ed., Dover History (Dover, N.J.: n.pub., 1914), facing p. 356.*
Lawrences is not recorded, but she was unswerving in her devotion to that faith to the end of her life.  

Samuel Tyler Lawrence’s older brother was Daniel, named for his paternal grandfather and born May 18, 1773. On January 7, 1796, Daniel married Sibelar Doty (born 1779), and, that same year, purchased 277 acres of land in Randolph, New Jersey, about seven miles northwest of Morristown. Because it was spacious and centrally located, the stone barn he built on this property replaced Sylvanus’s “Lawrenceville” as the new Methodist place of worship. Almost certainly in this barn/meeting house, on October 14, 1810, Fanny married a man from Geneva, New York, named Abner Cole (born 1783), who would also cross Joseph Smith’s path.

Without the benefit of a college education, Cole was able to

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28Portrait and Biographical Album of Calhoun County, Michigan (Chicago: Chapman Bros., 1891), 720.
29Lawrence, “Continuing the Line of Doty-Lawrence Family,” 9B, contains a pencil sketch by William Everett drawn May 4, 1812, which I consider the most reliable source for establishing Daniel’s birth date. Baker, Dickerson & Dickinson, 265, gives the birth date as May 12, but the following concur with May 18: Chambers, The Early Germans of New Jersey, 440; Ethan Allen Doty, The Doty-Doten Family in America: Descendants of Edward Doty, an Emigrant by the Mayflower, 1620 (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Author, 1897), 374; Lowrance, From the European Continent to American Colonist & Citizen, 415.
30Ibid., Everett’s pencil sketch spells her first name as “Sibelar” and dates the marriage at January 7, 1796. Baker, Dickerson & Dickinson, 265, concurs with the name and date. Lowrance, From the European Continent to American Colonist & Citizen, 415, uses “Sibillar” and “Sibilar,” but gives no date. The next two sources agree on the date but offer more spelling variations: “Sibilar” in Chambers, The Early Germans of New Jersey, 440; “Sibbel” in Doty, The Doty-Doten Family in America, 374.
31For the distance between Randolph and Morristown, see Gordon, A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey, 224. For Daniel’s land purchase, see Lawrence, “Continuing the Line of Doty-Lawrence Family,” 11. For the stone barn as the Methodism meeting place, see Lawrence, 12, and Wright, History and Records of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 79.
32“Married,” Geneva (N.Y.) Gazette, November 7, 1810: “In Randolph, Morris county (N.J.) the 14th Oct. last, Abner Cole, Esq. of this village to Miss Fanny V. [sic] Lawrence, of the former place.” The strongest suggestion that Abner and Fanny were married in Daniel Lawrence’s barn is a miscommunicated and/or misunderstood statement of fact from Portrait.
transform himself from a shoemaker into a lawyer. Despite his deistic leanings, Cole was a proponent of organized religion and claimed to belong to an unspecified denomination. He attended Western New York’s first Methodist camp meeting in 1805, but presents himself as a curious (possibly Presbyterian) bystander. If he was not a Methodist, his courtship of Fanny may have motivated him to

*33*“Things I Dislike,” *The Reflector* (Palmyra, New York), January 22, 1830, 27: “I dislike to have my children forget that their father was a cobbler.” That Cole authored this comment is supported by his belittling, in the same piece, someone who reads *The Reflector* without paying for it. His other paper also contains references to cloggers: “Eminent Shoemakers,” *Liberal Advocate* (Rochester, New York), July 3, 1832, 7. For Cole as a self-made man, see “Address of the Carrier, to the Patrons,” *Wayne Sentinel*, January 1, 1831, Extra: “And with his [Cole’s] pen discourses knowledge, The same as tho’ he’d been to College” (emphasis in original). That Cole is the author is evident from Egbert Bratt Grandin, Journal, 1831–41, January 1, 1831, photocopy of holograph, Wayne County Historian’s Office, Lyons, New York, lamenting how much time it took to print “a new years address, composed by A. Cole.” Grandin was then editor of *Wayne Sentinel*.

*34*In addition to the deistic tone found in both of Cole’s papers, *The Reflector* and the *Liberal Advocate*, their mastheads proclaimed “Know then thyself, presume not God to scan! The proper study of mankind is MAN,” quoting Alexander Pope’s “Essay on Man.” References to the *Liberal Advocate* are from the two bound volumes at the New York Historical Society.

*35*For Abner Cole’s views on religion, see an untitled notice, *Liberal Advocate*, November 1, 1833, 7: “On the subject of Religion we have only to say, with a learned divine ‘down east,’ that ‘any religion is better than none.’ We believe, however, that man is a ‘religious animal;’ and in case he should happen to be ignorant, he will be inclined to superstition” (emphasis his).

*36*“Protracted Meetings,” *Liberal Advocate*, February 23, 1833, 37,
join this faith. He and Fanny moved to upstate New York; and by 1812, when their second son and child was born, Lawrence Washington Cole, they were living in Palmyra.

By 1811, Samuel was married to a relation on his mother’s side, reports a visit by the author, presumably Cole, to western New York’s first Methodist camp meeting: “The novelty of this performance, attracted the attention of individuals belonging to all sects and denominations, among whom were a number of Presbyterian clergyman [sic], with whom the writer of this article was intimately acquainted, who was induced from a spirit of idle curiosity, to visit the spot and mingled with the throng” (emphasis his). Cole places this camp meeting shortly after 1803, which agrees with preacher Thomas Smith’s more specific date of August 1805. Quoted in George Peck, Early Methodism within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828 (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1860), 243–44.

37The speculation that Abner Cole could have converted to Methodism is partially derived from the experience of Elias Thompson, a son-in-law of Daniel (II) Lawrence. Wright, History and Records of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 82: “Elias Thompson was one of the founders of the Walnut Grave [Grove] M. E. Church. He was born in a Presbyterian family. . . . He adopted the Methodist church when he married Mary Lawrence, the daughter of Daniel and Sibilla [Sibelar] (Doty) Lawrence.”

38For L. W. Cole’s birth on November 13, 1812, and his middle name being Washington, see Portrait and Biographical Album of Calhoun County, Michigan, 720. The same page states that Abner and Fanny Cole were living in Palmyra at the time of his birth, which makes it the earliest recorded date for their presence in Palmyra. This source also names L. W. Cole’s siblings: Abner P., James M., Frances [Ann], and Sarah M. At first glance, the age ranges of the oldest two siblings do not concur when cross-referenced with the 1830 Federal Population Census: Palmyra, New York, (Lyons, N.Y.: Wayne County Historian’s Office, n.d.), 26, which lists three young men in the Abner Cole home. The oldest was born between 1810 and 1815, and the middle one was born between 1815 and 1820. I hypothesize that the first is L. W., himself, that his older brother was no longer in the household, and that the younger was a boy boarding with the family while learning the printing trade. Cole had at least one apprentice from outside the family. “Notice,” Liberal Advocate, February 23, 1833, 37, begins: “Some time last summer, we admitted into our Office, at the earnest solicitation of his father, an ill bred boy—named GEORGE LAWSON in the character of an apprentice.” That said, the birth year of 1812 for L. W. Cole does not agree with his recorded age of “thirty two years” when he married in 1848. “Mar-
Rachel Bryant (born 1793), and like his brother Daniel, he purchased
land in Randolph.\textsuperscript{39} For reasons unknown, Samuel began selling his
properties in April 1814. By the time the last transaction was final-
ized in January 1815, he had accumulated $2,069.81.\textsuperscript{40} Perhaps he
had debts or was raising capital for an investment opportunity. Unfor-
unately, the nation was in the middle of an economic slump that
would last for several years. The Treaty of Ghent had ended the War
of 1812 in December 1814, but peace did not ensure prosperity.
Then, in 1816, “the year without a summer” killed off crops in New
York, New England, and as far south as New Jersey.\textsuperscript{41} Then the Panic
of 1819 deepened the economic downturn. What Samuel Tyler Law-
rence did with the money is not known, but he never again owned

\textsuperscript{39} Wesley Baker, \textit{Dickerson \& Dickinson}, passim, shows both Samuel T.
Lawrence and Rachel Bryant as descendants of Peter Dickerson, baptized
July 9, 1648, in Salem, Massachusetts. For Rachel’s date of birth, September
1, 1793, see ibid., 364. No marriage date is given for Samuel and Rachel, but
the earliest record showing them as husband and wife is a mortgage they
gave Daniel Lawrence, December 27, 1811, Liber G, 422, Morris County
Clerk’s Office, Morristown, N.J. See also Samuel T. Lawrence’s earliest land
purchase, September 14, 1811, deed from Archibald Oles, Liber V, 346–47.
The deeds name “Samuel T. Laurance” and/or “Samuel T. Lawrance.” The
latter seems more likely because Sylvanus and Daniel used this spelling in
the early 1800s.

\textsuperscript{40} For Samuel T. Lawrence’s 1814 land sales, see deeds in the Morris
County Clerk’s Office, Morristown, N.J.: (1) To Daniel Lawrence, April
16, Liber B2, 47–48 for $15; (2) To Elias Briant, June 6, Liber B2, 224–26
for $400; (3) To Daniel Lawrence, September 24, Liber B2, 49–50 for $750.
See also two mortgages to a pair of men, Uriah R. Scriber and Daniel
Wurtz, both dated August 5, Liber H, one on p. 217 for $604.81 and the
other on p. 218 for $300. The total raised in 1814 was $2,069.81. The spell-
ing of the family’s surname in all these documents is, again, “Lau-
rance”/“Lawrance.”

\textsuperscript{41} “The Year without a Summer (Tambora Volcano Part II), Eighteen
Hundred and Froze to Death.” \textit{Indonesian Digest}, http://www.indodigest.
It was probably in 1820–21 that Samuel, Rachel, and their daughter Frances Maria, possibly an only child, relocated to Palmyra area. No record exists of their motives, but Samuel may have felt drawn by affection for his sister Fanny. Though Abner Cole was never wealthy, Samuel may have seen Abner’s political and financial success as promises of opportunities. For example, Abner Cole served as a justice of the peace (1814, 1815), overseer of highways (1816), and constable (1818). He also engaged in land speculation, mostly in and around Palmyra. Construction on the Erie Canal had begun in 1817, and a canal commissioner arrived in Palmyra in May 1820 to

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42I found no deeds for Samuel Tyler Lawrence in these county clerk offices: Monroe, Ontario, Oswego, and Wayne.

43Samuel T. Lawrence is listed as a taxpayer for 1809, 1811–18 in Ronald Vern Jackson, ed., New Jersey Tax Lists 1722–1822 (Salt Lake City: Accelerated Indesing [sic] Systems, 1981), 4:1985–88, 1990. Lawrence’s name is often misspelled, but his place of residence is consistently Randolph, New Jersey. There are no 1820 federal census records for New Jersey. In 1820, no Samuel Lawrence (or variation) appears in Palmyra in Jackson and Teeples, New York 1820 Census Index. However, Abner Cole appears in Palmyra (p. 99), suggesting that, had Samuel T. Lawrence been nearby, the legal-minded and patriotic Cole would probably have reminded his brother-in-law to register. Lawrence appears twice after 1820. The first is “Samuel F. [sic] Lawrence,” “1830 Federal Population Census,” 24, with age ranges that match Samuel T. Lawrence (40–50), Rachel Bryant Lawrence (30–40) and their daughter, Frances M. (15–20). The second is “LAWRENCE, SAMUEL P.” [sic] in Ronald Vern Jackson and Gary Ronald Teeples, eds., New York 1840 Census Index (Salt Lake City: Accelerated Indexing Systems, 1978), 534. Still, the earliest instance of a “Samuel T. Lawrence” in Palmyra is in the “List of Letters,” Western Farmer (Palmyra, New York), July 4, 1821.

44For Cole’s public service, see Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 2:223.

45Abner Cole described what lands he had available in a weekly advertisement entitled “For Sale,” Palmyra Register (Palmyra, New York), from June 30, 1818, to November 3, 1818. There were no buyers. Regarding Cole’s land transactions from his first in 1808 to when Samuel T. Lawrence was known to be in Western New York in 1821, sixteen acquisitions and three sales are found in the Ontario County Department of Records, Archives and Information Management, Hopewell, New York. Two purchases
hire workers to construct a ten-mile stretch. Perhaps Samuel was one of the four hundred who applied.

Or perhaps he worked directly for Abner Cole who, in 1820 became involved in the Great Embankment, one of the canal’s most ambitious undertakings. Cole received a $10,000 loan from the State of New York in 1820 for the creation of an iron forge. He erected his iron works less than eight miles west of Palmyra next to Irondequoit Creek in Perrinton, New York. Perhaps the state specified this location so that it would be handy to the Great Embankment. The original intent was to have the waters of the Erie Canal pass along a wooden aqueduct rising seventy feet over the Irondequoit Creek Val-

and one sale can also be found for the same time frame in the Wayne County Clerk’s Office, Lyons, New York

46 See “Erie Canal,” Ontario Repository (Canandaigua, N.Y.), May 16, 1820, reprinted May 24, 1820, under the same heading in the Geneva Gazette (Geneva, N.Y.) and the Palmyra Register.

47 Untitled item, Geneva Gazette, April 5, 1820: “The bills authorizing loans to George McClure and Abner Cole, have passed both houses.” See also “Titles of Acts,” Geneva Gazette (Geneva, N.Y.), May 10, 1820: “to authorize a loan of money to Abner Cole.” Cole’s iron works was first declared operational in “New Forge,” Palmyra Register (Palmyra, N.Y.), December 6, 1820. This notice was reprinted under the same heading in the Rochester Telegraph (Rochester, N.Y.), January 2, 1821.

48 Horatio Gates Spafford, “Perrinton, or Perrington,” in his A Gazetteer of the State of New York (Albany, N.Y.: B. D. Packard, 1824), 408: “Coles’s Iron Works, in the NW. Corner, on Irondequot creek, merit notice, but I have no account of the extent of the works, or the quality of the iron.” Cole ran a weekly advertisement entitled “Notice,” Ontario Repository (Canandaigua, N.Y.) January 2, 1821 to January 28, 1824: “THE subscriber informs the public, and the friends to ‘Home Manufactures’ in particular, that his IRON WORKS, on the Irondequot, in the town of Perinton, are now in operation, and that Wrought IRON, of a good quality, and of any description, may be had on short notice. A. COLE, Irondequot Iron Works, Dec. 25th, 1820.” A crow’s-flight over land was less than the eight miles listed in Samuel W. Shepard, Erie & Junction Canal Directory: Containing a List of the Principal Places on Said Canals, with Their Distance from Each Other, and from the Several Collector’s Offices (Little Falls, N.Y.: Griffing’s Press, 1825), broadsheet.

49 According to John W. Barber and Henry Howe, Historical Collections of the State of New York (New York: S. Tuttle for the authors, 1842), 266,
ley, but fears concerning its stability forced a change to an earth and stone embankment. Because Cole had the only iron forge in Perrinton, it is safe to say that he manufactured many of the items used in creating the Great Embankment, and he would have needed men.

Although this is speculation, Samuel Lawrence may have already had iron-working experience. Morris County had several iron mines. In fact, later in the nineteenth century, iron ore would be discovered next to Sylvanus’s Lawrenceville meeting place. Native Americans called an iron-rich area of Randolph “heavy stone,” from which the modern town of Succasunna derives its name. Jonathan Dickerson (born 1747), a relation of Samuel Lawrence on his mother’s side, purchased the Succasunna iron mine around 1779. It came to be known as the Dickerson mine, and Jonathan’s son, Mahlon (born 1770), acquired it in 1807 and turned it into one of New Jersey’s most prominent, its ore used at “one hundred forge fires.” By the time Samuel Lawrence reached New York, Mahlon Dickerson, after two terms as New Jersey’s governor, had been elected to the U.S.

the Great Embankment was the “greatest work on the canal.”


53 Wesley L. Baker, passim, has Jonathan Dickerson (and by extension, his sons Mahlon and Philemon), John Dickerson, Samuel Tyler Lawrence and his wife, Rachel Bryant, all being descended from Peter Dickerson, who was baptized July 9, 1648, in Salem, Massachusetts.

Although Samuel’s presence at Abner Cole’s ironworks is speculative, he was definitely a farmer and a treasure seeker. Joseph Knight Sr. documents: “He was a Seear and he had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them.”

No other contemporary document mentions Lawrence possessing a seer stone, scrying, using rods, etc., but it was their mutual interest in magical methods of seeking treasure that brought Sam Lawrence into contact with Joseph Smith.

**Samuel Tyler Lawrence in Palmyra**

When and how Samuel Lawrence became a “seear,” or exactly what seeric activities he engaged in is not known. He was one practitioner of a widely held belief that folk magic could reveal the presence of lost or buried valuables, including gold and/or silver treasure. (A modern remnant is water-dowsing with a forked branch or two L-shaped metal sticks.) The practice required a talented adept, who frequently stared intently at a seer stone placed in an upturned hat, blocking out the light with his or her hands. Money-digging was considered a risky business. The belief was that most buried treasure was guarded by spells which would make it “slippery” (cause it to sink deeper) if the seer did not recite the correct counter-charm, or even by the soul of a murdered treasure guardian who would rise terrifyingly to confront the treasure-seekers.

Samuel Tyler Lawrence would have grown up hearing about the

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57 I used many sources for this overview, but note two newspaper items available in the Palmyra/Manchester area during the peak period of its fascination with this phenomenon: (1) “Money Diggers,” a popular and somewhat sarcastic reprint from a Vermont paper, appeared in the *Palmyra Herald, and Canal Advertiser*, July 24, 1822, in the *Ontario Repository*
“Morristown Ghost,” a notorious abuse of this folk belief that occurred in 1788 when he was two. Ransford Rogers, a schoolmaster, launched a confidence scheme that embarrassed Morris County residents for years. He duped two consecutive groups of about forty men each with his claim that he could communicate with, and therefore appease, ghosts guarding buried Tory treasure. In November 1788, he led the first group into a field by night, ordered strict silence, and contained the men within protective concentric circles. He then conversed with the guardian “ghosts” (accomplices in sheets).

In 1789, Rogers again duped a second group of forty men, but this time attracted more established, church-going members of the community by giving religion an important role. Each meeting began with prayer on bended knee and often commanded, “Look to God!” After a drunken ghost left tracks in the snow to the schoolmaster’s door, Rogers was apprehended and incarcerated. Tellingly, his followers were outraged because the treasure could not be retrieved if Rogers were behind bars. Released on bail, he confessed his crimes but repeated his deception elsewhere. Though he was proven to be a fraud, it is safe to say that not all his followers were prepared to condemn money-digging altogether.

The list of those deceived by Rogers has been suppressed over the years. (Canandaigua, N.Y.), July 30, 1822, and again in The Farmer’s Diary, or Ontario Almanack, for the Year of Our Lord 1823 (ca. 1822), not paginated; (2) the more positive reprint from Orleans County, New York, “Wonderful Discovery,” Wayne Sentinel, December 27, 1825. For a detailed discussion on treasure-seeking in an early American context, see Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View.

David Young, The Wonderful History of the Morristown Ghost; Thoroughly and Carefully Revised (Newark, N.J.: J. C. Totten, 1826). Young’s work has been overlooked for years because it was not the first edition and mentions no names. He drew his information from an anonymous 1792 account, possibly lost. Young’s preface says he was true to the 1792 edition, while correcting its inaccuracies. Young grew up in Morristown and lectured throughout New Jersey on astronomy for decades, also providing almanac calculations.

Whether Sylvanus Lawrence was on that list or not, Samuel was raised in a community that believed in the supernatural. In fact, the residents’ search for a seer set the fraud in motion, since Rogers, teaching in Smith’s Clove, New York, moved to New Jersey only upon being assured that the position of schoolmaster was waiting for him.

The history and topography of Morris County probably lent credence to money-digging. General George Washington had made Morristown his winter headquarters in January 1777 and again in December 1779. Many troops found shelter with pro-independence residents, while the less fortunate lived in huts constructed without nails. As a boy, Samuel probably played among the fast-eroding earthworks, collapsed huts, and tottering chimneys. Finding artifacts would not be unexpected, and some ended up in a local museum.

One soldier, Elihu Bond, buried a chest of silverware and money, then returned and unearthed it after the war. Furthermore, there was always the chance of discovering another iron mine.

Palmyra’s drumlins (elongated mounds of glacial debris), were believed to be man made, their interiors containing treasure chambers guarded by spirits “in ancient dress.” The drumlins’ antiquity was visually attested to by stumps of trees as wide as six feet that had grown atop them. Local papers reflected and spurred local interest with stories about excavations of aboriginal mounds in Indiana.

For the few names known, see Philanthropist (pseud.), The Following Pages Are a Fac-Simile Copy of the Original History of the Morristown Ghost! Published in 1792 with Appendix Compiled from the County Records (Morristown, N.J.: L. A. Vogt/Dover, N.J.: B. H. Vogt, 1876), 37–41. Andrew M. Sherman, Historic Morristown, New Jersey: The Story of Its First Century (Morristown, N.J.: Howard Publishing, 1905), 412–14, claimed to have the list of names but waxes philosophical on why it was not included.

Sam’s older brother named his son, born May 4, 1806, after George Washington. Chambers, The Early Germans of New

Sherman, Historic Morristown, 286–87, reports Charles F. Axtell’s account of playing among the ruins; see also Bond’s account, 415–16.


On June 27, 2004, when I toured the Smith Family Farm, now an LDS visitors’ site, our guide pointed to large stumps, some up to six feet in diameter, and explained that they had been imported to demonstrate the tree size when the Smiths lived there. See also Daniel Fink, Barns of the
Ohio, and western New York and their artifacts. One article about an Ohio excavation speculated: “From these and many other similar discoveries, the writer believes (and we think with good reason) that this country was once inhabited by a race of people, at least, partially civilized, & that this race has been exterminated by the forefathers of the present and late tribes of Indians in this country.”

Joseph Knight lists Samuel Tyler Lawrence as part of a neighborhood group of money-diggers who believed in this ancient race and their buried valuables. Some members of this group were financially stable, showing that such beliefs were not confined to the poorer classes. No documentation exists of Lawrence being hired locally as a seer, but he could have supplemented his income by this

Genesee Country, 1790–1915 Including an Account of Settlement and Changes in Agricultural Practices (Geneseo, N.Y.: James Brunner, 1987), 54–57; and “Tennessee Antiquities,” Rochester (N.Y.) Gazette, August 22, 1820: “The trees growing where they [Indian antiquities] were found, are of as great size and age as any in the surrounding forest. Both at Mr. Anderson’s and Mr. Lane’s and many extensive circular, elevations of earth, raised two or three feet above the common surface, arranged in order, having the very appearance of once populous towns, upon which are standing large trees: on one of them, a poplar of five feet diameter at least.”


“Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859,” in Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 2:303–4: “There was a company there in that neighborhood, who were digging for money supposed to have been hidden by the ancients. Of this company were old Mr. Stowel—I think his name was Josiah—also old Mr. [Alvah] Beman, also Samuel Lawrence, George Proper, Joseph Smith, jr., and his father, and his brother Hiram Smith. They dug for money in Palmyra, Manchester, also in Pennsylvania, and other places.” Samuel T. Lawrence and the Smith family were not wealthy. Moreover, an untitled notice in the Western Farmer (Palmyra), October 24, 1821, declared George Proper an “insolvent debtor” and ordered him to appear in court December 11, 1821, to explain why he should not be incarcerated. In contrast, Beman and Stowell were men of property. For “Alva Beeman,” see a deed from James Hamilton, January 3, 1811, Liber 16, 280–81, Ontario County Department of Records, Archives & Information Management. For
means, for his fee would not have depended on whether any treasure was found.

A man who bolstered the money-diggers’ hopes of finding ancient treasure was Luman Walter (born ca. 1788). He was described as a clairvoyant, and it is possible he may have picked up his occult skills while traveling in Europe. Walter claimed that he had a book that was a record of America’s former inhabitants and from which he “interpreted” lengthy passages that told where they buried many treasures before their annihilation. Abner Cole later identified this book as Cicero’s *Orations* in Latin. Cole did not believe in or approve of the treasure quest, but he could have easily attended one of Walter’s publicity-seeking sessions, only to have his suspicions confirmed upon hearing Cicero’s words.

Perhaps an evolving, money-digging mythology can be teased out of a story Lawrence told Martin Harris about a dig that had to be abandoned when “a large man who appeared [to be] eight or nine feet high” sat on the ridge of a barn and “motioned” for them to leave. Giants as treasure guardians are a common motif in money-digging lore. Perhaps this motif drew from (or reinforced) newspaper reports of gigantic aboriginal skeletons, one of which was described as

Stowell’s “extensive land holdings,” see Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:82.


Abner Cole first described Walter’s act with Cicero in his satiric “The Book of Pukei.—Chap. 1,” *The Reflector* (Palmyra), June 12, 1830, 36–37. Eight months later, Cole reiterated and clarified this disclosure in the straightforward “Gold Bible, No. 5,” *Reflector*, February 28, 1831, 109. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 116–22, identifies “Walters the Magician” in the “Book of Pukei” as Luman Walter. Cole would have known some Latin as a result of his legal studies, but he also seemed to have studied it on his own. An untitled item in *The Reflector*, January 13, 1830, 21, reads: “We wish to have all communications addressed to us written in English, (except now and then a Latin quotation, which shows learning,) and more than one-third of the words must be spelt correctly—otherwise they will be condemned, without a hearing (reading) to the flames” (emphasis his).

Martin Harris, “Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859,” Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:305.

According to an unrelated New England story, a fortune-teller who
“nine or ten feet” tall.

One of the more involved digs took place circa 1822-23 in adjacent Manchester, where Willard Chase and Alvin Smith, Joseph’s older brother, believed that an iron chest was buried in a drumlin (later named Miner’s Hill). They hired Luman Walter who applied the necessary counter-charms by making “certain movements”—probably “drawing a circle around the laborers, with the point of an old rusty sword, and using sundry other incantations.” The chest was not retrieved. Samuel Lawrence is not mentioned as a participant, but the excavation was sizeable, suggesting a need for a large party of diggers, and Lawrence’s brother-in-law, Abner Cole, then owned Miner’s Hill. If the diggers sought Cole’s consent, Samuel Lawrence would have been a likely intermediary.


71 “Circleville, O[hio]., Aug. 20. Our Antiquities,” *Geneva Gazette*, September 18, 1822. See also an untitled reprint from Portsmouth, New Hampshire in the *Rochester Telegraph*, December 26, 1820: “He [the skeleton] must have been a man of uncommon size, measuring more than 7 feet; a very thick skull, and double teeth all round his upper jaw.” A vaguer report is “Curious Fact,” *Ontario Repository* (Canandaigua, N.Y.), July 30, 1822: “The great size of some of the thigh bones denotes men above the ordinary stature.”

72 Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 117, dates the Miner’s Hill dig to 1822–23. “Lorenzo Saunders Interview, 12 November 1884,” in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:152–54, 156–57, recounts the details of the iron chest, Luman Walter’s involvement, and his “certain movements.” Abner Cole wrote in “Gold Bible, No. 5,” *The Reflector*, February 28, 1831, 109, a description of Walter drawing the circle with the rusty sword point. He does not specify the location as Miner’s Hill but does state that Walter performed these maneuvers in Manchester, where Miner’s Hill is located.


74 Since the diggers expected to find something valuable on Cole’s
a chest of gold watches. Neighbor Joseph Capron explained the details: “Accordingly, orders were given to stick a parcel of large stakes in the ground, several rods around, in a circular form. This was to be done directly over the spot where the treasures were deposited. A messenger was then sent to Palmyra to procure a polished sword: after which, Samuel F. [sic] Lawrence, with a drawn sword in his hand, marched around to guard any assault which his Satanic majesty might be disposed to make. Meantime, the rest of the company were busily employed in digging for the watches.”

It is not known who owned the sword. I hypothesize that Lawrence created it, following Francis Barrett’s occult book *The Magus*, but have no documentation to either confirm or disprove it.

In the fall of 1823, Alvin Smith, suffered an untimely death from the misapplication of a remedy involving calomel (mercurous chloride). I argue that Alvin’s younger brother, Joseph, suffered greatly from this loss and may have turned to Samuel Lawrence as an older property, they would have been prudent to finalize with Cole, a strong-minded lawyer, his percentage of the find. A parallel situation would have been the 1825 contract entered into in Harmony, Pennsylvania, among diggers who included three of Samuel Tyler Lawrence’s treasure-seeking associates: Josiah Stowell, Joseph Smith Sr., and Joseph Smith Jr. “Articles of Agreement, 1 November 1825,” Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:407–13.

Francis Barrett, *The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer; Being a Complete System of Occult Philosophy*, 2 vols. bound in 1 (1801; reprinted, York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 2000), plate facing 2:106 (image of sword); 2:110 describes its construction. If Lawrence was familiar with Barrett, he may also have known Ebenezer Sibly, *A New and Complete Illustration of the Occult Sciences* (1784; reprinted, London: Champante and Whitrow, 1791), 1085, which describes how a silver mine in Germany had to be shut down because of the repeated appearances of “a horse, breathing fiery flames and pestilential vapours at his nostrils.” I see here a remote echo of Martin Harris’s report that Lawrence described “a company of horsemen” who came upon a company of treasure-diggers “and frightened them away.” “Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859,” Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:305.

brother figure, for the two men were closest between Alvin’s death and the Book of Mormon’s coming forth in 1829. Granted, this argument does not allow for the facts (1) that Joseph already had an older brother, Hyrum, five and a half years his senior, to whom he was already close, (2) that Samuel T. Lawrence, nineteen years Joseph’s senior was literally old enough to be his father, and (3) that Joseph Jr. left no direct statement about his relationship with this man whom mutual friend Lorenzo Saunders called his “very intimate acquaintance.”

I see three avenues by which this familiarity with Samuel T. Lawrence may have influenced the future Mormon prophet: Methodism, and German. First, it was about 1824–25 that Smith recalled: “I attended their [Methodist] several meetings <as often> as occasion would permit. But in process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them.” 78 Granted, this attraction is attributed to camp meetings, not to Samuel Lawrence, but Lawrence would have been a knowledgeable participant in conversations about Methodism. Second, the Smith family possessed an intricately drawn, magic parchment (or lamens) to protect their home. Its creator is not known, but I hypothesize that it was Lawrence. Some of the symbols that appear on it were apparently copied from Barrett and Sibly, two occult authors with whom, as discussed above, Lawrence may have been familiar. 79 Third, the lamens required “some facility with German,” 80 a language that Lawrence may (there is no direct evidence) have written or spoken. In case he did, Smith could have concluded that it contained an innate power; in 1842, Smith seized the opportu-
nity to study German for a time.\textsuperscript{81}

Joseph Smith visited Hill Cumorah shortly after midnight on September 22, 1823, but the Angel Moroni told him to return the following year, accompanied by his brother, Alvin. Alvin’s death made this requirement impossible to fulfill. When Joseph went alone, the angel instructed him to return the following year on the same night but with another companion. Joseph left an account of his 1825 visit, but Quinn suggests that Lawrence accompanied him.\textsuperscript{82} Neither Smith nor Lawrence left any record of a mission to Cumorah in each other’s company, but Willard Chase, who had participated in the Miner’s Hill episode, recalled:

Joseph believed that one Samuel T. Lawrence was the man alluded to by the spirit, and went with him to a singular looking hill, in Manchester, and shewed him where the treasure was. Lawrence asked him if he had ever discovered any thing with the plates of gold; he said no: he then asked him to look in his stone, to see if there was any thing with them. He looked, and said there was nothing; he told him to look again, and see if there was not a large pair of specks with the plates; he looked and soon saw a pair of spectacles, the same with which Joseph says he translated the Book of Mormon. Lawrence told him it would not be prudent to let these plates be seen for about two years, as it would make a great disturbance in the neighborhood. Not long after this, Joseph altered his mind, and said L. [Lawrence] was not the right man, nor had he told him the right place.\textsuperscript{83}

If Chase’s recollection is correct, then Church history was in striking agreement with Lawrence on two points: First, the “specks” (later called the Urim and Thummim) were needed to translate the plates; and second, Smith did wait two years before retrieving the plates from the hill, this time accompanied by his bride, Emma Hale Smith.

That 1825 trip up the hill seems to have been the two men’s most trusting moment. In the fall of 1826, Smith wanted to return

\textsuperscript{81}Ibid.; Scott H. Faulring, ed., \textit{An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith}, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), passim.

\textsuperscript{82}Quinn, \textit{Early Mormonism and the Magic World View}, 162.

to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where he had been engaged in a treasure-digging venture and had met and fallen in love with Emma Hale. However, he lacked the funds for the trip. Possibly he explained the situation to Lawrence and was rebuffed. Still, Smith told Lawrence that he had discovered a silver mine along that river at a spot where the ore could be easily accessed. He would share the profits with Lawrence, but only if Lawrence accompanied him. Finding a silver mine was not unreasonable per se to Lawrence. John Dickerson, his maternal relative (born 1755), was a silversmith who worked on material supposedly retrieved from a silver mine owned by a Morristown judge. Still, Lawrence demurred until Smith pledged himself to three years’ servitude if the mine was not found.

At that point, Lawrence agreed and the two set off. Once in Pennsylvania, Smith had the older Lawrence put in a good word for him to Isaac Hale. Hale, already hostile to a treasure-digging, prospective son-in-law, was unimpressed. Lawrence then wanted to find the silver mine. Of course, it could not be located. The relationship between the two men was never the same.

Joseph Smith eloped with Emma Hale on January 18, 1827. On September 22, she accompanied him to the Hill Cumorah and he successfully retrieved the Book of Mormon plates. According to Joseph Knight, however, Samuel Lawrence had been searching the hill for the plates. Smith, fearful that Lawrence might succeed, sent his father at dusk to watch Lawrence for any signs that he might be headed for the hill and, if so, to warn him that young Joseph would “thrash the stumps with him.” Neither father nor son encountered Lawrence that

84 “Willard Chase Statement, Circa 11 December 1833,” Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:69. The concept of readily available pure silver predates this episode. “Silver Mine,” *Palmyra Register*, August 16, 1820, states: “The ore is so pure that it can be drawn out with a hammer, into bars of almost any size, and is thought by some to be sufficiently pure in its natural state.” “From the Village Record,” *Western Farmer* (Palmyra), December 12, 1821, refers to silver ore “six feet thick, and pure metal” in Ohio. Whitney R. Cross, “Mormonism in the ‘Burned-Over District,’” *New York History*, July 1944, 332 note 16, commented, “Such ideas were common in this vicinity and elsewhere.”

evening.⁸⁶

A few days later, Joseph Jr. again sent his father to the Lawrence household where, under guise of reading a newspaper, Joseph Sr. eavesdropped on a secret meeting of the local money-diggers. Though Samuel may have no longer trusted Joseph Jr., this call suggests that he still had neighborly feelings about other members of the Smith family.⁸⁷ Samuel Lawrence and Luman Walter were in attendance, but Willard Chase was in charge, leading the discussion on finding where Smith had secreted the plates. Rachel Lawrence, aware of Joseph Sr.’s ploy, stepped into the yard and called in a suppressed voice to her husband, “Sam, Sam, you are cutting your own throat.” Upon learning that they may have been discovered, Walter proclaimed that he would find the plates “in spite of Joe Smith or all the Devils in Hell.” When Rachel went back inside, Joseph Sr. pretended he had heard nothing and departed.⁸⁸

The local treasure-seekers attempted to find the plates before and after, but not during the night of September 22. They may have thought it would be easier to let Smith retrieve the plates, and then convince him to cut them in. Another reason may have been a variant of the Scots belief that inhabitants of the unseen world must find a new place to dwell on the eve of each change of season; the autumnal equinox was September 22. Such terrifying entities could be


⁸⁷Lorenzo Saunders mentions going with Samuel Lawrence to the Smith farm to eat sugar in March, and, with some prodding, dated the year at 1827—in other words, after Joseph had lured Lawrence to Pennsylvania in 1826. This episode shows evidence of friendly relations with the family, regardless of Lawrence’s feelings about young Joseph. The problem with Saunders’s account is that he claims Sidney Rigdon was also present, although Rigdon apparently did not come to Palmyra/Manchester until three years later—ca. December 1830–January 1831. Lorenzo Saunders, Interviews, September 17, 1884, September 20, 1884, and November 12, 1884, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:128; 2:142–44; and 2:151. For a detailed, contemporary description of sugaring, see “Maple Sugar,” *The Farmer’s Diary*, not paginated.

seen by seers and those with second sight. In fact, Smith later recounted being accosted by supernatural forces while retrieving the plates.

Joseph Knight reports that Lawrence, accompanied by fellow money-digger, Alva Beeman, a “grate rodsman,” tried to bargain with Smith for a share of the plates. He refused, to their displeasure, but Beeman correctly divined that the plates were buried under the hearth. This encounter demonstrates, not only that relations between Lawrence and Joseph Smith were strained, but also that he and others viewed the plates as monetarily valuable, not as religious objects.

Lawrence is never mentioned as having a serious interest in Mormonism, which is easy to understand. He was securely Methodist, he mistrusted and resented Joseph Smith, and he probably saw parallels between Smith’s religious claims and how Ransford Rogers suddenly “got religion.” Finally, if Lawrence had accepted this new faith, it would mean the inversion of their relationship, with the younger

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89 Robert Kirk, a Scottish clergyman, recorded this folk belief in 1691, a manuscript that was not published until 1815: “They remove to other Lodgings at the Beginning of each Quarter of the Year. . . . Their chamæleon-lyke Bodies swim in the Air near the Earth with Bag and Bagadge; and at such revolution of Time, SEERS, or Men of the SECOND SIGHT, (Fæmales being seldome qualified) have very terrifying Encounters with them, even on High Ways; who therefor usually shune to travell abroad at these four Seasons of the Year.” Robert Kirk, The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies (1893; reprinted, Stirling, Scotland: Observer Press, 1933), 67-69.


91 “Joseph Knight, Sr., Reminiscence, Circa 1835–1847,” in Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 4:16.

92 C. C. Blatchly, “Caution against The Golden Bible,” New-York Telescope (New York City), February 20, 1830, claimed: “The whole of the plates are said to weigh about thirty pounds; which would be in gold near eight thousand dollars, beside the value of the engraving.” This sum would explain Lawrence’s keen interest. Although Blatchly does not say how he came up with this figure, he quotes heavily from the now-missing Palmyra Freeman. The New-York Telescope is in the Huntington Historical Society, Huntington, New York.
man becoming his mentor. Any combination of these factors could have tainted Mormonism as a distasteful proposition for Lawrence. In contrast, Luman Walter was a temporary convert and Alva Beeman was a permanent one. However, local converts were few and opposition grew with Samuel T. Lawrence’s brother-in-law, Abner Cole, becoming one of the new faith’s most vocal critics.

Abner Cole’s iron works failed to prosper. He defaulted on his loan to the state, resulting in the seizure and resale of some of his land in 1822 by Sheriff Samuel Lawrence (no relation to Samuel Tyler Lawrence). In 1824, Sheriff Lawrence again auctioned Cole’s property, this time including his law office on Palmyra’s main street. In 1825, the state attorney general auctioned off more Cole land. In 1826, Cole sold more property and paid off another debt, which apparently stabilized his financial situation. The Coles retained their “Bower”

93Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View, 124, calls Samuel Lawrence an “early New York convert to Mormonism,” but he does not give his source. It was almost certainly Pomeroy Tucker’s statement that “Samuel Lawrence” was among the “pioneer Mormon disciples.” After making this statement, however, Tucker then calls the list merely “persons residing at or near the prime seat of the Mormon advent.” Still, Lawrence’s place as second on Tucker’s list cannot be ignored, reinforcing the previous relationship between him and Joseph Jr. “Pomeroy Tucker Account, 1867,” in Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 3:106–9.

94An untitled notice announced the resale of Cole’s property in Western Farmer (Palmyra, edited by T. C. Strong), March 20, 1822, repeated weekly through June 12, 1822. With the next issue, the publisher changed the name of his paper to the Palmyra Herald, and Canal Advertiser, and the announcement continued to run through September 4, 1822. The auction was held September 5. See mortgage, Liber 1, 6–7, Wayne County Clerk’s Office, Lyons, New York. “Samuel Lawrence late sheriff of the County of Ontario” seized and resold the property of Abner Cole, Asa R. Swift and Zebulon Williams in an auction April 10, 1822. Deed, Liber 3, 46–48.

95Untitled notice of default, Wayne Sentinel, repeated weekly with five postponements from January 7, 1824, through August 18, 1824. Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 2:153.


97Herman H. Bogert, assignee of insolvent debtors Joel and Levi
(home) on Winter Green Hill.\footnote{98}

Abner Cole, former iron works proprietor,\footnote{99} reinvented himself as the editor of the freethinking \textit{Reflector}, which first appeared on September 2, 1829. Seventeen-year-old L. W. Cole was first the “printer’s devil” (apprentice) and eventually his father’s foreman.\footnote{100} The paper lived up to its name, with topics reflecting humanity at its best (biographies, arts, and sciences) and its worst (gossip). Cole also attacked such popular movements as temperance and political anti-Masonry, although he believed his paper to be politically neutral, probably to avoid alienating subscribers.\footnote{101} Although no documentation identifies Cole as a Mason, I think he was and therefore attacked

\begin{itemize}
  \item Thayer, vs. Abner Cole, was settled when Cole paid “$646 by sale of lands.” Supreme Court, 1821–1828, May 24, 1826, Ontario County Department of Records, Archives & Information Management.
  \item An untitled notice, \textit{The Reflector}, September 30, 1829, 17, tells of armed, “pugnacious fellows” failing to locate the Cole residence the week prior. “The Bower,” ibid., October 14, 1829, 28, is a tongue-in-cheek but affectionate poem that seems to have been written by Fanny Cole.
  \item In the 1830s, Abner Cole’s paper published two references to iron. Untitled item, \textit{Liberal Advocate} (Rochester), November 17, 1832, 115: “Men like iron, must first be heated before they can be wrought upon.” See also an argument in favor of iron, not wood, shutters, in “Iron Window Shutters,” ibid., June 14, 1834, 28.
  \item If L. W. Cole was born in 1812 and started working for his father in 1829, then \textit{Portrait and Biographical Album of Calhoun County, Michigan}, 720, is correct: “When seventeen years old he [L. W. Cole] learned the printer’s trade, and so competent was he found to be, that at the expiration of eighteen months he was made foreman of the office.” \textit{The Reflector} makes no mention of L. W.’s promotion but acknowledged eight months into its run that the apprentice had sometimes been forced to act as foreman. “Our Own Affairs,” \textit{The Reflector}, April 19, 1830, 128–29.
  \item “To the Public,” \textit{The Reflector}, September 2, 1829, 1, claimed: “In politics we belong to no particular sect or party, and shall never interfere, any further than may (at the time) suit our own whim or fancy; and we shall, at all times, assume the prerogative of taking under our fatherly care and protection, any political demagogue, without distinction, who from turpitude, may require chastisement.” According to \textit{Portrait and Biographical Album of Calhoun, Michigan}, 720: “Politically he [Abner Cole] was a Democrat of the old Jacksonian stamp.” His relation by marriage, Mahlon Dickerson, was an influential Democrat, considered for a time as Andrew Jackson’s
anti-Masonry. Cole signed his articles O. Dogberry, lifted, undoubtedly, from Shakespeare’s comic constable in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Cole took a strong stand against what he saw as religious excesses, with Joseph Smith and Mormonism as frequent but not exclusive targets. He once compared Smith to Ransford Rogers and the Morristown Ghost. He and Smith obviously knew each other (*The Reflector* was printed on the press of E. B. Grandin, the Book of Mormon’s printer), but they did not know each other well or travel in the same social circles. This is why the “Book of Pukei” (June and July 1830) a confidently penned parody of early Mormon activities, has proven so puzzling. Its claims could be dismissed if not for their reiteration and clarification in the straightforward “Gold Bible, No. 4” (February 1831).

“Gold Bible” recounts the discovery of the gold plates without any mention of religion. Instead, it portrays Joseph Smith as successfully summoning the spirit responsible for guarding the treasure chambers. The spirit promises that, if certain conditions are met, he will deliver a book describing the ancient race and the location of their treasure. After handing over the book, the spirit desperately tries to wrest it back, but Smith clings to his prize. Cole states this was

running-mate. See weekly announcements, *Wayne Sentinel*, September 20, 1831, (“Republican Ticket”) through May 9, 1832 (“Republican Nominations”). On June 6, 1832, the same publication ran an untitled letter from Dickerson withdrawing his name for consideration.

The most convincing argument that Cole was a Mason is the pro-Masonic stance of *The Reflector*. It uses Masonry’s coded language (“Almighty architect, of the Universe”) in “Comets,” *The Reflector*, August 4, 1830, 82. I infer a form of guilt by association since an untitled item in *The Countryman* (Lyons, N.Y.), September 7, 1830, condemned “the printer of the [Wayne] Sentinel and his coadjutors” for being Masons. Cole used the same press as the *Wayne Sentinel*. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:223.

This pseudonym was recently employed by one of Abner Cole’s descendants, when the return address for a residential street in California was given the tongue-in-cheek description of “O. Dogberry IV Citrus Ranch.” Forrest Dickerson “Dick” Nowlin, Goleta, Calif., to Frank Passic, Albion, Mich., May 3, 1989, 1 p. typescript, Local History section, Albion Public Library, Albion, Mich.

“Gold Bible,” *The Reflector*, January 6, 1831, 76.
the version about finding the gold plates that Joseph Smith and his father first told.\textsuperscript{105}

It seems unlikely that Abner Cole would have heard this story directly from the Smiths, so his most likely source was Samuel Tyler Lawrence, former treasurer-seeker with the Smiths and Cole’s brother-in-law. The Reflector offered him anonymity in airing his distrust of Joseph Smith Jr., yet let him stay on friendly terms with the rest of the family.

By late March 1830, copies of the Book of Mormon were available for purchase in Palmyra. Its almost six hundred pages describes the journey of ancient Israelites to the Americas, the flowering of their civilization,\textsuperscript{106} their visitation by Jesus Christ, and ultimately, their eradication in a battle at the base of Hill Cumorah.

The month after Joseph Smith organized his new church, Samuel Lawrence also went on to a new venture. By May 1830, he was operating a “bathing house” on the same property as his “dwelling house.”\textsuperscript{107} Available year-round and at a moment’s notice were warm and cold bathing and showering.\textsuperscript{108} When someone damaged this structure, Cole published a threat: “The person who lately behaved so

\textsuperscript{105}Compare “Book of Pukei.—Chap. 2,” The Reflector July 7, 1830, 60, and “Gold Bible, No. 4.” ibid., February 14, 1831, 100–101. See also Cole’s “Fortune Telling,” Liberal Advocate (Rochester, N.Y.), January 12, 1833, 12: “We shall mention the ridiculous farce of the mormonites;—an imposition that had its origin in ‘money digging,’ fortune telling, and an acquaintance with, and a belief in ‘familiar [sic] spirits.’”

\textsuperscript{106}According to Cross, “Mormonism in the ‘Burned-Over District,’ 332 note 16: “The idea of a pre-Indian civilization stemming from the lost tribes of Israel was . . . commonplace, with a history running back at least to William Penn.”

\textsuperscript{107}Deed, Liber 15, 314–18, Wayne County Clerk’s Office: the “Lawrence lot, with a dwelling house and bathing house thereon” which was “formerly occupied by said Lawrence” was auctioned for $200 on July 11, 1834; see also Deed, Liber 14, 472–75; “In Chancery—Before the Vice Chancellor of the Seventh Circuit,” Wayne Sentinel, May 23, 1834, through July 11, 1834, with the last instance adding a postponement. All of these sources refer to “Samuel T. Lawrence.”

\textsuperscript{108}These advertisements read: “The Palmyra Bathing-House is now in operation, for showering. Warm and cold baths provided on short notice” The Reflector, May 1 and 21, 1830, 8, through September 4, 1830. Running
ungenteel at the Palmyra Bathing house is ********* is informed that if he calls and makes immediate reparation his name will be withheld from the public.”109 The damage was apparently minor because Lawrence’s weekly advertisements continued without interruption. Only a year later, Lawrence was able to remodel the facility.110

Yet another possible intersection between Lawrence and Mormonism occurred when he reportedly met Sidney Rigdon, a convert from Kirtland, Ohio, who worked closely with Smith during the Church’s early years and was a contender as Smith’s successor when the Prophet was killed in 1844. Rigdon came to Palmyra in December 1830 to learn more about his newfound faith and its prophet. Neighbor Lorenzo Saunders (born 1811) recalled that he was cutting corn for Samuel Lawrence one day when Rigdon called on him. The three ate supper together, then Lawrence and Rigdon went into another room for a private conversation.111 Saunders gives no details about this conversation; however, when Rigdon interviewed other neighbors who criticized the Smiths’ integrity or the validity of the Book of

concurrently was “Bathing House,” Wayne Sentinel, July 23, 1830, through November 12, 1830: “S.T. LAWRENCE has put this establishment in complete order for warm or cold Bathing and showering. Baths will be prepared, at all seasons, and at a moment’s notice.”


110a “Bathing,” Wayne Sentinel, June 10, 1831, through October 4, 1831: “S. T. LAWRENCE, having refitted and put in operation his BATHING ESTABLISHMENT, will be ready at all hours to accommodate such as may wish to minister to their health or comfort in that way, with Warm or Cold BATHS, of pure SPRING or MINERAL WATER—And also SHOWERING. June 14, 1831. 403.” This notice did not run on June 24, August 20, and September 6. Samuel’s father died on August 16 and his niece Jemima D. on August 22.

111 Saunders’s report has a major obstacle. Rigdon was apparently in Palmyra only around December 1830–January 1831, while Saunders states that he was cutting corn for Lawrence “in the summer of 1828 . . . just before harvest.” Harvesting corn can take place any time from late summer until well into the winter, as long as the storms of autumn and winter do not flatten or cover up the stalks. “Lorenzo Saunders to Thomas Gregg, January 28, 1885,” Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 3:177. For techniques for cutting corn in December, see LeBart Beck, The Book, http://www.bartbeck.com/page32.html (accessed April 4, 2004).
Mormon, he dismissed such accusations as prejudice.\(^{112}\) Neither of Rigdon’s biographers mention a possible encounter between him and Lawrence, probably because Saunders’s recollections more than fifty years after the event seem confused.\(^{113}\) Still, his four interviews offer valuable information, including a scaled-down version of the Susquehanna silver mine story, punctuated with “Sam Lawrence told me so.”\(^{114}\) Saunders also claims that he attended Rigdon’s badly received pro-Mormon sermon at the Palmyra Young Men’s Association,\(^{115}\) meaning he could identify the preacher by sight. Before January’s end, Rigdon, Joseph, Smith, and his wife, Emma, journeyed west to Kirtland.\(^{116}\)

By February 1832, Abner Cole had moved to the booming flour city of Rochester, twenty-nine miles west of Palmyra down the Erie Canal.\(^{117}\) He set up an office at 24 Reynolds Arcade, arguably western New York’s premiere building at the time. He renamed his weekly paper the  *Liberal Advocate* and moderated the tone somewhat by removing the gossip columns. Like many other editors, he relied on agents, mostly postmasters it seems, to collect subscriber fees. Postmaster “M. W. Wilcox” was one agent for Palmyra, the other was “S. T. Lawrence.”\(^{118}\) Agents received a commission, implying that Abner trusted


\(^{115}\)Ibid., 2:131. For another person’s remembrances of Rigdon preaching, see Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5:451: 3:70–71 (“Pomeroy Tucker Reminiscence, 1858”); and 3:122–24 (“Pomeroy Tucker Account, 1867”). For dating this sermon to late December 1830, see Vogel, 2:“Appendix B: Chronology, 1771–1831.”


\(^{117}\)Shepard, *Erie & Junction Canal Directory*.

\(^{118}\)Lawrence is listed in the first nineteen appearances of the “Agents for the Advocate” list, *Liberal Advocate*, May 5–November 17, 1832. (Agents were not listed for August 4, September 1, and December 8, 1832.) “S. T. Lawrence” no longer appears from January 1, 1833, on. The final publica-
Samuel and/or felt obligated to help him out financially.\textsuperscript{119}

Samuel’s career as an agent ended, for unknown reasons, with his last appearance on the agents’ list on November 17, 1832. On April 17, 1833, Lawrence was indicted in Wayne County for “fraudulently secreting property.”\textsuperscript{120} The proximity of the two events invites speculation that they were related.\textsuperscript{121} The \textit{Liberal Advocate} does not comment directly on either event, but perhaps an indirect observation appears in this statement: “The wretch who betrays his companions, even in infamy, to gratify his revengeful temper, without any particular wish to promote the ends of justice, deserves to share the fate of his accomplice in crime, and his breach of confidence

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item[119]\textsuperscript{a} Terms,” \textit{Liberal Advocate}, February 23, 1832, 1, states: “One dollar per series (or sixteen numbers.) payable in advance, or on the delivery of the 8th number.—Post Masters and others who will become agents, shall receive a liberal commission.” He had previously established a similar policy with \textit{The Reflector}. Notice May 21, 1830, 21. He may have been referring to Samuel T. Lawrence in “Things I Dislike,” \textit{The Reflector}, January 22, 1830, 27: “I dislike to be troubled with my poor relations” (emphasis his).
  \item[120]\textsuperscript{b} Vogel, \textit{Early Mormon Documents}, 1:351–32 note 147, states that this indictment is in the Oyer and Terminder Minutes, 1824–45, 92, Wayne County Courthouse, Lyons, New York. Since Vogel’s volume was published, the record has been recatalogued and relocated: Oyer and Terminder Minutes No. 1, 1824–45, 9/8/1823–8/21/1843, Book 1, Office of the [Wayne] County Historian, Lyon. The grand jury adjourned on October 5, 1832 (p. 89), and reconvened April 15, 1833 (p. 90), framing the period for the complaint against Lawrence. Lawrence is the first and only person charged with “fraudulently secreting property” between 1824 and 1837. For a legal analysis, see the appendix to this article.
  \item[121]\textsuperscript{c} In support of the untrustworthy agent argument, another paper from the same era describes the actions of one of its former agents and the grief he caused in the Penn Yan, New York, area. See an untitled announcement in the \textit{Rochester Gem and Ladies’ Amulet} (Rochester, N.Y.), May 16, 1835, 79: “One or two subscribers there, we have been informed, did actually pay for the 5th vol. to the then agent, Mr. T. H. B. [Th. H. Basset] and he pocketed and kept the money, together with other sums received of subscribers residing in other towns: this can be shown by his own and others’ letters in our hands.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
alone, should operate as an impeachment of his credibility.” 122 No trial was docketed, suggesting that the charges could not be substantiated, that Lawrence settled out of court, or that he had already left the vicinity.

**THE LAWRENCES IN OSWEGO, NEW YORK**

In late 1833, Doctor Philastus Hurlbut, an excommunicated Mormon, arrived in Palmyra and Manchester from Ohio. Eber D. Howe had employed him to gather information for a book intended to damage the credibility of the Smith family and of Mormonism. Hurlbut interviewed Palmyra neighbors and collected their sworn affidavits.

The finished book, *Mormonism Unvailed* (sic) (1834), names Samuel Lawrence but does not include an affidavit from either him or Abner Cole. 123 Cole had moved to Rochester by February 1832, 124 but if Hurlbut traveled to Palmyra by the Erie Canal, a logical route, Rochester would have been on the way. Further, Cole himself may have visited Palmyra on November 9, 1833, 125 a day after Joseph Capron gave his statement about Lawrence and the magic sword. Cole and Howe apparently began communicating with each

122“Common Informers,” Liberal Advocate, January 21, 1833, 20. However, in “To the People of Rochester,” same edition, 18, Cole accuses unidentified Rochesterians of being “common informers,” which suggests that his first denunciation was a local issue, not related to Lawrence’s indictment.


125On November 9, 1833, Abner and Fanny W. Cole of Rochester, made a deed to sell land in Palmyra to Truman Heminway of that town, Liber 13, 463–64, Wayne County Clerk’s Office. This transaction occurred during a two-week gap in the Liberal Advocate’s publication (November 1–16, 1833). The document also states the Coles appeared before the clerk, most likely in Lyons, on November 28, 1833, to have the sale recorded—the day after the publication of the following issue. Rochester, Palmyra, and Lyons were all connected by the Erie Canal.
other as early as 1830–31. Perhaps Cole was uninterested, or perhaps he advised Hurlbut off the record. The *Liberal Advocate* remained silent about Hurlbut, while other papers mentioned his whereabouts and activities.

Samuel Tyler Lawrence’s absence from *Mormonism Unveiled* is easily explained. After his indictment in April 1833 and by autumn of the same year, Samuel and his brother Daniel moved their families to Oswego, New York, a small town near the southeast corner of Lake Ontario, about forty miles east of Palmyra. Daniel purchased his first piece of property there on October 4, 1833. On November 1, 1833, Samuel signed a 999-year lease with Alvin Bronson, president of the Oswego Canal Company. The brothers planned to own and operate a cedar sawmill on the Oswego River. They would make railroad ties from Canadian timber, then raft the timbers down the Hudson River to use in constructing the first railroad between Jersey City and Newark. A formidable obstacle along this eight-mile stretch between the two cities was “the Meadows” (actually, marshes). Dirt fill

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128 Deed, October 4, 1833, from Samuel Hawley to Daniel Lawrence, Liber P, 343–44, Oswego County Clerk’s Office.

129 Deed between the Oswego Canal Company and “Samuel T. Lawrence,” November 1, 1833, Liber 56, 75–76, Oswego County Clerk’s Office. That Samuel completed this transaction, rather than Daniel or his son George Washington, suggests he was not just a mill hand, but helped run the operation. However, “G. W. Lawrence” is listed above “S. T. Lawrence” on whom to contact regarding space to rent above their machine shop in “To Mechanics,” *Oswego Palladium*, March 18, 1835. The length of the lease seems to be legalese for “forever,” expressed more poetically as “nine hundred and ninety nine years or while timber continues to grow or water to run” in an unrelated deed from Chandler Maltby [Sr.], May 1, 1832, designates part of his land as a community cemetery. Liber 26, 171–72, Monroe County Clerk’s Office, Rochester, New York.

130 Baker, *Dickerson & Dickinson*, 265–66; Lawrence, “Continuing the
and thousands of cedar ties were needed to create a stable foundation for the railway. This arduous and costly undertaking was a joint venture of the Paterson & Hudson River Railroad Company and the New Jersey Rail Road & Transportation Company.\(^\text{131}\) President of the first company was Philemon Dickerson,\(^\text{132}\) the younger brother of Mahlon Dickerson. It is quite possible that the Lawrence brothers received orders for railroad ties through this family connection. Their sawmill must have proved successful, for in August 1834, Daniel purchased more property, either on land adjoining the mill, or the mill site itself.\(^\text{133}\)

On Saturday, July 11, 1835, Samuel and Rachel Lawrence’s daughter, Frances Maria, married Joseph Parsons Whitney in a ceremony conducted by a Methodist minister, Rev. Salisbury.\(^\text{134}\) Three days later, Samuel and Rachel signed a seven-year mortgage. It was

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\(^{132}\)Philemon Dickerson frequently appears in Walter Arndt Lucas, *From the Hills to the Hudson: A History of the Paterson and Hudson River Rail Road and Its Associates the Paterson and Ramapo, and the Union Railroads* (New York: Mullens-Tutrone Co. for the Railroadians of America, 1944), esp. 60–61 (appointment March 30, 1831, as president) and 76 (re-elected in 1832).

\(^{133}\)Deed, August 6, 1834, Liber 26, 453, Oswego County Clerk’s Office (Daniel Lawrence’s purchase of lot 13 in block 81 in East Oswego for $4,000). The seller was Gerrit Smith, who later became famous as an abolitionist, philanthropist, and U.S. Congressman.

\(^{134}\)“Married,” Oswego Palladium, July 15, 1835. This notice mistakenly gives the day as “Sunday, the 11th.” The 11th was a Saturday. Salisbury’s denomination is identified, not in this notice, but in another “at the First
the closest they would come to owning land again; but during the Panic of 1837, they defaulted on their 1838 payment and their land was sold at auction.\(^\text{135}\) In the early hours of October 5, 1835, a fire burned several buildings, including the Lawrence sawmill. Samuel lost 150 cords of red cedar, but Daniel lost an uninsured $5,000. Despite this financial blow, the obviously better off Daniel purchased more property for $5,300 the month after the fire.\(^\text{136}\) The Lawrences apparently brought a new sawmill quickly into operation, for the New Jersey Railroad & Transportation Company bought “Cedar Ties on acc’t” for $5,000.14 on November 30, 1836, from “Lawrence & Whitney.”\(^\text{137}\) The name suggests a Lawrence/Whitney partnership, probably with Samuel’s son-in-law, Joseph P. Whitney, as bookkeeper.\(^\text{138}\)

Methodist E. Church.” “Married,” Oswego Daily Palladium, October 4, 1855. He is identified as “of the West Methodist Church” in “Localities,” Oswego Daily Palladium, December 29, 1855. I consider the differences in the names to represent spelling variations, not different men.

\(^{135}\) Mortgage, July 14, 1835, to “Samuel T Lawrence . . . and Rachel his wife” from William J. Proctor, Liber H, 90–91, Oswego County Records Retention Center, Oswego; deed, November 2, 1838, with defendant “Samuel T Lawrence and Rachel his wife” and complainant William I. Boder, Liber 28, 240–42, Oswego County Clerk’s Office.

\(^{136}\) Untitled article, Oswego Palladium, October 6, 1835; Deed November 12, 1835, Liber W, 265–66, Oswego County Clerk’s Office. Coincidentally, the seller was Richard L. DeZeng, the older brother of Phillip M. DeZeng, a constable who had arrested Joseph Smith Jr. nine years earlier in Chenango County, New York. Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 4:263. For the relationship, see E. B. O’Callaghan, “The Descendants of Frederick August, Baron De Zeng,” New York Genealogical and Biographical Record 5, no. 1 (January 1874), 8.

\(^{137}\) “Report, N.J. Railroad and Transportation Co.,” American Railroad Journal, and Advocate of Internal Improvements (New York City), February 4, 1837, 71; also in Lawrence, “Continuing the Line of Doty-Lawrence Family,” 9A.

\(^{138}\) Joseph Whitney’s profession appears in The Oswego City Business and Residence Directory, and Compendium of Useful Information (Oswego, N.Y.: Printed by Richard Oliphant for Knorr & Hancock/William Hancock), for 1852–53 (261); 1854–55 (121); 1856 (129); 1857 (140). Title varies.
When Abner Cole died on July 13, 1835, in Rochester,\textsuperscript{139} his survivors apparently affiliated more closely with the Lawrences, underscoring how emotionally close Fanny remained to her brothers despite the geographical distance. In August 1836, declaring herself a resident of Oswego, she sold her remaining land in Palmyra.\textsuperscript{140} Daniel died the following year on June 26, 1837, at age sixty-four.\textsuperscript{141}

In 1837, L. W. Cole moved to Port Ontario, a new harbor town whose promoters claimed would rival Oswego. Apparently his mother, Fanny, and sister, Frances Ann, both resided with him there, for his career as publisher of the \textit{Port Ontario Aurora} was bookended by their weddings.\textsuperscript{142} On October 16, 1837, Frances Ann married George R. Parburt in Port Ontario while, in about February 1838, Fanny Cole married Israel Jones, a widower and early settler in the area.\textsuperscript{143} Around February 1838, L. W. Cole, perhaps realizing that Port Ontario was not blossoming as promised, resigned from the pa-

\textsuperscript{139}``Died,'' \textit{Rochester Daily Democrat}, July 15, 1835; ``Died,'' \textit{Wayne Sentinel}, July 17, 1835; both in Vogel, \textit{Early Mormon Documents}, 2:223. Abner and Fanny Cole had probably attended Frances Maria’s wedding to Joseph Whitney on Saturday, July 11, then returned by steamboat to Rochester. Rochester and Oswego papers routinely printed timetables, and an untitled editorial praises this form of speedy travel, \textit{Oswego Palladium}, July 22, 1835.

\textsuperscript{140}Deed to Henry Jessup, August 10, 1836, Liber 21, 272-73, Wayne County Clerk’s Office.


\textsuperscript{142}``L. W. Cole'' is listed as issuing ``the first copy of a good sized paper, called \textit{The Port Ontario Aurora},'' in Crisfield Johnson, \textit{History of Oswego County, New York, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers} (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1878), 209. An untitled item, \textit{Oswego Commercial Herald}, November 8, 1837, proclaims: ``We have received the first number of a new paper published at Port Ontario, in this county, called the \textit{Port Ontario Aurora},'' while an untitled item, \textit{Oswego Palladium}, February 28, 1838, announces: ``J. E. Van Cleve, Editor, and L. W. Cole, publisher of the \textit{Port Ontario Aurora} have both withdrawn from that paper.''

\textsuperscript{143}``Married,'' \textit{Wayne Sentinel}, November 15, 1837. I found no date or
per and eventually moved to Michigan.\textsuperscript{144}

In 1844, L.W. entered into a partnership to publish the \textit{Michigan Argus} in Ann Arbor. Ten years later, he sold out and moved to Albion, Michigan, where, in 1855, he founded the \textit{Albion Weekly Mirror}.\textsuperscript{145} Unlike his father, L.W. made politics a major topic. His devotion to the Democratic Party was so strong that he even defended controversial, “copperhead” (anti-union/pro-slavery) views during the Civil War. His younger brother, James Madison Cole (born 1819), edited the \textit{Ann Arbor Journal}, a proudly Republican publication.\textsuperscript{146}

Both papers reprinted items about Mormons from other papers, but added little or no commentary. The few original items about

place for the marriage of Fanny W. Cole and Israel Jones, but the two settled financial matters beforehand in a deed on February 15, 1838, Liber 27, 46, Oswego County Clerk’s Office. A deed, December 8, 1846, Liber 45, 331–32, refers to them as husband and wife. Israel Jones’s death date of September 9, 1847, is recorded in “Died,” \textit{Richland Courier} (Pulaski, N.Y.), September 15, 1847; reprinted with the same title, \textit{Oswego Palladium}, September 21, 1847.


\textsuperscript{145}The announcement of L.W. Cole’s partnership appears in the November 20, 1844, number; for his departure, see “Valedictory,” June 29, 1854. \textit{History of Washtenaw County, Michigan} (Chicago: Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1881), 556–57, mentions the newspaper but misspells the name of one partner, \textit{Gardiner}, as \textit{Gardner}. This source also identifies Cole as a Mason (1184). For Cole’s plans for his new paper, see “To The Public,” \textit{Albion Weekly Mirror}, October 11, 1855.

\textsuperscript{146}The first and last editions of the \textit{Ann Arbor Journal} (Ann Arbor, Mich.) during James M. Cole’s tenure are missing; however, “To The Pub-
the Mormons had a negative tone. For example, editors James M. Cole and Ezra C. Seaman described the Mormons as “deluded” in 1857 and 1858 notices and strongly supported the anti-polygamy Morrill Bill (1862): “We hope it will become a law, for we regard the Mormons as the most despicable and corrupt people, their women the most downtrodden and disgraced, and their Priesthood as the greatest hypocrites and tyrants of modern times.”\(^{147}\)

Also predictably, L. W. Cole looked upon seers and treasure-seeking with the utmost skepticism. Splashed across five columns on the front page on November 11, 1845, was an original story: “Money Digging. Or Obediah’s Last Effort.”\(^{148}\) He claimed it was a true story of old New England; however, its many in-jokes about Abner Cole, Luman Walter, and Ransford Rogers reveals it as a grand pastiche of what he saw and heard while growing up in Palmyra. The plot involves an attempt to retrieve chests filled with gold from “Roger’s meadow,” named after the man who buried it there—possibly an allusion to Ransford Rogers. The main character is Obediah, no doubt a nod to Abner Cole’s pseudonym, but he is no acerbic skeptic. Perhaps L. W. Cole modeled Obediah on his uncle, Samuel T. Lawrence, for the character steadfastly and methodically goes about preparing for the dig, never questioning the validity of the overall premise.

As the story begins, Obediah orders new mineral rods for a dig at Roger’s meadow, instructing the blacksmith on the “mysterious manner” they are to be created. Afterwards, he obtains mercury from a doctor to “point” the rods. To stress its significance, Cole steps out of the narrative to inform the reader directly that “mineral rods must be tipped with mercury” to prevent the devil from stealing the trea-


sure. Alva Beeman and Joseph Smith Sr. reportedly anointed mineral rods with consecrated oil to prevent the devil from deceiving the user.149

Once the dig is under way, Obediah, fearful of guardian ghosts, attempts to protect the diggers inside the magic circle, extends what he thinks is a Bible (actually a Latin dictionary), and pronounces: “In the name of this holy book I command you to depart.” Cole describes Obediah as acting as “deacon.” Thus, it seems that Samuel Tyler Lawrence was acting as “deacon” when he used a magic sword to protect the diggers for the chest of gold watches.

At the frenzied peak of the story, when Obediah and the company of money-diggers are fleeing from guardian ghosts, L. W. Cole writes: “Ere the blaze had died away, immediately in the path of the frightened men, the prince of darkness himself appeared—with blazing horns and a tail of monstrous length, reeking with the flames of Tartarus which he had apparently just left!! Oh the horrors of money digging! even [sic] the prophet Jo. himself must have yielded, had he been there.”

However, like the Morristown Ghost episode, these supernatural visitors are revealed as costumed men, and the pranksters all enjoy a laugh at Obediah’s expense. The reader is left with the impression that money-digging is a benign diversion from another era, which is what it had become. L. W. even quips that, with so few money-diggers around at the time, they were destined to become as extinct as the race of ancient giants.

Whether Samuel Lawrence changed his views and gave up his treasure-seeking ways is unknown. Before his arrival in Oswego, the town already had its own history with money-diggers. In 1830, a woman used a “magical glass” to instruct her followers where to dig in

149 “James Colin Brewster Account, 1843,” Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 3:316; Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View, 265–66. A New England woman sewed metallic mercury into sections of black velvet of her “indicator,” which she held horizontally over the ground. Allegedly, the mercury would become agitated in the presence of silver or gold. A large rod would then be used to identify a precise location. George A. Emery, Ancient City of Gorgeana and Modern Town of York (Maine) from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time Also Its Beaches and Summer Resorts, 2d ed. corrected, enlarged, illustrated, and revised (Boston: G. Alex Emery, 1874), 202–4; see also Dorson, Jonathan Draws the Long Bow, 179–80.
the hills. In mid-1832, local papers described how money-diggers were hard at work, digging up a well with hidden treasure in the ruins of Fort Oswego. They found only cartridge-boxes, staves, bullets, and the like for their efforts.  

Because the old fort and Daniel’s place were both located on Aries (now Schuyler) Street, an extremely short walk away, Samuel could have felt temptation nagging.

The Latter-day Saints kept moving westward, yet two examples of a Mormon backlash could have reached Samuel Lawrence. The first was the Anti-Mormon Almanac for 1842, available for purchase in Oswego. Though under twenty-five pages, it was crammed with Mormon-related material, mostly taken from Howe’s Mormonism Unvailed. Although it does not mention Samuel Lawrence, it quotes people he knew, including Joseph Capron and Isaac Hale. Almanacs were an invaluable tool for the serious treasure-seeker, providing information on the movements of heavenly bodies required in navigating the complexities of the money-digging belief system. If Lawrence was still interested in treasure, he would have been drawn to this work.

In the second example, Increase Van Dusen McGee, a Mormon apostate from Nauvoo, Illinois, appeared at Oswego’s Market Hall in May 1847 with an exhibit of eight large paintings “illustrative of the operations of that deluded sect.” He claimed that he and his wife, Maria, were made a king and queen in the Mormon endowment ceremony, and probably peddled copies of their exposé at this public lecture. It seems unlikely that Lawrence would have resisted either this public lecture or chatting with the McGees about his experiences with

150 “Another,” Free Press (Oswego), October 20, 1830; untitled item, ibid., July 18, 1832; also “A Relic of Olden Time,” Oswego Palladium and Republican Chronicle, May 23, 1832.

151 Deed from Samuel Hawley to Daniel Lawrence, October 4, 1833, Liber P, 343-44, Oswego County Clerk’s Office, describes this property as being in West Oswego on Aries Street. The fort also stood on Aries Street, according to a contemporary map with the original celestial street names. Gordon, Gazetteer of the State of New York, 616.


153 “Mormon Exhibition,” Oswego Palladium, May 11, 1847; I. McGee
the late Joseph Smith Jr. However, no record survives of his possible involvement.

Samuel Tyler Lawrence died in Oswego December 18, 1847, his remains interred in the Fifth Ward Cemetery. Years later, as part of a health movement to rid urban areas of graves, the cemetery was

and Maria McGee, *The Mormon Endowment: A Secret Drama, Or Conspiracy, in the Nauvoo-Temple, in 1846; in Which Process Mr. & Mrs. McGee, (The Authors of This Work.) Were Made King & Queen . . .* (Syracuse, N.Y.: N. M. D. Lathrop, 1847).
transformed into a recreational park and later still into a school. Lawrence’s remains were slated to be moved October 6, 1890, to plot 30–R10–CP in Riverside Cemetery. His gravestone seems not to have been transferred, and the Fifth Ward Cemetery was a swampy locale. Even into the 1920s, students spotted bones protruding to the surface. In short, Lawrence himself may have fallen victim to one of the treasure-seeker’s biggest fears—slipping in the shifting earth.

**CONCLUSION**

The enigmatic Samuel Lawrence of early Mormon history was Samuel Tyler Lawrence from Morris County, New Jersey, adding further clarity to the New York period of Joseph Smith’s life. A promising avenue of further study may be how Samuel T. Lawrence linked two such divergent personalities as Abner Cole and Joseph Smith Jr. It is important, however, to recall that Samuel T. Lawrence himself left no record of his association with the future Mormon prophet, nor did he make the claim of being his “very intimate associate.” Neither did Joseph Smith. Lawrence’s two nephews, L. W. and James M. Cole, likewise never acknowledged growing up in the same neighborhood where Mormonism got its start. How intentional was their collective silence? Were they being evasive about their past? Or were they simply getting on with their lives? For example, in Oswego, the smooth operation of Lawrence’s sawmill was almost certainly foremost in his mind, not a failed friendship back in Palmyra.

When he looked in the mirror, Lawrence may have seen a busi-

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nessman, Methodist, husband, and father. However, this is at odds with history’s fascination with him as a treasure-seeker who was associated with the future Mormon prophet.

APPENDIX:
FRAUDULENTLY SECRETING PROPERTY

The indictment against Samuel T. Lawrence on April 17, 1833, for “fraudulently secreting property” begins by ordering a thousand dollar bond from both Lawrence “principal” and “Abraham Fisk as surety” for their appearance in the next court term. The witness, William Hyde, who was under subpoena, swore that “he is in indignant [indigent] circumstances” and was granted six dollars for expenses. Joseph Aufenanger, who prepared this opinion and analysis for Rich Troll, commented that, because the state was a party to the indictment, it was a criminal matter, not a civil one between Hyde and Lawrence.

New York’s oldest (1909) statutory definition of “fraudulently secreting property” defines it as the “misdemeanor” of hiding or disposing of property on which a mortgage had been executed with the intent of defrauding “the mortgagee, or a purchaser thereof.” This exact definition reappears, without a previous reference, in brand-new Penal Law §571 in 1882, meaning that the crime of “fraudulently secreting personal property” did not exist until that year. Aufenanger speculates that the indictment may be “a description of the acts that Samuel Lawrence was charged with committing rather than the proper title of the crime.” In that case, if Lawrence were being sent to debtors’ prison and had tried to conceal some property that his debtors could have claimed, he would have been guilty of a “misdemeanor” (Title VI of Offenses Punishable by Imprisonment in a County Jail and by Fines, §4).

However, there is no evidence that Samuel Lawrence was insolvent. Aufenanger thinks it more likely that Lawrence was charged with embezzlement, or “fraudulently removing and secreting of personal property, with which the party has been entrusted, for the purpose of applying it to his own use.” An 1825 act specified that “the offence of embezzling letters, is punished with fine and imprisonment.”

Thus, William Hyde, disgruntled at not receiving one or more copies

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157 March 3, 1825, 3 Story, 1991, John Bouvier, A Law Dictionary,
of his subscription of the *Liberal Advocate*, possibly filed a criminal complaint against Lawrence, accusing him of embezzling the subscription money or taking the papers. Hyde may, therefore, be the “common informer” against whom Cole railed, but Cole may have also taken the step of discharging Lawrence as the paper’s agent.

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“A PARTICULAR FAVORITE”: SARA ALEXANDER OF THE OLD SALT LAKE THEATRE

Margaret Finlayson Maxwell

THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY in America saw a burst of popular interest in the theater. From coast to coast, even frontier towns boasted some sort of playhouse and a group of local, more or less amateur players, who performed an astonishing array of dramas and dances for appreciative local audiences. One of the most impressive western theaters was the old Salt Lake Theatre. Beginning in March 1862, it became a cultural center for citizens of Salt Lake City, not yet fifteen years old. Among the members of its stock company, the Deseret Dramatic Association, was the talented Sara Alexander. In addition to her dramatic gifts, she was also a woman of passionate convictions, which led her first to Mormonism and a place teaching Brigham Young’s daughters, then away from the Saints for the rest of her life.

Sara Ann Alexander was born April 8, 1839, in Wheeling, West Virginia, the sixth child of William and Sarah Brentlinger Alexan-

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After her husband’s death in 1844, Mother Sarah B. Alexander moved with Sara and an older daughter, Mary Ada, to St. Louis, Missouri probably before 1856.

St. Louis in the 1850s was a bustling metropolis of close to 80,000 people, with a long stage history. Considering the varied repertoire of plays and ballets performed weekly during the season, we may surmise that Sara, now sixteen or seventeen, went often to the theater. When the Keller Troupe opened at the People’s Theatre early in 1857, they hired a number of local young people to portray angels, nymphs, and satyrs. Sara may have been among the young men and women trained by the troupe’s stage manager for a week before the Kellers arrived. The St. Louis Theatre also advertised on February 12, 1858, for fifty young ladies to dance in the grand ballet of Faust. Sara may have been among them. In short, the city offered many opportunities for young women interested in acting and dancing. Since Sara reached Salt Lake City as an accomplished dancer, it seems reasonable that she received some sort of training while she was in St. Louis.

The Alexanders, however, did not plan to stay in St. Louis. Ac-

1 Unless otherwise noted, genealogical facts for Sara Alexander and her family were retrieved from AncestralFile, www.lds.org. Christened “Sarah,” she changed the spelling of her forename to “Sara” after she joined the Deseret Dramatic Association. I use this spelling throughout and refer to her mother as “Sara B.”

2 Isaiah Moses Coombs (1834–86) states that he met the Alexander family in St. Louis in the fall of 1856. Isaiah Moses Coombs, Diaries, 1855–63. This citation appears in Vol. 2, Archives of the Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives). According to James Finlayson (1830–1908), the Alexanders were living at 146 Tenth Street, St. Louis, in 1858. James Finlayson, “Autobiography,” n.d., 3; photocopy of undated typescript by unidentified typist in my possession; photocopy of holograph also in my possession, location of original unknown. Unless otherwise cited, all references to this source are to the typescript.


4 Gayle Kassing, “Dance on the St. Louis Stage: 1850–1870” (Ph.D. diss., Texas Woman’s University, 1978), 142. I was unable to determine the duration of the theatrical season.

5 Ibid., 163.
According to family records, Mary Ada Alexander was baptized August 2, 1850, and her mother in December 1857. No baptismal record has been found for Sara, but presumably she was also baptized before 1857. The newly converted family decided to move to the new Mormon gathering place in Utah, and St. Louis was the major outfitting stage for immigrants preparing to cross the plains. But purchasing the necessary supplies, a wagon, and an ox team seems to have been beyond the family’s reach until they met James Finlayson.

Finlayson, a Scottish immigrant who had joined the Mormon Church in Glasgow in 1850, was a twenty-nine-year-old, childless widower whose wife had died in St. Louis in February 1858. Soon afterwards, he began courting the two daughters of Sarah B. Alexander, settling on the elder, Mary Ada, a young woman of twenty-three.

According to one source, Mary Ada had recently broken her engagement to another man because of her mother’s disapproval. Possibly Sarah B. pressured Mary Ada to accept Finlayson’s proposal so that the Alexander family might accompany the relatively well-to-do Scotsman to Utah. If Mary Ada entered the marriage reluctantly, it may explain young Sara’s thoroughgoing dislike, which eventually amounted to hatred, for her brother-in-law. That part of the story may never be known; but when James Finlayson took deck passage on the steamboat Isabella for Florence, Nebraska Territory (now part of Omaha), on May 18, 1859, Sarah B. Alexander and her daughters were with him. On May 26, following an eight-day journey up the Missouri River, the travelers were in Florence, where they purchased clothing, a wagon and team, and supplies for the trek across the plains.

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6 According to Finlayson family tradition, Mary Ada was engaged to be married to James Dwyer, who reached Salt Lake City in 1860 and opened a bookstore at West Temple and First South. According to George D. Pyper, The Romance of an Old Playhouse, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1937), 184, “Sara Alexander and her mother were converted to the Mormon faith by James Dwyer, a missionary.” Dwyer named his first child, born in 1863, Mary Ada Dwyer; she gained fame as an actress, using Ada Dwyer as her name. See Chris Rigby, “Ada Dwyer: Bright Lights and Lilacs,” Utah Historical Quarterly 43, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 42–51.

7 James Finlayson, “Autobiography.”
A week later, on June 1, James and Mary Ada were married. The following day, the whole family drove their wagon three miles northwest of Florence and joined the James S. Brown Company, numbering 353 individuals, 59 wagons, 104 yoke of oxen, 11 horses, 35 cows, and 41 young loose cattle. On June 13, the unwieldy group slowly moved out toward the prairie. Brown recorded, “Many of them had never driven an ox one mile in their lives, and the result was almost like herding a train on the plains.” After a few days of travel, “the stock seemed in danger of being destroyed by flies and mosquitoes, and the people suffered much from the same cause.” Despite such hardships the amateur wagon masters averaged between sixteen and twenty miles per day.

Sara Alexander recorded her recollections of the trip years later. She described the travelers trudging beside the oxen that pulled the heavy wagons over the rutted, sandy track, deeply furrowed by thousands of immigrants who had already passed that way. The travelers started from camp each morning by eight o’clock, stopped briefly at noon, and then about sundown made camp for the night near a stream or river. Here is part of Alexander’s recollection of an evening in camp:

The wagons were corralled, making a large space inside in the form of a ring with a small opening at each end. . . . Tents were pitched, preparations for the evening meal commenced, and everyone was busy. . . . I don’t think anything ever tasted so delicious and appetizing as those sagebrush cooked meals in the cool of the evening. . . . All had an iron oven, a flat bottomed pan with a lid. It held a good sized loaf of bread, which was eaten warm with bacon or ham, and potatoes. . . . Sometimes a buffalo would be killed, and then we had fresh meat . . .

After the suppers were over, and everything was cleared away as spick and span as army quarters, and a long evening was before us . . . there would be prayers and discourses by the Elders and Teachers, and singing. . . . The stillness, the vastness, the night with the moon and stars shining over us, was all so overwhelming in its beauty and greatness that a heathen must have been impressed with the presence of God.

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8 Finlayson family genealogical records, Ancestral File.
9 James S. Brown, Life of a Pioneer (Salt Lake City: G. Q. Cannon, 1900), 397–98. Also James Finlayson, “Plains Diary,” 1, typescript copy in my possession.
Sara also told a revealing incident about herself. One afternoon, she said,

I, being tired and perhaps a little rebellious, sat down on the ground to rest, and watched the long train go by. . . . I sat there until the last wagon passed. I thought I would be missed and they would feel sorry for me being so tired, and let me ride a little way. I must have looked a forlorn speck sitting there. As the last wagon . . . left me there alone I felt as if I were in an empty world . . . [Then] looking off in the distance I saw some Indians rapidly riding in my direction. The first emotion of fear took possession of me, and I made a good run to catch up with my family.

I HAD NOT EVEN BEEN MISSED! WHAT A BLOW!10

Most of the days, however, passed in an endless, dusty, monotonous round. The miles ground slowly away under the creaking wagon wheels, the rutted trail stretched endlessly before the travelers, broken occasionally by shallow creeks or bigger rivers that they crossed with primitive ferries. After two and one-half months of travel, on August 29, 1859, the company rolled down East Canyon Creek to Salt Lake City.11

Sara Alexander and her mother lived at first in Salt Lake City with Mary Ada and James Finlayson. One historian states that Sara was “an attractive young schoolteacher who had taught in Big Cottonwood” when she first came to the valley, but adds no additional details.12 But at least one man hoped to change her plans. Isaiah Moses Coombs, who had met Sara sometime earlier in St. Louis, was living in Parowan in southern Utah when the Finlaysons and the Alexanders arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. He learned of their arrival that fall and, on January 5, 1860, noted in his diary that he had

finished a letter to Sister S.A.E.A. [Sara Alexander] in which I have of-

10 Sara Alexander, “A Little Story of the Experiences of Sara Alexander when Crossing the Plains in 1859,” n.d., 6, typescript, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. I suspect that Sara Alexander wrote this reminiscence when she was older and prone to romanticize her pioneer past. Since she was twenty years old when she crossed the plains, she was hardly of an age to indulge in such childish and genuinely risky behavior.


ferred her marriage. . . . In a conversation I had with Pres. Dame this morning I asked him if there would be any objections to me getting another wife [Coombs’ first wife had remained in their Illinois home when he migrated to the West with the Saints] and [he] answered that there were none & that he would give me a recommend to Br. Brigham as a person worthy of taking another wife whenever I wished. . . . I believe that I feel desirous of going into this order through pure motives & I ask wisdom of my Heavenly Father to direct me in this as well as in all other matters.13

Although Sara’s response has not survived, on February 23, a disconsolate Coombs wrote, “Rec’d an answer from Sis. Alexander. She rejects my offer; she does not wish to marry. I think from the spirit of her letter that she does not like Mormonism as well as she used to.”14 More than a year and a half later, Coombs attended the October 1861 general conference, and visited the Alexanders at the Finlayson home in Salt Lake City. On October 5, 1861, he wrote in his diary: “Sis. [Sarah B.] Alexander told me today that I was the only man Sallie [Sara] had ever loved and that the only reason why she rejected my offer some time ago was that I had a wife. I have not broached the subject to her since.”

This intriguing hint suggests that Sara disliked the practice of polygamy and perhaps resolved never to marry as a way of removing herself from such courtships. In addition, although she would, for all practical purposes, have been Coombs’s only wife (at least for the time being), she may have felt that her sister’s lot as Finlayson’s wife was a hard one, although there is no evidence that Mary Ada herself complained. Finlayson was known as a dour Scotsman, practical and unsentimental, with little patience for life’s refinements. He was a hard worker and an adequate provider, but he expected his wife to be equally uncomplaining as she bore and reared children and managed the household. Although this conclusion is conjectural, Sara, seeing her talented, sensitive sister’s acceptance—willing or not—of this role, may have vowed not to be trapped in a similar union.

In May 1862, the Finlaysons moved to Payson, sixty miles south of Salt Lake City. Sarah B. Alexander was sealed about that time as a plural wife to Alvah Alexander and remained in Salt Lake City with

13Isaiah Moses Coombs, Diary, January 5, 1860, LDS Church Archives.
14Ibid., February 23, 1860.
her new husband. At Brigham Young’s invitation, Sara moved into the Lion House with the president’s large family, to serve as a dance instructor for his daughters.

More than fifty years later, Sara Alexander wrote to an old friend, Horace G. Whitney, about her life with the Young family:

Boarding in the famous Lion House, a protegee of President Brigham Young, made my stay there most interesting and rather unique. . . . I had the joy of knowing all his beautiful daughters, ten of them, at the time of my advent there, just at the gate of womanhood—ages ranging from fifteen to seventeen years. They grew to be very dear to me and have always held a special place in my memory and heart. . . . They were very bright, attractive, and entertaining, and many happy times we have had together. . . . I was treated as one of the President’s daughters . . . My special comfort and adviser was Clara Decker Young [Brigham Young’s wife], one of the most beautiful characters it has ever been my good fortune to meet. It was in her charge I was placed by Brigham Young when I became a resident of the Lion House.

One of Brigham Young’s daughters, Clarissa, described the gymnasium in the Lion House where the girls received their dance instruction. “Along the full length of the west side of the house ran a huge porch, and here Father had placed every contrivance available in that day. . . . We had regular teachers to instruct us in gymnastics, fencing, and solo dancing. It was probably because of our training in dancing that the girls of our family were in such demand for ‘fairy’ or ballet

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15AncestralFile, James Finlayson family record. I have not found a kin relationship between Sarah B. Alexander’s first husband, William Alexander, and Alvah Alexander. In 1868, Sarah B. Alexander moved to Payson to live with James and Mary Ada Finlayson. She remained in Payson until her death at age sixty-two on March 17, 1870.

16“Sara Alexander Writes of Old Life in Salt Lake,” Deseret News, Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronology of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), January 22, 1916, LDS Church Archives. According to Pyper, The Romance of an Old Playhouse, 120, “Ten of the daughters of President Young made their appearance in the new theatre. These ‘Young’ maidens were among the prettiest and most popular of Salt Lake’s girls. They were called the Big Ten, not that they were very large, but simply to contrast them with the next eight, for the President’s family was numerous.”
dancers when the Salt Lake Theatre was opened.”17 Sara Alexander, of course, was their dance teacher and, a short time later, would be dancing and acting on the Salt Lake Theatre stage as well.

George D. Pyper tells how Sara Alexander began her Salt Lake Theatre stage career. “One evening she attended a rehearsal by the dramatic company at the home of Hiram B. Clawson and was asked to read the part of an absentee. The part was sent to her three times and three times returned, she having no desire to join the company and not believing she could be an actress overnight.” Pyper concludes by stating that Sara complied only when President Brigham Young specifically requested her to do so.18 Although the exact date of her appearance on the stage is not known, she began her work with the Deseret Dramatic Association, the Salt Lake Theatre’s stock company, during its second season (December 25, 1862, through February 8, 1863).19

The history of the Salt Lake Theatre has been told more than once.20 William Dixon, an Englishman who visited Salt Lake City in 1866, four years after Sara joined the stock company, described the building as it appeared at the time of his visit:

Outside, this theatre is a rough Doric edifice, in which the architect has contrived to produce a certain effect by very simple means. Inside, it is light and airy, having no curtains and no boxes, save two in the proscenium, with light columns to divide the tiers, and having no other decoration than pure white paint and gold. The pit, rising sharply from the orchestra, so that everyone seated on its benches can see and hear to advantage, is the choicest part of the house. All these benches are let to families, and here the principal elders and bishops

17Clarissa Young Spencer, One Who Was Valiant (Caldwell, Ida.: Caxton Printing Co., 1940), 29. This book is a memoir of her father.
20Best-known sources for Salt Lake Theatre history are Pyper, Romance of an Old Playhouse; Maughan, Pioneer Theatre in the Desert; and Myrtle S. Henderson, A History of the Theatre in Salt Lake City from 1850–1870 (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, 1934).
may be seen every play night, surrounded by their wives and children, laughing and clapping like boys at a pantomime. . . .

In the sides of the proscenium nestle two private boxes; one is reserved for the Prophet, when he pleases to be alone, or wishes to have a gossip with some friend; the other is given up to the girls who have to play during the night, but who are not engaged in the immediate business of the piece. As a rule, everyone’s pleasure is considered in this model playhouse, and I can answer, on the part of Miss [Annie Asenath] Adams, Miss Alexander, and other young artists, that this appropriation to their sole use of a private box, into which they can run at all times, in any dress, without being seen, is considered by them as a very great comfort. . . . But the chief beauties of this model playhouse lie behind the scenes; in the ample space, the perfect light, the scrupulous cleanliness of every part. . . . The green room is a real drawing room. The scene painters have their proper studios; the dressers and decorators have immense magazines. Every lady, however small her part in the play, has a dressing room to herself.\textsuperscript{21}

On the stage, chandeliers and suspended coal oil (kerosene) lamps furnished illumination. The footlights were coal oil lamps controlled by a rod. Barrels of sand and salt were kept close at hand for fire prevention. This lighting was the best obtainable for the time, despite a drama critic’s complaint that the illumination was so poor you could hardly see the play unless you happened to be sitting in the orchestra near the footlights.\textsuperscript{22}

As was nineteenth-century custom, most evenings at the theatre began with the featured play (either tragedy or comedy) followed by a variety act (recitation, dance, vocal, or instrumental number). The evening ended with a farce. Such double billings might seem interminably long to present-day theater goers, but Dixon assured his readers that in the Salt Lake Theatre, “the curtain, which rises at eight, comes down about half-past ten; and as the Mormon fashion is for people to sup before going out, they retire to rest the moment they get home, never suffering their amusements to infringe on the labours of the


coming day.”

The home grown talent of the members of the Deseret Dramatic Association impressed Brigham Young in its first few months; and at about the time Sara joined the company, he sent for the well-known tragedian, Thomas A. Lyne, then playing in Denver, to coach the Salt Lake Theatre troupe. Since dancing, comedy, and soubrette roles proved to be Sara Alexander’s forte, she may have done little acting in the tragedies performed while Lyne was in residence. In any case, her name was not mentioned in the regular theater reviews carried by the Deseret News during this period. But when a team of well-known comedy players, Mr. and Mrs. Selden Irwin, joined the Deseret Dramatists for five months, beginning November 4, 1863, Sara Alexander came into her own. Observing, practicing, and learning from these fine actors, she received her first critical notice shortly after they left the city in April 1864. Of her performance in The Jacobite on May 28, 1864, Edward Tullidge wrote: “It is dangerous to commend young ladies too early, but the acknowledgement of Miss Alexander’s services on the stage is merited. With careful study and good reading, that lady has no very serious obstacle between her and an elevated rank among artistes.”

Heady praise indeed, but more was to follow, with Sara undertaking a different comedy role each week during the early months of the summer. On June 15, Tullidge reported that “the drama of

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23 Dixon, New America, 201.

24 Maughan, Pioneer Theatre, 103. According to Pyper, Romance of an Old Playhouse, 25, 28, 103, 127, Thomas Lyne was a disaffected Mormon who had joined the Church in Nauvoo. Nonetheless, he seems to have been well liked by Brigham Young and those he worked with in the theater, returning to work with the players more than once.

25 According to Pyper, Romance of an Old Playhouse, 117, the Irwins came to Salt Lake City from Denver, where they had been playing and departed toward Nevada and California on April 11, 1864. Mrs. Selden Irwin appears in theater reviews in the New York Times from 1886 to 1887, suggesting that she, but evidently not her husband, was acting in New York City and vicinity at that time. New York Times Theatre Reviews, 1870–1919: Vol. 2, 1886–95 (New York: New York Times Company, 1975); passim.

26 “Theatrical,” Deseret News, June 1, 1864, 4. Deseret News theater reviews were unsigned, but Tullidge was the regular critic during the period Sara Alexander was with the company.
‘Eustache Baudin’ was played Saturday evening. . . . Miss Alexander was perfectly free and at home.” Of The Crock of Gold, reported June 22, the Deseret News said, “Miss Alexander was truly excellent and gives great promise of becoming a particular favorite. Though she might be very useful elsewhere, low comedy is decidedly her forte. Sarah Stack was true to life, and called from the audience the most rapturous applause.”

The following month, on July 20, 1864, the well-known English actor, George Pauncefort, came from Denver with his leading lady, Florence Bell. Brigham Young disapproved of married actor Pauncefort’s intimacies with the Denver actress and made his point by staying away from the theater on nights that Pauncefort played. But despite Young’s disapproval, Pauncefort was popular with local audiences. He also seems to have tutored Sara Alexander. Sara performed “the kind-hearted, sharp-tongued nurse and boarding house keeper” in Romance of a Poor Young Man for three performances beginning July 21 under Pauncefort’s direction. The season closed at the end of August with Pauncefort playing the Duke opposite Sara’s Pepita in The Duke’s Motto. After this, Pauncefort and Bell went on to San Francisco.

But Pauncefort returned shortly. Although Thomas A. Lyne had been brought back to the Salt Lake Theatre in November, on December 10, he left the city and Pauncefort was “recalled by public demand.” On December 17, Pauncefort performed in both plays of the evening, taking the part of Jasper in The Bachelor of Arts. Of Sara Alexander’s role in that comedy, the Deseret News drama critic said, “Miss Alexander had little to do, but done [sic] it well.” Black Eyed Susan, with Sara in the title role, concluded the evening’s entertainment. “Though the sentimental is not Miss Alexander’s line,” said the critic, “she made a very good Susan, the scene in which she parts from William being excellently rendered.” Sara’s dramatic rise was just beginning, however. The Christmas Eve offering was Hamlet, with Pauncefort in the lead. The critic judged Alexander’s Ophelia

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28John S. Lindsay, Mormons and the Theatre (Salt Lake City: Century Printing Company, 1905), 39.
But after Pauncefort’s performance of Macbeth on January 7, 1865, he left the city. Although no explanation has survived, a signed announcement by Brigham Young on the theater in the following week’s Deseret News may identify the problem: “I have ever felt a strong repugnance to the employment of men and women upon our stage who have been in the practice of following the customs or common habits of the civilized world, and also, to the representation of plays in which murder and the exhibitions of the evil passions and the display of villainy form a prominent part . . . [These] arouse feelings which should never be called into being.” President Young continued: As long as he was in charge, the theater’s productions would make no use of such phrases as “by heaven” or “I swear.” In addition, since the theater was designed to furnish “innocent amusement” for “the laboring classes,” there would be no “impropriety of language or gesture . . . unnatural contortions, and ranting and raving. . . . We cannot descend to the level of the wicked world and copy after their fashions and escape sin.”

On January 14, 1865, Pauncefort wrote back to Brigham Young, complaining about his dismissal and demanding payment “for the pupilage of Lady Macbeth, Macduff, with a slight touching up on the witches—$25.00 . . . For a copy of my book of Macbeth—$10.00. [In addition,] I think I ought to receive something for Miss A’s tuition in ‘Ophelia’ and ‘Black Eyed Susan,’ considering the shortness of my engagement.” There is no record whether Brigham Young agreed that Pauncefort had money coming.

After Pauncefort’s departure, the Salt Lake Theatre players settled into the routine customary in nineteenth-century American theaters: a main play separated from a lighter afterpiece by solo recitations, singing, or dancing, with a new bill of fare almost every week. Amazingly enough, the Deseret Dramatic Association, with Sara Alexander increasingly a mainstay in performances, seemed equal to this demanding task. In White Lies, produced January 14, 1865, her role of Jacintha “threw humor and vivacity into the piece.”

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ing week, “Miss Alexander played magnificently as Colin” in *Nature and Philosophy*. The company returned to the previous season’s *Crock of Gold* on February 11, with “Miss Alexander very humorous as Sarah Slack.”

Sara Alexander’s first critical recognition as a dancer took place on the same day as Abraham Lincoln’s inauguration to a second term as U.S. president in Washington, D.C. Following a citywide celebration of the inauguration on March 4, 1865, the Salt Lake Theatre Company presented *Camilla’s Husband*. Theater critic Tullidge stated: “Miss Alexander’s tambourine dance was well received; she manifests the elements of a very accomplished danseuse.”

This performance seems to have launched Sara Alexander as a theatrical dancer. Following a short break, the spring theater season began on March 18, with a farce, *Magic Toys*. The previous week, Tullidge predicted: “The neat little protean ballet farce, ‘Magic Toys,’ will give Miss Alexander ample scope to display some of her abilities and an opportunity to lead out in a new range of characters. It comprises several characteristics—solo dances, and a grand ballet divertissement, in which twelve young ladies will assist the characters.” After this generous preview, the *Deseret News*’s comments the next week on the ballet seem anticlimactic: “Miss Alexander danced exceedingly well. . . . Everybody done [sic] well.”

*Magic Toys* proved so successful that it was repeated on April 1 and 8 and was scheduled for April 15 as well. But the theater closed abruptly after Lincoln’s assassination on Friday, April 14. It reopened in mid-June, when the Dramatic Association players gave a special performance of *Camilla’s Husband* and the ever-popular *Magic Toys* in


35“‘Theatrical,’” *Deseret News*, March 15, 1865, 188. The “twelve young ladies” were almost certainly Brigham Young’s talented daughters, augmented possibly by Totty Clive, who rose to prominence as a dancer after Sara Alexander left Salt Lake City.

36“‘Theatrical,’” *Deseret News*, March 22, 1865, 196.
honor of the visit of Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Sara Alexander acted in the first and danced in the second.\(^{37}\)

The August 1865 arrival of the John S. Potter stock company from Idaho City, with the immensely popular actress Julia Dean Hayne\(^{38}\) and her leading man, George B. Waldron, initiated one of the most sustained periods of theatrical offerings in the early history of the Salt Lake Theatre. It was also an important period for Sara Alexander’s development as an actress. She worked during the fall season that year with both Hayne and Waldron, observing and learning from both.

After they completed their initial contract with the Potter Company, Hayne and Waldron left to continue playing with the regular stock company of the Salt Lake Theatre. They remained in Salt Lake City until the end of June 1866. Julia Dean Hayne particularly seems to have charmed everyone she came in contact with; Brigham Young named his large family sleigh the *Julia Dean* in her honor, and it is said that Hayne went on sleighing parties with the Young family more than once during her winter in the city.\(^{39}\)

However, Hayne’s leading man, Waldron, had his own agenda, according to John S. Lindsay, Sara Alexander’s contemporary on the Salt Lake Theatre stage. “It looked for a while as if Miss Sara Alexander was destined to [become Waldron’s wife]; she certainly filled George’s eye. He was very much enamored of the petite and lissome [sic] Sara.”\(^{40}\) He formally asked Brigham Young for permission to court her. According to the *Union Vedette*, a chatty newspaper published at Fort Douglas, “After the information reached the ears of

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\(^{37}\)“Theatrical,” *Deseret News*, June 14, 1865, 292.

\(^{38}\)Julia Dean Hayne (1830–68), well-known American actress, started her career in New York City. After an unhappy marriage to Dr. Arthur Hayne, she went to San Francisco, played in most of the large cities in the West for the next ten years, divorced Hayne in 1865, then went to Salt Lake City, where she remained from August 1865 to June 1866. She then married James G. Cooper, a federal official in Utah Territory, and died in childbirth in March 1868 in New York City. Edmond M. Gagey, “Dean, Julia,” in *Notable American Women, 1607–1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, edited by Edward T. James, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1971), 1:449.

\(^{39}\)Maughan, *Pioneer Theatre*, 133.

\(^{40}\)Quoted in Lindsay, *Mormons and the Theatre*, 56.
Brigham Young that Mr. Waldron, our ‘well-beloved’ and ‘well-behaved’ tragedian of no mediocre talents, had taken it into his heart to sue for the hand of Miss Alexander—an excellent young actress of Brigham’s raising, or rather guardianship—and the proposition was ‘laid upon the table,’ for religious reasons, report runs thuswise—that Brigham said in the presence of bystanders, ‘Mr. Waldron is a gentleman and a good actor; he can play Richlieu, Richard III, Romeo, and what not, finely; but (by this time Brigham brought his best sarcastic elocution into use) he can’t play Alexander.’”

It is not known what Sara Alexander thought of Brigham Young’s fatherly intervention, but obviously, since she was still living under his roof, she accepted his authority. As it turned out, Young’s refusal was well advised. One theater historian points out that Waldron was apparently already married, for the newspapers of both Idaho and Oregon had mentioned Mrs. Waldron on several occasions during his sojourn in those regions. In any case, Waldron left the Salt Lake Theatre following his interview with Brigham Young.

Although by 1865 regular members of the Deseret Dramatic Association received a small salary, special benefit performances for individual actors were occasionally scheduled, with the honored individual receiving the proceeds for the evening. Sara Alexander was featured regularly in the early months of 1867, both as an actress and

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41 Unidentified article from the *Union Vedette*, November 1, 1865, quoted in Ralph Elliott Margetts, “A Study of the Theatrical Career of Julia Dean Hayne” (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1959), 302. Another version of the story appears in Edward Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Star Printing Company, 1886), 763, and in Dixon, *New America*, 204–5. According to Tullidge and Dixon, when Waldron approached him, Young said, “I have seen you play Hamlet very well, and Julius Caesar pretty well, but you must not aspire to Alexander!” I agree with Margetts that the contemporary *Union Vedette* version is more likely to be accurate, particularly since Waldron played neither Hamlet nor Julius Caesar.


43 Unidentified article in *Deseret News*, October 24, 1865, quoted in ibid., 303.

dancer in both main plays and afterpieces.45

Because of her solo dancing to “hearty and well deserved encores” between plays, it is not surprising that a benefit evening was announced for her in the Deseret News on April 10. The following evening,

there was a very crowded house. . . . The play was entitled Natural Curiosity, in which the fair beneficiary successfully sustained a protean role of five characters as Florence Langton and her disguises. Her rendering of the inquisitive, good hearted, and quick witted young lady, the ancient nurse with wonderful family reminiscences, and the fast young man was excellent. The other characters were well sustained . . . After the play, Miss Alexander and Mr. [George] Brower appeared in a beautiful and graceful new fancy Swiss dance, entitled the Pas Styrian, which was executed in their very best style, and drew hearty applause. . . . Then followed a farce, with Mr. [Phillip] Margetts and Miss Alexander in the leading parts, entitled My Wife’s Maid. Of this we cannot speak, having had a surfeit of good things before it, and leaving, satisfied with what we had enjoyed.46

Toward the end of the season the following winter, on February 13, 1868, the theatre gave Sara another benefit. The Deseret News critic pronounced it “quite successful, the spectacular romance of Aladdin being the chief attraction.”47

On June 16, 1868, Marie Scheller arrived from the East Coast to

45The playbill for Tuesday, January 1, 1867, may serve as an example of Sara Alexander’s activities. A “Grand Matinee for Ladies and Children” featured “The Elves, or, The Marble Bride,” starring W. C. Dunbar as Baron Popolina. “During the piece beautiful solo and ballet dances by MISS ALEXANDER and an efficient corps de ballet [trained by Alexander] and DWARF DANCE by Mr. George Brower.” The afterpiece that same evening was the popular Harlequin’s Triumph, with Sara Alexander dancing Columbine to Brower’s Harlequin. This acrobatic tour de force ended with Harlequin’s “aerial flight with Minette the Columbine.” The performance was repeated on Thursday and the following Tuesday before being replaced on Thursday, 10 January, with Found in a Four Wheeler and Uncle Tom’s Cabin, in which Alexander also participated. Salt Lake Theatre playbill collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah.

46“Theatrical,” Deseret News, April 17, 1867, 125.
star in the spectacular *Under the Gaslight!* Sara Alexander played the part of Peachblossom, “a girl who was never brought up,” to Mme. Scheller’s Laura Courtland, “the Belle of Society.” This sensational production, which played for six consecutive performances beginning June 18, featured a full-size locomotive that thundered across the stage, to the imminent peril of the hero, tied helplessly across the tracks.  

Several noted San Francisco actors appeared on the Salt Lake Theatre stage in August 1868, including Annette Ince and Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Davenport. With the support of the local company, Ince and the Davenports produced *Richelieu, Black Eyed Susan, East Lynne,* and other popular dramas. According to one theater historian, it was at this time that Sara Alexander “gained her first real recognition on the stage” as a dancer, performing the sailor’s hornpipe with Davenport. George Pyper stated: “Mr. Davenport recognized in Miss Alexander an accomplished dancer and often spoke of her skill.”

Sara may have been dissatisfied by her small salary and the fact that “inducements to study were few” on the Salt Lake Theatre stage. Perhaps Annette Ince, a member of John McCullough and Lawrence Barrett’s San Francisco theater stock company, suggested to McCullough, when he came to Salt Lake City that autumn, that he should ask Sara Alexander to join his company. Following Ince’s benefit on September 12, 1868, Sara announced that she was leaving the Deseret Dramatic Association to join McCullough and Barrett in their new California Theatre.

On Wednesday, October 14, 1868, the *Deseret News* carried the following advertisement: “FAREWELL BENEFIT AND LAST AP-

52 For McCullough’s autumn arrival, see Maughan, *Pioneer Theatre,* 139.
53 The California Theatre did not open until January 19, 1869. Gagey, *The San Francisco Stage,* 105. This may explain Brown’s claim, *History of the American Stage,* 406, that Alexander “appeared at the Metropolitan Thea-
PEARANCE! MISS ALEXANDER! Thursday evening, October 15, 1868. The Pride of the Market, Miss Alexander as Marton the Pride of the Market. Followed by Reading by Miss Louise [Young], Song by Mr. J. M. Hardie, and Polka by Miss Louise & Miss Susie [Susa Young Gates] Concluded with new laughable farce, entitled, A scene in the life of an unprotected female! Polly Crisp, an unprotected Female, Miss Alexander."

The Friday, October 16, issue of the Deseret News reported, “Last night there was a very good house, Miss Alexander taking her benefit and making her last appearance. The first piece was ‘The Pride of the Market,’ which was well rendered. . . . After the first piece, Miss Alexander was the object of a handsome present, Mr. [Phil] Margetts being the medium selected to convey it to her.”

Thus, at age twenty-nine, after six years in Salt Lake City and five of them associated with the Salt Lake Theatre, Sara Alexander moved on. Her San Francisco career remains obscure. Although several authorities state that she acted with the Barrett-McCullough Company and with the San Francisco Metropolitan Theatre, none of the standard sources list dates, plays, or roles for her.54 Perhaps, although she had some prominence in Salt Lake City theatrical circles, she was only a minor member of the California Theatre Stock Company in San Francisco.55

Sara Alexander’s theatrical work in San Francisco was interrupted twice by family emergencies. Early in the summer of 1870, Sara learned that her sister, Mary Ada Alexander Finlayson, then living in Payson, Utah, was suffering from congested lungs and a nagging cough. Sara urged her to come to San Francisco, thinking the sea air might help her. In August 1870, Mary Ada arrived with her...
two youngest children, three-year-old Frank and one-year-old Lisle, and stayed with Sara for several weeks.\(^5\) Mary Ada’s letters home to her husband, James Finlayson, and sons Fred and George tell of her excitement on the night she used Sara’s theater pass and, from the audience, watched her sister on stage. The next night she watched from the wings. Mary Ada had a wonderful time in San Francisco, but the hoped-for improvement in her health did not occur.

During the summer of 1871, Mary Ada visited Clara Decker Young at the Lion House. Shocked at the ravages of illness she saw in Mary Ada’s face, the motherly Mrs. Young wrote to Sara, suggesting that she visit her sister. She came immediately, ready to blame someone. James Finlayson was the easiest target,\(^5\) especially when Sara demanded that her sister return to San Francisco with her at once. Finlayson flatly refused. I can imagine him snapping that there had been enough of that business the year before, with Sara filling his wife’s head full of theatrical nonsense. Checked, but not defeated, Sara went to Salt Lake City and returned with Clara Decker Young. James Finlayson listened respectfully to the prophet’s plural wife and agreed that Mary Ada should go to San Francisco again.

Sara, Mary Ada, and Lisle, now age two, left for San Francisco in August 1871. They took a long stagecoach trip from Payson to Salt Lake City, where they caught the sooty, cinder-spitting railroad train across the Nevada desert to San Francisco. The journey they undertook with such high hopes was fruitless, however. The doctor who

\(^5\)According to the James Finlayson family record in my possession, Lisle Sarah Finlayson (stage name Lisle Leigh) was born July 4, 1869, in Payson.

\(^5\)Sara Alexander’s hostility and contempt toward James Finlayson emerge clearly from her letters. For example, in a letter to James Dwyer, the man to whom Mary Ada had first been engaged, she wrote on December 12, 1911, three years after Finlayson’s death, one of her comparatively mild statements about Finlayson: “My dear loving (?) brother-in-law seemed the only person who could not get along with me amicably. I never received a letter from him without something in it to distress me in body and mind. I had enough to worry me God knows without the annoyances I received from him. He’s dead now. I hope God thinks more of him than I did.” Photostat copy in my possession, courtesy of Lisle Finlayson Graham, Salt Lake City, James and Mary Ada’s oldest granddaughter.
examined Mary Ada diagnosed her as suffering from “advanced consumption” (tuberculosis), then incurable.

A month later on September 19, 1871, Mary Ada died. Sara arranged a grand funeral for her sister and invited all her theater friends to accompany the body to the Laurel Hill Cemetery. Ten carriages followed the black hearse. Blaming Finlayson for her sister’s death, she informed him of Mary Ada’s demise by sending him a chilly note after the funeral, enclosing the bills for the doctor and the funeral expenses. She also informed him that she had decided to keep Lisle and raise her as a companion for herself. Furthermore, in case Finlayson had any idea of trying to force her to give Lisle up, by the time he received the letter, she and Lisle would be on a steamer bound for New York City.  

Sara bitterly claimed that Finlayson refused to pay for the funeral, yet his diary notes $145 in “Cash to Miss Alexander” from September 1871 to March 1874. Therefore, he must have been aware of Sara’s and Lisle’s whereabouts and conscientious about taking care of his financial obligations. However, he apparently made no effort to contact his daughter for almost ten years. Lisle was brought up in theater wings and backstages. She toddled onstage at Macauley’s Theatre in Louisville, Kentucky, in her first part at the age of four under her stage name, Lisle Leigh.  

In the next few years, Sara Alexander expended more effort on furthering her gifted niece’s career than she did on her own. By 1877 Sara, then age thirty-eight, and Lisle, age eight, were living in Brooklyn. The child actress was finding work in a number of plays, both on

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58Mary Ada Alexander Finlayson’s trips to San Francisco, her death, and Sara Alexander’s adoption of young Lisle Finlayson (afterward Lisle Leigh) are from family records in the possession of the Lisle Finlayson Graham family, as summarized in Margaret Finlayson Maxwell, James Finlayson, Man of Destiny (Fayette, Iowa: N.p., 1962), 20–22.  
59“Miss Leigh made her stage debut when only four as the child, Allie, in Kit, the Arkansas Traveler, at Macauley’s, Louisville.” “Lisle Leigh,” Variety, May 25, 1927, in Lisle Leigh clipping file, New York Public Library, Theatre Collection. Kit, the Arkansas Traveler, starring the noted comic actor Francis S. Chanfrau, played at Macauley’s Theater, Louisville, February 1–6, 1874. John Jacob Weisert, Last Night at Macauley’s: A Check List, 1873–1928 (Louisville, Ky.: N.p., 1958).
and off Broadway.\textsuperscript{60} In May 1880, James Finlayson found them on his way to Scotland to serve a mission. He must have written to let Sara know that he intended to call, for she made sure that Lisle was not at home when he called.\textsuperscript{61} Sara reluctantly agreed to tell Lisle about him before his return.

When James Finlayson returned to the United States in September 1881, he made another effort to meet his daughter. This time she was at home, but her aunt had told the girl so many negative things about her Utah relatives that “she would have nothing to do with him, and kept a cool distance from her family . . . for the rest of her life.”\textsuperscript{62}

Sara Alexander’s long acting career took a surprising turn in 1916 when she was seventy-seven. She signed a contract with the Fox Film Corporation (New York) to act in silent pictures. Her first picture was a five-reeler, \textit{Caprice of the Mountains}, released July 17, 1916. One of many potboilers produced during this early period of the motion picture industry, the film starred June Caprice as Caprice Talbert, with Sara Alexander as Caprice’s aunt. Lisle Leigh also had a role in this film playing Maria Baker. Sara also played Grandma White in her second film, \textit{Little Miss Happiness}, released by Fox August 28, 1916, also starring June Caprice.\textsuperscript{63}

Sara Alexander also worked briefly for Goldwyn Pictures, play-

\textsuperscript{60}George C. D. Odell, \textit{Annals of the New York Stage} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927–49) vol. 15. Many listings are found for Lisle Leigh, but none for Sara Alexander, indicating either that Sara’s roles were supernumeraries or that she devoted herself fulltime to her niece’s career to the exclusion of her own.

\textsuperscript{61}“Spent most of the day trying to find Miss Sara Alexander, who has my daughter, Lisle S. Finlayson changed to Lisle Leigh. On May 4 found Miss A. She is living at 140 High Street, Brooklyn. Did not see my daughter. She has not been told of her father and brothers by her aunt, but she [Sara] has agreed to make her acquainted with her family relations before my return to America.” James Finlayson, “Missionary Diary,” May 1880, holograph in my possession.

\textsuperscript{62}Ibid.; and Maxwell, \textit{James Finlayson}, 23–24.

\textsuperscript{63}The Caprice films had stock plots, and no summary that I have found identifies Maria Baker’s role. “Miss Sara Alexander, one of the most celebrated actresses of the American stage, is to make her debut at the age of 80 [sic] in the Fox production of ‘Caprice of the Mountains.’ . . . In her first picture production she appears in a character role [Caprice’s aunt].
ing Aunt Lucretia to May Marsh’s Carey in The Glorious Adventure, a five-reeler released July 6, 1918.\textsuperscript{64} But probably her most important film was The Woman the Germans Shot, otherwise known as The Cavell Case. This motion picture, based on the life of Edith Cavell, an English nurse whom the Germans executed as a spy in World War I, appeared in November 1918. Julia Arthur starred as Nurse Cavell, while Sara Alexander portrayed Cavell’s mother.\textsuperscript{65} In 1919, Sara Alexander traveled to Miami and the Everglades for the shooting of The Jungle Trail, released by Fox Film Corporation on June 1, 1919. Starring William Farnum as Robert Morgan, the film included Sara Alexander as his mother.\textsuperscript{66} Alexander’s last film was The Passion Flower, a Talmadge Production starring Norma Talmadge. In it, she played an old peasant woman.\textsuperscript{67}

Salt Lake theater critic Eugene Traughber described Sara Alexander as she appeared in 1921. “Retaining much of the vivacity of her youth, Miss Alexander is now a quaint, dainty little person of the ‘lavender and old lace’ type. She wears side ringlets of the fashion of a number of decades ago, and their fluffiness gives a peculiar softness and charm to her face, reminding one of an old-fashioned portrait.”\textsuperscript{68}

In 1923, Sara Alexander’s health began to fail. Yet she continued to take minor parts, particularly in plays in which Lisle was appearing. Her last theatrical appearance was as a beggar woman in Rust, which opened at the Village Theatre in New York City on Janu-
ary 31, 1924. After this she was unable to obtain further stage work and went to live at the Percy Williams Home for Retired Actors, Amityville, Long Island, New York. She died on Christmas Eve, 1926, age eighty-seven.70

Lisle died five months later. She had returned to New York from a Chicago production of Not Herbert at the Mintein-Central Theater April 17-May 7, 1927, and had collapsed while climbing a flight of stairs at a friend’s home. She died of heart disease on May 19, 1927, age fifty-seven.71

Sara Alexander’s career and the life of the old Salt Lake Theatre covered an almost identical span of years. Dedicated on March 8, 1862, the theater was a little more than a year old when Sara joined its company. The training and encouragement she received there determined her career. The railroad’s coming meant, among other things, that touring companies and stars eclipsed the Deseret Dramatic Association.72 Thus, Sara Alexander’s six years with the Salt Lake Theatre coincided with the high period of stock company drama in the city. Although she seems to have had no association with the LDS Church once she left Salt Lake City, Sara Alexander always recalled her experiences at the Salt Lake Theatre with nostalgic pleasure. In fact, at the Salt Lake Theatre’s jubilee in 1912, she requested “a souvenir card or something that she could keep till her death.”73

On April 16, 1828, less than four months after Sara Alexander’s death, the New York City Journal announced that the Mountain States Telephone Company had purchased the building and would raze it to make room for an office building.74 The final performance was held

72Pyper, Romance of an Old Playhouse, 212; Maughan, Pioneer Theatre in the Desert, 147.
73Pyper, Romance of an Old Playhouse, 320.
74Maughan, Pioneer Theatre in the Desert, 152.
October 20, and on November 5, the building was demolished. Its destruction marked the end of a dramatic era unique in Mormon cultural history. Part of that era was Sara Alexander who, at her passing, was reportedly the oldest living American actress.

Pyper, Romance of an Old Playhouse, 397–400, 403; Maughan, Pioneer Theatre, 152.

CONTESTING THE LDS IMAGE:
THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW AND
THE MORMONS, 1881–1907

Matthew J. Grow

Over the course of the twentieth century, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints grew increasingly adept at communicating its message to the American public through the use of mass media. In the past decade, President Gordon B. Hinckley’s interviews on Larry King Live and 60 Minutes, his best-selling Standing for Something, and the spotlight of the 2002 Olympics have allowed the Church remarkable power in shaping its public image. Roughly a century ago, however, when controversy over the “Mormon Question”—the label given to the national debate over Mormonism’s polygamy, theocracy, and general relationship to the nation—swirled daily across the pages of America’s newspa-

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pers and magazines, defenders of Mormonism confronted a fundamentally uneven playing field. Anti-Mormon crusaders often had access to mainstream periodicals, publishers, and pulpits, while the Saints could generally respond only through their own newspapers and pamphlets, which had much smaller circulations and were indelibly tainted because of their Mormon association.

The *North American Review*, a nationally prominent magazine which boasted a large circulation and an impressive reputation, differed from most mainstream publications by allowing Latter-day Saints to contest the popular perception of Mormonism. Indeed, the *Review* sponsored a surprisingly open dialogue on Mormonism from the 1880s to the early 1900s, inviting both prominent Latter-day Saints and leading anti-Mormons to present their arguments before an influential national audience. By writing for the *Review*, Mormon leaders (including John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, Susa Young Gates, and Reed Smoot) seized a significant opportunity to reshape the public perception of Mormonism.

Studies of the Mormon public image, which have proliferated in recent years, have largely examined the writings of mainstream Protestant authors, politicians, and clergymen on the Latter-day Saints. These studies generally portray a one-way process by which outside groups—particularly representatives of the broadly defined American mainstream, from evangelical Protestants to women’s groups to politicians—imposed an identity on the Saints.²

Given the reams of nineteenth-century anti-Mormon novels, po-

political tracts, sermons, travel narratives, and exposés, this approach is certainly warranted. The writings of Latter-day Saints in the Review, however, demonstrate that Mormons also vigorously contested the imposed image, not only in publications meant for fellow Saints, but also through the national media. However, previous studies of the Mormon image have generally made little or no use of this rich source. The fourteen articles on Mormonism published in the Review between 1881 and 1907 include five written by leading Mormons, eight composed by crusaders against the Saints, and a final one which aimed at academic objectivity. While the Review did not allow absolute parity between the two sides, it did foster an open debate with sustained Latter-day Saint participation. An analysis of the influential articles in the Review suggests the general contours of both sides of the debate over the Mormon question.

The hard-fought contest over the public image of Mormonism had begun even before the official organization of the Church in 1830. Indeed, Mormon authors had long sparred with their opponents, particularly through LDS newspapers and pamphlets. Occasionally, Mormons successfully turned to the popular press to publish


Shipps includes four of the fourteen *North American Review* articles in her quantitative study of the Mormon image in “From Satyr to Saint.”

Nineteenth-century Americans had a habit of labeling difficult social issues as either a “Question” or a “Problem” (the terms were often used simultaneously). Thus, besides the “Mormon Question” or “Mormon Problem,” Americans faced an “Indian Question,” a “Woman Question,” and a “Negro Question,” among others.

Leonard J. Arrington, “Mormonism: Views from Without and Within,” *BYU Studies* 14 (Winter 1974): 148, described the response of Mor-
pro-Mormon letters and articles. In 1852, for instance, Jedediah M. Grant (with some ghost-writing by Thomas L. Kane) wrote a letter in defense of the Saint which appeared in the *New York Herald*. Edward Tullidge also contributed articles to national publications in the 1860s. At other times, Mormon leaders used local newspapers to promote their cause, as Parley P. Pratt did in San Francisco in the


6After the *Herald* declined to print additional letters, Grant and Kane wrote two more missives and published all three as a pamphlet. Jedediah M. Grant, *Three Letters to the New York Herald* (New York: n.pub., 1852); Gene A. Sessions, *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 100–110. Kane also recognized that it was “impossible to do much for you [the Saints] before public opinion was corrected,” so he “manufactured public opinion” through the placement of anonymous pro-Mormon articles in various newspapers, the publication of his sympathetic and influential pamphlet *The Mormons* (1850), and his friendship with journalists such as Horace Greeley, particularly in the late 1840s and early 1850s. See Thomas L. Kane, Letter to Brigham Young, December 2, 1846, Brigham Young Collection, Archives of the Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives); Albert L. Zobell, *Sentinel in the East: A Biography of Thomas L. Kane* (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan, 1965); and Mark M. Sawin, “A Sentinel for the Saints: Thomas Leiper Kane and the Mormon Migration,” *Nauvoo Journal* 10 (1998): 7–27.

1850s. Brigham Young recognized the importance of gaining access to the national press and sent George Q. Cannon on a public relations mission to the East in 1859. With Kane’s help, Cannon had some success in placing “well written articles as correspondence and editorial [sic].”

Even with these modest successes, however, mainstream newspapers and periodicals during the nineteenth century generally remained closed to the Saints. In addition, the achievements of these authors were not unequivocal victories; when Mormon writers like Grant and Pratt published in non-Mormon papers, their articles were often introduced by editorial comments criticizing or ridiculing them and their cause.

Writing for the Review thus afforded Mormons a unique opportunity to express their views in lengthy, reasoned essays in one of the nation’s preeminent journals. Founded in 1815 as the voice of Boston’s aristocratic elite, the Review quickly rose to the status of America’s leading literary magazine. Though its circulation remained fairly small for much of the century, the Review exerted an enormous influence due both to its prominent contributors—generally luminaries in politics, literature, and academia—and to its well-heeled readership. In 1876, the Review changed owners and, two years later, moved from its native Boston to New York City. The new owner, Charles Allen Thorndike Rice, also radically changed the content of the magazine; his stated aim was to eschew partisan politics and “to make the Review an arena wherein any man having something valuable to say could be heard.” On the Review’s new outlook, L. S. Metcalf, Rice’s first managing editor, commented, “I knew that there was a certain preference for articles which tended to the sensational, and I allowed myself to be considerably influenced by Mr. Rice’s undoubted belief in the practical business advantage of such contributions.” The Mormon question—one of the most sensational subjects of the day—would not be overlooked.


George Q. Cannon, Letters to Brigham Young, April 14, 1859, March 18, 1859, April 6, 1859, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives; Davis Bitton, George Q. Cannon: A Biography (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 94–96.
Controversy was the mantra of the revamped *Review*, with religion second only to politics as choice of topics. The *Review*, for instance, famously featured a debate over the veracity of Christianity in 1881. The journal also invited a series of well-known individuals to defend their faith, producing responses ranging from Edward Everett Hale’s “Why I Am a Unitarian” to Wong Chin Foo’s “Why I Am a Heathen” to Robert G. Ingersoll’s “Why I Am an Agnostic.” With the new format, readership soared. From just 1,200 subscribers in the mid-1870s, subscriptions reached a peak of 76,000 in 1891. By comparison, Jan Shipps estimates that the average article in the periodical press about Mormonism from 1860 to 1895 reached an audience “somewhere between five and ten thousand.”

In addition to controversy, the quality of writing attracted readers; Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, and William James were all frequent contributors in the late nineteenth century. The fame of other contributors further propelled the *Review’s* rising readership; in 1890, for example, authors included William T. Sherman, Theodore Roosevelt, Andrew Carnegie, William Gladstone, Madame Blavatsky, Jefferson Davis, E. L. Godkin, Lyman Abbott, Walt Whitman, and a host of other political, religious, military, and academic leaders. By the early 1890s, the *Review of Reviews* could comment, “It is unquestionably true that the North American is regarded by most people, in all parts of the country, as at once the highest and most impartial platform upon which current public issues can be discussed.”

In the context of nineteenth-century journalism, the “impartial plat-

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10 Shipps, “From Satyr to Saint,” 65.
11 The information on the *North American Review* is taken from Frank Luther Mott, *History of American Magazines, 1850–1865* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938), 2:249–59. A study of the *Review’s* early Boston years is Marshall Foulk, *Coming to Terms with Democracy: Federalist Intellectuals and the Shaping of an American Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001). When Allen Thorndike Rice died in 1889, he left a controlling interest in the *Review* to his close friend, Lloyd Bryce, who served as editor until 1896. After a short editorial stint by David A. Munro (1896–99), George B. H. Harvey purchased the *Review* and became its editor until 1926. Harvey, one of the most important journalists of the period, also edited *Harper’s Weekly* from 1901 to 1913 and was president of the publishing company Harper and Brothers. Bryce, Munro, and Harvey all followed Rice’s basic editorial policies of focusing on open debate, current...
form” of the Review did not mean objective or neutral; rather, it signified the inclusion of voices representing disparate perspectives on public issues.

From 1881 to 1907, the North American Review published fourteen major articles on Mormonism. The appearance of these articles reflected the national mood over the Mormon question, as they arose in the context of specific national political tumult, from the federal crack-down on polygamy in the 1880s to the turn-of-the-century controversies over the seating of B. H. Roberts and Reed Smoot in Congress. While debate over the Mormon question continually simmered in American political and social life, it only occasionally boiled over to captivate sustained public attention.

The Review had not been completely silent on the Mormon question during its Boston years. In 1862, in the context of the national discussion over the Morrill Act, the first anti-polygamy legislation, the Review published a forty-page article by Charles Henry Brigham, a Congregational minister in Massachusetts. Brigham reviewed four recent books, all written by sympathetic outsiders or by the Saints themselves: Jules Remy’s Voyage au Pays des Mormons, Richard F. Burton’s City of the Saints, the first three volumes of the Journal of Discourses, and John Jaques’s Catechism for Children. Brigham explicitly contrasted his approach with the rabidly anti-Mormon literature of the day, which he characterized as unrestrained “by ordinary scruples of decency.” Given the national interest in Mormonism (he claimed that “our own Review is almost the only one which has not favored the new Israel with elaborate notice”), Brigham sought to provide a detailed and accurate description of LDS social life, politics, events, and controversy. See also Mark G. Schmeller, “Charles Allen Thorndike Rice,” and Salme Harju Steinberg, “George Brinton McClellan Harvey,” in American National Biography, edited by John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 18:405–6, 10:276–77.

12A review of Benjamin Ferris’s Utah and the Mormons (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1854), and Mrs. Benjamin Ferris’s The Mormons at Home (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856) appeared in the Review 83 (July 1856): 274–75. The anonymous reviewer praised the Ferrises’ stridently anti-Mormon books, even expressing the “wish that these books could be circulated in a cheap form among the classes of persons most liable to be seduced by Mormon emissaries.”
and theology.13 While Brigham staunchly opposed Utah statehood because of Mormonism’s “customs of barbarism,” his choice of books led him to praise numerous aspects of Latter-day Saint life, including their extensive home-grown literature, reliance on the Bible, rapid growth, industriousness, and the cleanliness of their cities.14

Even so, he concluded antagonistically: “What philosopher will show us the true place of that aggregation of ideas which, in spite of its elements of good, remains in its whole only a monstrous and ridiculous excrescence?”15 While Brigham’s central conclusions were negative, his relative balance prefigured in some ways the later policy of the Review. Unlike Brigham’s effort, however, the balance of the Review’s later treatment would not be achieved through relatively dispassionate analysis by an outside observer using neutral or positive sources, but by allowing advocates on both sides of the Mormon question to advance their arguments in its pages.

Following Brigham’s article, the Review remained nearly silent on Mormonism for almost two decades.16 It broke its silence in 1881, after its own move to New York City, the revision of its editorial policies, and the intensified national attention on Mormonism as opponents of polygamy renewed their campaign for stricter legislation (resulting in the Edmunds Act in 1882 and the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887). Salt Lake Tribune editor Charles C. Goodwin launched an offensive against the Saints in a highly derogatory article which warned


14Brigham, “Mormons and Mormonism,” 196, characterized Remy’s and Burton’s books as a “vindication of the Mormons from the charges brought against them, and [as] a candid statement of the facts as they appear.”

15Ibid., 208, 225, 227.

16In 1863, the Review published an anonymous review of Louis A. Bertrand’s Mémoirs d’un Mormon (Paris: Dentu, 1862), in North American Review 96 (April 1863): 563–64. The review contains a brief summary of Bertrand’s book and concludes: “He can console himself for slow progress and ill success in his mission by the interest which his well-written volume will be sure to excite.”
of Mormon disloyalty and despotism and called for decisive action by
the federal government to force Mormon political submission. A rela-
tive newcomer to the Utah scene, Goodwin had taken over the edito-
rial reins of the Tribune in 1880; he quickly emerged as a leading foe
of Mormonism in both the local and national press.\textsuperscript{17}Mormonism,
he groaned in the Review, “is a despotism as absolute in its control
over its own people as ever existed on the earth.” While popular per-
ceptions focused on the offensive practice of polygamy, Goodwin be-
lieved that relatively few understood the greater dangers inherent in
the undemocratic and abusive Mormon theocracy. The “hive has
commenced to swarm,” he declared, and would soon overwhelm the
American West.\textsuperscript{18}

Goodwin combined fears of Mormon theocracy with appeals to
American nativism, alleging that “the Mormon church is a foreign
kingdom, hostile in all its features to a republican form of govern-
ment.” He continued, “It is guided and controlled by foreigners, and
depends upon foreigners and the children of foreigners for future ex-
pansion and power.” The “poor and ignorant” immigrant masses who
made up the bulk of Mormons owed absolute allegiance to the
Church and readily committed horrific crimes “in the very ecstasy of
fanaticism.” Unless the federal government acted vigorously to com-
bat Mormon political domination, Goodwin predicted that, within
fifteen years, “nothing less than an exhaustive civil war will suffice to
overcome this open enemy of republican government.”\textsuperscript{19}

Interestingly, most of the subsequent writers against Mormon-
ism in the Review followed Goodwin in emphasizing the Saints’ politi-
cal sins rather than polygamy, an approach which contrasted with

\textsuperscript{17}Lawrence I. Berkove, “Charles Carroll Goodwin,” \textit{American Na-
tional Biography}, 9:268–69; and James W. Hulse, “C. C. Goodwin and the
For another example of Goodwin’s charges in the national press, see his
“The Mormon Situation,” \textit{Harper’s New Monthly Magazine}, October 1881,
756–63. As Hulse documents, Goodwin gradually moderated his stance to-
wards Mormonism, even including praise in an article for the national
Munsey’s Magazine in 1900.

\textsuperscript{18}C. C. Goodwin, “The Political Attitudes of the Mormons,” \textit{North
American Review} 132 (March 1881): 276, 278.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 277–83.
most anti-Mormon literature of the day. In so doing, their attacks echoed the polemical literature against Catholicism, which also distinguished between leaders and followers, evoked fears of political hierarchy and subversion, and condemned immigration.

To balance Goodwin’s article, the editors of the *North American Review* sought a Mormon response and wrote to George Q. Cannon, counselor in the First Presidency and Utah Territory’s Congressional delegate “proffering the use of its columns to any leading Mormon who would write a brief article on the political attitude of the Mormons.” Cannon himself took up the challenge, as he considered Goodwin’s article “as base an attack upon us and our principles as could be.” It was fitting that Cannon should be the first Mormon writer in the *Review*, given his long service in the polemical trenches and his previous use of various media (from Mormon-owned papers

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20Shipps, “From Satyr to Saint,” 66, bases her conclusion on an extensive survey of the Mormon image in the American periodical press beginning in 1860. In so doing, she challenges earlier interpretations, most prominently associated with historian Klaus J. Hansen, that the “true target of the anti-polygamy campaign was not polygamy so much as it was the temporal (social, economic, and political) power of the Mormon church hierarchy” (62). Cf. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967). Other studies that closely examine the Mormon image in the nineteenth century largely support Shipps’s position, including Givens, *Viper on the Hearth*; Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); and Bunker and Bitton, *Mormon Graphic Image*, 34-35.


22George Q. Cannon, Journal, January 28, 1881, holograph at LDS Church Archives, transcript in private possession.

23Ibid., March 5, 1881.
to unsigned editorials in national papers) to defend the Saints. L. S. Metcalf, the Review’s managing editor, congratulated Cannon on his article, which he considered “the first that would appear on our [the Mormon] side of the subject in any magazine.” Metcalf assured Cannon that his article “would be read with great interest, would stir up favorable and unfavorable comment and do a great amount of good for the people.”

In his article, entitled “Utah and Its People,” Cannon asserted the need for a strong Mormon voice in the national debate. “There is probably no subject which has been agitated so much as this,” he reasoned, “and concerning which less is really known,” as only anti-Mormon writings were available to most of the nation. Cannon (who had been described by Goodwin as the “sweetest, smoothest, and most plausible sophist in all this round earth”) criticized Goodwin’s short residence in Salt Lake City and his willful disregard of contrary information. Dismissing Goodwin’s article as “full of unsustained assertions” and founded on gossip, Cannon articulated what became a frequent Mormon refrain of calling for a higher standard of evidence to be applied to the Mormon question. Even so, Cannon’s tone remained primarily defensive, preoccupied with rebutting Goodwin’s specific charges. For example, he explained that the vast majority of Mormon leaders were native-born Americans and described foreign-born Mormons as coming from the “liberty-loving races of Europe,” who quickly learned to revere the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Cannon turned the tables on Goodwin by blaming Utah Gentiles for the immorality and crime in Utah. Further, anti-Mormons had ironically caused the solidarity they lamented: Persecution, Cannon explained, “has had the effect to hoop them up, to force upon them the necessity of clinging to their co-religionists, by whom alone their virtues have been acknowledged.” He also characterized plural marriage as an act of “religious devotion” and asserted, “There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that sensualism is at the founda-

tion of this system of marriage.” Cannon concluded with a stirring defense of Utah, citing everything from high rates of home ownership to low rates of taxation to the existence of railroads and telegraphs. He queried, “Is there no credit due to a people, whatever their faults may be, who, under such constant assaults and misrepresentations, have accomplished so much in peopling the desert and filling the desolate valleys with peaceful homes and the hum of civilized industries?” In short, “Utah has been the Cinderella” of the United States: “Give her a fair opportunity, and see if she will not at least rank in all that is admirable and attractive with her more favored sisters.”

The Church-owned Deseret News, edited by Charles W. Penrose, recognized that the Review’s publication of Cannon’s article presented a unique opportunity for Mormons to speak for themselves. Immediately following the publication of Goodwin’s article, the Deseret News had lamented that a “respectable monthly like the North American Review would spoil its pages with such a mess of trash,” citing Goodwin’s numerous factual errors, inflammatory tone, and thinly veiled political ambition. After the publication of Cannon’s piece, however, the News reversed its estimation of the Review. Like Cannon, the News complained, “While the public prints have been free to intentional malingers and persons entirely ignorant of our doctrines and doings, they have been measurably closed against the defenders of our faith.” Therefore, the Review’s willingness to publish Cannon’s article signaled a “new departure in the discussion of the so-called Mormon problem,” and the News hoped that “other standard magazines will be found willing to ‘do likewise’” by opening their pages to Mormon writers.

The Review surely disappointed the Deseret News the following year when it published an article by Utah Governor Eli H. Murray which echoed Goodwin’s denunciations of Latter-day Saints as defy-

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29 “Utah and Its People,” Deseret Evening News, April 21, 1881.
ing laws, government, and the Constitution. Territorial governor from 1880 to 1886, Murray had emerged as an ardent foe of Mormonism. He dispensed with Mormons’ complaint of religious discrimination by arguing that the “question of religion does not in any proper sense enter, at this day, into a legitimate discussion of the Mormon question.” In his essay, he traced the historical relationship between the Church and the government to demonstrate that the “oneness of the Mormons, their dreams of empire, and their greed for unwarranted political power and unnecessary polygamous wives, is the fruitful source of all their trouble.” Indeed, he declared, “the sovereignty of the church is supreme in Utah.” Like Goodwin, Murray excused the deluded Mormon masses, blaming instead their “polygamous leaders, with their designing schemes, fighting for prolonged power.”

Polygamy occupied a subordinate, but significant, part of Murray’s critique. In particular, he decried plural marriage for its creation of hordes of supposedly illegitimate children. In general, however, polygamy represented a political evil because it “flaunts its defiance in the face of the Government, and denounces every effort to pass effective laws as oppression, and every officer who attempts to see the laws faithfully executed [as Murray envisioned himself], as an enemy.” To further emphasize the evils of polygamy, Murray compared Utah Mormons with the law-abiding, monogamous, and thoroughly docile members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Professing that he would defend Mormon religious liberty, he nevertheless concluded, “Obedience to law is required, and the exercise of temporal power by ecclesiastical authority, in the least degree, will no longer be toler-

30 In the 1880 election for Utah’s Congressional delegate, Murray certified Allen G. Campbell as the victor, even though his opponent George Q. Cannon received more than 90 percent of the vote, on the grounds that Cannon was a polygamist and not a naturalized citizen. The U.S. House Committee on Elections later overruled Murray and ordered Cannon’s seating. For biographical information on Murray, see Thomas A. McMullin and David Walker, Biographical Directory of American Territorial Governors (Westport, Conn.: Meckler Publishing, 1984), 306–7.

ated.”

Two years later, Murray once again appeared in the Review to debate Church President John Taylor on “Ecclesiastical Control in Utah.” Taylor, who had been “personally requested by a representative of the Review” to write an article on Mormonism, had apparently not been informed that Murray would also be contributing an article on the same topic. In his essay, which appeared as the lead article of the January 1884 issue, Taylor cast the Mormons in the role of a persecuted minority who were simply striving to enjoy the blessings of freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. Responding to critics like Goodwin and Murray who had emphasized Mormon theocratic defiance, Taylor wrote, “The simple fact is that the citizens of Utah are contending in a peaceable and legal manner for the same rights, privileges, and immunities that are possessed by their fellow-citizens—for these only, and no more.” Taylor condemned the Edmunds Act of 1882 for disenfranchising polygamists while giving the franchise to “the roué, the libertine, the strumpet, the brothel-keeper, the adulterer and adulteress.”

Like his nephew George Q. Cannon, Taylor attempted to recast the debate over Mormonism by portraying the Saints as peaceful and law-abiding and claiming that their enemies were the true “religious fanatics and political demagogues.” In contrast to other radical groups, Taylor asserted, the Mormons did not “appeal to dynamite or gunpowder” but chose to peacefully challenge the Edmunds Act through the courts. Taylor broadened his arguments and sought to appeal to the national audience by suggesting that unconstitutional attacks on Mormons would inevitably weaken the liberties of all

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32Ibid., 342, 346.
Americans. He also appealed to white racial solidarity, stating, “It is vain to talk of the freedom of the negro while the white man is sought to be disfranchised, manacled, and enslaved.”

Even so, the bulk of Taylor’s article carried a defensive tone, as he responded to misrepresentations of polygamy, Mormon patriotism, and Utah society. To rebut charges like Murray’s that the Mormon question was political not religious, Taylor quoted the entire Articles of Faith to emphasize the Saints’ sincere religiosity. He concluded by reaffirming the republican nature of Mormonism and condemning the invasions of Mormon liberties by a corrupt minority, expressing his hope that the Latter-day Saints would be protected from those who sought to “destroy every vestige of republican liberty in Utah.”

In his response, Murray labeled Utah a “deformed child” who needed closer federal supervision to combat Mormonism, “a monster of no considerable proportions.” He repeated many of the themes of his earlier article, particularly regarding Latter-day Saint leaders, who “rob the poor of the results of honest toil, womanhood of its chief adornment, and inspire the souls of a confiding people in Utah with hate toward the people of the United States.” Murray also countered LDS complaints about the ubiquity of anti-Mormon influence by criticizing Mormon attempts to hire Eastern lobbyists to mold their national press image and shape potential federal legislation. He further recommended authoritarian action to maintain republican rule, reasoning that only strong federal action could ensure a peaceful solution to the crisis. “Abolish the Legislature,” he declared, and rule the territory through a “Legislative Council” of up to thirteen presidentially appointed officials. Murray thus viewed the anti-polygamy crusade as a “second Reconstruction” in which heavy-handed federal authority would be used to preserve the integrity of the nation. His accusations provoked a strong reaction from the Deseret News, which charged that he and other “Utah plotters” stirred up national sentiment so they could “ride upon the ruins of a misjudged community into positions which they could never reach by

38Ibid., 22.
merit.”

The opponents of Mormonism in the Review often linked the doctrine of blood atonement—which allegedly justified murders at the prophet’s command—with the Saints’ political domination of Utah. Kate Field, a prominent American journalist whose articles regularly appeared in leading American and British periodicals, developed this theme most fully in an 1886 article which painted the state of Utah society in the most extreme terms. Field had spent eight months in Salt Lake City between October 1883 and July 1884 investigating Mormonism and later visited Nauvoo and Kirtland, an experience which resulted in numerous articles, a planned (but never published) book, and a highly popular lecture entitled “The Mormon Monster” which she delivered on the national lyceum circuit. For Field, the “Mormon Monster” was “not so much a social evil as a political criminal bent on Treason.” Indeed, political defiance, not polygamy, was Mormonism’s main offense for Field; “my lectures,” she once explained to Mark Twain, “are against the treason of the political machine, called a religion to blind the unwary.”

In her description of blood atonement for the Review, Field por-

40 “Governor Murray’s Series of ‘Ifs,’” Deseret Evening News, December 22, 1883. Charles W. Penrose was then editor of the Deseret Evening News.


43 Field, Letter to John Augustin Daly, December 8, 1885, in Moss, Kate Field, 189.

44 Field, Letter to Samuel Langhorne Clemens, March 6, 1886, in Moss, Kate Field, 190. Twain disagreed with Field’s assessment, “Considering our complacent cant about this country of ours being the home of liberty of conscience, it seems to me that the attitude of our Congress and people toward the Mormon Church is matter for limitless laughter and derision. The Mormon religion is a religion: the negative vote of all of the rest of the globe could not break down that fact; and so I shall probably always go
trayed Mormon duplicity by quoting from several LDS leaders who appeared to alternately affirm and deny blood atonement. She continued with a lengthy quotation from an anonymous disaffected Mormon which included horrifying tales of Utah life, complete with authoritarian leaders, deceptive bigamy, scandalous Endowment House rituals, and widespread neglect of wives and children. The passage reached a climax with allegations of both attempted and successful murder. For instance, one Mormon woman, who had grown bitter toward her faith and shared the secrets of the Endowment House with her sons, met an untimely fate: “They cut mother’s throat and disemboweled her before our [the sons’] eyes, and then told us to leave the Territory in twenty-four hours, or we’d be treated the same way.”

In response, LDS politician Joseph A. West explained the principle of blood atonement in Mormon theology while dismissing Field’s extreme allegations. He denied its secretive nature and averred that “it is but a logical and pure continuation of the belief of all Christians in Christ’s sublime atonement.” He continued, “There are mortal sins which deprive the doers of the expiation wrought by Jesus; and the shedding of their own blood is the only sacrifice which can save such guilty ones from an outer darkness which shall endure forever.” Thus, West interpreted blood atonement as an example of God’s divine mercy, as God sometimes gave “men the opportunity to die in the flesh, by the swift stroke of a righteous vengeance, rather than to suffer eternally in the spirit.”

Even with these admissions, West asserted that the Mormon be-

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46At the time, West was Speaker of the Utah House of Representatives; he had spent March-June 1886 in Washington, D.C., representing the Utah Legislature in its dispute with Governor Murray. He helped convince President Grover Cleveland to remove Murray as governor and testified before Congress against the proposed Edmunds-Tucker Act. Andrew Jenson, “Joseph A. West,” *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901–36), 1:754–56.
lief remained merely theoretical and “passive.” Just as significantly, West indicted Field’s article as indicative of the current cultural atmosphere in which the most extreme stories regarding Mormonism were accepted as fact. Indeed, “Miss Field cannot substantiate, by one tittle of credible evidence, the tale she has related,” which had undergone substantial evolution in her writings and speeches. He passionately argued that most literature on Mormonism ignored basic evidentiary principles and looked forward to the “day when the same care will be used in reporting and construing the utterances of Mormons that is required” for other religious groups.

Another ubiquitous anti-Mormon theme—the degrading influence of polygamy on women and children—was challenged by Susa Young Gates in the *Review* in 1890. Gates’s interaction with the journal demonstrates that at least some of the Mormon authors, unlike Cannon and Taylor, took the initiative in approaching the *North American Review*. Gates queried Lloyd Bryce, the *Review*’s editor, about submitting an article on polygamy. Bryce responded encouragingly: “I think it would make an important contribution and that the American people would take great interest in hearing from you why Polygamy should not be abolished in Utah.” Bryce recommended that she use “as many little incidents as possible of home life—showing by these the practical workings of the system,” advising that such a strategy would give her article a “far greater importance—as the theory of the system has already been so fully discussed.” Gates’s article—originally titled “Why I Think Polygamy Should Not Have Been Abolished in Utah”—was accepted by the *Review* with only minimal editorial changes to shorten the piece.

A daughter of Brigham Young who became a leading Mormon

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50 Bryce, Letter to Gates, February 6, 1890, Gates Papers. Intriguingly, George Q. Cannon noted in his journal, January 10, 1890, that not all Lat-
author and advocate for women’s rights, Gates argued that the “common statement that plural marriage debases husbands, degrades wives, and brutalizes offspring, is false.” In describing the life of the Young family, she emphasized the parental attention and guidance given to the children as well as their opportunities for education, music lessons, and cultural development. Gates also countered the common charge that polygamy produced physically and mentally deformed children.51 “As a physiological fact,” she noted, none of Brigham Young’s fifty-six children was “halt, lame, or blind, all being perfect in body and of sound mind or intellect.” Childhood in a large polygamous family was certainly not without its difficulties, she admitted. Courting in the Young household proved particularly awkward. “Could you be unreservedly happy,” she asked, “if, every time you cast a loving look or offered a slight caress, there were eighteen pairs of disinterested eyes observing the performance minutely, eighteen voices to twit you in a graduate[d] scale of ridicule?” More seriously, Gates freely admitted the existence of disputes among sister-wives, though she claimed that the trials of plural marriage enabled the “brave hearts to overcome their own weaknesses and selfishness.”52

Gates also portrayed polygamous women as progressive on issues of women’s rights. Indeed, Mormon women were “working grandly at the sex problem of the nineteenth century.” Gates argued (as have some historians of Mormon women) that the very system of plural marriage liberated women to more fully enter public life. With the assistance of sister-wives, a woman could “launch out into her chosen vocation, ready to add the mite of her experience to the great problem of humanity.” Gates concluded with a plea to the “mistaken,


prejudiced, American public” to halt their crusade against her “broken, crushed, and oppressed people.” At a time of increasing national opposition to plural marriage, six months before the Manifesto, Gates thus attacked central portions of the rationale advanced to oppose polygamy. Rather than oppressing women and producing neglected and deformed children, plural marriage contributed to women’s progress and ensured a child’s attention, stability, and opportunities for refinement.

Following Gates’s volley, the debate over Mormonism in the Review—and soon after in much of the nation—subsided. Compromise with the nation, in the form of the Manifesto against new plural marriages in 1890 and the dismantling of the Church’s political party in 1891, led to Utah statehood in 1896. The Mormon question seemed resolved. The elections of Church leaders B. H. Roberts to the House of Representatives in 1898 and Reed Smoot to the Senate in 1902, however, reignited the national furor over Mormonism.

Following the election of the polygamist Roberts, Eugene Young—a non-Mormon grandson of Brigham Young who contributed numerous anti-Mormon articles to the national press in the 1890s—warned about the “Revival of the Mormon Problem.” Ignoring the recent and enthusiastic participation of Mormons in the Span-

53Ibid., 349–50.
ish-American War, Young emphasized Mormon defiance during the
Civil War to contend that there was a “subtle connection . . . between
our national troubles and the progress of Mormonism.” Declaring
that the compromises which had supposedly settled the Mormon
question during the early 1890s were merely Mormon maneuverings
meant to deceive the American public, Young charged that Latter-day
Saint doctrines of plural marriage and political domination remained
essentially unchanged.56

For Young, the election of Roberts, “one who typifies militant
Mormonism,” starkly revealed the “real nature of Mormon surrender”
as a sham. He accused Mormon leaders of hypocrisy, contending that
Mormon rhetoric and symbolic action notwithstanding, the “un-Amer-
ican policy of Brigham Young is the policy of [current Church Presi-
dent] Lorenzo Snow and his followers.” Like most of the previous
opponents of Mormonism in the Review, Young emphasized what he saw
as Mormonism’s political scheming. He asserted that the Saints con-
tinued to dominate Utah politics and craved control of the entire West.
He thus issued a call to national leaders to confront anew the Latter-day
Saints: “Aggressive, devoted, determined, they present again a problem
that well merits the attention of our wisest statesmen.”57

The “wisest statesmen”—at least in the eyes of the Senate—chose
to reexamine the state of Mormon society in the wide-ranging hear-
ings on the seating of Reed Smoot, which provided fodder for several
articles in the Review by some of the leading protagonists. The Review
first addressed the Smoot hearings in an article penned by Joseph
Smith III, president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-
ter Day Saints and long-time foe of polygamy.58 In 1903, the same year
his article appeared in the Review, Smith also engaged in a debate
over “Mormonism and Polygamy” with his cousin Joseph F. Smith,

56Eugene Young, “Revival of the Mormon Problem,” North American
57Ibid., 482–89.
58See Roger P. Launius, Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet (Urbana:
University of Illinois Press, 1988), 247–67 for a discussion of Smith’s
antipolygamy activities. A more complete treatment of Smith’s writings and
actions against polygamy is Charles Millard Turner, “Joseph Smith III and
the Mormons of Utah” (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1985).
then Church president, in the national periodical *The Arena.* After presenting the RLDS version of early Mormon history, which protected his father from the epithet of “polygamist,” Joseph Smith III lamented that the agreement by which Utah entered the Union allowed men to maintain their pre-1890 plural marriages.

Continued cohabitation raised the specter that, after Mormons had achieved “political supremacy or balance of power” throughout the West, state laws would “permit them to throw off the mask of acquiescence . . . and to reinstate the practice as a church dogma.” Assuming the role of one long familiar with the cunning and ruses of Utah Mormonism, he proffered political advice to ensure that his allies would not “again be fooled or outwitted into permitting such a political menace to continue.” Only briefly did Smith address the issue which had brought plural marriage forcefully to the forefront of the national consciousness: the impending Reed Smoot case. Nevertheless, he counseled, “Mr. Smoot is not a polygamist, and ought not to be excluded on this account; nor can he justly be excluded upon the plea that he is a Mormon.”

Shelby M. Cullom, Republican Senator from Illinois and long-time opponent of Mormonism, twice weighed in on the Reed Smoot controversy in the pages of the *Review*. Cullom had consistently railed against Mormonism throughout his long political career (including thirty years in the Senate), even claiming that, as an Illinois legislator in the 1860s, “I had the honor—and, as Mormonism used to be, I consider it a signal honor—of preparing the first anti-Mormon bill ever presented to a legislature.” Although Cullom was normally an extremely cautious and conservative politician, his biographer


states that he uncharacteristically “denounced Mormons in the most unrestrained terms,” in proposing radical (and failed) legislation against Mormonism from the 1860s to the 1880s. In a 1905 article in the Review, Cullom argued that Mormonism still posed a menace to American society. Noting the decline in polygamy, Cullom described the Mormon hierarchy’s control of politics as the greater threat, stating, “We can never too earnestly denounce and combat the tendency of church hierarchy, or any hierarchy, to dominate law.”

Nevertheless, two years later Cullom voted to allow Smoot to retain his senatorial seat. He explained this about-face in a second article in the Review by arguing, “It is perfectly obvious that the evils of Mormonism are not what they were,” as polygamy “has been practically obliterated.” Furthermore, Cullom justified his decision in the Smoot case by describing it as “in no way a verdict or an opinion concerning Mormonism.” Rather, the Senate had merely acted in its judicial, not legislative, role of determining Smoot’s capacity to serve in Congress. The charges against Smoot were “weak, being from their inception aimed more at Mormonism than at Reed Smoot.” In response to the piles of public petitions received by Senators, Cullom agreed with his Mormon antagonists that the public had been “supplied with equally voluminous fiction, sentiment and prejudiced impression, as well as with facts, and with comparatively little opportunity to sift and discriminate.” Finally, to deny Smoot his seat would only have made him a martyr and strengthened the Mormon hierarchy.

James W. Garner, a pioneer in the academic field of political science and professor at the University of Illinois, contributed a generally accurate and balanced view of the controversy. He advanced no clearly stated position on whether or not to seat Smoot, conceding that the question “is one concerning which men of the highest moral

Review 181 (September 1905): 384.


65At the time of this article, Garner was best known for his widely re-
standards may differ.” After dismissing most charges against Smoot as blatantly false or irrelevant, Garner wrote that only one allegation was “entitled to serious consideration”: “His chief offense is that, as an apostle of the Mormon hierarchy, he has supported and sustained his brother leaders in their violation of the law.” Garner’s article indicated a larger trend within both academia and journalism toward a nonpartisan, “objective” style of writing. Rather than merely giving voice to both sides of a dispute, this approach privileged the role of an outside authority who could dispassionately, yet sympathetically, consider all sides of an issue.

The final article in the Review on the Smoot case was authored by none other than Smoot himself. Writing nearly a year after the Senate had allowed him to retain his seat, Smoot argued against the necessity of a constitutional amendment banning polygamy. The hearings, he suggested, had proved “conclusively” that not even one “solitary polygamous marriage” had occurred after the 1890 Manifesto “by or with the consent, connivance, countenance, sanction or approval of the Mormon Church.” Furthermore, the Church had recently removed John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley, the two most notorious post-Manifesto polygamists, from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. And even cohabitation—the continuance of pre-


67Eric Eliason, “Curious Gentiles and Representational Authority,” 165, argues that some commentators on Mormonism in the nineteenth-century (Horace Greeley, Richard Burton, and Mark Twain) “helped lay ground work for contemporary understandings of who can offer trustworthy evocations of a given society,” which eventually contributed to a larger shift in “American journalism, literary travel writing, and ethnographic description.”
Manifesto plural marriages—was rapidly dying out as the polygamous population aged. Certainly, Smoot stretched the truth, but he relied on the common distinction between plural marriages performed by individual Church leaders (even with the tacit but unofficial approval of most of the other General Authorities) and marriages officially authorized by the Church as a corporate entity. In addition, Smoot argued that Utah had also “kept faith with the National Government in respect to Statehood” by limiting Mormon control of its political institutions. Thus, Smoot argued that the Mormon question had been decisively resolved, rendering a constitutional amendment unnecessary.

The end of the Smoot trial foreshadowed a shift in the portrayal of the Latter-day Saints by the national press which had become obvious and widespread by the 1920s and 1930s. Latter-day Saint writing for the North American Review was part of a larger effort during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries which contributed to the reshaping of the Church’s public image. Turn-of-the-century Mormon leaders clearly recognized the debilitating effects of a negative image and fretted about its influence on missionary work, the Church’s rising generation, and national policies involving Utah. In a special general conference in November 1901 to sustain Joseph F. Smith as the new Church president, Smith lamented the near-ubiquitous “slanderous reports” on Mormonism. “The Lord designs,” Smith promised, “to change this condition of things, and to make us known to the world in our true light—as true worshipers of God.”

Besides the writings in the Review, turn-of-the-century Church leaders took a variety of actions to present the Latter-day Saints as

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70 Joseph F. Smith, Sermon, in Conference Reports (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, November 1901), 70. Flake, Politics of American Religious Iden-
“true worshipers of God.” Church leaders and their allies, for example, paid subsidies to various national newspapers in 1887–88 to improve the chances for Utah statehood, an action one historian has credited with playing a “crucial role in neutralizing the overwhelmingly adverse public image of the Mormons.”

Besides the Review, Church leaders also wrote articles for other national journals. Articles or letters by Joseph F. Smith appeared in Arena, Out West, and Collier’s. Church leaders became even more successful at publishing in national periodicals in the 1910s. B. H. Roberts published a serialized history of the Church in American Historical Magazine from 1908 to 1915 (which later became his Comprehensive History of the Church) and James Talmage wrote a series on Mormon doctrine which appeared in newspapers throughout the nation in 1917. In addition, BYU professor Nels L. Nelson’s Scientific Aspects of Mormonism (1904) became the “first friendly book written by a Mormon to be published by a prominent Eastern house” (G. P. Putnam’s Sons).

Finally, Church leaders recognized the potential to shape Mormonism’s public image through tourism. After statehood, the Church began to more explicitly market itself to tourists, establishing a Bureau of Information and Church Literature on Temple Square in 1902, which helped transform Temple Square into a popular tourist destination.

LDS writings in the North American Review were thus part of a

tity, 102–8, perceptively argues that it was Smith’s concern for changing the Church’s public image that dictated many of his decisions during the Smoot hearings, including the decision to decisively abandon polygamy and approve the disciplinary actions taken against Taylor and Cowley for post-Manifesto plural marriages.

Lyman, Political Deliverance, 5, 69–95.


Thomas K. Hafen, “City of Saints, City of Sinners: The Develop-
larger process by which Church leaders used the national media and other available resources to counteract the highly negative image of Mormonism. Within this broader context, the Review’s coverage of the Mormon question merits particular attention because of its large circulation and the prominence of both its anti-Mormon and its Latter-day Saint contributors. Traces of the nineteenth-century Mormon approach to public relations continue to exist—in particular, the simultaneous stance of feeling persecuted and martyred by negative press coupled with persistent attempts to use the media. In certain respects, however, nineteenth-century public relations differ dramatically from the strategy used by the contemporary Church to influence public perceptions, which emphasizes describing positively LDS beliefs and practices, ignores most criticisms, and stays on message. Mormon writers in the Review, for instance, remained on the battlefield chosen by their opponents, typically responding to specific or general allegations made against Mormonism rather than positively presenting its doctrine or history. Certainly, a combination of factors contributed to the defensiveness of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints: the virulence of the attacks, a rhetorical culture that placed a greater premium on debate, and a deep-seated mentality of persecution.

Significantly, both proponents and opponents of Mormonism in the Review appealed to strikingly similar standards of conduct and judgment. Taylor and Cannon, for instance, invoked virtually the same political standards—namely, an appeal to republicanism and constitutional rights—which Goodwin and Murray used to condemn Mormonism. Likewise, Gates defended polygamy by drawing on contemporary notions of domesticity and women’s rights which were often employed to ridicule the Church. Smoot also endeavored to present the Latter-day Saints as typical Americans, normative in their daily lives and their marriage practices. By drawing on the same standards and playing on the same field as anti-Mormon crusaders, turn-of-the-century Latter-day Saints helped establish the credibility of Mormons as bona fide Americans. In the process, Mormonism modified some of its most distinctive practices and rhetorically abandoned some of its most comprehensive critiques of nineteenth-cen-
tury American culture. The move was not without irony, as the rapprochement with American society created its own tensions—the oscillation, in Armand Mauss’s evocative terms, between “the Angel” and “the Beehive,” between distinctiveness and assimilation. Indeed, this tension in Mormon public relations—between emphasizing similarities with American society and focusing on distinct Mormon doctrines and practices—continues to exist.


SUBSTANCE VERSUS SUPERFICIALITY: WOMEN’S PRESCRIBED ROLES IN EARLY TERRITORIAL UTAH, 1850–70

Kami Wilson

In 1857 an article in the Deseret News desperately lamented, “Where Are They? What has become of all the modest, quiet, home-loving young ladies we used to see in old times, and read of now occasionally?” The article, an exchange from a New York paper, bemoaned the rise of idle, affected, simpering, fluttering young women who cared solely about appearances. From concerns about the length of their gowns to worries over their positions in society, these girls, the article insisted, focused their energies upon artificial indicators of human value, rendering themselves essentially worthless. Specifically, superficial young women, in abandoning qualities of respectfulness, economy, industry, and spirituality, failed to prepare themselves for their home-based roles. The author asked, “Do young women ever seriously think about their destiny and position in the world; for what purpose they were created and designed? Do they . . . endeavor to render themselves capable to adorn the most beautiful and holy office on earth—that of wife and mother? Then do not consider yourselves mere waxen dolls, or parti-colored butterflies, or walking

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show cases any longer.”

Throughout the first two decades of Utah’s territorial period, anxious leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints echoed this concern that women were becoming far too superficial, focusing their time and energy on things that mattered little instead of on those of greatest substance, specifically, their roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers. Although some of the rhetoric focused on young women, most of it centered on grown women who bore the responsibility for their daughters’ inappropriate behavior as well as their own. Leaders’ worries reverberated over the pulpits and constituted a hot topic in the pages of the Deseret News, especially in the territory’s earliest years. The intensity of the claims and the frequency of their repetition indicate the seriousness of the matter for Utah leaders.

Three years after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Church leaders began printing the Deseret News, the official organ of the Church and a more efficient means of disseminating prophetic counsel than the pulpit. Throughout Utah’s territorial period, authorities made concerted efforts to distribute this periodical. “Agent bishops” of various areas in the territory received the assignment to take subscriptions and oversee the paper’s distribution.

The three editors of the Deseret News between 1850 and 1870 all served in lofty positions in the Church hierarchy and, significantly, in positions that put them in close contact with President Brigham Young. Willard Richards, who edited the paper from 1850 to 1854, served as a counselor in the First Presidency. Albert Carrington took over from 1854 to 1867. He served as Brigham Young’s personal secretary during his editorship, and later as an apostle and assistant counselor to Young. George Q. Cannon, later a counselor in four First Presidencies and editor from 1867 to the end of the period under study, also served as Brigham Young’s private secretary. The close proximity and relationships the editors had with Brigham Young and the president’s strong influence in the territory suggest that Young at least influenced and possibly controlled what was printed.

In 1857 Heber C. Kimball strongly urged members of the

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1“Where Are They?,” Deseret News, June 17, 1857, 119, exchange. I designate each Deseret News citation as an article picked up from or exchanged with another paper, a local piece, or as “unknown” if the article’s source was not apparent.
Church to subscribe to the News, explaining that, contrary to some individuals’ understanding, the publication was not owned by the editor but was “entirely owned by the Church and controlled for the mutual benefit of all who are interested in building up the kingdom of God on the earth.” Furthermore, said he, the News should be handed down from generation to generation as a sacred relic to be treasured for time and eternity since “such publications are not going to be burned up, according to my faith they will go into the resurrection.”

Nevertheless, the counsel contained in the Deseret News differs from the transcripts of actual sermons such as the Journal of Discourses. First, the printed words are not all quotations from Church authorities. Exchanges, for instance, comprise about one third of the prescriptive articles aimed at women. About a third of the articles could be identified as local in origin, while the origin of the remaining third could not be identified.

The News reprinted women-targeted articles from at least 150 different periodicals based around the country and overseas. Most originated from eastern papers, including three of the News’s favorites: the American Agriculturist (Springfield, Massachusetts), Life Illustrated (New York), and the New York Herald. Many of the periodicals from which the News borrowed pieces had an agricultural or rural emphasis, and a few articles came from publications produced specifically for women such as Godsey’s Lady’s Book. Pieces from other papers must have undergone several filters before finding themselves in print in Utah. Although exchanges printed in the News originated predominantly from non-Mormon sources and would probably not be considered actual Church doctrine, they certainly would not have contradicted Church leaders’ views.

Second, as a literary medium, News editors could present subjects in a variety of ways. Short stories, quips, poems, historical accounts, and reports of exotic cultures offered different and often very entertaining ways to present the same subjects discussed previously in the bowery or the tabernacle. Finally, the Deseret News also provided a platform for some female voices, as women authored 22.2 percent of


3 Specifically, of the 1,300 articles appraised, 35.8 percent were exchanges, 27.6 percent were local, and 36.5 percent could not be identified as either local or an exchange.
the articles studied.\footnote{Of the articles studied, I could identify 22.2 percent as being written by women, while 12.0 percent of the articles could be definitely identified as authored by men. A full 65.8 percent of the articles did not allow for accurate identity of the sex of the author. Judging from their content and the fact that men worked more frequently as editors, authors, and reporters, however, it seems fairly safe to assume that most unidentified articles were also written by men.}

As the official organ of the Church and one of the only mass-produced printed works in the territory, the Deseret News provides a fascinating glimpse into the prescriptive roles of Utah LDS women in the 1850s and 1860s. From the first printing of the News on June 15, 1850, through January 1870, approximately 1,000 issues emerged from the press. These issues included at least 1,300 articles specifically by, about, and/or intended for the readership of women. Very few issues did not contain at least one piece aimed at female readership, the vast majority of them prescriptive and/or proscriptive. The decade of the 1850s saw the greatest proportion of female-targeted articles. From 1850 through 1860 the Deseret News averaged two articles per issue aimed specifically at women. After 1860, the average dropped to one per issue. With the commencement of the Deseret Semi-Weekly News in 1867 the number of articles targeted at women dropped considerably—to fewer than one article every five issues. It should be noted that much of the News’s material applied to both men and women, but the 1,300 articles in this statistical survey are only those specifically targeted at women. (See Appendix for topical classifications.)

The decline in the frequency of articles printed for women reinforces 1870 as the ending date of this study. For unknown reasons, it seems that the Deseret News, around this time, relinquished part of its role as the conveyer of female-targeted counsel to the newly organized Relief Societies and, in 1872, to the Woman’s Exponent, Utah’s first periodical produced by and for women. Additionally, the News’s role as one of the only means of communication between the territory and the rest of the country changed with the 1869 completion of the transcontinental railroad. I chose early 1870 as the concluding date, however, since it allowed me to include the political activities of Utah women preceding their receipt of suffrage, an issue the News had been tackling for several years.
This study, far from presenting an exhaustive description of women’s lives during the period, focuses instead on the counsel they received. By its very nature, the counsel assumed a negative tone, since it addressed undesirable qualities that required correction. Church leaders typically had no qualms about sharply censuring women (as well as men) in their efforts to mold Saints and build God’s kingdom. However, Church leaders and Deseret News pieces also portrayed women as loving, sensitive, strong, and capable. Leaders’ counsel to women, generally lovingly given, but not complimentary, comprises the core of this study.

It is difficult to ascertain the degree to which women of this period adhered to direction from Church authorities. The fact that professing LDS women viewed leaders as prophets of God would have given such instruction some weight. Leaders’ counsel constituted a body of doctrine toward which women tried to mold their lives, sometimes succeeding and sometimes failing. This “divine” prescriptive literature also stood as a measuring stick against which women could personally gauge their level of righteousness in the kingdom. The female-targeted rhetoric of Utah’s early territorial period provides an understanding of the pressures, motivations, and expectations under which professing LDS women functioned daily, regardless of the preciseness to which they adhered to the counsel.

**ECONOMIC EXHORTATIONS: INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY VERSUS IDLENESS AND EXTRAVAGANCE**

Church authorities’ moral concern for women enveloped a financial component that naturally alarmed leaders of a community trying to eke out an existence from an inhospitable land. By any standard, Brigham Young and his fellow leaders had their work cut out for them in overseeing the settlement of the semi-arid Great Basin. From dry soil, to insect pests, to distance from urban centers, the survival of the LDS community demanded the full support of its inhabitants. Utah pulpits and periodicals resounded with Church authorities’ cries for cooperation among constituents. Indiscriminate in their exhortations, leaders called upon women as well as men to bolster the economic survival of the settlements.

Economic self-reliance began as a requisite for the Saints in Utah and continued to be urged throughout the territorial period, even after contact between Salt Lake City and the outside world increased. The rhetoric of the early years of settlement focused on the
general ideals of working for the common good and rooting out selfishness. Such persuasions eventually evolved into a specific program of local manufacturing and production. By 1852 leaders preached this doctrine of home industry forcibly and frequently. Leaders persuaded Church members to manufacture their own possessions instead of relying upon “Gentile” merchants and craftsmen, believing that such self-reliance would ensure economic, social, and spiritual well-being. Home industry’s success, as well as the territory’s general economic health, required the Saints’ religious adherence to the qualities of industry and economy. These two characteristics, as well as their corresponding opposites, idleness and extravagance, served as topics for countless sermons, both over the pulpit and in print, to men and women of Utah.

The Deseret News, itself named after the ever-busy honeybee (Eth. 2:3), exhibited no tolerance for idle women. “Idle!” the News incredulously cried, “how can women be idle? With perishing thousands around her, . . . with resources on every side, how can she be idle?” In 1852 Brigham Young avowed, “Deplorable indeed must be the situation of that People, whose sons are not trained in the practice of every useful avocation, and whose daughters mingle not in the hum of industry.”

Many exhortations for female industry exemplify the pre-industrial nostalgia that peppers the pages of the News. Editors often implored women to hearken back to an earlier era of devotion to industry. One of the News editors’ favorite lectures on industry included a story in which a few women, dressed in their “most elegant ruffles,” paid a visit to Martha Washington. Humbled and ashamed, they found George Washington’s wife knitting with a “speckled apron on.” The author reportedly said, “There we were, without a stitch of work . . . but General Washington’s lady, with her own hands, was knitting stockings for her husband and herself.” Lady Washington gently reprimanded her visitors, remarking, “While our husbands and brothers are examples of patriotism, we should be patterns of industry.” The News editors concluded feverishly, “What do the Ladies of Deseret say to lady Washington’s precept and example? Good! GOOD!! GOOD!!! . . . spinning wheels, looms and knitting needles are the music and dancing of

5“Idle Women,” Deseret News, August 15, 1855, 182, exchange; and Brigham Young, “Governor’s Message,” Deseret News, January 24, 1852, 18, local.
Deseret, among the elite.” On the same page, the News praised Brigham Young’s family for weaving more than 500 yards of cloth during the current season. The editor exulted, “If all follow this example, we shall not need to write much longer about home manufacture, or Lady Washington. Lady Young is the example of the day for Deseret.”

The almost exclusively domestic nature of nineteenth-century women’s work kept women focused upon and in close contact with their homes and families. Church leaders directed women to employ industrious habits in the home, thus contributing to, if not ensuring, the family’s well-being. Leaders often reminded women that lazy habits would directly lead to unhappy families and to misery and frustration on the part of the incompetent homemaker. As an exchange described, “Show me an idle woman, and I will show you a discontented, peevish, restless meddler.” In 1864 an Eastern editor worried, “The number of idle, useless girls, in all of our cities seems to be steadily increasing.” These girls, the editor sniffed, lounged about in the mornings and spent their afternoons and evenings in idle social gatherings. They demonstrated no domestic skills nor habits of industry. The editor asked, “What will they be as wives and mothers? . . . What a store of unhappiness for themselves and others are they laying up for the coming time, when real duties and responsibilities shall be thoroughly assumed!”

To help women acquire necessary skills for happy and efficient homes, the editors often used space in the News to instruct women in the art of household economy. In many instances, prescriptive, rather than prescriptive, stories indicated habits to be avoided. For example, an article entitled “The Half-Housekeeper” berated a fictional woman for her “unpalatable” cooking, a table that “was never rightly laid for a meal,” leftovers that “were never properly cared for after dinner,” children’s clothes that “came to pieces the second day,” and the fact that she never received company without feeling compelled to apologize for her household’s disorganized state. Preaching the same theme but in a more positive vein, a happy, industrious, organized housekeeper counseled her struggling friend to have a specific

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6“Anecdote of Lady Washington,” Deseret News, March 6, 1852, 34, exchange; untitled, Deseret News, March 6, 1852, 34, local.
time for every duty and a place for everything with everything kept in its place. Good housekeepers should always be engaged in doing some task, and they should take time to refresh themselves with naps and other enjoyments when needed.\(^\text{10}\)

Such counsel emanating from the pages of the *Deseret News*, much of it copied from Eastern periodicals, reflected a decidedly more favorable housekeeping setting than that experienced by most Utah women of the period. Frontier conditions, poverty, and husbands absent due to missions or plural marriage often figured into Utah housekeepers’ experiences. LDS women sometimes experienced an added component of responsibility that did not affect their fictional Eastern sisters. Not only did women manage their households, but many of them had to financially support themselves and their children, as well as their missionary husbands. Such women typically chose to raise money by performing tasks that fell under the umbrella of traditional women’s work.\(^\text{11}\)

Although housework unquestionably served as the primary kind of women’s work, Brigham Young’s pragmatic approach to the Great Basin economy encouraged women’s activity in other vocations as well. From helping with fall harvest, to receiving midwife training, to teaching, President Young saw women as a useful resource in boosting the territory’s economy, as well as an appropriate way to magnify “man” power in the territory. As Young remarked, “It is always disgusting to me to see a big, fat, lubberly fellow handing out calicoes and measuring ribbon; I would rather see the ladies do it. The ladies can learn to keep books as well as the men; we have some few, already, who are just as good accountants as any of our brethren.”\(^\text{12}\)

Always a man of practicality, Brigham Young encouraged women to become educated in practical skills and to utilize those skills in the territory. It was Young’s desire to have women function in jobs such as

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See also “Happy at Home,” *Deseret News*, June 21, 1866, 225 (front page), unknown; and Mary A. Chapin, “Mr. Pepper’s Wife,” *Deseret News*, July 11, 1855, 142, unknown.

\(^{10}\)“How She Found the Time,” *Deseret News*, August 8, 1855, 171, exchange. See also “Advice to Farmer’s Wives,” *Deseret News*, December 24, 1862, 206, exchange.


\(^{12}\)Brigham Young, April 6, 1869, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:374–75.
telegraph operators, store clerks, phonograph operators, and silk manufacturers, leaving the men free to perform manual labor.

An 1867 article boasted of women’s involvement in Utah industry and encouraged the trend to continue. The article stated, “The interest which is now being felt in the education and training of young ladies is very pleasing. It speaks well for the future.” Furthermore, the article promised, if women take advantage of their opportunities, “We will soon have women who will prove worthy co-labourers of their fathers, brothers and husbands in the great work which lies before us, and become the mothers of the race of heroes.” In whatever occupation women chose to employ themselves, Church leaders instructed them in no uncertain terms to be industrious. This was a mark of a capable woman and a key for the territory’s economic and spiritual success. As Daniel H. Wells, later second counselor in the First Presidency, instructed women, “Make yourselves useful in the drama of life; qualify yourselves also for the part which may be allotted you to perform in the Kingdom of God. . . . Let your time be fully occupied in some useful employment.”

Hand-in-hand with the vice of idleness stood the evil of extravagance. Writers of prescriptive literature minced no words and spared no literary color when addressing extravagance. One angry writer asserted, “An extravagant wife is worse than a pestilence. She eats a man up with as little remorse as she would devour an omelet. She is one of the domestic plagues sent to punish the whole fraternity of husbands. . . . She must be treated just as the medical profession say the cholera must be met; strong and sanitary measures must be brought into requisition to neutralize her recklessness. Her lavishness must be resisted by the strong arm of conjugal authority.”

An Eastern exchange exclaimed, “[Extravagant] women . . . are more than half the cause of our national misfortunes.” The consequences of extravagance manifested themselves in communities’ treasuries (“while the business men of America proverbially live poorer, dress shabbier, work harder, and many more hours, than in any other

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country in the world, their wives and daughters are ten times more idle, more extravagant, and more useless,"17) and in their interpersonal relations (extravagance is the “grand foe of wedlock”18). According to the News, neither the mighty Rockies nor the vastness of the Great Plains prevented extravagance from poking its destructive fingers into their beloved Zion. An 1868 article admitted, “The reign of extravagance, which for the past few years has held high carnival in the Eastern States, has not been without its influence here.”19

Extravagance served as one of Brigham Young’s favorite lecture topics; and more often than not, those on the receiving end of Young’s scathing sermons were women. In an address delivered in 1852, he said, “We heard of a sister, who, last week sold a good cow to a merchant, for $25, and took her pay in ribbons and nick-nacks, which she might as well have dispensed with as not, and which cost in market about $2.50; now when this woman’s children cry for milk, who will pity her; and when she goes to her neighbors to beg for her little ones, who will give?”20 When leaders considered the twin economic sins of idleness and extravagance, they generally gave men the brunt of their idleness tirades while naming women as the culprits of extravagance problems. Young had little patience with either male loafers who failed to contribute to the territory’s coffers or extravagant females who sucked them dry.

Prescriptive literature of the 1850s and 1860s generally viewed women as the responsible party in terms of household economy, for as one issue purported, “A man’s wealth depends more on his wife than his income. . . . If married men are poor, in nine cases out of ten it is their wives’ fault.”21 Another article said, “Teach the Women to Save. There’s the secret. A saving woman at the head of a family is the very best savings bank ever yet established.”22 Still another asserted, “It matters not whether a man furnishes little or much for his family, if
there is a continual leakage in his kitchen or in the parlor, it runs away he knows not how.”

Although a few *News* articles portrayed women as the frugal half in the marriage, most commentary on women and economy inclined toward the idea expressed in the following quip: “Why are the ladies of the present day like the lilies of the Scriptures? Because they toil not neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them.”

Church leaders pleaded with women to accept and implement the doctrine of home industry. As Brigham Young said, “[Ladies] can do much more towards molding and controlling the habits and fashions of our community than the men can.” When leaders began preaching home industry with gusto in 1852, the pages of the *News* rang with praises for women who manufactured their own clothing, obviously in hopes of spurring others to similar action. Under the title “Newest Fashion,” the *News* reported that an unnamed Utah woman attended Sunday meetings in a buckskin sack, “beautifully ornamented . . . the exhibition we have everywhere heard spoken of in the highest praise, and we only wish that it had been our wife who had set this noble example.” In 1858 the *News* encouraged, “We hope that ere long every lady who has any interest in this Territory will be adorned with garments of our own workmanship, and display more rivalry in showing native cloth and raiments than in encouraging the sale of gaudy and poor materials from other and distant places.”

Church leaders resorted to various themes in hyperbolic efforts to convince women to wear home-manufactured items. They ap-

known.


27“Deseret State Fair,” *Deseret News*, October 13, 1858, 139, local.
pealed to women’s aesthetic sense: “Female loveliness never appears to so good advantage as when set off with simplicity of dress.” “Our dear human angels,” the author said, “would carefully avoid ornaments which properly belong to Indian squaws and African princes.” They furthermore insisted that contemporary female fashions compromised women’s health: “A witty doctor once said that tight lacing was a public benefit, inasmuch as it killed all the foolish girls and left the wise ones to grow up to be women.” Several times the News praised the “bloomer” costume as a positive option for women. In the first months of its organization, Utah’s Female Council of Health discussed alternatives for female clothing. As Patty Sessions, a prominent LDS woman, recounted, “I went to Sister Smiths to help form a fashion for the females that will be more conducive to health than the long tight waisted dresses filled with whale bone and hickery that they were now.” Indeed, women of Utah did design a “Deseret costume” similar to the Bloomer costume, but it did not interest Utah women enough to actually wear it. As the years wore on, however, leaders became increasingly exasperated. In 1867 Apostle George A. Smith declared, “I do not care whether the ladies wear a bunch of flowers, a cabbage leaf, a squash, or a scoop or a saucer on their heads, if it pleases them; but let it be made at home.”

Judging from the evidently futile pleadings for increased home manufacture, those Utah women with the financial option of purchasing nicer things struggled between their desires to be faithful and their penchant for fashion and refinement. As Maureen Ursenbach Beecher explained, “For the women, States fabrics, like States fashions, represented more immediately than did anything else the gentility that they determined to build into their frontier society.” Furthermore, conflicting prescriptive images women received from the Deseret News made the issue more confusing. With all of its counsel against extravagance and sermons promoting home industry, the

29Untitled, Deseret News, February 13, 1856, 390, unknown.
32George Albert Smith, October 9, 1867, Journal of Discourses, 12:144–45.
News still encouraged its subscribers to be refined. Lengthy fictional exchanges, often written by women and always written for them, presented positive pictures of refined home life, complete with parlors and pretty clothing, servants and savory foods. Editors also reported excitedly when issues of Godey’s Lady’s Book, the magazine of high Eastern fashions, arrived in the territory and even quoted from its pages. The silk industry in Utah demonstrated that the wearing of fine fabrics did not constitute a problem in leaders’ eyes.

Cash flow out of Church hands to purchase States-made fabric, however, was unacceptable. The News gives the impression that Church leaders expected women to achieve a level of refinement, but only by using home-manufactured products.34 Certainly the Deseret News during this period provides an accurate example of Richard Lyman Bushman’s observation: “Refinement was at one moment a desirable polish to make the Saints shine in the world’s eyes and at another a worldly pride that hindered acceptance of the gospel.”35

Counsel against finery in fashion and laziness in living, in addition to appearing contradictory, probably seemed ridiculously inapplicable to the women of Territorial Utah who struggled to acquire even the simplest clothing for their family and who tried to keep house on dirt floors under leaking, bough-covered dirt roofs. The first several years in the valley by most accounts constituted an exercise in survival. Although advertisements for millinery work and “fancy gowns” began to appear in the News as early as October 1850, counsel to women to refrain from extravagance did not appear until December of 1851. Even in those early years, such counsel was distributed only in small doses, most of it referring directly to the push for home industry of 1852.

The News spent considerable space advising women about fashion sense during those first few years, but the vast majority of it en-

34 Examples include “The Way My Mither [sic] Did It,” Deseret News, February 20, 1856, 394, exchange; and untitled, Deseret News, March 11, 1857, 423, unknown. Godey’s Ladies Book is mentioned in at least a dozen places, including Deseret News, July 4, 1860, 141, local, where it is referred to as a “valuable magazine.”

couraged healthy fashions (such as the Bloomer costume), not necessarily economical fashions. The year 1854 saw the first real push against female extravagance. Perhaps by this time enough families were living sufficiently above subsistence level to begin making purchases that Church authorities considered excessive. It also appears to be an early manifestation of what would flower as the Mormon Reformation in 1855–56.

With the exception of the first few years of the 1860s when the war in the States claimed most of the printed space, counsel against extravagance continued steadily throughout the period. It peaked in 1856, the year in which the *News* printed the greatest number of female-targeted articles. However, the peaks appeared before the September beginning of the Reformation, indicating that the increase was not a result of the movement. Instead, the greater number of articles probably reflected Church leader’s concern over members’ lack of spiritual commitment that led to the Reformation. Articles counseling women to be industrious were fewer throughout the period than those extolling economy, indicating that Church leaders found women’s level of industry relatively satisfactory. Rhetoric decrying unnecessary spending did not miss a beat during the Utah War and the accompanying move south, despite the poverty experienced by much of the population throughout the ordeal.

Nor did the *News* differentiate its counsel between those with sufficient financial resources and those, particularly in the outlying settlements, who experienced grinding poverty throughout the entirety of the period. To these women, the constant scoldings and exhortations to cut back on expenditures must have seemed at best perplexing and at worst offensive. Historian Juanita Brooks commented on the feelings of resentment that existed in the Dixie area toward those in the more prosperous north. Saints in the southern part of the territory felt far removed from the relative wealth and comfort experienced closer to Salt Lake City as well as misunderstood by Church authorities who seemed more in tune with the circumstances of the northern Saints. In later years, when a number of Brigham Young’s wives came to Dixie to promote the Retrenchment Society, Brooks’s grandmother, comparing the coarse homespun worn by herself and those around her to the fine clothing of Young’s wives, reportedly said, “I sat there and listened as long as I could stand it, and then I said, ‘Which do you want us to retrench from, Sister Young, the bread
or the molasses?”

So why did Brigham Young and his fellow authorities harp so relentlessly on this topic when it apparently applied to so few of their followers? First, sources suggest that although the Saints languished economically in the early years of the settlements and in many cases throughout the entirety of the period, not everyone scrounged for the daily essentials of food and clothing. Some Saints, to one degree or another, had buying power; their financial resources were not completely subsumed by life’s essentials and they could make purchasing decisions. They could choose to buy fabric at the Gentile establishments as Brigham Young had pleaded with them not to do or to produce their clothing at home. They could sacrifice personal acquisitions and donate to the perpetually struggling Perpetual Emigration Fund. Most likely these individuals did not enjoy vast amounts of material resources (except by comparison); but Brigham Young and other Church leaders still urged them, in the spirit of sacrifice and social unity, to use those resources in building the kingdom, not in diminishing it. As economic historian Leonard Arrington described the Church’s view of individual economic situations, “The building of the Kingdom might also necessitate holding back increases in individual incomes, but individuals had only one life to contribute to the great cause.”

It is difficult to ascertain the percentage of people with buying power in the territory, but the ease with which outside merchants made good money in the Valley, advertisements for material goods (including millinery items) in the Deseret News that ran week after week, and sources that speak of households with maids indicate that at least a few families were not scraping the bottom of the barrel economically, although they were probably not living in the lap of luxury either.

Most likely these well-off families were those of the leaders themselves. One contemporary source noted that the Retrenchment

38Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 81–82, 295, describes these household economies. Elizabeth Wood Kane, Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Suc-
movement was designed “with the view of opposing a growing tendency among the leading families to an ostentation and luxuriousness of living.” An aforementioned News article promoting home industry stated, “Spinning wheels, looms and knitting needles are the music and dancing of Deseret, among the elite.” That last phrase suggests that perhaps this admonition was directed particularly at Utah’s upper class. Certainly Brigham Young and his family lived above subsistence level. The fact that, when forming the Young Ladies Retrenchment Society in 1869, he called his own daughters into the parlor to make the announcement suggests that he felt those closest to him needed reform. In short, although plenty of women in Utah Territory could only dream of having a problem with extravagance, Church authorities found enough examples, likely in the individuals closest to them, to warrant such economic instructions in the News.

Second, Brigham Young, both an economic and a spiritual overseer, always had his antennae up, sensing dangers to the territory’s security. The California gold rush of 1849 acted as an economic windfall for the territory and as the first indication of how quickly materialism could erode the Saints’ spiritual and social security. As John Taylor described, “You would have thought . . . the ladies were bees and [the Gentile merchants’] stores the hives—though unlike in one respect, for the bee goes in full and comes out empty, but in this case it was reversed.” He continued, “As the yellow stream continues to flow from the Pacific coast to the Valley, the cry of the people is, goods! Goods!! GOODS!!” Utah’s own mining booms in the 1860s brought a similar thirst for material wealth and a similar temptation.


“Anecdote of Lady Washington,” Deseret News, March 6, 1852, 34, exchange; emphasis mine.

to disobey leaders’ counsel.

Additionally, throughout the entire period, the Deseret News editors read periodicals from the rest of the country that described problems with female extravagance. Thus, Church leaders found a ready reflection of their own concerns, and hence, many of the articles subsequently appeared in the pages of the News. Church authorities had an eye keen to the economic and social realities of the territory, fully aware of how quickly materialism and extravagance could grasp humanity, threatening their sacrificial willingness to contribute to the general well-being of the territory. Thus, whether they used prophetic foresight or not, Church authorities realized early on that, as time passed, more and more goods from Babylon would pour into Utah Territory.

The portending completion of the transcontinental railroad in the late 1860s made the danger more imminent. Brigham Young knew that, as the years passed and the economic dynamics of the territory changed, more and more Saints would be in a position to direct their resources away from the Perpetual Emigration Fund, tithing contributions, and local industries and instead purchase items from the outside world. Although many of the Saints did not have the opportunity to indulge in economic extravagances throughout the period, habits of economy and industry would become increasingly beneficial. Additionally, such teachings could be passed on to succeeding generations who, more than likely, would be faced with genuine questions of materialism and extravagance. As Brigham Young said, “The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich in this country, forget God and his people, wax fat, and kick themselves out of the Church and go to hell. This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth and yet they have to be tried with riches.”

Finally, the simmering problems of extravagance and superficiality that Brigham Young observed among his own people as well as in the rest of the country were not just economic problems. They were manifestations of deeper inward sins that could prevent salvation. Brigham Young was not opposed to amassing resources as such, as long as they were acquired through industry and as long as that

42Quoted in James S. Brown, Giant of the Lord: Life of a Pioneer (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 133–34.
wealth was used for righteous purposes and provided that the holder could retain it without succumbing to pride and selfishness. Indeed, the scriptural basis for home industry emphasized the sin of pride: “And again, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands” (D&C 42:40).

Since the early 1850s, Brigham Young had encouraged the Saints to follow this doctrine first taught by his predecessor Joseph Smith. Refusing to use goods from “Babylon,” according to Church leaders, signified a spiritual commitment to shunning evil ways of the world. As Young declared, “We have the words of life; we are the head; and we should lead in fashions and in everything that is right and proper; and not be led by the world.”43 Church authorities worried that, too frequently, the distraction of following Eastern fashions compromised women’s ability to function as spiritual leaders in their homes and communities. In territorial Utah, as in other times, a woman’s role in economics was intricately connected to her spirituality. As Daniel H. Wells, then Brigham Young’s counselor, remarked:

That sister who seeks diligently to order her own conduct and her household; who seeks to bring forth from the elements for her own support, commences in the right way to obtain exaltation; she exalts herself in the sight of her husband and in the sight of all good men. She can be economical with that which she handles for the use of her household, whereas before she has perhaps been wasteful and prodigal of the rich blessings of God bestowed upon her. In making this reformation she has taken an important step in the way of exaltation in this world for the exaltation in the world to come.44

**Female Superficiality: The Crime and the Culprit**

Idleness and extravagance constituted economic components of a much broader problem that concerned Church authorities. Periodicals and speeches of the period described a troubling tendency of women toward the selfish quality of superficiality: unduly concerning themselves with outward appearances, while compromising their in-

44“Remarks by President Daniel H. Wells,” *Deseret News*, September 24, 1862, 97, local.
ner moral character. The *Deseret News* printed a steady stream of tirades on this topic throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s. The fact that many articles originated from Eastern newspapers indicates that the concern was not unique to Utah.

Female superficiality manifested itself in all aspects of women’s lives. A superficial woman carefully adorned her body, for example, but cared little for her soul and inner character, hidden from others’ eyes. A superficial woman “put on airs” and carried herself charmingly in public but treated her family poorly. She exerted herself to have a finely ornamented home, but those places not seen by company remained dirty and unkempt. A superficial homemaker focused on maintaining an attractive and spotless parlor rather than providing a happy, comfortable home for her family. A superficial woman attended church to show off her finery, not to worship. A superficial woman appeared happy, but inwardly felt miserable. And of course, a superficial woman indulged in idleness and extravagance.

In contrast, leaders urged Utah women to rise to a higher level and develop qualities of substance. For example, during the Reformation, Church leaders linked lack of spiritual commitment to superficial qualities. One piece directed women to maintain cleanliness in their homes, even in hidden places, explaining, “It may be urged that these are small matters, but small matters are the main ingredients of this life, . . . and our understanding of a reform, of making Israel an ex-

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45Nineteenth-century propounders of female-targeted prescriptive literature did not generally use the word “superficial.” More commonly they used terms like “modern woman” or “fine girl” to define those who manifested the negative qualities discussed in this paper. The word “superficial” concisely and accurately describes the proscribed woman in a way the nineteenth-century phrases do not. Even so, the term “superficial” could be found on occasion, as in Topsy, “Housework,” *Deseret News*, April 29, 1857 (an exchange from *Life Illustrated*) where it is used to describe female education.

ample in every good thing, extends to correct thought, words and action at home, as well as abroad; before and with one’s family, as well as with friends and strangers.\footnote{47}

One reprinted article captured the tone of most other rhetoric against female superficiality:

Girls, let me tell you a stubborn truth. No young woman ever looked so well, to a sensible man, as when dressed in a neat, plain, modest attire, without a single ornament about her person. She looks then as tho’ she possessed worth in herself, and needed no artificial rigging to enhance her value. If a young woman would spend as much time in cultivating her mind, training her temper, and cherishing kindness, meekness, mercy and other good qualities, as most of them do in extra dress and ornaments to increase their personal charms, she would at a glance, be known among a thousand. Her character would be read in her countenance.\footnote{48}

As with idleness and extravagance, the compromising effect of superficiality on women’s home-based roles underlay the concern. Under the title “Who Should Not Be a Wife,” a News article described a woman who “thinks more of her silk dress than her children,” strains her husband’s pocketbook with her extravagant wants, and cares more about frivolous things than her husband’s love.\footnote{49}Most prescriptive literature urged women’s excellence in the areas of wifehood, motherhood, and housewifery, all of which overlap significantly. Three articles, each about one of these three divisions of women’s work, exemplifies the prescriptive urgings LDS women encountered during this period.

First, the Deseret News repeated several times the story of a mechanic who, despite himself, could not be unhappy. “Let the day be ever so cold, gloomy, or sunless, a happy smile danced like a sunbeam on his countenance.” Upon receiving an inquiry about this unusual and admirable quality, the mechanic explained that the secret of his happiness was his encouraging, loving, industrious wife who concerned herself constantly with ensuring his happiness. The article exulted, “What an influence, then, hath woman over the heart of

\footnote{47}{“Reformation,” \textit{Deseret News}, November 5, 1856, 277, local.}
\footnote{48}{Untitled, \textit{Deseret News}, May 25, 1854, 56, exchange.}
\footnote{49}{“Who Should Not Be a Wife,” \textit{Deseret News}, May 3, 1865, 242, unknown.}
man.” This piece served as a contrast to others in the *News*, warning wives that if they did not provide happiness for their husbands at home, their spouses would, of necessity, be forced to find it elsewhere—an ominous threat in a polygamous society. Many articles also condemned men for not loving and honoring their wives. Whatever the tone, Church leaders unequivocally stressed the importance of marriage in society, censuring bachelors, specifically, for their deviant lifestyle, and urging both husbands and wives to strengthen their marriages.

Second, to encourage good housekeeping skills, the *News* printed an article in 1855 describing three different fictional homes. Mrs. Yates’s house was unorganized and dirty. Mrs. Jones’s house was meticulously and uncomfortably clean. Although considered a better homemaker than Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Jones’s “spirit of houseworship interfered with her duties as a wife and mother,” and both women drove their husbands to public ale-houses. In contrast, Mrs. Fields, the third housekeeper, “demanded that her house should be a home” and strove tirelessly to make “her house a haven of peace and happiness, to which her husband ever returned with pleasure, and herself most happy in making him so.” Furthermore, few other female-targeted topics compare to housekeeping in terms of the quantity of articles printed in the *News*. From recipes, cleaning tips, and other practical advice, to passionate rhetoric about the lofty role of the housekeeper, the *News* untiringly sought to improve Utah’s homemakers and exhibited respect for their multitudinous tasks.

Finally, at the various festivities held in Utah Territory throughout the period, “Mothers in Israel” stood as the ultimate toast for women. No greater title could they receive. On the subject of motherhood, the *News* noted, “It is true that the sacrifices you make for the world will be little known by it—men govern and earn the glory; and the thousand watchful nights and sacrifices by which a mother purchases a hero, or a poet . . . are forgotten.” But if mothers’ achievements were not to be praised, mothers’ failings and weaknesses were to be sharply censured, especially, as discussed below, mothers’ neglect of inculcating desired virtues in their daughters.

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51“*The Three Homes,*” *Deseret News*, December 5, 1855, 312, exchange.
52“*Mothers,*” *Deseret News*, April 19, 1851, 245, unknown.
Church leaders believed that female education needed serious evaluation and alteration. Always the pragmatist, Brigham Young measured female education’s success in terms of its practical contribution to the territory. He had no patience for the “ornamental” education fashionable in the States that schooled girls in French, fancy needlework, and music but which failed to instill any practical skills. News articles throughout this period dubbed graduates of such schools “accomplished babies.” Instead, Brigham Young saw much greater use in educating women in skills that would equip them to serve in various capacities throughout the territory. As the Deseret News observed:

Instead of educating every girl as though she were born to be an independent, self-supporting member of society, we [speaking of the United States generally] educate her to become a mere dependent, a hanger-on, or, as the law delicately phrases it, a chattel. . . . What every woman; no less than every man, should have to depend upon, is an ability, after some fashion or other, to turn labor into money. She may or may not be compelled to exercise it, but every one ought to possess it. If she belong to the richer classes, she may have to exercise it[;] if to the poorer, she assuredly will.”53

Such lofty ideals for women’s education, however, required an infrastructure that simply did not exist in Utah Territory. A “Parent School,” organized in 1850 to train individuals in all branches of education, and the University of Deseret, which also opened in 1850, represent early efforts at providing education. Several enterprising medical practitioners like Patty Sessions and Martha Hughes Cannon opened schools, but generally women’s local and personal circumstances determined the level of education they received. Even with the lack of good educational opportunities, News rhetoric generally painted academic education for women in a positive light.

Ever concerned primarily with women’s home-based roles, however, leaders warned against neglecting homemaking education for the territory’s daughters. “The greatest danger to our daughters in the present time is the neglect of domestic education,” the News proclaimed. “Not only to themselves, but to husbands, families, and the community at large; does the evil extend. By far the greatest amount of happiness in civilized life is found in the domestic relations, and

most of these depend on the domestic culture and habits of the wife and mother. Let our daughters be intellectually educated as highly as possible; let their moral and social nature receive the highest race of vigor and refinement; but along with these, let the domestic virtues find a prominent place.”

Further, the News explained, “the experience of every-day life, especially among civilized people, shows us that housework, is a part of the sphere of woman’s duty. We would not confine her to this particular form of labor, but a knowledge of housewifery should form the basis of every woman’s education, which education can never be complete without it.”

Utah mothers were blamed for the threat represented by domestically challenged, exceedingly superficial, daughters; and Church leaders minced no words when censoring them for neglecting this important duty. A local piece queried, “What can the mother mean, who fails to instruct her daughter in these things? . . . Away with this flagrant outrage upon common sense. Let girls be taught the practical duties of their sphere.” Still another article stated, “Mothers who encourage their daughters in superficial accomplishments and bodily display, are often preparing them for a life of chagrin and misery. On the other hand, when they are trained at home, by precept and example, in retiring, industrious, studious, virtuous habits, they are prepared to be useful and happy throughout life.”

On a broader level, the existence of marital problems in the United States was laid directly on the doorstep of “the women, to their pernicious bringing up, to the extravagant habits they have formed, and to their general incapacity to attend to household duties or to take upon themselves the responsibilities of maternity and family government.”

Any LDS woman, regardless of economic circumstances, could potentially manifest superficiality in her life—in her demeanor toward others, in her commitment to her faith, and in her dedication to her family. It is difficult to imagine many Utah mothers, especially those in straitened circumstances, failing to teach daughters domest-

56 “Hints to Young Ladies,” Deseret News, February 16, 1854, 28, local.
57 “For Mother’s Eyes,” Deseret News, February 24, 1858, 405, unknown.
tic skills since such household help must have been invaluable. Yet, as with the subject of extravagance, Brigham Young felt enough concern about superficiality and mothers who failed to teach their daughters substantial principles to emphasize it. In a lengthy discourse on motherhood, he underscored the importance of women as their children’s educators: “It depends in a great degree upon the mother, as to what children receive, in early age, of principle of every description, pertaining to all that can be learned by the human family.” He lamented, “When will mothers understand this? Knowing that this is the case, I am perplexed with grief when I see such a wanton diversion from the real design of life, it causes me to mourn for my poor, ignorant, fellow mortals, and sometimes almost goads me to anger. I can see mothers pay attention to everything under heaven, but the training up of their children in the way they should go.”

One lone voice pinpointed another culprit for female superficiality. In 1854, Letitia Jane Lockheart, a bold and articulate News subscriber, demanded, “Would the lords (or would-be-lords) of creation better our condition? Then let them by precepts and examples offer on the holy altar a more suitable incentive to reformation.” She explained that as long as the bodily adornments against which the News was fulminating—including “snow-white hands (that cannot cook the bread we eat)”—remained the “chief attractions to our lords that are to be, then so long will we follow in the ‘good old way.’” She asserted that if men delighted in honoring their Heavenly Father and mankind, “then you need not advise us, for we will follow you.” The News editors instructed men to heed Lockheart’s advice and expressed hope that few men in Utah deserved her tongue-lashing.

This piece by Letitia Lockheart stands out in the News, not because it censures men, for, as with women, men in Utah regularly received criticism from Church leaders. A few articles decrying superficial men even made their way into the pages of the News. Lockheart’s article is virtually unique because it is an example of a woman sharing her views on a female matter upon which mainly

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59 Brigham Young, April 8, 1852, Journal of Discourses, 1:66–68.  
men had voiced their opinions. In a society headed by men, with the main newspaper edited by men, men's views claimed the dominant voice. Women certainly were not silent. From 1850 to 1870, the *News* printed 129 poems by women, most written locally. However, with the notable exception of Eliza R. Snow, who addressed women's issues in several poems, these female-authored verses generally tackled religious topics, not specific women's issues. Utah women, encumbered with the struggles of daily life and with few venues to express views and feelings which they were probably still learning how to interpret, remained relatively quiet. The dawn of LDS women taking more public and vocal roles was at hand, however, providing the beginning of an increase in perception, understanding, and well-roundedness lacking when half of the population speaks but little.

**THE WOMAN QUESTION: ASKED AND ANSWERED**

As Utah's territorial period progressed, women encountered an increasing number of opportunities to function in public capacities separate from their endeavors to manage homes, raise families, and in many instances, earn money by performing domestic tasks. The Female Council of Health, local Relief Societies, and midwife training were among the activities available to women in the early days of the territory. Brigham Young's pragmatism and the needs of the nascent territory encouraged such involvement. It was not until the end of the 1860s, however, that the territory would see a marked increase in female organization, providing still more opportunities for Utah women.

Since the Saints’ arrival in the Great Basin, forces brewing in the country at large pushed for ideological changes in the nation's view of women’s rights and opportunities. The most visible manifestation of these forces was the fight for female suffrage. Throughout the country, individuals struggled with the “woman question,” which had resurfaced with the end of the Civil War and the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment that excluded “sex” from the list of conditions upon which individuals could not be denied the franchise. Women’s rights activists, including the National Woman Suffrage Association.

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62A notable exception is Fanny Fern, a correspondent from the *Boston Olive Branch*. Her articles heartily support Church leaders’ views of women and appear many times in the *News*. 
and the American Woman Suffrage Association, both formed in 1869, worked tirelessly to ensure that the country could not escape consideration of women’s right to vote. In 1865 the Deseret News remarked, “What is to be done with the women, is a question repeated in every journal.”

Throughout most of the period under study Church leaders regarded female suffrage with unguarded criticism. In 1850 the News ridiculed a report of the proceedings of a women’s rights convention held in Massachusetts, declaring “surely the end must be nigh.” Echoing tirades against superficial women, Church leaders exhibited no patience for women who neglected important responsibilities while agitating for increased rights. Women’s rights, the News asserted, included the right to stay at home, the right to have her home in order whenever her husband returned home, the right to care for her children instead of leaving it to the hired girl, and the right to “remain a woman without endeavoring to be a man.”

The year 1868, however, saw a dramatic change in the attitude of the Deseret News toward female suffrage. Early in the year the News asserted Utah’s approval of suffrage for women, and throughout the year articles reported favorably on women’s rights lecturers in Utah and the West. In December 1868 the News acknowledged that “there is some justice in women claiming the right of suffrage.” Indeed, the editor continued, “there is scarcely an argument of this character that can be urged against women having the right of suffrage, that cannot with equal consistency be applied to men.” The article assured, “Among the Latter-day Saints this question has been decided years ago. In our conferences, from the first organization of the Church in these days until the present, the right of woman to vote side by side with man has been practically recognized. At all po-

64 “At the Women’s Rights Convention,” Deseret News, March 22, 1851, 229 (BYU Special Collections copy of the Deseret News), exchange.
political meetings, where the ladies have been present, they have had the right to vote accorded them without question. . . . The entire question of qualifications for voters, whether property, color or sex, has long been practically settled among the people of this Territory.”67

This sudden shift in thinking can be attributed in part to the ongoing combative dialogue between Utah and the States. Social activists throughout the country, determined to rid Utah of polygamy, “the second twin relic of barbarism,” portrayed LDS women as repressed and degraded, shy and sad. Church leaders and Utah women alike eagerly shot down such unflattering descriptions. Prominent LDS woman Eliza R. Snow proclaimed to a gathering of several thousand women protesting the proposed Collum bill, “Do you know of any place on the face of the earth, where woman has more liberty, and where she enjoys such high and glorious privileges as she does here, as a Latter-day Saint? ‘No!’ The very idea of women here in a state of slavery is a burlesque on good common sense.”68

Into this foray of words came proposals by eastern editors for female suffrage as a way to overthrow polygamy and, possibly, even the Church of Jesus Christ itself. The News identified two explanations for eastern interest in Utah female suffrage. First, with its supposed abundance of women, eastern advocates considered Utah a perfect testing ground. Second, easterners hoped that if Utah women received the vote, they would abolish polygamy forthwith.69 LDS leaders seized on this obvious opportunity to prove both the faithfulness of LDS women and to refute claims portraying them as degraded. Church leaders vociferously proclaimed their support for female suffrage by stating, “Utah is giving examples to the world on many points, and if the wish is to try the experiment of giving females the right to vote in the Republic, we know of no place where the experiment can be so safely tried as in this Territory. Our ladies can prove to

the world that in a society where men are worthy of the name, women can be enfranchised without running wild or becoming unsexed.”

Church leaders staunchly denied the possibility that LDS women might vote down polygamy. The News avowed women’s acceptance of and loyalty to plural marriage and assured that women seldom, if ever, apostatized from the Church and left Utah unless led by an unrighteous husband. True to Church leaders’ declarations, the establishment of female suffrage in Utah in 1870 did not prove detrimental to the Church.

Significantly, about a year before Church leaders’ acceptance of the propriety of female suffrage, Brigham Young authorized the reorganization of the Female Relief Society, begun in 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois. Although local relief societies had been functioning since at least 1857, no formal, general organization had been made. In 1867 Brigham Young called on bishops to organize Relief Societies in their wards. The following year, Young appointed Eliza R. Snow to encourage the bishops in their efforts. A decade and a half earlier, the Deseret News published a poem by Snow in which she criticized Eastern reform advocates and insisted that woman’s rights were not needed in Utah Territory. She explained that the struggle for social change, “unaided by the light of inspiration,” could not succeed. The Holy Priesthood’s power, she asserted, was required to regulate society.

Shortly after the reorganization of the Relief Society, the opinion of Church authorities toward female suffrage changed dramatically and “Presidentess” Snow commissioned Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith, wife of Apostle George A. Smith and future general president of the Relief Society, to travel throughout the territory and preach retrenchment “and women’s rights, if she wished.” Using Snow’s poem as an explanation, then, the 1868 shift in attitude signaled that some form of divine inspiration allowing for the propriety of female suffrage had occurred. It would seem that the 1867 reorga-

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nization of the Relief Society, established under priesthood direction, constituted an important step, if not the essential means, of female suffrage’s being welcomed into Utah Territory with the full approval of Church authorities.

Along with its obvious function of relieving the physically and spiritually needy, the Relief Society served three main purposes. First, it became a structure within which women’s resources could be collected and utilized to meet financial goals of the territory. Under the newly reorganized Relief Society, women were encouraged to participate in the cooperative mercantile ventures begun in 1868 and to rededicate themselves to home industry. The Relief Society also served as a means of discouraging extravagant behavior. As Leonard Arrington remarked, “It would seem that the underlying motive for the organization of the Relief Societies was the prevention or diminution of female extravagance, by the rich as well as the poor, thus relieving hard-pressed husbands to devote a larger share of their production and time to the building of the Kingdom.”

Second, the Relief Society could serve as a possible antidote for female superficiality. The News observed, “[Societies] can, by their example and influence, dissipate this absurd pride, and teach young ladies that leisure and indolence and frivolous pursuits are neither lady-like nor refined, but that labor, and all exertion which contributes to usefulness and independence, are ennobling and dignified.” The months preceding the full-blown development of the Mormon Reformation in the autumn of 1856 saw the greatest number of female-targeted articles in the Deseret News than in any other year studied. Pieces addressing female superficiality and the related topics of fashion, extravagance, motherhood, and women’s rights peaked in pre-Reformation 1856. Interestingly, as the number of prescriptive articles receded in late 1856 and 1857 when the Reformation was in full swing, the number of articles about Relief Society increased. In 1857 the News began reporting the formation and activities of local Relief Societies, a news focus that would not be re-

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74 Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 254.
75 Ibid., 251–52.
peated until 1867. Quite probably these societies formed as a result of the Reformation that discouraged both women and men from frivolous and unfaithful tendencies and encouraged them to devote their energies to worthwhile pursuits.

In 1869 the Church went a step further in molding substantial young women by forming the Young Ladies Retrenchment Association, precursor to the current Young Women’s organization via an intermediate stage as the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association. This society taught young women to “retrench” from unwholesome habits, including extravagance, idleness, lightmindedness, and frivolity. Senior branches of the Retrenchment Association also formed, encouraging grown women in similar fashion. The Relief Society and the Retrenchment Association thus served as a form of education for training Utah’s women in substantial qualities.

Finally, the Relief Society provided a structure within which women could broaden their sphere under the authority of the priesthood. Although women actively participated in their church meetings, their homes, their families, and some organized societies in the early part of the territory, the effective organization of LDS women stands as a distinguishing feature of the late 1860s and beyond. Relief Society organizations served as a means for facilitating individual female ambition, achievement, and involvement in a way not previously possible in Utah. Indeed, the Relief Society became the answer to the woman question in Utah. The society provided a structure within which women could improve themselves, function outside of the home in building the kingdom of God, and stretch the borders of their sphere in an acceptable and appropriate manner, for it all occurred under the auspices of the priesthood. It also provided an opportunity for women to demonstrate to the political and spiritual leaders of their community their ability to successfully function in public capacities, possibly also contributing to the LDS change in attitude toward women suffrage.77

Even political activities, such as the mass indignation meetings held by Utah women to agitate against proposed legislation, occurred

within the structure of the Relief Societies. In a Relief Society meeting in 1868, George Q. Cannon stated that the women of Utah were solving the question of women’s rights by “doing good and learning to elevate themselves and their fellow beings.” He explained that a wide field stood open to their societies and that their sphere was so broad they would not have time to do all that was available for them to do. According to Cannon, the sisters possessed great influence and “if they would use their power rightly they . . . could do much good hastening [the] Millennial reign.”

The 1869 text by Emily Woodmansee, later modified to become the current LDS hymn “As Sisters in Zion,” captures the vision of the Relief Society. Service, economy, industry, motherhood, substantial qualities, and women’s rights all receive attention in three of the ten stanzas of the song that follow.

We’ll turn from our follies, our pride and our weakness,
     The vain, foolish fashions of Babel despise;
We’ll seek for the garments of truth and of meekness,
     And learn to be useful and happy and wise.

We’ll bring up our children to be self-sustaining;
     To love and to do what is noble and right;
When we rest from our labors, these dear ones remaining,
     Will bear off the Kingdom and “fight the good fight.”

‘Tis the office of Angels, conferred upon woman;
     And this is a Right that, as women, we claim;
To do whatsoever is gentle and human;
     To cheer and to bless in humanity’s name.79

**CONCLUSION**

Additional opportunities for women in Utah, as well as increasingly vocal cries for changes in woman’s sphere in the rest of the coun-

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78Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, Relief Society Minutes, March 1868–May 1869, Historical Department, Archives of the Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

79Emily H. Woodmansee, “Song of the Sisters of the Female Relief Society,” Songs Celebrating the Relief Society, flyer (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992), emphasis hers.
try, caused concern among Church leaders who sought to channel any changes in a way that would, first, be in accordance with divine principles, and second, benefit the territory. Stated another way, the period reflected a time when women and their leaders strove to harmonize new opportunities for women with their traditional home-based roles.

Although Relief Society provided the structure through which women could function outside the home, women individually faced the dilemma of how to fulfill all their responsibilities successfully. Plural marriage may have provided one solution. With husbands often preoccupied with other members of their families, absent on missions, or otherwise busy with Church service, some “sister-wives” shared household tasks, thus allowing them freedom to pursue other interests. Inversely, plural marriage could complicate women’s lives by placing extra responsibility on the shoulders of an essentially single mother. Eliza R. Snow provided a spiritual formula to women struggling with the interplay between traditional and nontraditional duties. “Let your first business be to perform your duties at home,” she directed. “Inasmuch as you are wise stewards, you will find time for social duties, because these are incumbent upon us as mothers and daughters in Zion. By seeking to perform every duty you will find that your capacity will increase, and you will be astonished at what you can accomplish.”

Female-targeted LDS rhetoric of the 1850s and 1860s suggests that the structural changes in women’s roles required the character changes urged by Church authorities. A woman who would successfully manage a family and home as well as participate in Church service, politics, employment, and/or education, must develop substantial skills and abilities. To a great degree, the early days of Utah Territory ushered in the challenging phase of LDS women’s experience that has continued to the present day. Manifested in increased opportunities in all areas of women’s lives, as well as in sustained attacks from society at large on women’s home-based roles, modern women’s circumstances require them to be increasingly solid in their convictions, reasoning, and spirituality that they might succeed at new op-

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80 Beecher, “Women’s Work on the Mormon Frontier,” 288, explains that such comparative freedom occurred only in unusual cases.

opportunities without compromising home-based duties. Perhaps Church leaders’ pleas for retrenchment and against superficiality that began well before the increase in women’s opportunities of the late 1860s were partly intended to prepare women, and the generations of daughters to follow, for the challenges ahead.

Today LDS women, as well as women of all faiths, struggle with the same issues confronting their sisters of the mid-nineteenth century. Aware of their capabilities and desirous to contribute their talents and skills, yet anxiously dedicated to their families, women deal daily with the delicate interplay between home-based and out-of-home responsibilities. Now, as in territorial Utah, circumstances require women to successfully organize their lives by diligently developing substantial qualities that in so doing they might “be astonished at what [they] can accomplish.”

APPENDIX:
ARTICLES BY THEMATIC CATEGORY, JULY 1850–JANUARY 1870

N = 1,300
Note: Because many of the following topics are closely related, significant overlap existed. I subjectively determined which topic seemed to constitute its predominant theme and placed it in a single category. Thus, this chart lists the number of articles with the identified topic as the primary theme, not the total number of articles that discussed or mentioned each particular topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Articles (N)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biographies of women</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy/industry vs. extravagance/idleness</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic education/mother as educator</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivities involving women</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home industry</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherhood</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief Society</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensational items</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficial vs. substantial qualities</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in foreign cultures</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s education/employment</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s involvement in social activism</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s participation in the literary arts</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s participation in the performing arts</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s rights</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

83The report of a woman speaking in tongues, the invention of a lady’s saddle, and the answer to a riddle/puzzle by a female subscriber.
A SACRED CODE: MORMON TEMPLE DEDICATION PRAYERS, 1836–2000

Samuel Brown

THE IMPRESSIVE CONTINUED GROWTH of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has occasioned significant debate about the course of its historical development. Interested scholars, critics, and devotees have commented repeatedly on the changes (or lack thereof) in LDS theology and practice occasioned by the Church’s expansion in a variably hostile environment. Scholars have described the passing of the political kingdom of God and the demise of the Church’s official polygamy, emphasizing the radical changes represented by such departures. Other authors have noted the loss of Mormon devotion to physical symbols or the

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1Klaus J. Hansen, Quest for Empire (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967).

173
passing of the charismatic faith (represented by glossolalia and prophecy) characteristic of the nineteenth century. The overall process, described as accommodation and institutionalization, is generally assigned to the turn of the twentieth century, with additional changes at mid-century. David John Buerger has commented extensively on the evolution of one of the most prominent signs of Mormon otherworldliness, the temple and its ordinances, including the ritual centerpiece, the endowment. An important window into Mormonism, as yet not carefully studied, is the corpus of sacred prayers required to sanctify these buildings as holy sanctuaries. Since the original LDS temple at Kirtland, Ohio, was dedicated in 1836 by a prayer which was later canonized (D&C 109), each of the now more than one hundred structures has required a dedicatory prayer prior to assuming its place in the ritual geography of Mormonism. Those which underwent architectural modification and renovation have required a second dedication before reinitiating their sacred roles.

These prayers are written and presented by the highest ranking Church leaders before an exclusive audience of Church members screened for worthiness. Given their function of consecrating Mormonism’s holiest physical structures, these dedicatory utterances constitute an important resource for studies of the development of

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6 During my preparation of this study (1998–2000), Nick Literski, compiler of a digital compendium (http://www.vii.com/~nicksl/), from which I drew the texts for analysis, informed me of his work on a project to publish a compilation of the texts with exegetical commentary. This website is no longer accessible. The LDS Church has since established http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/ as an official site.
LDS ritual and theology. The fact that temple ordinances are necessary to the salvation of Church members imparts to these prayers a clear ritual significance. Before their dedication, these temples can be toured by interested outsiders, and the sacred rites cannot be performed. After the dedication ceremonies, even devout members may be denied entrance if they lack official documentation of their fitness for temple worship. Although no saving power is attributed to the prayers per se, they clearly transform temples into holy spaces where salvation may be bestowed; without such a transformation, these temples would not be capable of supplying salvation to the Latter-day Saints.

Evidence of the importance of dedication to these temples comes from Church president Gordon B. Hinckley (1995-present): “When [a temple] is dedicated it becomes the house of the Lord, vested with a character so sacred that only members of the Church in good standing are permitted to enter. It is not a matter of secrecy. It is a matter of sanctity.”

On a more practical level, these prayers represent a forum in which a self-selected body (perhaps including deceased Church authorities) may address significant spiritual topics. The speeches at Church general conferences—the development of whose themes

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9David O. McKay prefaced his 1955 dedication of the Swiss Temple by saying he was addressing a “real audience among whom are former presidents and apostles of the Church,” then named all prior Church presidents and Elder Stayner Richards, who had selected the site at Bern. *Improvement Era* 58 (November 1955): 795.
through time has been studied statistically—are a somewhat similar forum for official pronouncements of Church practice and belief, though they are addressed to a more general audience.10

The significance of these prayers suggests the importance of analyzing their evolution with the focus on several questions: (1) When and in what ways have the prayers evolved? (2) Do they mirror other changes in the period of active accommodation—or, more generally, have they followed shifts in the sociocultural milieu? (3) Do they reflect a significant adjustment in LDS views of the sacred? This paper reports the results of a statistical analysis of the content and form of these prayers, including all prayers through the one hundredth operating temple, dedicated in 2000.11

To perform this evaluation, I reviewed the prayers collectively and compiled a table of more than 130 different elements, clearly present in at least one prayer. I then individually reviewed the prayers twice, noting the presence or absence of each element for each prayer. I then compared the frequency of these elements for four time periods:12 1836–1920 (approximate end of the initial accommodation period; ten prayers), 1920–74 (defeat of the ERA; toward the end of the major social changes of civil rights and the sexual revolution;


11 Although little documentation is available for the original Nauvoo Temple dedication, every other dedication prayer is represented (including several rededications for renovated temples), through the dedication of the Boston Massachusetts Temple in October 2000.

12 I used Student’s t-test (Intercooled Stata 6.0, Stata Corporation, College Park, Texas) to determine whether differences in rates among the periods were statistically significant, using parameters that ensured a 95 percent probability that differences were not due to small numbers or random chance. Briefly, I assumed the null hypothesis—that there has been no change in temple dedication prayers and any apparent change is due to random chance alone—and determined the extent to which that hypothesis is improbable. It is standard practice to assume that a 5 percent chance of labeling random chance a real change is acceptable, a position which corresponds (in statistical terms) to a “p” value of 0.05. I have elected to document in footnotes where a particular change is even more impressive, e.g., a tenth of a percent chance of error, as these are the most likely to be actual changes. I omit further formal references to “p values” or “statistical signifi-
eleven prayers), 1974–83 (ending before Hinckley’s first dedicatory prayer; fourteen prayers), and 1983–2000 (seventy-eight prayers), with separate analysis of the twenty prayers (31 percent) written/delivered by men other than Hinckley since his first prayer in 1983. To confirm these findings, I evaluated the change of each element over time with moving averages, using a window size of ten dedication prayers as a practical compromise between sensitivity and statistical noise.

The dedications display certain commonalities. Minimally the speaker addresses God, invites God to accept the offering of the temple, usually invokes priesthood authority, prays for the temple’s sanctification and protection in general terms, often prays for the redemption of the dead (through the temple rites), makes mention of God’s presence in the temple, and closes in the name of Jesus. Table 1 includes all elements present in at least three-quarters of prayers during the time periods evaluated.

The form and content of temple dedications have undergone clear changes during their 160-year history, most visibly a recent move toward summarization and codification, which roughly coincides with the activity of the current Church president, Gordon B. Hinckley, who, a member of the First Presidency since 1981, has also been connected with the temple rite’s modernization and development. The simplest measure of complexity, gross word length, has clearly decreased. (The average length prior to 1920 was 2,516, and it has declined steadily to 885 for 1983–2000.) In addition to this simple quantitative measure, the trend toward simplification and standardization is apparent in shifts in rhetorical structures and references to sacred elements.

cance.”

13I chose 1974 over, for example, 1970 or 1978, to balance the number of prayers in each category. I selected these boundaries before the statistical analyses. In addition, the statistical hypothesis testing described above allows abstracting beyond such expediencies of format, particularly when the probability of true change is very high. In addition, confirmation is found in moving average analysis, which safely abstracts beyond the choice of time slices.

14Buerger, The Mysteries of Godliness, 166.

15Because each part of the St. George Temple was dedicated as it was completed, I treat each prayer separately in the analyses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>87%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invokes priesthood authority:</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects temple from cataclysm:</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives this offering:</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's presence in temple:</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redeems the dead:</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1836–1920</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receives this offering:</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's presence in temple:</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1920–74</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blesses all church officers:</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blesses all governments:</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blesses the temple staff:</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing revelation:</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No unclean thing:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priesthood restored:</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects temple from cataclysm:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives this offering:</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redeems the dead:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's presence in temple:</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invokes priesthood authority:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1974–83</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blesses General Authorities:</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude for Restoration:</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple as God's house:</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives this offering:</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redeems the dead:</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's presence in temple:</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1983–2000</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formulaic dedication phrases:</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Father and Son:</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full name of Church:</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full name of temple:</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invokes priesthood authority:</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protects temple from evil men:</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receives this offering:</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's presence in temple</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have grouped the thematic elements of temple dedications into four broad categories significant to understanding the religious quality of these prayers and will discuss individual prayer elements within each category: “Sacred Property,” “Sacred History,” “Holy Ancestors,” and “Sacred Words.” In each category, I employ an explanatory framework based on that expounded by Mircea Eliade and partially systematized by Bryan Rennie, based on the centrality of the sacred in religious life.16

**Sacred Property**

A core component of religious life is the establishment of sacred, as opposed to profane, space. This phenomenon is present in religious traditions as varied as crossroads, totems, cathedrals, or temples. The dark world where God is absent is symbolically divided from the world of light and order where God is present. In this view, religious people seek to validate their existence amid the forces of decay and senselessness by sharply delineating sacred from profane space and striving to be found within the sacred space thus described. These objects serve to illuminate the boundary between areas where God and the light of God exist and the dark void where God is not. Such a division helps religious individuals find their place in the chaos of the world and to recognize the proximity of the Divine. The omnipresence of such symbols and practices underlies the importance of this concept to the study of any religion.17

The earliest LDS temple dedication prayers demonstrate a robust concern for the painstaking distinction between sacred and profane property. Several prayer elements are devoted to this theme, including detailed blessings of the temple’s physical structure and grounds, formulaic references to the statue of Moroni adorning each

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16Bryan Rennie, *Reconstructing Eliade* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). Given the diffuse nature of Eliade’s work, I use Rennie rather than Eliade’s corpus in discussing key themes. When Rennie does not discuss a topic, I cite Eliade. While I recognize that Eliade has eloquent critics, I do not undertake a defense here, preferring to allow the coherence of this analysis to support the theoretical framework.

temple, and a plea that the temple be protected from cataclysm, evil men, and any “unclean” entrant.

Although notably lacking from the founding prophet’s only dedication (and possibly from the Nauvoo Temple dedication18), all other nineteenth-century Utah temple dedications include a specific, exhaustive listing of all the temple fixtures that are to be sanctified. An excerpt from the St. George Temple dedicatory prayer demonstrates this extremely detailed approach:

We dedicate the outer walls of this Temple unto thy name O Lord that they may be Holy and all the materials of which they are Composed the rock, the mortar, the sand, the lime, the plastering inside and out and every material that is used in their Construction that it may be sanctified unto the Lord. We dedicate all the windows belonging to this Basement Story, the sills, the frames, the sash, the glass, the Putty, the weights, the Cords the fastnings the paints and all the material of which they are Composed that they may be Holy unto the Lord. We dedicate all the outer steps or stairways leading to the Temple, with the railings the Stone wood Iron, lead and all materials of which they are Composed. We dedicate unto the Lord all the inner walls of the Temple with all the materials of which they are Composed that they may be Holy. We dedicate all the doors of the basement [sic] unto the Lord with the frames bolts screws locks and all fastnings that they may be Holy.

We dedicate unto thy most Holy Name the font which thy people have Erected for the ordinance of Baptism for the living and the dead. We dedicate the flaging, the foundation upon which the font stands unto the Lord. We dedicate the Twelve oxen that bear up the font that

18A full text of Joseph Young’s private dedicatory prayer on April 30, 1846, does not apparently exist, although the summary in Elden J. Watson, Manuscript History of Brigham Young (Salt Lake City: Elden Watson, 1971), 147–48, states that Young blessed “all that pertained [to the temple] to the Lord,” suggesting the same level of detail that appears in the next several dedications. The transcript of Orson Hyde’s public dedicatory prayer in Thomas Bullock, Minutes of the Dedication of the Nauvoo Temple, Historic Sites File, LDS Church Archives, includes neither a comprehensive statement or a detailed list of dedicated items. The temple names are currently standardized by city and state/country (e.g., the Oaxaca Mexico Temple, the Seattle Washington Temple). I usually use the form of the temple name in use at the time of its dedication (e.g., the Nauvoo Temple, the Arizona Temple, etc.) unless possible confusion may arise.
they may be Holy. We dedicate the font itself with the Steps leading to it and the railing and all materials of which they are Composed the Casting, the Iron, Stone or wood and we pray that they may be acceptable unto the[e] O Lord Our God. We dedicate the Boiler the Engine, and the pipes leading to the font, and washing baths for the washing of thy People unto thee O Lord that they may be Holy. We dedicate the railing that surrounds the font unto thee.19

This preoccupation with physical detail, except for a brief revival in the 1950s and 1970s, is no longer present in modern temple dedications.20 Currently, Gordon B. Hinckley and his colleagues have substituted in its place specific blessing of the different rooms in which the temple rituals will be performed. Thus, in a 1998 dedication, Hinckley prayed, “We dedicate the Baptistry, the endowment rooms, the magnificent Celestial Room, the sealing rooms with their sacred altars, and every facility which is a part of Thy holy house.”21

Even those dedications which fail to list the rooms by name contain a non-specific reference to the temple’s physical facilities.22 There are thus three distinct approaches to characterizing the physical space to be sanctified, detailed specification (“Detailed”), reference to rooms alone (“Rooms”), and a generic reference (“Non-detailed”).

Figure 1 demonstrates the changes in frequency of the three approaches to blessing the “fixtures.”23 The earlier detailed approach has been supplanted by the abbreviated version. Moving average analysis suggests that the detailed version tapered off with the

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19Woodruff 7:304–5.
20David O. McKay, in the 1950s, included such catalogues in two of his four prayers. Spencer W. Kimball in the mid-to-late 1970s included it in seven of his nine prayers. Gordon B. Hinckley used similar language in re-dedicating the Swiss Temple in 1992. These are the only exceptions.
22The only exception is the Idaho Falls Temple dedication by George A. Smith in 1945.
23The grounds surrounding the sacred building received somewhat less attention before 1960 (three of sixteen prayers), somewhat more attention in the 1960s and 1970s, but then once again disappear. Here again, with Hinckley’s membership in the First Presidency, detailing aspects of the
1980s, while the room-specific consecration lagged by perhaps a decade. This room-specific version is present in 70 percent of the prayers since 1983 offered by men other than President Hinckley.

This change from specific sacralization of physical minutiae to separate sanctification of individual rooms may represent an attempted focus on the power—salvational, according to LDS theology—that inheres within specific compartments of the temple. This approach recognizes the ritual significance of each distinct domain within the temple rather than detailing an exhaustive list of all the building materials and architectural elements. The newer approach to consecrating the temple may thus fill a practically sacramental role: the rooms in which saving rituals will take place are made ready for their salvational role rather than being subsumed by the overall structure.

Alternatively, the change represents a shift from a period of sacralizing even “frames, bolts, screws, and locks,” to a more practical

temple grounds and physical facilities changes to a mixture of abbreviated lists and succinct allusion. These changes are very unlikely (less than a one in ten thousand chance) to be due to random variation.

24Graphs and data available upon request.
approach that draws attention to sacramental rites—ordinances—rather than sacred space per se.

In addition to a shift toward rooms as the physical unit of consecration, a formulaic reference to the entire temple has developed and is now usually present. References to the temple from base to the top of the tallest spire existed in nonstructured form (e.g., “from foundation to turret”) in 73 percent of prayers from 1920 to 1974, but it has been replaced by a definitive form which refers specifically to the temple base and the statue of the Angel Moroni. (Thus Spencer W. Kimball blessed the Washington D.C. Temple “from the lowest stone to the highest spire, on which the statue of Moroni stands,” in 1974, and in 1989 Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated “the entire structure [of the Portland Oregon Temple] from the footings to the tallest tower, with the figure of Moroni.”) Since 1983, 63 percent of prayers include a specific reference to Moroni, while only 10 percent contain the general reference. This stylized abbreviation of the temple as a sacred architectural object whose center is traced from its nether portions to the tip of its heaven-directed spire is an image that accords remarkably well with the notion of an axis mundi that binds the three levels of existence—heaven, earth, and hell—together. In the Mormon case, this axis is adorned by a messenger of light, the Angel Moroni.

While these are the most typical elements of Mormonism’s approach to sacred space, several related themes are present in temple dedication prayers. Conceptually, sacred space is protected by God from the chaos of the profane world. In keeping with this notion, LDS temple dedications consistently plead for God to preserve the physical premises of the temple from calamities of nature and the scheming of human adversaries. In the words of Gordon B. Hinckley: “May this holy temple be preserved by Thy powerful hand from the destruc-

28Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 51–53. The instructions on building temple fonts “in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble” is another instance of this concept in Mormonism’s sacred architecture (D&C 128:13).
tive forces of nature, and, more importantly, from any defiling act or presence on the part of those who are enemies to Thy work.29

Such requests for protection from desecration of the temples by the enemies of the Church did not become standard until Gordon B. Hinckley. Prior to his ascendancy, six of twenty-eight dedications (21 percent) included such a plea; sixty-five of the seventy-eight since 1983 (83 percent) have included such a reference. Though this trend may reflect the increasing prevalence and prominence of efforts to ridicule or desecrate the temples,30 it is unclear why the forced abandonment of the first two temples31 would not have translated into pleas for protection from adversaries at an earlier period.

Along these same lines are prohibitions of entry by the uninitiated and the unworthy—“unclean thing[s].” Initially (1836–1920) present in 40 percent of prayers, such a request was present in all prayers from 1920 to 1974. Since 1974, the frequency decreased to just over half. Interestingly the shift coincides with the transition to a stricter system of temple admission that developed in the first decades of the twentieth century.32 Arguably, once the system of temple recommends had matured, there was no further need to affirm it, and the taboo against impurity was absorbed into the pleas of


30Ed Decker’s and Dave Hunt’s The God Makers (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1984) and the accompanying film was one such effort. The film was revised and updated in 1997; and in April 1990, the temple endowment itself was modified and modernized, an event which drew extensive unwanted publicity. Buergu, The Mysteries of Godliness, 170.

31The Kirtland Temple, abandoned and converted into a barn, has since been acquired, restored, and is maintained by the Community of Christ, which has also been open in sharing the space. Brigham Young’s agents made strenuous efforts to sell the Nauvoo Temple to raise funds to move the Saints West but without success. The building was burned, apparently by an arsonist, in 1848 and its remaining walls were leveled by a tornado in 1850. During Gordon B. Hinckley’s presidency, a replacement was built as a functioning temple on the footprint of the old and with some restored historic elements.

protection discussed previously.

**Sacred History**

Paralleling the quest for holy places are attempts to recreate or revisit the times when God was present on the earth—*illud tempus*, or “yon time” in Eliade’s parlance. Thus are explained annual festivals and ritual reenactments of the war of the gods or the creation period, or those initial times when God was actively present with humanity. Eliade and others have argued that Christianity has an alternate temporal focus: Through the miracle of the Incarnation, God returned to earth. As a consequence, the Christian ritual calendar is based on the events of the life of Christ and early Church fathers rather than the initial great battle between good and evil or the taming of chaos by El, Yahweh, or local equivalents. Jan Shipps has argued that Mormonism represents a similar recalibration of the cosmic clock. She suggests that Smith’s claim that God had returned once again, that ancient American prophets had spoken both directly to him and through the records engraved on gold plates, meant that sacred time could be calibrated from Mormonism’s foundational events in the early nineteenth century.

Confirmation of Shipps’s argument is found in the relative lack of reference to either early Christian history or the primeval period in the temple prayers. There is no specific mention of gratitude for Christ’s atonement prior to David O. McKay in 1964, though from 1964 to 2000, 39 percent of the prayers include such an expression. I do not suggest that general references to forgiveness and salvation are absent, simply that Jesus’s atonement is not specifically identified prior to these prayers, an important shift from the general to the specifically Christian. One third of Hinckley’s prayers include such a ref-

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34 Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 72, 111.
36 This is *contra* the clear primeval focus of the temple endowment itself, which firmly grounds Mormonism in “yon time.” It is possible that such references are absent from dedication prayers in an effort to avoid inappropriately public mention of the endowment. In any case, the temple and temple prayers focus more on the Restoration and the creation than on the Incarnation, thus distinguishing Mormonism from mainline Christianity.
ference. After 1964 there is not a significant difference among the eras, suggesting an overall shift in the 1960s without further change. This trend mirrors a similar change in homiletic emphasis in general conference addresses, as the frequency of references to Jesus in those addresses doubled at essentially the same time. Armand Mauss argues that such a change reflects the Church’s increased integration into the Christian mainstream; thus, we are seeing the phenomenon of integration rather than a specific attempt to recapitulate primary Christian times. This view appears reasonable, given the vague nature of the reference and the lack of other reminders of Christian time in dedicatory prayers.

Mormonism has been blessed with a close proximity to its formative period; a journey to the time when God was last on the earth would extend through little more than a century and a half. The key features of the sacred re-creation of the earth include the direct visitation of God to Joseph Smith (Joseph Smith’s First Vision), the restoration of divine authority (the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods), and the organization of the Church.

Starting with the St. George temple in 1877, every temple dedication for half a century includes a recitation of Restoration events. Although the phrasing varies by speaker, President McKay’s dedication of the London Temple is typical:

Thou, Great Elohim, and Jehovah, Thy Beloved Son, answered the fervent appeal of the lad Joseph Smith, and through subsequent administrations of angels enabled and authorized him to organize the Church of Jesus Christ in its completeness with apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc., as it was established in the days of the Savior and the apostles in the Meridian of Time. . . . Thou didst send heavenly messengers to confer upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and others the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, and subsequently all the keys of the priesthood ever held by Thy prophets from Adam, the Ancient of Days, through Abraham and Moses, Malachi and Elijah.

This detailed redaction suggests an attempt to maintain listeners in the not-far-distant time of holiness when the enumerated heav-

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37Shepherd and Shepherd, A Kingdom Transformed, 100–102.
enly beings communed with the Latter-day Saints. Such a redaction, after being present in twelve of twenty-one prayers before 1920, is present in only two of ninety-two prayers from 1920 to 2000.

Reference to the story of Joseph Smith’s first experience inhabiting truly sacred space, his vision in the “Sacred Grove,” follows a different time course. Reference to the First Vision increased in frequency after the turn of the century coinciding—with the increasingly important role of the narrative in the Church at large. Even these references, though, decline with time, as the prayers are pared down to their present format.

In place of the detailed redactions of Mormonism’s foundational events has come a blanket expression of gratitude for the Restoration in general. Beginning with a frequency of 20 percent prior to 1920, such a general reference was made in nearly 80 percent of prayers from 1920 to 1983. Notably, though, even this limited reference decreases in frequency to 33 percent for the 1983–2000 period.

Moving average analysis of the detailed recitation, the shorter version seen in several prayers in the 1970s, and the dramatically abbreviated reference shows that the detailed recitation is largely absent after 1980, while the other versions are present through the 1990s before tapering off. In each case, the decreased rate of reference is less pronounced in prayers by Hinckley than by the other men composing prayers after 1983.


41 Data available on request.

42 Four historic temples have recently been dedicated: the Vernal Utah Temple (November 2, 1997), the Nauvoo Illinois Temple (June 27, 2002), the Winter Quarters Nebraska Temple (April 22, 2001), and the Palmyra New York Temple (April 6, 2000). In each of these cases, the dedicatory prayer recounts locally pertinent sacred history. These prayers are the exception that prove the rule, however, as only one (Asuncion, Paraguay) of
sionalized history. While there is some temporal correlation, the movement in authorized history since 1980 has been against admissions of sin, weakness, and failure on the part of the early Latter-day Saints and their leaders, not the elimination of a Mormon “catechism,” which continues in didactic and proselytizing materials to the present day. It seems more likely that this change is part of a movement toward simplified prayer structure. Thus, this trend may reflect a maturation process, in which didactics are no longer required, as the stories have been internalized by the intended audience: A brief reference encapsulates a rich symbolic structure. This view is compatible with the hypothesis that the prayers are being standardized into a ritual formula with succinct allusions to shared experiences and beliefs which are sacredly meaningful to the listeners.

Alternatively, these abbreviated references may reflect increased ritual distance from the invocations of sacred time as part of an overall trend of pragmatic streamlining and ecclesiastical bureaucratization, or a reflection of the decreasing tolerance of LDS members for sacred symbolism. Whatever the reason, current temple dedications are more concise in revisiting the sacred past when God walked with Mormonism’s founding fathers.

**HOLY ANCESTORS**

Another expression of religious humanity’s quest for God is representations of audience with supernatural or once-mortal beings who were present with God in primeval time and space. Many religions worldwide maintain an active ritual belief in the importance of visits from deceased tribal ancestors. These messengers bring gnosis from beyond the pale of mortality and generally also legitimize the current generation of elders. They are often specifically left by withdrawing God as his representatives. Mormonism has a rich legacy of such behavior with a founding prophet who reported visits with myriad angels and prophetic ancestors. Thus, the Book of Mormon was given to Joseph by the ancestor who completed it, the prophet-cum-angel whose form now adorns the spires of LDS temples. The le-

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gitimizing priesthood was brought to Smith and his colleagues by John the Baptist and the early apostles Peter, James, and John. Polygamy was justified as the recapitulation of how biblical patriarchs lived (D&C 132). Elijah came in fulfillment of ancient prophecy and taught early Church leaders the significance of the “sealing” power integral to the salvational efficacy of the temples.\textsuperscript{45}

The early dedication prayers reflect this tendency, including references to angels and ancestors as varied as Moses, Elijah, and Peter. Thus, Heber J. Grant prayed at the dedication of the Laie Hawaii Temple:

\begin{quote}
We thank thee that thou didst send Thy servant, John the Baptist, and that he did lay his hands upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and ordain them to the Aaronic, or Lesser Priesthood. We thank thee for sending thy servants Peter, James, and John, apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, who ministered with the Savior in the flesh and after his crucifixion, and that they did ordain thy servants Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

In contrast, reference to holy ancestors in later prayers is limited to an expression of gratitude for Joseph Smith and mention of Moroni’s statue. The detailed references, present in half of prayers from 1920 to 1974, are largely absent by 1980. Even the non-specific references are mostly gone by 1990. Moving average analysis suggests that the decline begins in the early-to-mid-twentieth century, preceding the body of prayers offered by Hinckley.

Specific references to Elijah follow the same general trend, rising from 40 percent prior to 1920, to a high of 73 percent (1920–74), with a current prevalence of 13 percent for 1983–2000. Elijah may have been seen as an exception because of his association with the ever-expanding genealogical work.

Mythic ancestors are, of course, only substitutes for the Creator himself. Requests for the actual visitation of God, whether intended figuratively or literally, have increased significantly through time, be-

\textsuperscript{45}Interestingly, Moroni instructed Joseph Smith: “I will reveal unto you the priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet”(D&C 2), which reiterates, in Joseph Smith’s prophetic understanding, Malachi’s prophecy of turning the hearts of the children to their fathers and vice versa (Mal. 4:5–6).

\textsuperscript{46}Heber J. Grant, Improvement Era 23 (February 1920): 282.
beginning with no references before 1920 and gradually reaching the current frequency of 20 percent. These references are in addition to mention of God’s spiritual presence, which has also increased somewhat with time. Requests for the visitation of Jesus have followed a different chronological course. While such requests were never made prior to 1920, they reached a peak of 50 percent in 1974–83 and are present in 10 percent of prayers since 1983. This shift is consistent with the more general increase in references to Jesus and his atonement, discussed previously, perhaps explaining the discrepancy with requests for the Father’s visitation.

Requests for the visitation of angels, on the other hand, have decreased significantly throughout the periods studied, paralleling the decreased prominence of references to such angelic visitors by name. While present in 50 percent of prayers prior to 1920, such a request has not been made in a single prayer since 1983.

It seems clear that explicit references to ancestors have been abbreviated and codified, like those relating to sacred space and time, with once wide-ranging references to a pantheon of supernatural visitors now telescoped into non-specific requests for the presence of God’s spirit. Given the decreasing concreteness of such references and the concomitant decrease in references to angels as a group, it seems reasonable to infer that the references to God’s spiritual presence and visitations are meant more figuratively than when they were originally uttered. The lack of even a stylized reference in modern prayers suggests a trend away from ritual emphasis on holy ancestors rather than simply a process of summarization and codification.

**Formulae and Invocation**

Sacred verbal formulae are important to the LDS Church and to religions generally. Often such invocations, fixed permanently as the words of deity, are taken to have ritual roles and powerful properties. Using such formulae, worshippers gain the capacity to command the gods and the elements. In addition, uttering God’s actual words allows the worshippers to become mouthpieces for the divine Word. Finally, ritual formulae may approximate heaven by instantiating on earth patterns established in the heavens. 47

In the LDS context, such invocations include the blessings on sacrament, the words of the temple endowment, temple marriage

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sealings, the first few words of blessing a baby, confirmation, ordaining an individual to the priesthood, or pronouncing the anointing portion of a blessing of healing. These prayers must be recited verbatim, lest they lose their salvational efficacy. Ordinances must be repeated if a single word is missed in the sacred formula. While this has not always been so, there can be little doubt that it is so now.

The early temple dedication prayers notably do not approximate any such standardized formula, representing instead more free-form texts. Though the separate elements predate him, it is only with the advent of Gordon B. Hinckley that a near-obligatory invocational pattern is introduced into these prayers. In its current form, the authoritative invocation includes six specific elements: the authority of the priesthood is invoked, the ordinance is performed in the name of Jesus, the temple is dedicated to both the Father and the Son, both the full name of the temple and the full name of the LDS Church are used, and a plea is made that God will accept the temple. Thus Hinckley, in dedicating the San Diego California Temple, prayed: “And now, our beloved Father, acting in the authority of Thine everlasting priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ, as Thy servants duly commissioned, we dedicate unto Thee and unto Thy Son this the San Diego California Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Wilt Thou accept it as the offering of Thy people.”

Many of the constituent elements of the invocation were present individually prior to their corporate formalization. A request that God accept the offering of the temple dates from the very earliest of the temples and has been a consistent element of dedications through the present day. Although priesthood authority is invoked in the brief dedication of the Nauvoo Temple in 1845, it was not until 1919 with Heber J. Grant that it became a consistent part of LDS temple prayers; 97 of 104 prayers include it. Spencer W. Kimball was responsible for four prayers without it, while James E. Faust pronounced the other three. Although all temple prayers end in Jesus’s name, it is only with Lorenzo Snow’s blessing of the Manti Temple in 1888 that such a phrase appeared as more than the closing line. From that time forward, it is a prominent element of dedication prayers, with the notable exception of David O. McKay’s prayers in the 1950s and 1960s.

While he did not invoke Jesus’s name in the dedication proper, McKay in his four prayers introduced the formal use of the full names of the temple and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a convention familiar to modern Latter-day Saints from other sacred ritual prayers. Harold B. Lee and Spencer W. Kimball did not follow this lead, but it has been adopted consistently by later prayer authors. Of the sixty-six ensuing prayers, only three lack it.

The distinctive element of dedicating a temple to both Father and Son was introduced by Harold B. Lee in 1972 and implemented consistently from 1983 by Gordon B. Hinckley, including in prayers offered by others during Hinckley’s tenure. Ezra Taft Benson, in his dedication of the Frankfurt Germany Temple, offered a possible explanation, although this insight appears to be unique to him: “We dedicate [the temple] unto Thee as Thy hallowed dwelling place. We dedicate it unto Thy Son as the house of the Lord where the fullness of the priesthood may be exercised.”

49 Although these constituent elements are present in early temple dedication prayers, the synthesis and standardization observed in the last twenty years is clearly novel. The codification of this formula, in which the elements are juxtaposed in the text and the composition of the complex of elements matches the pattern established, is undeniable, jumping from roughly 10 percent before 1920 to almost 100 percent since 1983.

There are at least two possible explanations for this development. One could argue that the desire for standardization evidenced by general Church policies, the Correlation Committee, the formalization of other priesthood ordinances (e.g., instruction manuals for members of the priesthood), has motivated this formalization. In other words, the exigencies of managing a large, increasingly bureaucratic church may have influenced sacred aspects of religious life. A brief, uniformly reproduced benediction might be seen as an attempt to limit diversity and mandate ritual uniformity.

A second explanatory approach would see in this codification of the temple dedication formula the increased presence of the mystic worldview in which formulaic speech and patterns based on celestial models have divine power. The roots for such practice in Mormonism are clearly evident in the codification of the Church’s ordinance-related prayers. For instance, the presence of the sacrament prayers in

Ether 6 and 7 has made them into scripture. While it is unlikely that Hinckley believes that his formal model for temple dedicatory prayers has the same status for the Latter-day Saints as the verbatim aspects of the sacrament prayers and temple endowment rites (particularly given its occasional absence from dedication prayers), it is possible to argue that he desires temple prayers to partake of that effect.\textsuperscript{50}

The significant increase in the use of the Hebrew “Elohim” also seems to reinforce the view of the dedicatory prayers as moving toward a sacred formula. Such ritual invocation of God’s name is well known in other religions as a source of divine powers. “Elohim” does not appear prior to 1956 but is present in 71 percent of all prayers since 1983. Although this trend may be associated with the development of the Mormon theology of the godhead, the temporal correlation is imperfect. The Church took the official position in 1916 that “Elohim” is the name of the Father and “Jehovah” the name of the Son, a delay of forty years (though only five prayers) between the doctrinal clarification and its inclusion in temple dedications.\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{Conclusion}

This analysis of prayer elements within these four broad categories (sacred property, sacred space, sacred history, holy ancestors, and sacred words) shows a clear shift in the way sacred rhetoric has been used in the dedication of LDS temples. Verbose, complex references to sacred time, space, and ancestors have been simplified, abbreviated, or eliminated. The most basic indicator of complexity, the average number of words per prayer, has dropped by more than half. At the same time, these simplified prayers have been arranged around a formulaic expression that increases the affinity of temple dedications

\textsuperscript{50}The use of the formulaic Hosanna Shout—“Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, To God and the Lamb,” to conclude and “seal” the temple dedications is another example of this phenomenon. See Steven H. Heath, “The Sacred Shout,” \textit{Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought} 19, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 115–23. The Hosanna Shout was also used to confirm the bestowal of temple rites per se, independent of dedication ceremonies, an example of a formula apparently having salvific power. The shout is no longer used in that way routinely.

with other LDS sacramental prayers.

The changes in these dedication prayers are complex. A single framework may not be sufficient to provide a complete explanation. At first blush, these dedications have evolved away from earlier approaches to sacred space and time. The once mystically intricate quest for God that required the consecration of every nail and brick and explicitly invited the presence of angels may have concluded.

Instead, current Church leaders have substituted abbreviated versions appropriate to the pared-down discourse possible in the post-“typographic” television age (discussed below) and consistent with the demands of a globalized Church whose doctrine and ritual are “correlated” at headquarters by a bureaucracy perhaps hoping to downplay Mormonism’s mystical roots at a time when polygamists and other schismatics claim divine or angelic support of their movements. Mormonism may have exchanged, in the phrase of Armand Mauss, its temple angels for a temple beehive.

But this view is not necessarily correct, as certain key elements have been retained despite the overall process of simplification and maturation. Now more than ever, Mormon temple dedication prayers approach a consistent model. Their affinity with traditional ordinance prayers is extremely high (thus, by extension, close to heavenly models for saving rituals), and there is statistically little room for doubt that this represents a true change. Prayers now commonly invoke a personal name for God, rather than using more traditional titles. They appear more than ever to partake of the salvational efficacy of ordinance prayers.

In addition it is possible that, given the increasing maturity of the ritual and doctrinal structure of the LDS Church, simple allusions have achieved greater symbolic power. Whereas earlier generations required the formal recitation of a Mormon catechism from a purely didactic perspective, current generations are now directed Godward by stylized references. The connection with the period of extensive angelic ministrations is importantly retained through ritual reference to the figure of Moroni that unites the temple with the heavens and serves as a powerful reminder of the temple’s role as axis mundi.

Practical considerations ought not to be discounted. As the Church has grown, the strictly temporal constraints on leaders and facilities have increased, possibly providing some impetus for abbreviated prayers. To accommodate ever-increasing audiences at the dedications, Church leaders preside over multiple dedication sessions, at
each of which the same prayer is repeated. A very long prayer would present difficulty.

While the figure of Gordon B. Hinckley looms large both in number of prayers and in influence, it is unlikely that these shifts are merely his oratorical idiosyncrasies, as they collect and codify changes that began before his presidency and are maintained in the text of others’ prayers since 1983. Some answers may need to await access to diaries and confidential minutes of meetings of the presiding authorities of the Church.

The shift in rhetoric seen in America over the last two centuries may also have influenced patterns in LDS temple prayers, as Americans have become generally less capable of tolerating complex oratorical structures. 52 While decreases in size and complexity of the temple prayers may be at least partially a result of a decreased capacity for sophisticated public discourse in American society, the temporal correlation is imperfect (the major shifts in rhetoric occurred in the mid-to late-nineteenth century), and such a framework does not fully explain the remarkable shifts in content.

The established facts from the dedication prayers themselves are straightforward. 53 The early temple dedications were free-form and lengthy, devoting significant detail to physical objects and the space they defined, to sacred history, and to supernatural visitors. Current prayers are more succinct, with fewer mentions of sacred ancestors, time, and place. They simultaneously partake of formulae and have adopted an approach to sacred space that deals more with salvific tasks than the overall temple structure. Contemporary prayers are also more in line with others associated with LDS ordi-

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53 Other potentially helpful sources, not explored in this paper, include the talks given at temple dedications before the dedicatory prayer, sermons and addresses on the role of temples, and the personal writings of the prayer authors, particularly Gordon B. Hinckley.
nances. The move toward codification and simplification is textually obvious; its significance is doctrinally, culturally, and spiritually less clear. Whatever the ultimate interpretation, these prayers have a long history of reflecting and perhaps inciting the Mormon quest for the close proximity of the Divine.

54Thus, while reference to angels in dedicatory prayers has decreased, the last quarter century has witnessed the immense popularity of books on near-death experiences—the quintessential moment of encounter between humans and God—by LDS authors, including Betty J. Eadie, Arvin S. Gibson, Lance M. Richardson, Lawrence E. Tooley, and others. In addition angelic or ancestral visitations are occasionally reported as inspirational vignettes in Church News, Ensign, or less formal settings. Mormon pageants such as those at Cumorah or Manti may be folk expressions of the quest for sacred space and time, each occurring at a spiritually significant location and imbued by many participants with a faith-affirming, even mystical power.
“Vindicating the Right . . . of the Twelve”: Elias Adams’s Letters Concerning Succession

Robin Scott Jensen

Following the murder of Joseph Smith, Mormons sooner or later had to choose whom to follow as their next leader. Historians, labeling this time period the “succession crisis,” have systematized the opposing arguments and chronicled the resulting schismatic movements. A more difficult task, however, is explaining the reasons behind the individual decisions. The two letters reproduced here provide a private glimpse into the thought and motives of Elias Adams, who followed Brigham Young, as he reacted to his brother George’s decision to follow James Jesse Strang.¹

Elias Adams was born in 1792 at Marlboro, Windham County, Vt.

¹Elias’s brother, George, should not be confused with George J. Adams, a counselor in the Strangite First Presidency, who is consistently known in Strangite literature with his middle initial and whose presence can be documented in different locales than that of George, Elias’s brother. Reed M. Holmes, Dreamers of Zion: Joseph Smith and George J. Adams Convic-
Vermont, to Job and Sabra Adams. Elias had at least two older brothers and, according to family tradition, at a young age moved to Rutland, Jefferson County, New York, where he lived with his uncle and aunt, Arunah and Betsy Otis. After serving in the War of 1812, Elias moved to Adams County, Illinois, where he married Elmira Cadwell in 1823. She died in 1836 in Adams County after bearing six children. In 1837, he married Malinda Railey (1815–82) at Quincy, Illinois. When and where Elias became a Mormon is unknown, but he and his family moved to Nauvoo in 1843.

After the death of Joseph Smith, Elias moved with the Mormons who followed Brigham Young and the Twelve as far as Mount Pisgah, Iowa, where he served in leadership positions from at least February 1847 until he and his family continued their move to Utah in the spring of 1850.

They settled in Layton where he died on February 17, 1886, one day before his ninety-fourth birthday, from injuries sustained in a fall.

Little is known of Elias’s brother George. Born in 1790, he was living in Jefferson County, New York, when the July 1845 letters from Elias reached him. He had married Polly Edgerton about 1827 and had at least two children, Elias and Eliza. At some unknown point, George had become a Mormon and, by the time he received the
second letter, had affiliated with Strang, as evidenced by the letters themselves.

The Mormon Church had a long and early presence in northwestern New York where Jefferson County was located. In 1839, James Blakeslee reportedly baptized a hundred people in the county. On May 25–26, 1844, three hundred members attended a conference held in Adams, Jefferson County, “150 of which have embraced the gospel since last autumn.” In the first letter Elias asked George to come to Nauvoo to enjoy the blessings of the temple, available only to a Church member. The basis of the second letter was that George espoused Strangism, thus proving that George had left the leadership of the Twelve and joined the Strangite Church. George died on August 29, 1849, at age fifty-nine, only two years after Elias wrote him this second letter. His family remained in Theresa, Jefferson County, New York, and most likely did not affiliate with Strangism, as they did not join the Strangite members at Beaver Island, Michigan.

Elias’s first letter, which found George a Mormon, captures two important events, namely the Mormons’ activities in Nauvoo only one year before they begin the exodus and the Saints’ attitude toward Sidney Rigdon. Elias advises George that “you would do well to come here” to Nauvoo “and the sooner you come the better it will be for you[r] interest” because the “gathering to Nauvoo still continues” and that the “prospects [or] Crops here this season are the best I ever saw in any country.” Elias relays to George his excitement that the temple in Nauvoo is rapidly nearing completion, “and then brethren will commence receiving their endowment[s. I]t is a matter here that engages the most of our attention. And it will be a great privilege to be at or near Nauvoo.”

A second point of note was Elias’s disenchantment with Sidney Rigdon. “I will inform you that Rigdon dont stand very high in the estimation of the people here, We all know here that Sidney is not fit to be leader of Gods people.” Significantly, Elias does not mention the meeting on August 8, 1844, at which Rigdon offered to serve as the

Bureau of the Census, 1870, Jefferson County, Theresa Township, p. 37. They had been in Theresa Township for the 1860 census, p. 17.

5 Parley P. Pratt, Letter to the Editors, Detroit, October 12, 1839, Times and Seasons 1 (January 3, 1840): 44.

Church’s “guardian” but where Brigham Young reportedly received Joseph Smith’s “mantle” (took on the voice and appearance of Joseph Smith) in a way that, as many members of the congregation later testified, settled the succession question for them. Obviously, Elias based his decision on other factors.

The following letters reproduce the holograph’s spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Angle brackets indicate Elias’s insertions in the text. I retain strikeouts. For ease of reading, I have included paragraph indentations for both letters and created paragraph breaks in the second. I reproduce postmarking and addresses in the notes.

** Montibello 8 July 18th 1845

Respected Brother, I now take my pen to answer Your letter; I will say in a few words that I ought to have written sooner, but from various causes I have been prevented. We are all glad to hear from you and that you were all well And firm in the faith of the Gospel.

We are all well at this time through the blessings of God. We have removed from the place where we lived in Adams County to Hancock within ten miles of the city of Nauvoo. I now live on the road leading from Navuoo to Quincy in a good neighborhood of land well situated for farming or grazing. It is considered to be one of

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8Montibello was on the road between Nauvoo and Warsaw in Hancock County, Illinois.

9Adams County was (and is) directly south of Hancock County in Illinois.

10Quincy was the county seat of Adams County, located on the Mississippi River. The road between Nauvoo and Quincy hugged the river going through Warsaw. A New Map of Illinois with Its Proposed Canals, Roads & Distances from Place to Place Along the Stage & Steam Boat Routes (Philadelphia: S. Augustus Mitchell, ca. 1846); Daniel Haskel and J. Calvin Smith, A Complete
the most healthy settlements on the Mississippi. And excellent situations can be had on the most reasonable terms. The prospects Crops here this season are the best I ever saw in any country. And it will afford great privileges for the gathering of the Saints.

And now dear Brother if you can arrange your affairs you would do well to come here this fall as you would find a plentiful land and good situations. The gathering to Nauvoo still continues and the sooner you come the better it will be for you[r] interest both in a temporal and a spiritual point of view. The temple in Nauvoo is in a rapid state of completion. It is a splendid building, and there will be a room [end of p. 1] will be ready this fall. And then brethren will commence receiving their endowment it is a matter here that engages the most of our attention. And it will be a great privilege to be at or near Nauvoo. You requested me to give you information concerning the

Descriptive and Statistical Gazetteer of the United States of America, Containing a Particular Description of the States, Territories, Counties, Districts, Parishes, Cities, Towns, and Villages—Mountains, Rivers, Lakes, Canals, and Railroads; With an Abstract of the Census and Statistics for 1840, Exhibiting a Complete View of the Agricultural, Commercial, Manufacturing, and Literary Condition and Resources of the County (New York: Sherman & Smith, 1843), 556.

11Settlers to the Nauvoo area combatted sickness during much of their stay. To find an area relatively free of sickness would have been a great boon for a family near Nauvoo. See H. Dean Garrett, “Disease and Sickness in Nauvoo,” in Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Illinois, edited by H. Dean Garrett (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1995), 169–82.

12The dedication of the Nauvoo Temple occurred April 30, 1846, less than a year later.

13Joseph Smith introduced the sacred endowment to a handful of men on May 4, 1842. Dean C. Jessee ed., The Papers of Joseph Smith: Journal, 1832–1842, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:380. In an epistle dated July 15, 1844, four apostles told the Saints “let us haste to build the Temple of our God, and to GATHER together thereunto.” P. P. Pratt, Willard Richards, John Taylor, and W. W. Phelps, Letter “To the Saints Abroad,” Times and Seasons 5 (July 15, 1844): 586; emphasis theirs. In October 1844, Brigham Young told the Saints that the temple “immediately connected with the completion of our preparations, and ordinances, touching our salvation and exaltation, and that of our dead, necessarily claims our first, and
discussions among the saints concerning Rigdonism. 14 I will inform you that Rigdon don't stand very high in the estimation of the people here. We all know here that Sidney is not fit to be leader of Gods people. We all know that he is a wolf and would destroy the sheep. Our enemies here at this time lay still and say or threaten but little the murderers who assassinated our beloved Prophet and Patriarch have had their trial as mock call and are discharged. 15

I will just observe that land can be had from two dollars to five dollars per acre and there is at this time quarters with some improvements on them which are offered on terms that will suit any man with good timber and prairie. We desire to be remembered to all of our friends and relatives. And would rejoice to see them come gathering up to Zion to join with us in worshiping our God. For the time has come for the hearts of the children to be turned to the fathers, and of course of the hearts of Brothers and Sisters will be together to gather and be one in the Kingdom of our Father. 16 Our Prospects at present is as good as we could expect. And have also had an increase in our family we had a daughter born on the eleventh instant and we call its name Caroline. 17 I have enquired in the city of Nauvoo for Eliat Adams and heard that he had been there but had <[left?]>
there for the pine country and had gone from there to prairie duchin [Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin] I was informed also that he was a Mormon of the right kind. 18

I desire to be remembered to Jane, and I was truly glad to hear that she had reached home in safety and as she was in this country she has a knowledge of this country and also of the south. Therefore she would be a good pilot and of great service in coming to this country. 19

I request to be remembered to Brother Cheeseman and family. 20

I should be happy if my situation and circumstances would permit me to pay you all a visit but I cannot at present I will therefore bid you all farwell desiring you all may present and eternal happiness remember me to all inquiring friends

Elias Adams

NB 21 please write on the receipt of this immeatly write to des moines post office Illinois Hancock County. 22

[In different handwriting] Dear Cousins It is with pleasure I take my pen in hand to let yo know that I am well, and hope those few lines

Malinda’s fourth child and Elias’s eleventh child. Adams, Ancestors and Descendants of Elias Adams, 15.


19 I have been unable to determine who this woman might be.


21 Nota bene (“mark well”), calling attention to an important point.

22 In 1841, the Montebello Post Office was officially changed to the Des Moines Post Office only to be renamed the Montebello Post Office again in 1843. The name may have also been changed at other times. See James N. Adams, comp., and William E. Keller, ed., Illinois Place Names (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1969), 339, 442.
will find yo well. I should like to see yo all. Elias I am 5 feet 8 inches high.23 yo must all write. I cannot think of much more so good by to all

Rufus Adams24 [end of p. 3]

* * *

By early 1847, many of the Mormons who had decided that Brigham Young and the Twelve were the legitimate leaders of the Church were either moving west or preparing to do so. However, some Mormons saw the Twelve as usurpers to the rightful heir. While the Twelve under Brigham Young’s leadership argued forcefully that they were the successors to Joseph Smith, they based their arguments on events occurring in Nauvoo, not on any revelatory claim.25

In his second letter to George, Elias Adams defends the Twelve’s position largely from the Doctrine and Covenants although, as he tells George, he relies upon “the History of the Church itself” as well. Elias’s reliance on the Doctrine and Covenants—a different strategy from the Twelve’s own apparent approach—likely stemmed from two factors: first, his status as a general member of the Church, which gave him little or no access to the inner circles where Joseph Smith had introduced fuller doctrines and principles (i.e., temple ordinances and polygamy) including priesthood keys; and second, the convenience and authority of the Doctrine and Covenants, particu-


larly the sections devoted to the rules of the Church.

Did Elias formulate this scriptural argument on his own or was he guided to these verses of scripture by another source? I think it likely that Elias borrowed some argumentation from an 1846 pamphlet written by Reuben Miller, a former Strangite. Of the twelve Doctrine and Covenants scriptures that Elias references in his second letter, Miller quoted eight. Miller also emphasized that Strang “did not hold the keys and ordinances” of the Melchizedek Priesthood nor did Strang come through the “gate” talked about in Doctrine and Covenants 43:7. Elias emphasized these points as well. However, Elias did not mention Miller’s pamphlet; he may have found these scriptures independently or even used an unknown third source available to both him and Miller.

George Adams likely left the leadership of the Twelve and affiliated with Strangism in the summer or fall of 1846 when Strang began to aggressively preach his message. James J. Strang, virtually unknown in the Mormon Church at the time of Joseph Smith’s death, quickly gained momentum as a possible successor. Strang had heard of Mormonism in Wisconsin and traveled to Nauvoo in February 1844 to learn more. He accepted the teachings he heard and was baptized by Joseph Smith. The LDS prophet then asked Strang “to return to Wisconsin and make more full examinations of the country with direct reference to the advantages it might offer to the Saints.” Strang sent Smith a descriptive report in March 1844. According to Strang, Smith then sent him a letter dated June 17, 1844, relating a vision in which the Lord called Strang to establish a “stake of Zion” in Wisconsin to be named Voree and to gather the Saints there to build a house


\[27\] “Chronicles of Voree” (manuscript record of the Strangite Church similar to the Manuscript History of the LDS Church), March 3, 1844, 8, microfilm, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; originals in private possession. In this article, I used the transcription prepared by John J. Hajicek, *The Chronicles of Voree (1844–1849)* (Burlington, Wisc.: J. J. Hajicek, 1992).

\[28\] Ibid., March 3, 1844, 8.
Strang amplified this “call” with several visions of his own after Joseph Smith’s death in which he claimed to have been ordained by an angel as prophet, seer, translator, and revelator over the entire Church. In the uncertain environment of the succession crisis, Strangism quickly gained numerous adherents across the country; and by September 1846, the Strangite newspaper, the *Voree Herald*, claimed, albeit with considerable hyperbole, that “all Northern and central New York is with us.” In November 1846, a Strangite conference was held in the Black River District in Jefferson County with seventy members “in good standing.” Adams was obviously one of these members, since he, termed a “wise and faithful” man, was one of two appointed by the conference to forward funds to Voree.

The interim between Joseph Smith’s death and the ascendency of Brigham Young was relatively brief. Consequently few documents are extant that argue for the right of the Quorum of the Twelve as Joseph Smith’s successor rather than for one individual or another. Elias’s second letter to his brother is important in illustrating a common member’s interpretation of the Doctrine and Covenants in personally resolving the succession crisis. It is also an important primary source showing how that crisis had divisive consequences for families. George wrote a letter to Elias dated only August 25, but doubtless in 1846. As Elias was at Mount Pisgah, he might have received the letter just before writing his answer in mid-February 1847. However, it is also likely that he devoted some time in studying and drafting the

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31 “Conference Minutes,” *Zion’s Revelle* 1 (December 1846): 4. George J. Adams, who was already a counselor to Strang, was then editing *The Star in the East* in Boston, further differentiating these two individuals.

Dear Brother

I received yours of August 25th and was happy to hear that you were well and that you were prospered in your Crops and was glad to hear from my old friends and that they were well. But was sorry to see the change that was wrought in your mind since I saw you last and the erroneous notions that you had imbibed of James J Strang as claiming to be successor to the martyred Prophet Joseph Smith and as you wish to hear from me again—There is no greater pleasure I can take than the opportunity of vindicating the right of the legal claims of the “Twelve” in the Government of the Kingdom of God on the earth. For being a strict observer of all the administrations and watching with a jealous eye even in the very heart of the Church itself I think I can best determine the claims and the legality or illegality of them. I will not only take the Book of Doctrines & Covenants but also the History of the Church itself to determine this point, viz who shall preside.

Look at Doct & Cov Sec 2. par 17

It says every president &c is to be ordained by the high counsel or general conference. Was J.J. Strang so ordained. No but rejected.

Were the Twelve ordained by

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33 The Doctrine and Covenants printed in 1844, 1845, and 1846 used the same plates except for minor changes. For convenience, I also supply references to the current LDS edition (1981): D&C 20:67.

34 According to Chronicles of Voree, June 27, 1844, 10, an angel anointed Strang with oil moments after Joseph Smith was killed at Carthage. Miller, James J. Strang Weighed in the Balance, 1–4, discusses Strang’s alleged inconsistencies in recounting this ordination.

35 Strang was excommunicated three times by various Mormon groups: (1) a local conference at Florence, Michigan, August 4, 1844; (2) at Nauvoo by the Quorum of the Twelve August 26, 1844; and (3) at a meeting in the Nauvoo Temple February 1, 1846. See Chronicles of Voree, July 26, 1844, 13; Willard Richards, “To the Saints,” Times and Seasons 5 (September 2, 1844): 631; and Brigham Young, Journal, February 1, 1846, microfilm of holograph, LDS Church Archives. Strang felt that none of these excommunications were legitimate. “Has Presd’t. Strang, ever been accused of violating any of the laws of God? No! Has he ever been put on trial before any tribunal in the Church? . . . Has any complaint been made against him to any
that direction. They were. Sec 3rd par 11 [D&C 107:22]. Three Pre-
siding high priests chosen by the body—upheld by the confidence
faith &c of the Church Was J J Strang chosen & upheld in that way.
No—And again was he a high priest—no nothing but an Elder.
When he put in his claims—Again you will find that the Twelve form a
quorum equal in authority & power to the 3 Presidents previously
mentioned. [1844 D&C sec. 3 para. 11; D&C 107:24]. See also same
sec—par 31 [D&C 107:65]. Which says one be appointed of the High
Priesthood to preside. He shall be called Pres' of the High Priesthood
of the Church. Now as I said before Strang was not a high-priest
but only an elder and his claims are untenable.

And in par 37 of the same Sec [D&C 107:82] you will find that if
one [of] the 3 Pres' trangress he should be dealt with before the Com-
mon Council of the Church. Was therefore Joseph cut off by them.
[N]o. Was Brigham Young or the Twelve? No. Was ever J J Strang
ever acknowledged by them? No. And this same paragraph says that
their decision is an end of all controversy concerning him [D&C
107:83]. Clearly setting forth that God has already established a cor-

authority in the Church? No! We defy any and all men to show that he ever
had a trial, or that there ever was a witness or even a complaint against him.
Poh!” [sic] “Excommunications,” Voree Herald 1 (August 1846): [2]; empha-
sis in original.

36 Doctrine and Covenants 20, originally canonized in the 1835 Doc-
trine and Covenants was revised to incorporate offices that had been estab-
lished since the initial revelation was first given in 1830. On August 8, 1844,
Brigham Young asked a meeting of the assembled Saints: “If the Twelve be
the men to counsel you to finish the great work laid out by our departed
prophet, say so. . . . The vote was unanimous.” “Special Meeting,” Times and
Seasons 5 (September 2, 1844): 638. In actuality, there were a few dissenting
votes. Quinn, Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power, 393 note 115. Elias here
takes the position that the Twelve were the Church’s presiding officers so
sustained at that August meeting.

37 Chronicles of Voree, March 3, 1844, 6, states that Hyrum Smith or-
dained Strang an elder one week after his baptism, but his name does not
appear on the record of elders ordained in Nauvoo. General Church Re-
corder, Far West and Nauvoo Elders’ Certificates, 1837–38, 1840–46, Fam-
ily History Library, film #581219, original in LDS Archives. Crandell Dunn,
Letter to Brother Appleby, August 3, 1846, Millennial Star 8 (October 15,
1846): 93, states that in 1844 he asked to see Strang’s licence but “he had
none to give, for he had never received any.”
rect and undeviating Order from which he himself will not depart [end of p. 1] And if J J Strang or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel let him be accursed [Gal. 1:8]. Joseph Smith had the appointing of one for the purpose of receiving Commandments if he should be taken (by death) according to Sec 14. Par 1st & 2nd [D&C 43:3–4] For if this gift of receiving Commandments & Revelations was taken from him he should not have power save to appoint another in his stead [D&C 43:4]. Now Did Joseph lose this gift — no. See Sec 85 par 2nd [D&C 90:3]. The Keys of this Kingdom shall never be taken from you <(Joseph Smith)> while thou art in the world neither in the world to come. If you turn again to the 16th Section <2nd par> [sic; should be 1844 D&C sec. 14 para 2; D&C 43:7]. it speaks of a regularly established order. For verily I say unto you that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the Gate and be ordained as I have told you before teaching those revelations already received & shall receive through him whom I have appointed.

From what I have already quoted you will see that it amounts to this. That the appointment must be made by Joseph Smith of a Priest to succeed him and also that he must come in by the general voice of the Church or the high council and that his ordination must be by (an angel? no) but by Joseph Smith also. Sec 3rd Par 42 [D&C 107:92]. He has all the Gifts which he bestows upon the head of the Church. I think [if] you look at these things you will find it is ridiculous for a man to assume that he has his appointment of prophet seer revelator or any thing else by the hand of an Angel or by any thing else when God has established his kingdom and given an established order by which we must be governed. But as God has his fixed plan and purpose and rule by which he works laid down and that so plainly, it would [be] inconsistent with his nature to deviate from it. And you will find that the keys of the Kingdom have all been given to Joseph by the administration of Angels read Sec 50 [esp. paras 2–3; D&C 27:8–9, 12–13]. And this greater (Mechesck) priesthood holdeth the key of the mysteries &c. Therefore in the ordinances thereof the power of Godliness is manifest. Sec 4 par 3rd [D&C 84:19–20] also Sec 51 par 2 [D&C 28:7]. For I have given him the Keys of the mysteries &c. and in the latter clause of par 4 same Sec [D&C 28:12–13] it says—[“]neither shall any thing be appointed unto any of this Church contrary to the Church Covenants, for all things must be done in order and by common Consent in the Church.”] And to shew that a greater power of godliness will be exhibited in the ordinances given
to the Church than any other course that could be pursued even by
Angels themselves in the Government [end of p. 2] of this Church I
will make another quotation Bk Cov. Sec 21 par 7 [D&C 64:37–39].
[“]Behold I the Lord have made my Church in these last days like a
Judge sitting on a hill to judge the nations, for it shall come to pass
that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion;
and liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not
apostles and prophets shall be known.[“] I could quote a great
deal more on this head But I think I have perhaps stated enough to
satisfy—

Now I promised to say a little about Church History. 1st Did Jo-
seph appoint any to succeed him after his death while he was alive. 
He did—He imparted the Keys of the Kingdom to fifty and gave them
their full authority equal with himself and Brigham Young was their
President after he had done this, he commissioned the Twelve in
the following language. On you I have placed the burden of rolling
of the Kingdom to the nations of the earth and building up the kingdom
and a great deal more of the same import. If you would ask is
Brigham Young, Prophet seer and revelator to this Church I would say
yes, and so are the Twelve and so are many others in this Church.

38D. Michael Quinn, “The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844,” BYU
Smith performed.

39According to D. Michael Quinn, “The Council of Fifty and Its
Smith was the standing chairman during his life and Brigham Young be-
came the chairman when the Council of Fifty met for the first time after
Smith’s death on February 4, 1845 (171, 185). Quinn also mentions the
awareness of lay-members like Elias Adams of this council (189). See also
Klaus J. Hansen, Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Coun-
cil of Fifty in Mormon History (East Lansing: Michigan State University

40Quinn, The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power, 192–95. The Twelve
discussed this charge as directly pertaining to them. “Trial of Elder
Rigdon,” 651; and Wilford Woodruff, Letter “To the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints,” Salem, October 11, 1844, Times and Seasons 5 (Novem-
ber 1, 1844): 698.

41Joseph Smith reportedly said: “No man is a minister of Jesus Christ,
But Brigham is the Pres of the whole Church. But do they get Revelations they do. But why not publish them they do. Br Orson Pratt brot us a written Revelation the other day giving much important instruction relative to our journeying West —

I see I am filling up my letter I have been doing well since I have been here. O I have put up a mill and been doing the grinding of the place But I shall say something about my moving to Jane I will close my epistle by saying I pray my heavenly Father that you will give the subject that consideration its importance demands. For I know that by following J J Strang you are following a false prophet and you cannot get into Celestial Glory. Though if you follow him for any length of time you will find he is on a Sandy foundation—But I hope better things and that you will be prepared to go with us by the time grass grows. And bring as many with you as you possibly can I know it will be for your Salvation And by doing so you will be a saviour of men. What I have said I know are agreeable to the Doctrines of this Church and the mind of the Spirit write me as soon as you receive this

I remain as ever your
Affectionate Brother Elias Adams

* * *

Written sideways on the left side of the sheet is the postscript:
“Mrs Adams & Children / Join with me in sending their love / To yourself & family / Direct to me Camp of Is rael Mt Pisgah. / it will reach me though I may be farther [end of p. 3].”

If George responded to this letter, Elias apparently did not pre-


42 At this time, Brigham Young was senior apostle of the Quorum of the Twelve and was officially sustained as Church president with counselors December 27, 1847, at Winter Quarters, Iowa. Richard E. Bennett, We’ll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846–1848 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 290–92.

43 “The Word and Will of the Lord,” now D&C 136. See Bennett, Mormons at the Missouri, 156–57.

44 Elias had nine living children at the time of this letter. Adams, Ancestors and Descendants of Elias Adams, 146–50. The address appears as (side-
serve it, nor have I been able to trace George’s life beyond this point. Strangite headquarters moved from Voree to Beaver Island in Lake Michigan in 1850 where, after a period of increasing conflict with non-Mormon neighbors, Strang was shot and killed in 1856. His followers left the island and scattered. Today the followers of Strang likely number fewer than one hundred.\textsuperscript{45}
REVIEW ESSAY

RECENT MOUNTAIN MEADOWS PUBLICATIONS: A SAMPLING

Richard E. Turley Jr.


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213


The last several years have seen a veritable renaissance in Mountain Meadows Massacre studies. The Journal of Mormon History has already carried reviews of several works on the topic, as well as of other volumes in which the massacre is a significant element, though not the central topic. The seven publications featured in this review provide a sampling of the many other materials on the

massacre that have been served up for public consumption.

Before I began a serious study of the massacre a decade and a half ago, I assumed it to be a subject picked over so frequently by writers that further examination and interpretation would reveal little new information. Surprisingly, what I discovered—and what I have continued to recognize as colleagues Ronald W. Walker and Glen M. Leonard and I have been preparing our own book on the massacre over the last several years—is that many aspects of the subject remain largely untouched by serious scholarship. With so much opportunity to provide new insight into the most tragic event in Utah and Mormon history, I cannot help but feel disappointment when authors choose the easy road of regurgitation over solid, new, exhaustive research.

Of the hundreds—perhaps thousands—of writers who have treated the topic in the last century and a half, most have simply rehashed other writers’ work. Recognizing that tendency, I harbored hope that the highly advertised American Massacre by Sally Denton might be an exception. Denton’s paper credentials as an investigative reporter and her Washington, D.C., contacts led me to expect that she might turn up documents that would shed new light on the massacre. When her book was published in 2003, I eagerly leafed through a copy but was soon disappointed by her factual errors and shallow research.

From the map in the front of the book that contradicts the weight of historical evidence to the bibliography at the end that reflects woefully little original research, American Massacre proved to be yesterday’s leftovers, poorly stirred together and served up with a spicy writing style that helps disguise the mess for undiscriminating readers.

Denton’s numerous factual errors demonstrate her poor command of sources on the massacre and on Mormon history. As to the massacre, for example, she asserts that the men who left the besieged wagons at Mountain Meadows and were later killed included “Captain Baker’s son John H. Baker” (132). Actually, John H. Baker survived the massacre because he stayed behind in Arkansas. Denton asserts that two of the surviving Dunlap girls were “grandchildren” (206) of William C. Mitchell, which they were not. In fact, Mitchell’s

grandson perished in the massacre. Denton claims that “unidentified Mormons” (227) guaranteed Lee’s surety bond. Yet the guarantors’ names appear plainly in the court record. She describes prosecutor Sumner Howard as a “Missouri criminal lawyer” (228). In reality, Howard was from Michigan. By Denton’s telling, Judge John Cradlebaugh “inventoried the emigrants’ property at the Cedar City church” (202). He didn’t; the property had been auctioned off long before his arrival.

As to Mormon history, Denton naively accepts the untrue assertion that Joseph Smith “was never known to laugh” (7). Contrary to her claim, Far West is not “now Kansas City” (13). The Nauvoo Temple was built of limestone, not “marble” (23). Joseph Smith did not send orders to the Nauvoo Legion on “July 27, 1844” (28) since he had been dead for a month by then. Brigham Young was not “elevated to a deity” (55) when the First Presidency was reorganized in 1847. Parowan was not “named for a Book of Mormon warrior” (124). Isaac Haight was not “ecclesiastically superior” (147) to William Dame. They each held the same Church position in different locations.

Denton’s interpretive errors exceed her factual ones. For example, she blindly parrots the myth that “the Deseret News uncharacteristically failed to note” the arrival of the emigrants in Salt Lake City, “a harbinger that would only later seem conspicuous” (103). Contrary to her assertion, the newspaper did not regularly log the arrival of non-Mormon emigrant companies. Moreover, her assertion accepts the myth that all the emigrants killed at Mountain Meadows arrived in the valley as a single identifiable unit. In fact, they arrived in separate groups at different times.

Denton demonstrates that she was clearly outside her element when she took on this complex historical subject. Her treatment is primarily a rehash of the work of other writers, including R. Kent Fielding and Will Bagley, whose generosity she notes in her acknowledgments. Jan Shipps was right in concluding that American Massacre “adds nothing to the existing store of knowledge” on this subject.²

Samuel Nyal Henrie’s Writings of John D. Lee is a Lee descendant’s effort “to bridge a gap in the available Lee literature” (1). Acknowledging Lee’s published journals and Juanita Brooks’s writings

on Lee and the massacre, Henrie reasons, “However, we have been missing Lee’s own composed writings about his life and the Massacre, and nothing can take their place” (1). Drawing principally on *Mormonism Unveiled*, Henrie compiles in his volume Lee’s “life (autobiography) and confession, plus additional authentic records and accounts by Lee’s contemporaries treating his role” in the massacre and his “arrest, trials and execution” (1). Using Lee’s published journals, Henrie adds “a general introduction, short introductions to each section, a synthesis of Lee’s experiences in the Utah Territorial Prison, and an epilogue” (1).

This volume may well find accepting readers who want convenient access to edited excerpts from *Mormonism Unveiled* and a small number of other documents, although most are available elsewhere. Henrie was adept enough to point out that *Mormonism Unveiled*, though largely the work of John D. Lee, is marred by interpolations by Lee’s lawyer, William W. Bishop, or others.

Unfortunately, *Writings of John D. Lee* is peppered with errors, some merely typographical or grammatical, others substantive. Henrie’s introduction, for example, asserts: “John D. Lee was arrested on [sic] October of 1874, jailed and then brought to trial in July of 1975” (6). In fact, Lee was arrested in November 1874, and his first trial, of course, began in 1875. Rains destroyed the Harmony fort in 1862, not 1860 (251). The first edition of *Mormonism Unveiled* appeared in 1877, not 1871 (257). Sumner Howard was not a prosecutor at Lee’s first trial (275). And the massacre occurred in 1857, not 1856 (418). Henrie also writes that “the Kanab and Beaver City Mormon leadership . . . ordered the massacre” (339). By “Beaver City,” perhaps he meant “Cedar City.” Kanab did not exist in 1857.

Thorough scholars will prefer the early printed versions of *Mormonism Unveiled* over this edition. Henrie does, however, make a contribution worth reading. In the book’s epilogue, he describes his boyhood struggles “growing up in the Mormon society of Utah and Arizona” in the 1940s. Here Lee “was often portrayed as a sort of minor frontier Dracula.” Henrie recounts, “Mothers, half-humorously, half-seriously, threatened naughty children by chanting, ‘better watch out, or John D. Lee’ll get ya!’” (417). As Henrie grew, he wrestled to understand his “famous and infamous ancestor” and finally felt he “was able to enter a little into his mind” (418). He speculates that Lee felt “a deep and irreconcilable sorrow that he could not go back and relive” the days “when he made the worst mistake a person can make”
Readers may disagree with Henrie’s conclusions but will sympathize with his struggle.

The Fierra Blanca Publications edition of *Mormonism Unveiled* purports to be a “facsimile reprint of D.M. Vandawalker & Co Publisher[,] St. Louis 1891” (iv). Even librarians disagree on the meaning of “facsimile reprint.” Careful scholars will therefore want to know what this new edition is and is not.

On the positive side, the new edition provides easy access to *Mormonism Unveiled* for modern readers who do not want to shell out money for a nineteenth-century copy or take the trouble to read one at a library.

Readers should be aware, however, that the new edition does not precisely follow the text, capitalization, paragraphing, or pagination of the Vandawalker edition, which was actually published in 1892 from plates bearing an 1891 copyright date. For example, “$100 a mouth” in Vandawalker (47) becomes “$100 a mouth” in the new edition (50). “Disband his forces” (Vandawalker, 69) becomes “disband his forms” (Fierra Blanca, 72). Some differences are obvious; others less so.

Principal interpretive additions to the volume, which appear on the back cover and printer’s imprint page, are incongruent. The back cover describes the volume as “the autobiography of a bishop and enforcer of secret terrorist organizations of the LDS Church between 1843 and 1874.” The printer’s imprint page describes Lee as “a Bishop and ‘enforcer’ of secret terrorist organizations of the Mormon Church during the years 1838 to 1875.” In addition to the date discrepancies, purists will pick holes in this description. Though Lee was a locally appointed “presiding elder” for a time, he never was a bishop, and his 1870 excommunication makes the 1874 and 1875 dates puzzling. The label “terrorist organizations” is so laden with modern political connotations that historians could spend hours debating its applicability in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah Mormon history.

Readers of books on the massacre face a common problem. The killings were so calculated and brutal that it can be alluringly easy to accept *anything* that might be said about those who planned or car-

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3International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, “IFLA Cataloguing Section’s ISBD Review Group,” summary of meetings held in Oslo, August 13, 18, 2005, 4.
ried them out. Whenever emotion overcomes intellect in this way, a kind of gullibility sets in that renders readers vulnerable to deception.

Such gullibility made readers swallow *Mormonism Unveiled* whole when it was first published and poses a problem for modern readers, too. To avoid the problem, readers must recognize two important facts when studying this or any other edition of Lee’s “autobiography” and “confession.” First, Lee, like his co-perpetrators, lied repeatedly to protect himself and his reputation. Even after he was convicted, he held out hope of escaping death through an appeal, a deal with government officials, or a pardon. He also worried about how the account of his deeds would affect his descendants. These factors color his account.

Second, Lee’s “autobiography” and “confession” were doctored before being published as *Mormonism Unveiled* in 1877, after his execution. For example, in *Mormonism Unveiled* Lee supposedly claims that “most of my journals, written up to 1860, were called for by Brigham Young [and] were never returned to me. I suppose they were put out of the way, perhaps burned” (Fierra Blanca, 79). In fact, Lee’s post-conviction correspondence, written just weeks before his execution, gives no hint of such a claim. Instead, it shows that family members, at Lee’s request, turned most of Lee’s journals over to U.S. Marshal William Nelson for use by Lee’s lawyer William Bishop. Nelson and Bishop descendants later donated Lee journals—which cover, with some gaps, the years 1848 to 1876—to the Huntington Library.

**Charles W. Penrose’s The Mountain Meadows Massacre** is an Eborn Books reproduction of a pamphlet based on a lecture Penrose gave in Salt Lake City’s Twelfth Ward assembly hall on October 26, 1884. Penrose, who had attained notoriety for “the snap and ginger” of his earlier writings in the *Ogden Junction,* was the new editor of the *Deseret News* and a newly called counselor in a stake presidency when he gave his address.

The lecture proved popular among contemporary Latter-day Saints because it disclaimed general Mormon responsibility for the

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massacre, placing it principally on the head of John D. Lee, a few other white Mormons, and Native American bands in the broad vicinity of Mountain Meadows. But parts of Penrose’s version of events are wrong. For example, many Mormon white men besides Lee participated in the massacre, and Penrose’s account accepts that the massacre was driven principally by the anger of Native Americans, when in fact the principal aggressors were the white settlers.

For all its flaws, Penrose’s pamphlet had such dramatic impact on massacre historiography, especially among Latter-day Saints, that it remains essential reading. It also “excited the hostility of the anti-Mormon ring,” which was engaged at the time in a political battle for control of Utah Territory and used the massacre as an effective weapon for garnering support in Washington, D.C., and attracting media attention.

The wrapper and title page of the original pamphlet listed the lecture’s author as “Elder Charles W. Penrose,” leading some later readers to suppose that he spoke as a General Authority of the Church. Although Penrose unquestionably had the support of Mormon leaders, he did not become a General Authority until two decades later, when he was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In 1884 Penrose was regarded as knowledgeable about the massacre because he had followed the Lee trials when he was editor of the Ogden Junction.

One minor caution: At the time of this review, EbornBooks.com described its new publication as a “reprint of the 1884 edition.” Bibliographers will quibble with this description. As the back cover of the reprint itself correctly explains, “This item was originally published in 1884, but we have chosen to reprint the 1899 edition which contains additional information not included in the first.” The “additional information” is S. A. Kenner’s December 4, 1884, interview with James Holt Haslam that originally appeared in a supplementary pamphlet issued in 1885. Most readers will be happy to have the 1899 edition with this addition, but purists will want to acknowledge that the 1899

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6Ibid., 1:260.
7Supplement to the Lecture on the Mountain Meadows Massacre: Important Additional Testimony Recently Received (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1885). S. A. Kenner (1852–1913) was a printer, author, and journalist in Utah. In 1877 he became an attorney and eventually served as assistant U.S. attorney. James Holt Haslam (1825–1913) was the Cedar City rider
edition reflects minor copyediting changes from the first edition of the lecture.

Will Bagley’s *Avenging Mountain Meadows* is a reproduction of a document written by someone using the pen name “Vindex” in response to Penrose’s lecture. The reprint, designed as a keepsake for buyers of the limited edition of *Blood of the Prophets*, is preceded by Bagley’s introduction, in which he writes, “Within a week of [Penrose’s] address a scathing analysis of ‘Penrose’s harangue’ appeared in a four-page broadside titled *Mountain Meadows Massacre: Review of Elder Penrose’s Exculpatory Address Delivered Oct. 26th, 1884, in Twelfth Ward Meeting House*” (iv).

Printing experts may take exception to Bagley’s description of the “four-page broadside” that he reproduces. Although the term “broadside” is sometimes used loosely by the general public, librarians and other bibliophiles define a broadside as a single sheet printed on one side. The item in question might be more precisely described as a pamphlet.

Nor is it clear from Bagley’s introduction why he concludes that the publication appeared “within a week” of Penrose’s lecture. True, Vindex begins his denunciation by explaining that Penrose spoke “on Sunday last” (1), evidence that the writer may have started his analysis within a week of Penrose’s lecture. Yet evidence shows that Vindex’s pamphlet did not appear until two weeks after Penrose spoke. The pamphlet appeared in two forms, one dated, the other not. The date on the first version is “November 8, 1884,” and has the misspelling “Twelth” in the subtitle. The undated version corrects this misspelling and has font idiosyncrasies that match those of the *Salt Lake Tribune*’s publication of Vindex’s analysis on November 9, 1884.

Bagley concludes that Vindex is likely Robert N. Baskin, the prosecuting attorney in Lee’s first trial who “gloried in historian/Apostle Orson Whitney’s charge that he had been ‘the human mainspring of nearly every anti-Mormon movement that Utah has

who, just before the massacre, carried a message from Isaac Haight to Brigham Young, asking what should be done about the emigrants encamped at Mountain Meadows.

known’” (vi). Bagley acknowledges that while “Vindex’s assault on the weakest elements of Penrose’s defense was generally effective . . . the critique was not particularly brilliant” and “a few of Vindex’s stories contradict current knowledge” (v). These “stories” or “tales,” as Bagley describes them, are largely uncorroborated and not attributed. Nevertheless, like the Penrose pamphlet, the Vindex pamphlet is worth examination because it reflects the historiographic milieu of the day.

Reproduction of the Vindex pamphlet also corrects an error in Bagley’s Blood of the Prophets, in which he wrote, “Within a month” of Penrose’s lecture appeared “a broadside by ‘Vindex,’ perhaps William Nelson.”9 Nelson was the U.S. marshal in Utah during Lee’s second trial. Shortly after this trial resulted in Lee’s conviction, Nelson co-signed a letter with prosecuting U.S. district attorney Sumner Howard. They wrote, “It became apparent early in the investigation, that there is no evidence whatever to connect the chief authorities of the Mormon Church with the massacre. . . . Those whose thunder is stolen by this conviction and the fixing of the crime where the evidence pla[c]es it, and who failed in the same prosecution before, are exceeding angry, and are making to the public such misrepresentations as their malice suggests.”10 As Avenging Mountain Meadows correctly points out, Nelson is an unlikely author for the document.

Fielding and Fielding’s The Tribune Reports of the Trials of John D. Lee is a convenient book for anyone who wants to understand the nineteenth-century Salt Lake Tribune’s take on John D. Lee’s trials for participation in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. The Fieldings’ book saves readers the time required to review articles by more laborious means, such as scanning through reels of microfilm or paging through an online database. Individuals interested in intensive research into the massacre should know that, while the volume includes major Tribune articles and many minor ones on Lee, the massacre, and the trials, it is not exhaustive. And although there is a chronological arrangement to the book, it does not always correspond exactly to the order in which articles actually appeared in the Tribune.

Informed readers will understand that nineteenth-century

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newspapers would not meet today’s highest standards for journalistic excellence. The Tribune of the 1870s, as described in the American Journalism Review, “engaged in vitriolic Mormon-bashing, referring to . . . Brigham Young as a ‘Mormon Profit,’ [to Brigham Young Jr. as] ‘Fat Briggy,’” and to Charles Penrose as “‘the bastard in charge of the News.’”

During Lee’s trials, the Tribune was the principal media outlet for “the anti-Mormon ring.”

A complete understanding of the currents in nineteenth-century Utah and the United States generally cannot come from reading the Salt Lake Tribune accounts alone. In addition to the Tribune, a study of articles from such local Mormon-owned newspapers as the Deseret News, the Salt Lake Herald, and the Ogden Junction, along with Associated Press articles and other reports in national newspapers, gives a more comprehensive picture of the Lee trials and the events surrounding them.

Steven Farley’s The Mormon Mountain Meadows Massacre: From the Diary of Captain John I. Ginn is a work of limited usefulness. Readers must first understand that despite the book’s title, the text Farley prints is not Ginn’s diary. Ginn passed through the killing fields at Mountain Meadows eight weeks after the massacre and saw horrific evidence of the carnage. If a contemporaneous diary were available, it would have great value to students of the massacre. Unfortunately, such a diary has never surfaced, and no existing copy of Ginn’s narrative predates the twentieth century.

Readers may be hard-pressed, therefore, to understand exactly what it is that Farley has printed. Intriguingly, the book jacket and the publisher’s advertisement call it a “novel,” and Farley’s explanation “About the Diary of Captain John I. Ginn” (ix–x) is confusing.

The best work on Ginn’s narrative has been done by Utah War expert William P. MacKinnon, who has made preliminary comparisons of the various versions of Ginn’s story that are available at research libraries around the country. MacKinnon concludes that Farley worked in part from “a heavily edited version of the Ginn narrative” that he purchased from a collector-publisher. Serious massacre students who choose to read Farley should first read MacKinnon’s

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article “‘Unquestionably Authentic and Correct in Every Detail’: Probing John I. Ginn and His Remarkable Utah War Story.”

Farley’s publication does not negate the need for an accurate, scholarly edition of Ginn’s narrative. As MacKinnon’s article points out, with “variant Ginn narratives at Yale, Princeton, and LDS Archives, among other repositories, the full bibliographical story of Ginn manuscripts is a complex one that has not yet been analyzed or told.” Absent a definitive published text of Ginn’s story, MacKinnon’s recommendation deserves repetition: “The Ginn text most useful for those wishing to study his narrative is the original typescript in the Yale-Beinecke collections, which is the apparent master for the carbon copies at Yale, LDS Archives, and in Steven E. Farley’s collection.”

Besides textual issues, readers of Ginn accounts must deal with factual errors that may result from memory lapses, bias, and desire for profit and recognition. Again, MacKinnon’s article should be studied for examples of such problems in Ginn’s text. Rather than clarifying these issues, Farley compounds them with a superficial understanding of the massacre and an uncritical acceptance of Ginn’s assertions. For example, Farley writes that Alexander Fancher was “from Ohio,” that only sixteen children were spared in the slaughter, and that Ginn passed through Mountain Meadows “three weeks after the massacre” (xiii–xiv). Farley illustrates his misunderstanding of chronology by perpetuating the story that Jacob Hamblin kept “a company of Texans” (presumably the Turner-Dukes company) from rescuing the doomed emigrants—an impossibility since Hamblin was far north at the time. Farley also errs in suggesting that “as near as can be determined the Texans passed south of Cedar City on the very day the massacre took place at the Mountain Meadows” (xv). In fact, the Turner-Dukes emigrants remained north of Parowan until after the massacre.

Where will Mountain Meadows Massacre historiography go from here? Scholars who, in lieu of rehashing, wish to make genuine contributions to an understanding of the massacre might focus on

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14 Ibid., 331.
15 Ibid., 339 note 34.
large gaps in the current literature. Still lacking are solid, book-length group biographies of the massacre victims and perpetrators. Critical editions are needed of two major sources for telling the story—the existing transcripts of the John D. Lee trials and *Mormonism Unveiled*. Lee’s trials by themselves deserve a major book. Dozens of fine articles could be written about such subjects as the location of events at Mountain Meadows and the wealth of the massacred emigrants. The recipe for reliable works on the massacre should not omit an essential ingredient: original research in primary sources.
REVIEW ESSAY

BIOGRAPHERS AND THE MORMON “PROPHET PUZZLE”: 1974 to 2004

D. Michael Quinn

DURING A GRADUATE SEMINAR at Yale early in 1974, I was asked to recommend a biography of Mormonism’s founding prophet, Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–44). I replied: “There has been only one scholarly biography in the past thirty years, but I don’t like recommending it, because Fawn M. Brodie’s 1945 No Man Knows My History is deeply flawed in its research, in its unrelenting distaste for Joseph Smith, and in its interpretative framework. But she demonstrated his complex personality, identified crucial issues, asked significant questions, gave previously unavailable information, and wrote with stellar prose.”¹ The alternative, I explained, was poorly written biographies of almost no original research by

¹Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith,
authors who presented their beloved prophet as a one-dimen-
sional hero. Of course, every student in the seminar read Brodie
to learn about pre-Utah Mormonism. Although unfortunate, this
was inevitable for non-LDS scholars and general readers.

Several months later, the Journal of Mormon History published
Jan Shipps’s article “The Prophet Puzzle” which addressed the prob-
lem. As a non-LDS scholar, she lamented “the schizophrenic state of
Mormon history, with its double interpretative strand of Joseph
Smith as a man of God and Joseph Smith as a kind of fraud who ex-
ploited his followers for his own purposes.” She challenged her lis-
teners and future readers to research and write biographies that
“might allow us to reconcile enough of the inconsistency to reveal,
not a split personality, but a splendid, gifted—pressured, sometimes
opportunistic, often troubled—yet, for all of that, a larger than life
whole man.”

Donna Hill did not cite “The Prophet Puzzle” in her 1977 Joseph
Smith: The First Mormon, but approached his life as Shipps rec-
mended. For its issue as a paperback, a new publisher accurately ob-
served that “Hill cautiously rejects the simplistic reductionism of ei-
ther/or characterizations in favor of a broader, more humanistic view
that takes Smith on his own terms as both prophet and as man.”

She acknowledged caustic and devotional assessments of the Mormon
prophet, while presenting his life with breadth of research and
even-handed commentary. Despite both sympathetic interpretations
and rigorous candor, she did not seem to be endorsing or attacking
the faith. As a professional author and novelist, her prose matched
Brodie’s. For twenty-five years, Hill’s book was my only recom-
mandation to anyone interested in Smith’s sojourn from birth to death.

The issues of his early life were so complex that in 1984 Richard
L. Bushman began a biographical trend with Joseph Smith and the Be-
ginnings of Mormonism. As a believer and local LDS official, he did
not claim to be without bias, but he brought to Mormon origins his


2Jan Shipps, “The Prophet Puzzle: Suggestions Leading toward a
More Comprehensive Interpretation of Joseph Smith,” Journal of Mormon

3Donna Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon (1977; reprint, Salt Lake

4Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism
skills as an eminent historian of colonial America. In an approach that surprised LDS traditionalists, Bushman argued that statements from hostile witnesses could not be rejected completely. They correlated with evidence from early Mormon believers and helped explain gaps within traditional versions of Smith’s youth and young adulthood. In particular, Bushman affirmed that Smith’s family believed in various forms of folk magic common to early America, and that young Joseph was both a treasure hunter with seer stones and a religious seeker with earnest prayers. In Bushman’s view, the teenager matured into a religious seer and prophet who translated the Book of Mormon with what Smith called the Urim and Thummim.

A footnote showed his conservative revisionism (240–41 note 55). It disputed official LDS views that mid-1829 was the date for angelic restoration of apostolic authority. He did not question the reality of Joseph’s metaphysical encounters and accepted May 1829 as the date for the angelic restoration of Aaronic (or “Lesser”) priesthood by John the Baptist. But Bushman emphasized evidence showing that Smith organized the new church in April 1830 without the “Higher” (Melchizedek) priesthood of the ancient apostles Peter, James, and John, which authority Joseph did not actually receive until three or four months afterward. This was historical revisionism by a devout advocate of “faithful history.”

Absent faith-perspectives, revisionist interpretations characterize three recent books that also emphasize Smith’s activities before 1831. Because these partial-life biographies and four full-life biographies of significance appeared during the seven years before the bicentennial of Joseph Smith Jr.’s birth, this review gives more attention to these seven books.

In 1998 William D. Morain published *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Dissociated Mind.* Although most believers undoubtedly regard his psychoanalytical interpretations as hostile to Smith, Morain (to the contrary) is consistently compassionate toward this religious leader whose “fragile psyche” (56) was emotionally damaged by the combination of dysfunctional parents (20, 26, 31, 38, 41), the trauma “of three obscenely painful operations on the lower extremity of a 7-year-old boy without anesthesia” (xx), and the fact that “the cir-

*(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).*

cumstances of those operations were similar to the age-appropriate oedipal fantasies already lurking in the child’s mind” (12). In addition, the limping boy’s jealousy of his robust, oldest brother turned to guilt when Alvin died (122, 136–37, 141).

But “most of all, Joseph would have feared the amputation knife, that foot-long, sword-like instrument” which “haunted his dreams and daytime fantasies since it had been first (and for a second time) plunged into his leg” (19), especially because “castration appears as a regular part of male childhood fantasies surrounding all surgical operations after the age of three” (37).

The introduction admits once that “it is possible that he was who he said he was” (2), a human called by God to be a prophet. However, Morain seriously considers only variations of his psychoanalytic thesis that Smith “created a unique religious cosmology out of his own personal agonies” (xxv), a phrase indicating both the reductionism and compassion of this book.

Therefore, rather than an aspect of early American culture, Smith’s “crystal gazing is seen frequently among individuals who carry dissociated memories of past trauma” which “can often induce a hypnotic state . . . with visual hallucinations” (48). And “Joseph’s fantasy of the treasure search was a symbol of sexual consummation and conception” (143). Rather than being persecuted and assaulted for his unusual beliefs, Smith “seems to have developed a genius for getting himself attacked by all-male mobs in reenactment of the original trauma, perhaps creating new chances to master the earlier event” (38). Above all, Smith’s “horrible trauma in childhood was a driving force in the personality that created The Book of Mormon” (116).

“A clear example of . . . father-love alongside father-hatred—is the story of [Nephi using a sword to behead] Laban, perhaps the best known and best developed subplot of The Book of Mormon” (92). Because “a decapitation fantasy is usually a representation of castration” (66–67), “what its author has done is a characteristic example of ‘splitting,’ a primitive defense mechanism commonly used by traumatized children. Joseph’s ambivalence toward his father has been expressed in the literary device of dividing his father into two separate characters [righteous father Lehi and evil kinsman Laban], both of whose names begin with the letter ‘L’” (93). Thus, he can “protect the beloved father and kill only the loathsome part” (95).

Book of Mormon atonement passages are about Joseph, not Jesus. “Paradoxically, the sin can be removed only by cleansing in the
blood of Christ. Joseph, in a pattern characteristic of childhood trauma, seems to have taken the horrifying childhood specter of being covered in his own blood and split it into two opposing parts—one good and one evil—not unlike his splitting of Lehi and Laban” (108). According to Morain, “At some level of his psyche he [Smith] knew all too well about the crucifixion” (100).

Instead of the Book of Mormon simply mirroring anti-Masonic rhetoric of the 1820s: “If Joseph at the age of seven did regard the doctors as being involved in some form of secret conspiracy, then the rumors about the Masons in his young adult life would have fallen on fertile soil” (110). The record’s “dismemberment-filled passages suggest [an] origin within a dissociative trance of their author” (118). Therefore, the Book of Mormon “is ‘valid,’ however, as one person’s metaphorical expression of the themes of guilt, punishment, redemption, grief, and the ambivalent relationship of man to ‘father’ and ‘brother’” (126).

In sum, Morain does not regard Smith as a deceiver or charlatan, because “a sense of clairvoyance is a frequent delusion of the posttraumatic mindset” (115) and “because the mind deceives itself far more often than it deceives others” (145). Thus, “there was no ‘deception.’ The dissociated part of Joseph’s mind played it out in the way it could best ease his pain and guilt” (146). “Joseph retreats wholly into the split-off world of his mind, able to induce a self-hypnotic trance that separates him completely from the pain of reality” (172); and in the ordinances and rituals of his church, “Joseph repeatedly acted out his conflicts through ritual in a driven effort to expunge his lingering pain” (216). Throughout Morain’s narrative, the young man remains a tragic figure.

In 1999 psychiatrist Robert D. Anderson published Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon. If Morain was overtly compassionate, Anderson barely conceals his hostility toward Smith, whom he describes as “less than morally satisfactory” (xxv). Thus, Anderson writes that an earlier biography, written by “a Lutheran minister, takes what I consider to be an overly charitable position toward Joseph Smith” (217). This unacceptable charity was Reverend Robert N. Hullinger’s interpretation of “Smith as working toward an honorable goal, even if his methods were questionable”

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Instead, “coercion, manipulation, and misrepresentation” are Anderson’s mantra for assessing the Mormon prophet (xv, xxiv, xxvi, 84, 129, 138, 151, 172, 213, 238). “In the case of Joseph Smith, the theme of deceiving self and others is not a thread, but a steel cable” (230).

Anderson limits empathy to two successive pages. First, “almost certainly our human reaction is pity and horror as this young, already suffering child is subjected to such a torturous procedure” (27). Then on the following page: “From a psychoanalytic perspective, a boy in these circumstances simply cannot handle the complexities of the Oedipal triangle and nightmare fears which have now become reality. He regresses backward to the defenses of infancy. I argue that Joseph used the Book of Mormon as a narrative stage on which he obsessively replayed his surgery in various forms” (28; see also 23, 43, 45–46, 102–3, 135, 182, 210). Rather than an ancient text, it is “a repetitive tale of wish fulfillment” (52) and “Joseph Smith’s disguised autobiography” (53; see also xxxviii, 15, 44, 65, 108).

Yet Anderson sees a malignant personality in the writer’s “changing a hard-working brother (Alvin) into an unbelieving reprobate, hostile and defiant (Laman)” and “changing a decent, caring human being—his surgeon—into a drunken thieving murderer,” Laban (45). Also, “in Smith’s later life, when decent men attempt to accomplish tasks which threaten Joseph Smith, he likewise defines them as evil and attacks [them]” (47). In fact, common decency is something Anderson is unwilling to ascribe to Smith who “waged—and lost—his battle for decent civilized behavior” while dictating the translation in 1829 (204), because “through the Nephite people, [he portrayed] the triumph of unethical forces in his personality” (199).

Anderson’s hostility is so intense that he states: “As a psychiatrist, I have professional skepticism about the genuineness of Joseph’s concern for Emma” when she nearly died after the stillbirth of their first child (90). To Anderson, the Prophet had no redeeming qualities: “Smith erects a message of goodness on top of coercion, deceit, destruction, and hatred. I, no doubt like many readers, see the goodness as superficial” (213). Indeed, “we are left to wonder how much Smith genuinely cared about others or was capable of love” (168 note 46).

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7 Compare Robert N. Hullinger, Mormon Answer to Skepticism: Why Joseph Smith Wrote the Book of Mormon (St. Louis, Mo.: Clayton Publishing House, 1980).
What “began as a fantasy in Smith’s mind . . . increasingly became a psychological reality to him” (72), indicative of “the ability of the impostor to believe his fantasy (pseudologica fantastica)” (217). Even this is too charitable. Although he spends nearly the entire book explaining how Smith fits all the characteristics of “narcissistic personality disorder” (xxxvii) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, this is not pejorative enough. Anderson additionally invokes “the unofficial subclassification of ‘phallic narcissist’” (224), adding that “the unofficial term is ‘malignant narcissism’” (230). Ultimately, his concluding chapter declares that Smith actually does not fit “the pure narcissistic personality” because his lifetime of dishonesty and illegal acts shows that (at best) he only temporarily “believed his own fantasies” (232).

Psychiatric categories are insufficient to express the biographer’s revulsion, so he falls back on a timeworn assessment of Joseph Smith: “The Impostor” who projects “a false, grandiose self on others, demanding their regard and consideration for qualities and/or achievements that he does not, in fact, possess” (232). Anderson ignores his own caution about the temptation for “a psychohistorian to become reductionistic” (xxxii).

In 2004 Dan Vogel published Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet. At 715 pages, it equals the combined length of any three of the other six books, meriting more attention here.

Vogel has a “sympathetic” answer (xxi) for “the Prophet Puzzle” of thirty years earlier: “The most obvious solution to Shipp’s conundrum is to suggest that Smith was a well-intentioned ‘pious deceiver’ or, perhaps otherwise worded, a ‘sincere fraud,’ someone who prevaricated for ‘good’ reasons.” Acknowledging that Hullinger made a similar argument in 1980, he continues: “I believe that Smith believed he was called of God, yet occasionally engaged in fraudulent activities in order to preach God’s word as effectively as possible” (viii). “During

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8Dan Vogel, Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004). I had discussed with Dan various disagreements with his views and approaches, but I felt uncomfortable publicizing so many criticisms of a magnum opus by my close friend of twenty years. Although no one likes to be criticized, he read a longer version of this section in May 2005 and encouraged me to express publicly my critique in the interest of academic discourse. In that spirit, I have been equally candid in these critiques of biographers with whom I am not personally acquainted.
his early career as a treasure seer, he was a charlatan but came to believe that he was, in fact, called of God and thereafter occasionally used deceit to bolster his religious message” (xiv–xv).

While Hullinger could distinguish true ancient prophets from a false modern one, Vogel cannot: “I do not claim that the supernatural does not exist, for it is impossible to prove a negative. I maintain only that the evidence upon which such claims rest is unconvincing to me” (xii).

He echoes Anderson’s preface: “This position does not deny the possibility that God could exist and could/would intervene; it simply insists that, given the assumptions of science and history, miracles have not been established as fact and cannot be used as automatic explanations for events. One can acknowledge that the scientist or historian—or anyone, for that matter—may miss vital elements by refusing to acknowledge the spiritual.”9 This position is fair enough as a modus operandi, when naturalistic authors admit this limitation invites vital omissions (and logically, possible distortions) in writing about religious people who profess interactions with the metaphysical. Morain simply observes that divine actuality is “a possibility” he does not examine.10

However, Vogel goes far beyond the modest announcement of practical agnosticism. In the main text and source-notes, he attacks every suggestion of metaphysical reality (528): shamanism throughout the world (xii-xiii, 569 note 1), arguments for “intelligent design” in biological evolution (630 note 3), “remote viewing” (70, 592 note 13) which has been used by both the military and the CIA, “the feeling of burning in the bosom” (173, 617 note 19), and the nearly metaphysical dimensions of quantum mechanics (570 note 39). Not satisfied with “proving” Joseph Smith a fraud, Vogel insists that every metaphysical assertion is either delusional or fraudulent. He explains it this way: “As a teenager I dabbled in stage magic and sleight-of-hand tricks, but my attention soon turned to charlatans and confidence men who use similar methods” (xii). But focusing single-mindedly on “the methods of the charlatan” (xvi) can lead to tunnel-vision.11

Vogel asserts that in devoting 335 pages (pp. 130–465) to examining the Book of Mormon as “partly autobiographical” of “Smith’s

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11 For example, two fraud-exposers dismissed global warming as
life” (xix), “this is not to say that I am trying to determine its modernity or antiquity” (xviii). That disclaimer seems oddly disingenuous in view of “a difficulty Smith sometimes encountered in inventing new names” (119), his assertion that “Joseph had yet to invent Nephi’s second set of plates” (613 note 13), and the alleged “fact that the Book of Mormon narrative was not a literal history from an authentic artifact” (206). Also puzzling is his statement: “I have not wanted to judge him” (xxi), after Vogel describes Smith as a “pious fraud” who made “a conscious decision to deceive” through “nefarious means” (x, xii).

That said, Vogel’s view is far more nuanced than Anderson’s. He refers with compassion to “the saint that Joseph wanted to be and the man he was” (417) and, in phrases that could be the loving tribute by a devout believer, declares: “He believed in his work, believed that his own salvation depended on his success, and was prepared to do whatever he had to. Whatever his fate, he would face it as bravely as he had faced the surgeon’s knife” (181). Here Vogel approaches Mor-ain’s empathy.

Still, the book is perplexing. Vogel writes that “Joseph had not been concerned about which church was true in 1818” (60), but on the next page observes: “At age twelve [as of December 23, 1817], he had concluded that members of the various sects ‘did not adorn their profession by a holy walk and godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository’ [of the Bible]” (61). Denying literal reality in the testimony by the Eight Witnesses about the Book of Mormon’s gold plates, Vogel quotes an account which reports that Hyrum Smith privately testified that he “handled them with his hands,” which Vogel paradoxically states is “not unlike” seeing the plates “in vision” (672–73 note 5).

He regards Smith’s account of religious revivals “in the spring of 1820” as “anachronistic” (30), maintaining that “his quest for the true church began in 1824–25, not in 1820” (60). Nowhere does Vogel admit that Palmyra’s weekly newspaper reported on June 28, 1820 a Methodist “camp-meeting which was held in this vicinity.”

This omission is extraordinary because he repeatedly affirms fraudulent myth. See Penn and Teller, “Environmental Hysteria,” Episode 13 (April 18, 2003), Showtime Channel series, Bulls*t: The First Season, available on DVD.

12“Effects of Drunkenness,” Palmyra [New York] Register, June 28, 1820. In an early-life biography of this length, it is not sufficient to assume
that Methodism was the only denomination for which Smith showed any interest (59, 127–29, 505). Local almanacs specified that spring did not end until June 21st, and a “camp-meeting” was not simply where local congregants met outdoors for lack of a chapel.

From 1806 to 1818 New York publications gave detailed reports of Methodist “camp-meetings” throughout the state. Revivalists slept in tents and wagons at the “encampment” for days at a time because they followed preachers from one town to another.13 Since Wesleyan Methodists coined the term, this was the only “camp-meeting” known to the newspaper editor who wrote about Palmyra’s Methodist revival of June 1820.

The fact of this revival was published and emphasized in 1969 by Richard Lloyd Anderson, in 1969 and 1980 by Milton V. Backman, in 1991 by Walter A. Norton, in 1994 by Richard L. Bushman, by me in 1998, and in 2003 by Davis Bitton—all to no avail with various authors, including Vogel.14 Despite this emphatic evidence of June 1820, Anderson also insisted: “No known revival occurred in Palmyra

(as Vogel apparently does in his source-notes for pp. 30, 58–60) that its readers have already consulted his discussions of the problems with dating Smith’s pre-vision revival as 1820, which appeared in Dan Vogel, ed., Early Mormon Documents, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 1:58 note 19, 288 note 87, 306 note 103. Even his voluminous collection did not acknowledge the existence of this article nor of the follow-up discussion of this “camp-meeting” in the Palmyra Register on July 5, 1820. He did not include any quotations from this newspaper in the thirty-four-page section on “Palmyra Newspapers” of importance to “Mormon Origins in Palmyra and Manchester, New York,” in Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 2:v–vi, 217–40.

13Francis Ward, An Account of Three Camp Meetings, Held by the Methodists, at Sharon, in Litchfield County, Connecticut; at Rhineback, in Dutchess County [New York State] and at Petersburgh, in Rensselaer County, New York State (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Robinson and Little, 1806); “A Short Account of a Camp-Meeting Held at Cow-Harbor, Long Island, Which Commenced August 11th, 1818,” Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review 1 (September 1818): 356–60.

between 1818 and 1823,” repeating: “no revivals in or around Palmyra [—] 1820.”\textsuperscript{15}

Vogel also does not concede the existence of crucial accounts by Smith’s earliest associates outside his family. First, he is unwilling to admit the evidence that Joseph was a treasure seer with a seer stone as early as 1819–20, which requires him to ignore or dispute the testimony of Smith’s neighbors. Second, he is unwilling to accept the evidence that Joseph was active in the treasure quest along the Susquehanna River in 1821–24, which requires him to ignore or dispute the narratives by Russell C. Doud and William R. Hine that they worked with Smith in the treasure quest near the Susquehanna River as early as 1821 for an employer who died in May 1824. In a book that Vogel’s biography cites nineteen times, I criticized his earlier publications for rejecting those eyewitness declarations and for changing their chronology.\textsuperscript{16}

Third, when quoting the statement of Doud (whom Vogel identifies as a resident of Windsor, New York) that “in 1822 he was employed, with thirteen others, by Oliver Harper, to dig for gold under Joe’s directions (though the latter was not present at the time) on Joseph McKune’s land [in Harmony, Pennsylvania]: and that Joe had


begun operations the year previous,” Vogel deletes the references to Smith from the middle and end of the quotation. Even though he admits that Harper “was a major contributor to the Stowell-Hale company” of treasurer seekers (72), Vogel omits Doud from his otherwise exhaustive index and omits this page from his index citations for “McKune,” for “Hale,” for “Harmony (PA),” for “Smith, activities, Harmony (PA),” for “Stowell,” and for “Susquehanna River” (593 note 24; cf. 702, 705, 709, 714). The page for his heavily edited quotation is included in the index for “Harper” and “Windsor” (702, 715).

There is a reason for his refusal to accept statements by non-Mormon witnesses about Joseph’s metaphysical quests around 1820. It is the domino effect of Vogel’s refusal to admit that there was even one religious revival near Palmyra close to the spring of 1820, as Smith later claimed. To acknowledge that he was making metaphysical claims as early as 1819–21 (even in the treasure quest) would give too much support for the truthfulness of visionary claims later made by someone Vogel regards as a “pious fraud” from adolescence throughout adulthood (x). Thus, his entrenched interpretation overrides all evidence (from whatever source) that might lead to a contrary conclusion.

In referring to Bushman’s discussion of the Melchizedek Priesthood not being restored until after the new church’s organization—specifically not until the summer of 1830 (519–20), Vogel does not cite the Deseret Almanac of 1852: “JOSEPH SMITH [was] ordained to the Melchisedek [sic] priesthood by Peter, James, and John, (for John is not yet dead) [in] 1830.” Six years before Vogel’s biography, I published this quotation and indexed it four times in the book Vogel cites nineteen times.

These three partial-life biographies emphasize many of the same issues from similar assumptions. Morain does so with the great-

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17 Quoted in Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (2d ed.), 49, which Vogel’s biography cites nineteen times.

18 William W. Phelps, *Deseret Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord, 1852* (Salt Lake City: W. Richards, n.d.), 38. An early convert, Phelps lived at Canandaigua, New York, nine miles from the Smith family’s home. He was among the few admitted by the Prophet to the “Anointed Quorum” of endowed persons in 1843 and to the theocratic Council of Fifty in 1844.

19 Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (2d ed.), 558 note
est compassion, Anderson with expertise in psychoanalytic theory, and Vogel at almost twice their combined length and with massive referencing to historical sources.

Some might regard their greatest contribution to be the textual analysis of the Book of Mormon as Smith’s “disguised” or subliminal autobiography, particularly the 335 pages Vogel devotes to it. Personally, I think it is religiously and intellectually consistent to expect evidences of the world view, experiences, and culture of a non-academic translator-reviser to be reflected in his wording of translated-revised documents.

The greatest contribution of these three writers is their two-fold exploration of the Smith family’s dynamics and the emotional effects of extreme childhood trauma followed by lifelong limping. Neither factor was given adequate emphasis by previous biographers, many of whom implicitly deny that godly people can struggle with depression, ambivalence, anger, jealousy, boasting, pettiness, or feelings of inferiority. In fact, the breadth and depth in Vogel’s analysis of “family-systems” (xx) for Smith’s development are why The Making of a Prophet deservedly won the Mormon History Association’s best-book award. (See 53–86, 131–40, 145, 177–78, 225–28, 256, 326–27, 349–50, 373–75, 409–10, 452–53, 491.)

Nevertheless, the greatest weakness of the partial-life biographies by Morain, Anderson, and Vogel is their dismissal or exclusion of metaphysical reality from the life of all visionaries. Such exclusion requires the tautology that any claim for metaphysical experience can only be delusional or fraudulent. This closed system of logic for anti-metaphysics has no inherent superiority over the “closed system and insula tion against contrary evidence” which Vogel derides as “the norm for religious movements” (239).

Moreover, Anderson inadvertently identifies a problem with his own “naturalistic” assumptions. His introduction observes: “Attempting to blend the supernatural with the natural leads to a large, poorly defined gray area,” which he refuses to accept. Yet when psychiatric theories seem contradictory, he advises readers to “be willing to face...
Unwillingness to accept ambiguity and gray areas, the denial of unresolved inconsistencies, the concealment of uncomfortable evidence, the imposition of approved dogma, and the ridicule of dissent are also characteristics in those who deny the existence of the metaphysical. Religion has no monopoly on dogmatism.

Now for consideration of four biographies published between 1999 and 2004. While covering the Prophet’s full life, each has fewer pages than any of the partial-life biographies already discussed.

The first and last two are large-format with lavish photos, and the latter credit photographers as co-authors. Because this essay emphasizes text, this discussion mentions only the text authors of each.

In 1999 Deseret Book Company (through its subsidiary Shadow Mountain) published as close to an official biography as the LDS leadership had allowed for fifty years. Despite the *pro forma* copyright-page disclaimer that it does “not necessarily reflect the position of Shadow Mountain,” there is no similar disclaimer regarding “the Church.” Therefore, because of its corresponding input from LDS headquarters, Heidi S. Swinton’s *American Prophet* has the appearance of being even more official than the book Apostle John A. Widtsoe published in response to Brodie.

Swinton’s biography has statements specially prepared by LDS President Gordon B. Hinckley, by Apostles Dallin H. Oaks and M. Russell Ballard, and by Relief Society General President Elaine Jack. Nine non-LDS scholars also give specially prepared texts. Of the extensive citations to post-1965 scholarship, all but five authors had published with Deseret Book or were members of the LDS Historical Department, Brigham Young University’s College of Religious Education, its Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, its History Department, and/or its library.

Due to the semi-official format, Swinton’s *American Prophet* is extraordinary for including critical observations. It quotes those who cheered the death of a man they called a “blasphemous wretch” and “money digger” (18). “Do I personally believe?” queries Robert Remini (University of Illinois at Chicago) in a sidebar: “No. He may have be-

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lieved that he did. But whether he saw [God and Jesus], I have no evidence for that” (46). “It’s a very American tradition and a very American book,” (62) observes Richard T. Hughes (Pepperdine University), who is subtly summarizing the “naturalistic” view of the Book of Mormon. “I would as soon compare a bat to the American eagle,” said Reverend Alexander Campbell of the 1830 translation in relation to the Bible (65). Nathan Hatch (University of Notre Dame) states: “I would not paint Joseph Smith in pastel colors. He was a radical preacher of extreme ideas, very powerful ideas, which had tremendous appeal [—] particularly for those who were on the margins of society. But they were extreme ideas” (84). In 1831 dissenter Ezra Booth publicly questioned Smith’s “prudence and stability” (92). Martin E. Marty (University of Chicago) asserts: “Had I been on the same hill, I wouldn’t have seen what he saw” (96). A woman at Nauvoo wrote: “One needs a throat like an open sepulchre to swallow down all that is taught here” (142).

This quasi-official biography affirms Smith’s “search for Spanish treasure” (48). Also, Mormons brought persecution on themselves in 1830s Missouri because “they embodied a threat to the existing economic, social, and political forces” (83) through “buying from one another, voting together as a block [sic], and not integrating into the community” (102). “The Nauvoo Legion provided a sense of security to the [LDS] citizens, but it was viewed as a threat by the rest of Illinois” (125). Joseph Smith “was the mayor, lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion, a trustee for the University of Nauvoo, a subscriber to the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Association, and publisher of a [semi-]monthly newspaper, Times and Seasons. He was also the chief justice” (126), and “in 1844 he announced his candidacy for the presidency of the United States” (147). Therefore, “Nauvoo also drew resistance from its neighbors over its curious role as almost a city-state” which newspapers called “a great military despotism” (144). The biography refers to “the new Masonic Lodge of which Joseph was a member” (132). Also, “Joseph introduced a few trusted friends to the added concept of a plurality of wives as practiced by Abraham and ancient prophets” (140), with this full page discussing “polygamy.”

Some things are partly concealed. Stating that “treasure seekers tried to make a case that they had rights to the [gold] plates” (54) only implies that Smith previously worked with them in the treasure quest. “The doctrines Joseph preached were revolutionary for the day” (142), but the book mutes to near unrecognizability his teachings that God was once human and that humans can become gods. These are
reduced to a cryptic phrase that only the well-informed can decipher: “Joseph addressed the character of God, the origin and destiny of man” (143).

Other topics are completely missing. The Danites are absent from the 1838 “Mormon War” in Missouri (106–7). The discussion of Smith’s 1844 arrest for destroying the anti-Mormon newspaper in Nauvoo makes no mention that he fled the city to escape (150).

Published in 2002 for the “Penguin Lives” series, Robert V. Remini’s Joseph Smith is a remarkable achievement in its 190 pages. An award-winning biographer, Remini is a renowned scholar of the United States in the early nineteenth century. He avoids skepticism: “After considerable thought I decided to present his religious experiences just as he described them in his writings and let readers decide for themselves to what extent they would give credence to them” (x). His preface ends: “Joseph Smith Jr. deserves a respectful hearing” (xiii).

He gives primary attention to narratives by the faithful, with only occasional nods toward skeptical perspectives. Controversial topics like the treasure quest, apostasies, financial failures, violence, plural marriage, and theocracy emerge without sensationalism. Some might wince at this realistic assessment of Smith’s youth: “After all he was a teenager and, like all his peers, he had to contend with raging hormones and the torment of puberty” (45); still, they can also read such positive assessments as: “Joseph himself was a man of compelling charisma, charm, and persuasiveness, a man absolutely convinced that his religious authority came directly from God” (87).

Writing for general readers, Remini (better than any previous biographer) deftly interweaves Smith’s experience with the rambunctious national culture. Fair to the faith, this book is an ideal starting point for nonbelievers who are interested in Mormon origins, but not enough to want footnotes or a long book.

Matthew B. Brown’s 2004 Joseph Smith: The Man, the Mission, the Message is an interesting example of how one LDS publishing house approaches its faithful readers. It is surprising that his bibliography and source-notes omit any citation to the favorable biographies by

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22 Robert V. Remini, Joseph Smith (New York: Lipper/Viking/Penguin, 2002). It has no footnotes or endnotes, but has a brief essay on sources.

23 Matthew B. Brown, with photographs by Val W. Brinkerhoff, Joseph Smith: The Man, the Mission, the Message (American Fork, Utah: Covenant
Hill in 1977 and Bushman in 1984. Aimed at devout Mormons, the book seems puzzling for its corresponding citations to hostile nineteenth-century books by Thomas Ford, Thomas Gregg, John D. Lee, Pomeroy Tucker, and Orsamus Turner. Brown’s main text is a very interesting mix of candor and concealment.

Quoting contemporaries, he gives unflattering descriptions of the Prophet’s “prominent” nose, “massive” mouth, “whistling” speech, “stooped” shoulders, “quite small” hands, “massive” feet, limping walk, and “corpulency” (13–14), plus observations that his speech was “awkward,” “stuttering,” and stammering (18).

In the chapter about “The Prophet’s Character,” the first subheading is “Imperfect,” with the introductory statement that Joseph “was an admirable man who was nevertheless thoroughly human” (21). Among Smith’s admirable qualities were that he “assisted in the care of his children” (24), did housework (25), expressed humility, and had family prayers three times daily (27). The chapter also gives space to the occasion when the Prophet kicked Josiah Butterfield (a General Authority Seventy) in the seat of the pants and threw him out of the house (25–26). After a quotation that he was a “tender and affectionate husband,” the same page describes how Smith insisted on wrestling with a man seventy pounds lighter and broke the man’s leg by accident (31).

Rather than trying to diminish Smith’s heterodoxy, Brown refers to his teachings that God was once human and that humans can become gods (55). Among the disclosures is that “Joseph Smith was ordained as king of the Council of Fifty” which he had organized for theocratic government (57), at the same time the Prophet was candidate for the U.S. presidency (68–69).

With such candor, it is obvious what the author-publisher regards as forbidden. There is no mention of treasure quests, Danites, nor polygamist wives. However, perhaps slyly, Brown quotes three of them, Eliza R. Snow, Emily Partridge Young, and Zina [Huntington Jacobs] Young (13, 15, 27, 50).

Swinton’s and Brown’s books give an important context for Susan Easton Black’s large-format *Joseph Smith: Praise to the Man*, pub-
lished by another LDS press in 2004. She is a "professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University."

Professor Black’s omission of sources is stunning. With citations to more than twenty authors publishing after 1930, there is no reference to Hill, Bushman, or Remini, although she cites five works that can be considered biographical of Joseph Smith—a slender book by Edwin F. Parry in 1934, one each by BYU religion professors Hyrum L. Andrus and Ivan J. Barrett (a generation earlier than her faculty appointment), plus her own biographical collections of 1993 and 1998. Truly mystifying in a work aimed at devout believers, there is no acknowledgement of the devotional biographies by First Presidency counselor George Q. Cannon and Widtsoe. John Henry Evans is worth noting as the author of the first laudatory Mormon biography issued by a major New York publisher.

Controversial topics omitted by Black exceed the semi-official biography in 1999 and Brown’s devotional work published the same year as hers. There is no reference to treasure quests, Joseph’s leading a military expedition, “Zion’s Camp,” to Missouri from Ohio in 1834, the Missouri Danites of 1838, nor the theocratic Council of Fifty. She admits: “The Prophet made an attempt to escape the martyr’s fate” (94), but not that he fired a six-shot pistol at the Carthage mob.

However, Black accompanies silence about plural marriage with a nod and a wink for knowing readers. The nod goes to Smith’s wives with prominent sidebar-quotations: Zina Jacobs and Eliza R. Snow (88, 96). The wink is reserved for this quotation from Mary Elizabeth Rollins, who was living with her husband, Adam Lightner, when she became the Prophet’s polyandrous wife: “I could not take my eyes off him” (39).

_Praise to the Man_ is a glowing summary of Joseph Smith’s life. However, even the most appreciative readers might question the absence of anti-Mormon mobbings in Missouri during 1833, publication of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, baptism for the dead, the

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endowment ceremony, sealing of marriages for time and eternity, and his role as mayor and U.S. presidential candidate.

In sum, what changed or remained the same in the thirty years after Jan Shipps issued her challenge in 1974? What are the ramifications of these seven biographies published with an eye toward the two-hundredth anniversary of the Prophet’s birth?

There has been progress toward integrating the “two Josephs,” especially on the devotional side as indicated by Swinton’s quasi-official 1999 biography and Brown’s candidly devotional biography in 2004. Yet contradictions persist: the semi-official biography discussed topics that the privately published biography withheld from the devout, and vice-versa.

The BYU religion professor was also far less willing to report secondary scholarship or to acknowledge controversies in Smith’s life than the biographer with LDS headquarters input. This parallels Catholic Church experience in which religion professors of its colleges and universities have often been more conservative than the pope and more hesitant than faithful Catholic academics outside Vatican-controlled institutions.

The devotional LDS press is still not fully comfortable with the candor Hill demonstrated in 1977 and Bushman in 1984. But historiographic change is discernible at LDS headquarters, in the Mormon culture region, and in BYU’s Religious Education.

On the scholarly, non-devotional side, an odd divergence has occurred. Scholars without a Mormon background (like Remini) are writing and talking about Smith in the way Shipps recommended concerning the prophet-fraud dichotomy. Others (often of Restoration background, like Morain and Vogel) are finding sophisticated ways to present him as a sympathetic fraud. Still others (like Anderson, also of Mormon background) present Smith as a vicious fraud unworthy of devotion, respect, or even sympathy. So the picture is very mixed.

Nevertheless, aside from polemical works (pro and con), one’s religious affiliation and belief seem to be less important for scholars and popular authors who approach Joseph Smith and early Mormon history. To biographers-in-waiting, I recommend:

Write comprehensively and sympathetically about a man who was a youthful mystic, a treasure seeker and seer, a visionary who spoke modern revelations and communicated ancient ones anew, a loving husband who deceived his wife regarding polygamous proposals, marriages, and cohabitations, a man for whom friendship and loy-
alty meant everything but who provoked disaffection by “testing” the loyalty of his devoted associates, an anti-Mason who became a Master Mason, a Church president who physically assaulted both Mormons and non-Mormons for insulting him, a devoted father who loved to care for his children and those of others, a temperance leader and a social drinker, a Bible revisionist and esoteric philosopher, a pacifist and a commander-in-chief, a student of Hebrew and Egyptology, an indigent and a bank president, a friend of American Indians and the occupier of lands he regarded as rightfully theirs, a jail escapee, a healer, a city planner and land speculator, a mayor, a judge and a fugitive from justice, an absolute heterosexual who enjoyed snuggling in bed with male friends, a guarantor of religious freedom but a limiter of freedom of speech and press, a preacher and a street-wrestler, a polygamist and an advocate of women’s rights, a husband of other men’s wives, a declared bankrupt who was the trustee-in-trust of Church finances, a political horse-trader and U.S. presidential candidate, an abolitionist who authorized the ordination of already-free African Americans but respected the rights of slave-owners, a theocratic king, an inciter to riot, an unwilling martyr.

We have such a man in “Brother Joseph.” Give us a biography to match him!

28When the Prophet retired in Carthage Jail for his last night on earth (June 26–27, 1844), faithful Mormon Dan Jones wrote that he “lay himself by my side in a close embrace” (i.e., spoon-fashion). Joseph’s final night echoed his 1843 sermon on the resurrection, which his diary recorded as “two who were very friends indeed should lie down upon the same bed at night locked in each other[’s] embrace talking of their love & should awake in the morning together.” Likewise, he used common experiences as analogies for salvation and spiritual growth. Similar to most Americans of the nineteenth century, this was a sleeping pattern Joseph had followed with male friends since childhood. Early in 1826, the twenty-year-old bachelor boarded with the Knight family, whose eighteen-year-old son and Mormon convert later wrote: “Joseph and I worked together and slept together.” For context and sources, see D. Michael Quinn, Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 87, 99.

Reviewed by H. Nicholas Muller III

With *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, Richard Lyman Bushman has set a new standard for biographical and related scholarly work concerning Joseph Smith and the creation and early years of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It may provoke some debate on doctrinal matters and details concerning Smith’s life, but only the discovery of large caches of new documents or a significant change in scholarly fashion would consign this work to the back shelves. Smith, who ranks among the most influential of all nineteenth-century Americans, merits the scholarly attention.

A recognized historian, Bushman demonstrates a firm grasp of the extensive and growing available documentation and historiography concerning Smith and the formative years of the Church. Commendably, he explores many of the sources and writing within the body of his narrative rather than burying them in the extensive endnotes. This technique helps establish a context for many of his conclusions, and it should also forestall doctrinal and scholarly quibbles. Bushman provides an exhaustive account and analysis of the theological and ecclesiastical development of the Church beginning with Smith’s first vision of the Father and Son around 1820, the angel’s revelation in 1823 of the golden plates that contained the Book of Mormon, and their translation and subsequent publication. He details and documents the founding and the evolving organization of the Church and Smith’s theology, temple and city building, plural marriage, the internal rifts, and the constant persecution that dogged Smith and his followers until his violent death in 1844.

Bushman also presents a detailed portrait of Joseph Smith Jr. as a com-
plex, contradictory man who, a few weeks before his death, told his followers that they never knew his heart and that no man knew his history. He describes a man at once hierarchical and controlling, yet democratic; ignorant of institutions, but a brilliant intuitive organizer and administrator; easily angered, yet quick to forgive; a communitarian, and a capitalist; a pacifist who enjoyed parading with his legions in his resplendent military uniform; and a devoted husband who practiced plural marriage.

A practicing Mormon, Bushman also clearly knows the “central difficulty” in adding to the large body of work on Smith and the creation of the Church. “Joseph Smith lives on in the faith of the Mormons . . . who have built their lives on his teachings.” They “want to shield their prophet’s reputation.” In contrast, those “who have broken away from Mormonism” have a need “to justify their decision,” while others suspicious about or hostile to organized religion find “Joseph Smith a perfect target.” As “a believing historian,” Bushman admits he cannot “hope to rise above these battles or pretend nothing personal is at stake” (xix). He does neither, though the scholarship evident in *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* promises to improve the tone and level of that particular debate.

Bushman openly discusses “a rhetorical problem” that “vexes anyone who writes about the thought of Joseph Smith.” Did the continuing stream of revelations on matters large and small “come from Joseph Smith’s mind” or from God? Bushman maintains that they came from God and, consequently, that “we have to think of Smith as the early Mormons thought of him and as he thought of himself—as a relevator” (xxi). In dealing with the controversy of plural marriage, Bushman asks, “Was he a blackguard covering his lusts with religious pretensions, or a prophet doggedly adhering to instructions from heaven, or something in between?” (323) Bushman accepts the validity of the revelations, which for a biographer, especially a historian whose previous publications on American cultural history have earned him distinction, renders the questions and their answers much more than rhetorical. The matter of the revelations constitute obstacles along the very difficult path he chose to walk, one leading toward historicism.

In *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), Bushman demonstrated in a bravura performance his prodigious and nuanced command of the elements that define American cultural life, including the fine and decorative arts, wardrobes, furnishings and accessories, architecture, town planning, landscape architecture, and prescribed ideals in manners and etiquette, posture and speech. He successfully argued that a widely shared ethic of gentility and the quest to achieve a recognized standard of excellence in style and taste provided a unifying centripetal force on American society, especially when it moved beyond colonial elites and permeated the middle class in the years following the Revolu-
tion and through the first half of the nineteenth century.

Bushman largely abandons cultural context in *Rough Stone Rolling*. The dust jacket includes the label, under the title and image of Smith, “A Cultural Biography of Mormonism’s Founder.” Bushman may not have written nor approved this subtitle; the book does not fulfill it. Bushman pays too little attention to the energies of Jacksonian democracy in which Smith and his church developed and that Smith’s vision, life work, and communitarian teaching critiqued. He does not treat the temperance movement, race, the “cult of true womanhood” (an interesting prism through which to view the very important role of Smith’s wife Emma), or the trappings of material culture.

Smith and his family did not remain aloof from the larger social currents that swirled around them. His indomitable mother, Lucy Mack Smith, felt the force of refinement as an ideal. Bushman quotes her description of her distress shortly after her move to Palmyra, New York, over an observation “some wealthy merchant’s wives and the minister’s lady” made at tea that she deserved better than living in a log house. She defended herself, pretending “indifference,” but as Bushman notes, the remarks “stung,” and “the next entry in her account described plans to build a new frame house” (35).

Bushman treats the same incident much differently in *The Refinement of America*. Here the “well-meaning” remark stirred Lucy Mack Smith’s wrath, and she “turned on the women in a fury.” Soon “the Smiths constructed a frame house with a parlor and central hall and staircase, in keeping with local styles.” They could not afford the house and eventually lost it. “The humiliation of log cabin life,” Bushman concluded in *Refinement*, “drove them to exceed their resources” (426). Throughout his career, Smith faced debt and financial problems frequently exceeding his or the Church’s resources. “For families who had adopted middle-class values like the Smiths, consciousness of inferior housing was a painful reminder of their exclusion from respectable society” (*Refinement*, 426–27).

Though Bushman declares Joseph Smith “bred outside the rising genteel culture” (441), Smith enthusiastically described Van Buren’s refurbished White House as a “large and splendid palace, surrounded with a splendid enclosure, decorated with all the elegancies of this world” (392). Smith eagerly observed eastern cities, took care with his costume, encouraged visiting notables to lecture at Nauvoo, hosted large dinners in the style of his times, and near his end contemplated painter Benjamin West’s *Death on a Pale Horse* on exhibit in his store in Nauvoo. The Mansion House and the temples that Smith erected at Kirtland and Nauvoo receive little architectural analysis as do his important city designs, especially of Nauvoo, which became the second largest city in Illinois in a few short years. These designs
came to Smith in revelations, and to root them firmly in the context of the contemporary ideals of religious architecture and town planning would suggest temporal origins and question the validity of these and other revelations. This conundrum creates the disconnect with Bushman’s work on the ideals of genteel living.

Further, despite Bushman’s familiarity with revivalism, he does not see Smith’s life and work as a product of the electric environment of the millennialism, quest for perfection and redemption, widespread movement to democratize religion, and belief in occult of the Second Great Awakening in which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints formed and flourished. To portray Smith and the Church in the context of the cultural milieu of Jacksonian America would call into question the origins of the Book of Mormon and the steady flow of revelations that guided Smith and his followers. Bushman will not go into that preserve of apostates and nonbelievers.

These difficulties do not seriously undermine Bushman’s scholarly accomplishment of a balanced, if believing, treatment of the creation of the Church. The illustrations and maps achieve their purpose of illuminating the subject. The pace slows when he trudges through Smith’s ecclesiastical rationale, the development of Mormon theology, and the unfolding structure of Church governance.

When it turns to narrative, the prose often lives up to the magnitude of the drama of Smith’s life. Bushman conceives of Smith contemplating West’s Death on a Pale Horse looking at the depiction of an “apocalyptic scene as a swirl of half-naked, contorted bodies about to be slain by armed riders on horseback. In the center, a dark, misty figure on a white horse is about to trample a man supporting a dead or dying woman with a child kneeling at her side. In the background storm clouds rile the sky. Perhaps for no other viewer of West’s painting did art more accurately imitate life” (542). Or at the very end when West’s scene became prophecy, “Joseph [in a second-floor jail room] pulled the trigger six times into the hall, dropped the pistol on the floor, and sprang to the window. With one leg over the sill he raised his arms in the Masonic sign of distress. A ball from the doorway struck his hip, and a shot from outside entered his chest. Another hit under the heart and a fourth his collarbone. He fell outward crying, “Oh Lord my God” (550).

Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling has set the standard against which to measure work on Smith and Mormonism’s founding era.

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Reviewed by Robert A. Clark

The overland trails of the nineteenth-century West have fascinated historians, both lay and academic, for well over a century. The twentieth century saw the formation of numerous organizations dedicated to the history, preservation, and re-experiencing of the various trails. Federal legislation has anointed several of the historic routes, providing research and preservation dollars. The great central route, composed for the most part of the Platte River Road leading to South Pass, and then crossing the Great Basin with branches leading to Oregon and California and, later, destinations in Montana and elsewhere, has long been the best known of the various trails, as well as the most used by the emigrants. But there are other important trails that have, until recently, received scant attention and little popularization.

The long-neglected route from Salt Lake City to southern California has at last received a thorough and illuminating study in Edward Leo Lyman’s new book. Many years in the making, it provides a chronological interpretation and narrative history of one of the Far West’s important transportation routes, portions of which were first used by the Spanish as early as 1773, and which are now covered in occasional places by the pavement of Interstate 15.

Lyman has gathered a wealth of material chronicling the 850 miles of challenging landscape. Used as a major late-season emigration route in the 1850s, it became an important commercial corridor that was eventually superseded by the railroads in the 1870s and 1880s, and presaged today’s major highways. The road between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles, pioneered in 1848 and ’49, was a vital link between the Pacific and the Great Basin. Because it was open all winter while virtually every route to the north was snowed in, it was a viable alternative route for overland emigrants traveling on the California Trail through Salt Lake City.

Opening with an overview of the route set in today’s topography, the book treats the history of the route chronologically. Prior to 1849, pack trains moved between Santa Fe and southern California, and the western portion of that route included sections of what Lyman terms the “Southern
Route” between Salt Lake and Los Angeles. The author takes care to emphasize the presence of indigenous peoples along the route, their role in its original development, and the conflict brought to them by travelers, both early and late. He details the pioneering parties of 1849 who opened the route between Salt Lake and southern Utah and improved the road as it moved toward California. The early era of Mormon settlement and their outreach to indigenous peoples is clearly explicated, followed by the Mormon-federal conflicts of the late ’50s, the freighting years, and the later developments at each end of the route. The concluding summary chapter is a fine condensation and summary of the findings.

Departing south from Salt Lake City and joining the Old Spanish Trail in southern Utah, the route traversed some of the most forbidding deserts western emigrants were compelled to cross. Because so little water could be found en route, it was actually the most challenging of all well-used emigrant and freight roads. Still, the distribution of grass and water allowed a reasonably heavy flow of wagon traffic for two decades, and of pack mule trains for about the same period previous to that.

The first wagons used the route in 1849. Jefferson Hunt played a leading role in this endeavor. That same year the infamous Death Valley Forty-niners left the established route, turning west to seek a shortcut to the gold fields. Lyman documents the sufferings of these first trains and points to later improvements in preparation and planning that resulted from the sufferings experienced by the first parties to use the route.

The early parties faced great challenges. “During a thirty-six-hour stretch of no water for the cattle in central Utah, one of the better prepared emigrants, a Dr. Hall, incurred the wrath of most of his fellows by refusing a needy woman a drink even though he carried enough water for his animals. Hoover confided that ‘Mr. Hall is very much censured by all in the train and left him no friends.’ At about the same time a man assigned his turn on guard duty refused to perform the task, provoking one fellow traveler to attempt to shoot the slacker” (48). The tensions which erupted from the stresses of a barren land were only exacerbated by the physical challenges to come as they left the Virgin River. Vincent Hoover wrote, “‘We were compelled to work several hours rolling stone from the top of the hill before we could get up one wagon with eighteen yoke of oxen’ pulling it” (50).

The Mormons of the Great Basin began to use the trail for settlement purposes in 1851, planting communities along the trail all the way to San Bernardino in southern California. Las Vegas, a welcome oasis for travelers, became a Mormon mission—an interesting juxtaposition to the image it carries today.

Lyman emphasizes this trail’s potential advantages for Mormons immigrating to Utah who came by ship to San Diego via the Panama crossing.
The mostly European converts could avoid disease found along the Platte River Road and the dangers of early winter that contributed to the handcart disaster of 1856. However, I wonder if increased Mormon immigrant traffic on the trail would actually have increased the potential for calamities, due to its limited resources. In any event, Mormon leaders chose not to use this route for immigration and even withdrew their settlers from California Mormons in the run-up to the Utah War.

The tragedy at Mountain Meadows, a favorite resting area for travelers along the trail in southern Utah, is examined in some detail. Lyman delicately traverses the minefield of responsibility for the massacre of the Baker-Fancher wagon train on September 11, 1857, emphasizing the Mormon-Indian relationship and its influence on the event. The focus on Indian-white relations in all aspects of trail use is a strength of the work, and reveals an oft-neglected side of the transportation story in the West. Additionally, Lyman provides considerable ethnographic data on the various linguistic and cultural groups found along the length of the trail.

He also emphasizes the extensive freighting on the route from the late 1850s through the ’60s, its economic importance to the Great Basin and southern California, and vignettes of the freighters themselves. Receiving in-depth treatment are the trail’s geography, topography, and settlements, as are its use by the military, mail service, mining interests, and, of course, the Mormons.

Criticisms are minor. The bibliography is extensive and useful, but at times misses newer works. Edward F. Beale plays a role in the story, but Lyman cites only the outdated and triumphal biography by Bonsal, missing the newer biographies by Thompson and Briggs/Trudell. Small type and double columns made heavy work for these aging eyes. The notes are thorough and explanatory. Very good maps of the route(s) of the trail with modern landmarks are introduced early on, and a good selection of portraits and photos enhances the text. The index is thorough and annotated.

_The Overland Journey from Utah to California_ is highly recommended. It is a reference work that will be used regularly to illuminate the history of this important region and route.

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After reading this book’s title, foreword, preface, and introduction, I anticipated a text filled with Thomas Cottam Romney’s “vivid experiences as an eye-witness” (vii), which in fact, he relates in Chapter 24. I enjoyed reading them very much. These episodes explain unique experiences which bring to the reader a better understanding of the courage and faith of Mexico’s Mormon pioneers and their “devotion to church and family, community and country” (3).

This book was first published in 1938 at which time it was “the only printed volume dealing with the Mormon colonies in Mexico that has ever appeared” (1). No updated or revised editions of this book have been made. The first three chapters deal with Porfiro Diaz and conditions in the country under his strong-arm policies, the background of Mormonism, and the history of the Mormons in Mexico: the Mormon Battalion’s passage in 1846; a mission in 1875–76 to Chihuahua led by Daniel W. Jones; another in 1876–77 to Sonora and Chihuahua led by James Z. Stewart and Helaman Pratt; a third in 1879–89 to Mexico City and surrounding states led first by Moses Thatcher; and the Sonora Mission of 1887–88 led by Ammon M. Tenney. Chapter 12 explains “The Hazards of a Religious Boycott in Mexico.”

Much additional research on these topics in the intervening seventy years makes these chapters less relevant and the date of its writing probably explains what I consider that author’s somewhat biased view of the relationship between the Mormon colonists in Mexico and their adopted country.

The core of the book—and the topic of greatest interest to me—is Chapters 6–10, describing the challenges experienced by the founders of the nine Mormon colonies: six in Chihuahua and two in Sonora. I wish Romney had devoted more space to this period. Of the book’s 338 pages, these five chapters cover only 54. The first permanent colony, Diaz, was established in the State of Chihuahua in 1885. The Mormon colonization period ended with the establishment of Colonia Oaxaca and Colonia Morelos in the State of Sonora, in 1892 and 1897 respectively.

The development of the Mormon colonies suffered a setback with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 which led to the exiling of the Saints in 1912. Only Colonia Juarez and Dublan were able to prosper after the revolution. “Romney’s unique vantage point is the strongest draw of his narrative as Romney and his family lived much of their life in the Mexican Mormon colonies” (6). In my opinion, this perspective could have provided better insights into these events and would have been of more value to the
The author draws a strong parallel between the beginning and the end of these colonies, both of them marked, in his view, by persecution and terrorism. The federal marshals in the United States who hunted down polygamists so that they could be prosecuted and imprisoned were a strong motive for the establishment of the colonies, outside the U.S. boundaries. “A bitter war was on against the practice by enemies of the Church,” writes Romney, “and, in instances, devout and well meaning men and women denounced the doctrine in most vigorous terms. Even the Government joined in the fight. Legislation enactment by [U.S.] Congress . . . against the practice of plural marriage resulted in the prosecution and imprisonment of scores of devout believers” (51). With a similar tone, he describes the ravages of the Mexican army and revolutionaries as they swept through the colonies and forced the Mormons out of the country: “They [Mormons] have been robbed, plundered, and driven from their homes, their rights have been denied them, their property taken away from them, the safety of their wives and daughters jeopardized and their lives threatened, and at last they found it necessary to abandon their homes and possessions, and come from that land of riot and murder, brigandage and robbery, in order that they might escape at least with their lives; and quite a few have not been fortunate enough to get away with their lives, but have fallen by the hands of marauders and assassins” (217).

The book helps the reader feel the suffering, attitude, and perceptions of the author, who was thirty-six years old when he and his family were forced to leave their home in Colonia Juarez. It was a difficult and deplorable time for the colonists, reminding the reader that not all of the Saints’ challenges occurred in the nineteenth century.

Chapters 11 and 21 are well organized. They present the need for and controversy about the 1912 exodus from Mexico. Chapter 20, “The Human Product,” provides the reader with an extensive account of priesthood leadership provided by those who were part of the Mexican colonization experience. Their knowledge of the Spanish language, Mexican culture, and the spirituality developed under difficult circumstances has benefited the LDS Church in its effort to expand the restored gospel, not only in Spanish-speaking countries but worldwide. Romney also found that, in a professional way, the progeny of the colonists have been equally outstanding (273).

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ceives more than 12,000 visitors annually. The Museo has published in English and Spanish *Plotino Constantino Rhodakanaty, El Aguila Mormon* (1997), an updated second edition of LaMond F. Tullis’s *Mormons in Mexico* (Part I, 1997) and *The LDS Church and the Lamanite Conventions* (2005), also reviewed in this issue. He and his wife, Queta, have four children and fifteen grandchildren.


Reviewed by Kent Larsen II

What if nearly one-third of LDS Church members in Portugal (or Taiwan or Tonga or even Ontario) gave up on the Church’s hierarchy and started up their own? How would the Church react? What attempts would be made to bring them back into the fold? Would such a move be widely known throughout the Church?

Would such an event make future history books? Would it be the subject of books itself? It seems obvious that a schism of that magnitude would eventually be discussed and debated, the subject of significant works by historians.

But in the seventy years since a group of Mexican LDS Church members rejected the mission president appointed by Salt Lake City, the “Third Convention” schism has received little academic attention and is virtually unknown among the LDS public, both outside and inside Mexico. The lack of attention is perhaps more surprising given two unusual aspects of the schism. First, it did not involve doctrinal disputes, and second, the rift between the Church and the convencionistas was healed after ten years with a visit by Church President George Albert Smith.

Fortunately, this schism isn’t entirely unknown. It has been the subject of several academic articles, principally by F. LaMond Tullis and chapters in both of the general histories of the LDS Church in Mexico.¹ The schism has also now received its own book-length treatment in *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Lamanite Conventions: From Darkness to Light* by

Fernando Gomez Paez, the far-sighted philanthropist behind the Museo de Historia del Mormonismo en México.

Gomez Paez does cover the entire story in his book, a bilingual edition (reading in English from one cover and in Spanish starting with the other), along with an overview of LDS missionary work in Mexico from 1876 through the 1930s. Following the Mexican Revolution of 1910–17, the new constitution, in an attack on the Catholic Church’s traditional position in Mexican society, made it illegal for foreign clergy to officiate in religious ceremonies in Mexico and denied churches ownership of any property. This led foreign clergy, including LDS missionaries, to flee the country in 1926 for a period of nine years.

As a result, the local leaders of the more than two thousand Mexican members operated independently of the rest of the Church, receiving only occasional help and advice from Rey L. Pratt, the beloved president of the Mexican Mission, from headquarters across the border in El Paso, Texas. Even Pratt’s advice slowed while he was charged with starting the Argentine Mission in 1926, and then stopped when he died suddenly in 1931. His successor, Antoine R. Ivins, turned his focus to the U.S. portion of his mission (which then included the U.S. Southwest), leaving Isaías Juárez, president of the Central Mexico District, and his counselors Abel Páez and Bernabé Parra without support. (The only Church units in Mexico outside the Central Mexico District were in the Mormon colonies in northern Mexico.) According to Gomez Paez, Ivins didn’t write or even send pamphlets and proselyting materials (25).

Concerned over the lack of communication, Juárez called a “convention” of the leadership in his district in January 1932. This “First Convention” resulted in a request sent to Salt Lake City asking, in light of Mexican law, that a Mexican be named as mission president. Officials at Church headquarters apparently did not answer; at any rate, the Mexican Church leaders received no word. Ivins did, however, make his only visit to central Mexico in February 1932, accompanied by Apostle Melvin J. Ballard.

Perhaps encouraged by this visit, Juárez held a second convention in April 1932, which again authorized sending a letter to Salt Lake explaining
the situation and asking for assistance. Again the Mexican Saints received no response.

Harold W. Pratt replaced Ivins in 1934. Born in the Mormon colonies, Pratt was therefore a Mexican citizen and not affected by the laws on foreign clergy. He also was more interested in seeing the work progress in Mexico and, along with the missionaries who were able to return to Mexico starting at this time, put significant effort into the Mexican portion of the mission. He even convinced the Church to make separate missions for Mexico and for the Southwestern United States (the Spanish-American Mission) and moved the mission headquarters to Mexico City.

But Pratt was not what many Mexican members expected. At the Third Convention in 1936, again held under Juárez’s leadership, the convencionistas asked the General Authorities for a mission president “de pura raza y sangre” (“of pure blood and race”) as well as for additional resources. Despite months of effort by Pratt and Juárez, the convencionistas, some 800 of the roughly 2,800 Mexican Church members, set up their own LDS congregations and began to operate independently. Pratt presided over courts in May 1937 that excommunicated eight leaders of the Third Convention, including both of Juárez’s counselors in the district presidency, for their participation.

The convencionistas operated their own organization for more than ten years, establishing fifteen branches, operating MIAs, launching a fledgling missionary program, and growing by 50 percent to 1,200 members. Pratt’s mission ended in 1938, and his successor, A. Lorenzo Anderson, served until 1942, both without any resolution in the split. It took four years of effort by a new president, Arwell L. Pierce, to heal the rift. In a tactful move, Pierce persuaded the First Presidency to change the excommunications to “suspension[s],” thus facilitating their return to Church activity (39). Pierce’s efforts were rewarded with a reconciliation conference in April 1946, presided over by LDS Church President George Albert Smith.

Gomez Paez’s treatment of the story suffers from several weaknesses in addition to its strengths. While in book form, it is probably not significantly longer than the chapter-long treatment of the subject found in Tullis’s Mormons in Mexico. And while it covers the whole story, it lacks the detail of Tullis’s article on Arwell L. Pierce. The book also needs to be more clearly written and could use significant editing, particularly in English, which is

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3I base this on page lengths and page dimensions; I have not yet read the chapter in Mormons in Mexico.

not Gomez Paez’s first language.

But Gomez Paez does have material that is not found elsewhere, including at least five oral interviews and histories gathered by el Museo de Historia del Mormonismo en México and cited in this book. The book also benefits from forty-nine photographs, most apparently never previously published. And most importantly, the material is also faithfully presented in Spanish, a significant achievement in itself, given the status of LDS book publishing today.

As a result of its weaknesses for an academic audience, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Lamanite Conventions: From Darkness to Light is probably best considered a popular treatment of the subject. But since it is the only book available on the subject (although Tullis’s Mormons in Mexico is available), and because it includes material not available elsewhere, even academics will have to consider this book in order to better understand this significant event in LDS history.

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Reviewed by Val Hemming

Utah State University’s The Collected Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lectures is a compilation of ten lectures presented between 1995 and 2004 by scholars of Mormonism or the American West. After his retirement Leonard J. Arrington bequeathed his personal and historical collection to Utah State University. At that time he requested that the university’s historical papers become the focus for an annual lecture on some aspect of Mormon history. The Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lectureship was established in 1995 with Leonard himself presenting the inaugural lecture.

The subsequent nine scholars invited through 2004 included Richard Lyman Bushman, Richard E. Bennett, Howard R. Lamar, Claudia L. Bushman, Kenneth W. Godfrey, Jan Shipps, Donald Worster, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, and F. Ross Peterson.

Arrington titled his presentation “Faith and Intellect as Partners in Mormon History.” His lecture examined that partnership in the lives of Joseph Smith, Eliza R. Snow, Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon, and
Emmeline B. Wells. His introduction states:

Unlike many leaders of religious thought, they (his five examples) did not experience a period of wrestling with the problem of being pulled in two directions. . . . They seem to have readily accepted the desirability and necessity of maintaining a healthy balance between faith and reason, regarding the two as complements, not competitors. . . . All five of those I shall discuss were human beings, with observable imperfections, but they exhibited astonishing intellectual vitality, spiritual power, and moral courage, and appealed to the “better angels of our nature.” As Latter-day Saints believe, the divine spirit shone brilliantly through their writings and acts. For each of them, faith and intellect were partners. (3)

Through brief essays Arrington brings his five examples “earthward” making their lives relevant to the real-life experiences of his hearers/readers. Arrington concludes:

Over-emphasizing intellect to the neglect of spirituality and over-emphasizing faith without the application of reason are both unworthy of practicing Latter-day Saints. We cannot achieve spiritual excellence without intellectual rigor, and intellectual excellence is hollow without active spirituality. We need to have the spirit as we learn, and need to have learning as we build faith. Working together, faith and intellect help us achieve the Latter-day Saint goal of eternal progression. (29)

Bushman’s thoughtful essay titled “Making Space for the Mormons” is a prelude to his descriptions of the planning and building of Mormon cities found in his impressive Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling (2005). He notes that one of Joseph Smith’s “most powerful acts was to create a conception of space that governed the movement of tens of thousands of people for many decades. . . . Joseph Smith turned space into a funnel that collected people from the widest possible periphery and drew them like gravity into a central point” (35). He describes how Smith combined the concepts of temple, gathering and space and made these “the work” of the kingdom. His community plans became the model for the five Mormon gathering places, from Kirtland to Salt Lake City.

Richard E. Bennett’s lecture, “My Idea Is to Go Right Side Up with Care: The Exodus as Reformation,” grapples with the nature of “conviction” underlying the early Saints’ migrations to the Great Basin. His lecture, derived from research conducted for his book We’ll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846-1848, posits: “If the record is true, I maintain that in their eyes the sine qua non of their ultimate success was neither brawn nor brain
but covenant and obedience. In the simplest terms, they came to believe—and it was a gradual process of belief—that they would find their place if they would follow their God” (57).

Howard R. Lamar chose to discuss “The Theater in Mormon Life and Culture”: Utah’s early actors and performers, the building of the Salt Lake Theatre, and many of the plays performed there. Hiram Clawson, John T. Caine, and Heber M. Wells in this treatment are thespians rather than community leaders and politicians. We meet Maude May Babcock and learn of her profound influence on Utah as well as American performing arts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Lamar concludes with an invitation “for scholars and writers to see the Mormon past in a different light—to see happiness in the lives of a people in everyday life, to appreciate the English theatrical heritage as we have come to appreciate the Scandinavian rural and village heritage, and to investigate the remarkable rich and complex traditions of role playing in both the religious and secular life of this state, and not least, to explore the special status of women on the Utah stage” (88–89).

Claudia L. Bushman’s “Mormon Domestic Life in the 1870’s: Pandemonium or Arcadia?” was examined through the eyes of Elizabeth Wood Kane—who was horrified by plural marriage—yet who experienced an intimate look at Mormon life during an extended visit to Utah with her husband Thomas Kane in 1872. In conclusion Bushman writes:

Was this pandemonium or arcadia? Looking through Elizabeth Kane’s eyes, I have to think arcadia. This was a good time for the Mormons, and thanks to Kane’s writings, we can revisit it. Full of complexities and contradictions, the seventies featured pioneer life emulating eastern fashion, kindly people in bizarre marriages, independent women subject to strong leadership, and a people targeted for destruction who survived and flourished, perhaps because of their bad times. If these entries seem illuminating, remember that it is within your power to write documents that will similarly enlighten people yet unborn. (118)

Kenneth W. Godfrey in “The Importance of the Temple in Understanding the Latter-day Saint Nauvoo Experience: Then and Now” explores and interprets the implications of the LDS experience in building the Nauvoo Temple. “The temple captured the imagination of the Saints,” he writes, “and, like a vault, held their hopes, their dreams, and their aspirations. It is thus essential in understanding the Latter-day Saint Nauvoo experience” (153).

Jan Shipps, in “Signifying Sainthood, 1830–2001,” reminisces about her 1960s undergraduate experience at Utah State University and living among the Mormons. She observed that the Mormons’ distinctive practices
“set the Saints apart, separating them from everyone else on the basis of culture as well as religion” (166). She discusses a number of “signifiers” of Sainthood including plural marriage, the Church’s name, words used in public prayers, public “amens” after prayers and speeches, numbers of children, Word of Wisdom practices, white shirts and ties for men and missionaries, and CTR rings.

In “Encountering Mormon Country: John Wesley Powell, John Muir, and the Nature of Utah,” Donald Worster describes Powell’s and Muir’s encounters with Utah Mormon communities. Powell, an agnostic, was impressed with the results of Mormon communal efforts while criticizing or ignoring the religious basis for their ordered society. Muir, in his brief sojourn in Utah was impressed by “the best fed, best clad, happiest & most self respecting poor people I ever saw” (197). However, he complained that Mormons, as Saints, considered themselves superior to all other beings and noted the most important product of Mormon agrarian villages like Nephi were children. Although their Utah experiences are little studied, Worster points out: “Both men passed through Utah on their way to national fame and influence as conservationists. And in that passage they laid the foundations for one of the nation’s most important social movements” (202).

In her “Rachel’s Death: How Memory Challenges History,” Laurel Thatcher Ulrich brilliantly examines discrepancies between human memory and documented history. “Memory is not history. History is a documented account of the past. It asks memory, ‘Where did you get that?’ and ‘How do you know?’” She then reports versions of family memories recalling the accidental death of Rachel Thatcher in 1884. Contrasting a myriad of family stories of the death with known facts, she observes: “Sometimes, in the thicket of the past, documents give meaning to memory” (221).

F. Ross Peterson’s “I Didn’t Want to Leave the House, But He Compelled Me To” credits Ulrich’s lecture from the previous year with his decision to continue the theme of family stories versus known facts. He recounts the stories of Parley and Johanna Peterson, his paternal grandparents. Johanna converted in Denmark and emigrated to Utah where she married Parley. Substantial cultural and other differences led to a troubled marriage, their estrangement from family, community and Church, loneliness, but also, possibly, redemption. Reflecting on the meaning of his grandparents’ lives, Peterson muses:

This couple and their story illustrate a humbling, intriguing, and ironic reality of Mormon culture. It is hard to measure the impact of a changing theology on individual members. Parley and Johanna chose to live outside the umbrella of the church. . . . There are times when researching family history that we wonder: Is it better to leave the story
to memory and put the upturned stones back into their proper resting place? Or should we follow the sources and tell the documented story as best we can? It is clear that in a religious community, a congregation, a ward, a parish, or even a family, gossip, rumor and a lack of forgiveness and understanding make it difficult to remain in the fold. The principles of religion are not only manifested through texts, but through the lives of individuals. (241–42)

I found most of the lectures lively and entertaining. In published format, however, some worked better than others. I encountered many old acquaintances from my readings in Mormon and western history but found them in new historical and cultural contexts. I also met many new and interesting characters struggling with challenging circumstances to build their lives in rural Utah and Idaho. The lectures raise provocative questions that could guide students of the Mormons and the West to new areas for productive research and interpretation. This small book is well-bound, the notes interesting and helpful, but it contains no index. The quality of some photographs and illustrations is marginal. I was surprised at the number of typographical errors suggesting hasty editing. These criticisms aside, the lectures and the book are worthy monuments to the memory of the “lion” of Mormon history, Leonard J. Arrington.

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Reviewed by Rick Jepson

The nursing profession is deeply rooted in battlefields. Since Florence Nightingale revolutionized care in the 1850s during the Crimean War, nurses have continued to expand and redefine their practice during military conflicts. Their philosophy has been simple: A bath, clean clothes, a comfortable bed, fresh water, healthy food, and regular attention are as curative as any surgery or medication. And while their work isn’t glamorous in any setting, their wartime contributions have won them grudging respect from physicians and made them heroes to recuperating soldiers.

Latter-day Saint Nurses at War is a collection of autobiographical ac-
counts spanning from World War I to the current engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. It attempts to present these stories as a special segment of the wartime nursing experience, unique “because of their spiritual and religious perspective” (1). And in many respects it succeeds.

The collection soars high when it steps back and allows its contributors to tell their stories. For example, it’s heart-wrenching to read Ruth Dare’s memory of watching her sister die from a postpartum infection in 1944: “Penicillin, which would have cured her, was not available for civilian use. . . . I had been giving penicillin shots every four hours to soldiers with venereal diseases in the G.U. [genito-urinary] ward but couldn’t get any for my sister who needed it so desperately” (30).

It’s affecting to read an anonymous memoir from a nurse who joined the Church just before her second tour in Vietnam. Overwhelmed by her duties, she began abusing prescription drugs and was eventually caught by a pharmacist who happened to be an LDS bishop. “I was astonished that he was kind to me. He seemed to be more concerned about my welfare than about my illegal behavior. . . . [He] helped me believe that redemption, even for me, was possible through the sacrifice of our Savior, Jesus Christ” (168).

And it’s hilarious to read Estelle Burton’s defense when she was falsely accused of peddling morphine during World War II: “Number one, I wasn’t off the base last night; number two, I have never been on that street in Jacksonville; and number three, if I would have sold that morphine, I would have gotten a lot more than $35 for it” (29).

But these gems, and dozens more, are dulled by some other features of the book.

The organization is poor. While the accounts might have been grouped by similarities in geography, time, or experience, they are instead listed alphabetically. This leaves some profound commonalities understated and doesn’t distinguish the uniqueness of other experiences. Rosmary Harms, for example, deserved her very own chapter. The young German was conscripted into service and sent to dreadful circumstances on the Russian front. The temperature was subzero, even in the operating room. She was underfed, had only the clothes she took from dead soldiers, and had to shave her head because of lice. Her patients were so afraid of going back to the front line that they purposely contaminated their wounds by stuffing them with cat hair. “There was no pity,” she recalls, “no sorrow for anyone. I didn’t love anyone. I loved me. I was still alive, and that was most important to me” (55). Though shockingly unique, her story is lost in a sea of alphabetized accounts.

On the other hand, the shared experience of Ruth Dare and LaRue Elliot is woefully disjointed. They were nursing school roommates in Salt Lake City, enlisted together, served together in Virginia, England, and Ger-
many, were discharged at the same time, had a joint wedding in LaRue’s home, and wrote nearly identical accounts of their wartime experience. What a treat it would have been to find these recollections side-by-side with photographs and an introduction! But instead they are interrupted by Idonna Doerig’s postwar, stateside service. At least their last names aren’t Abernathy and Zamora.

Also, the book was obviously begun as a collection of World War II experiences and should have maintained that limited scope in publication. While there are forty-eight accounts from that era, there are only eight from Desert Storm, six from Vietnam, two from Korea, and one each from World War I, September 11th, Afghanistan, and Iraqi Freedom. This paucity makes their inclusion look like an afterthought.

Further, the editors’ writing—an introduction, a conclusion, and brief historical outlines of each war—is dry, clumsy, and unsure of its audience. In a failed attempt to cover these inadequacies, it is also cluttered with huge passages cut and pasted from superior sources. Take, for example, this historical sketch of the Vietnam War:

The military involvement of the United States in the affairs of Vietnam spanned the administration of five U.S. presidents and almost thirty years. In 1945 the Truman administration provided aid to the French who were trying to maintain their Vietnamese colony from Vietnamese rebels led by Ho Chi Minh. Eisenhower believed in the domino theory. Roarke (1998) quoted Eisenhower: “You have a row of dominoes set up. You knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly” (1067). Roarke noted that Eisenhower “warned that the fall of Southeast Asia to communism could well be followed by the fall of Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines” (1067). By 1954 the U.S. was providing 75 percent of the cost of the war to the French. However, Eisenhower stopped short of providing troops to the French. France was defeated and signed a truce in 1954. This truce created the countries of North and South Vietnam. Kennedy continued to provide support to the government of South Vietnam and ultimately supported South Vietnam in the conflict between the two nations, providing troops and materials. Johnson continued the support, making the Vietnam War “America’s War.” Again Roarke commented . . . (161)\(^5\)

Yet despite its compositional shortcomings, *Latter-day Saint Nurses at

\(^5\)The editors also consistently misspell the surname of their chief source, which is James L. Roark et al., *The American Promise: A History of the United States* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998).
War is a treasure chest, valuable both to professional historians and amateur enthusiasts. There is something powerful about reading first-hand accounts from these everyday heroes. Their simple service was just as valuable as storming Omaha Beach or charging Monte Cassino. Their histories are an inspiration worthy of attention; everyone should read this book.

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Reviewed by David L. Bigler

“If it could receive timely rains, it would be one of the Most beautiful, fertile regions on the face of the earth,” Norton Jacob said on arriving in Salt Lake Valley July 22, 1847, “being watered by numerous Brooks & Rivulets perpetually flowing out of the mountains on every side” (217).

Jacob’s first impression of his future home ended a thousand-mile journey with Brigham Young’s vanguard company from the Mormon emigration base on the Missouri River. In a larger sense, however, the forty-two-year-old New Englander had traveled a longer road since joining the controversial millennial religion in Illinois six years before. From that day he had taken an active part in the civil warfare at Nauvoo that did not end with Joseph Smith’s murder.

His vivid description of these revolutionary conditions in western Illinois and the last days of the theocratic Mormon city-state represent an important part of this new volume. Also compelling is Jacob’s first-hand story of a journey west that began with the Mississippi River crossing and included the terrible stretch across Iowa and establishment of Winter Quarters.

After these earlier experiences, Jacob’s journey to Salt Lake Valley almost comes as an extended excursion to get away from it all and reorder his perspective. He was ten years older than the average age of the adult members of the first company when he was named about March 1, 1847, to become one of history’s favored few who would go west with Brigham Young.
By now his journal has made clear why Young selected him to go and named him as one of the fourteen captains of ten.

Barney introduces Jacob as one of Mormonism’s “common folks,” but he was much more than this implies. Someone from private industry might recognize him as the general foreman. He is not the one who dons priestly robes and goes off to a quiet place to pray when work needs doing. Jacob is the man who knows how to build a bridge, fix a wagon, put in the Nauvoo Temple’s truss girders, and organize people to get a job done. Such uncommon men and women can be found at the heart of every successful endeavor.

What makes Jacob stand out is that he was a man of words, as well as works. His writings show that he was better educated than the leader of the company, an uncommon man in his own right, and fellow American-born journal keepers. His word pictures of the pioneer company’s journey west and return to Winter Quarters, which make up the heart of this book, are clear and compelling, such as his first impression of the Wind River Mountains: “The Wind river chain of the Rocky Mountains which was discovered yesterday, but the shaded side towards us shone dimly, now Stands out in all the noon-day Brilliancy of a Summer’s Sun & robed in full Winter costume, presents a Scene Majestic, grand & imposing! The Eternal Snows, lifted up on those angular Peaks toward Heavn, an offering from Earth to Heavn’s King as though she would fain enjoy His Purity” (182–83). His record is not a work of secondary importance, but one of highest value.

In editing it, Barney does it the justice it deserves. His notes are comprehensive, richly detailed and, unlike many edited documents, place the narrative within the larger context of surrounding events. He also balances and fills out the pictures Jacob draws with entries by other company members. Nor does he avoid possibly controversial subjects, such as the law of the Lord and adoption, but explains them honestly, if at times with a discernible spin. He dismisses too lightly federal warrants against Brigham Young and others for harboring counterfeiters, which caused their hasty departure from Nauvoo, as simply the pursuit of officials “bent on saddling church leaders with alleged violations of the law” (61).

Jacob’s record provides many insights on Brigham Young. His blunt reprimand on May 29 for “dancing, playing cards, ch[e]quers, domino[es] & giving way to the Spirit of gambling” (152) reveals Young’s belief that his own access to divine direction depended on the obedience of his people. The company had been told before leaving Winter Quarters that “[i]t was necessary for us to go & seek a place beyond the reach of the Gentiles, where the Kingdom of God may be established [&] a standard raised for all nations,” he said (151). Now make your actions square with that purpose, he made clear.

To those who think modern Utah mirrors Young’s vision of what he
came to do, Jacob offers a clearer understanding of this original purpose. First, Young saw Salt Lake Valley as their destination because “the word of the Lord” through Joseph Smith was “go to that valley,” which was outside the United States (227). There he would end “any trade or commerce with the Gentile world” (229). Young was determined to “cut every thread of this kind & live free & independent, untrammeled by any of their detestable customs & practices” (229). He knew “as soon as I saw it” that Ensign Peak was the place “we shall erect the Standard of Freedom” that he had referred to on the journey (228).

As Norton Jacob’s quotations of Young show, he came to establish God’s kingdom as a sovereign state, “beyond the reach of the Gentiles,” where Israel would gather in the last days and Christ would return within the lifetimes of its founders (151). In only six months, Mormon Battalion veterans would report the first of two back-to-back events that would eventually reshape this dream. James Marshall in January 1848 discovered gold in California; and only nine days after that, all or most of the area now within five southwestern states, including Utah, plus parts of two others, became part of the United States under the peace treaty with Mexico.

On the return to Winter Quarters, Norton Jacob was called on to take charge of a group of hunters comprised of some troublemakers in the company. Among these hard cases were the notorious Nathaniel Thomas Brown, wanted for murder in Iowa, as well as Mormon Battalion veterans from Pueblo William E. Beckstead, John Wheeler, James Oakley, and Isaac Carpenter, whose disobedience and salty language tested their captain. Jacob documents their misdeeds but took care to exempt David M. Perkins, also a battalion veteran, from the offenders.

For the faithful Jacob, keeping this group under control was the hardest job of all, but like everything else he did, he performed it well—as did Ronald O. Barney, who saw the importance of his record and enhanced a reader’s interest on every page. No Mormon history library should be without this attractive volume from Utah State University Press.

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It was during the tenure of President David O. McKay that the LDS Church transformed from a Utah church to an international church. The Church expanded its worldwide mission, created a new proselytizing plan for missionaries, organized the first stakes outside of the United States, began broadcasting efforts to the world, and dedicated more temples in foreign lands than inside the United States (Los Angeles and Oakland versus Switzerland, New Zealand, and London). In *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, author Gregory A. Prince with the assistance of William Robert Wright documents this transformation from the intimate vantage point of David O. McKay’s office journal.¹

Arranged topically rather than chronologically, the book examines such subjects as blacks and the priesthood, radio and television broadcasting, the rise of correlation, the Church Education System, the missionary program, temple construction, communism, and politics. Prince provides an unprecedented look into the workings of the Church during the McKay presidency, showing a church where General Authorities, united in purpose, are nevertheless often divided strongly in opinion. It shows a hierarchy with differing views about policy issues like Church-owned schools and the building program, doctrinal issues like blacks and the priesthood and evolution, and political issues like communism and civil rights. In my opinion, this book is the best history of the Church in the twentieth century to date.

Through it, we see David O. McKay as a charismatic and personable leader but also discover his human side. While he was very much a man of his age in his opposition to civil rights, he nevertheless set the stage for changes in the priesthood ban, loosening the application of the policy to “assume absence of black lineage unless there was proof to the contrary” (78), arguing that the priesthood ban was a practice rather than a doctrine (79–80), exploring the possibility of a mission in Nigeria (81–94), establishing a special committee of the Twelve to investigate the scriptural basis for the ban (80), and praying for a reversal on the ban (103–4).

¹Although the book lists both Prince and Wright as authors on the title page, Prince states in the introduction that he wrote the book and Wright “did the critiquing” (xvii). Surely Wright’s cooperation in this effort was important. As the nephew of Clare Middlemiss, Wright had access to the office journals that became the foundation for this volume. However for the sake of clarity, I will refer to Prince as the author.
Nor did he let his personal beliefs get in the way of his relationships. For example, his anti-Catholic views did not prevent his friendship with the Catholic Bishop of Utah (and eventually checked his anti-Catholicism), nor did his conservative Republican views prevent his friendship with President Lyndon Johnson. He was also a man of great loyalty, who refused to speak out against his fellow General Authorities even when they chose to address issues he disagreed with. He allowed Joseph Fielding Smith’s views on evolution to stand uncorrected despite his own favorable views toward the topic, and he refused to denounce Bruce R. McConkie’s *Mormon Doctrine* despite the findings of McKay’s own reading committee of 1,067 errors. David O. McKay was, in the end, an uncommon man with very common human failings, and this book is as much a tribute to that man as it is a historical analysis of his presidency.

The only thing that may rival this book’s content is its production. A fine example of the bookmaker’s art, the oversize volume is beautifully designed and brilliantly executed, with thirty-two pages of photographs and paintings, including portraits of the First Presidency by Arnold Friberg that have never before been published. Normally I do not consider a book read if it is not marked up—I like to underline and write in the margins of my books. However, I found myself unable to do that with this volume. It is too much like a work of art for me to desecrate with marginalia.

Initially I had concerns about Prince’s reliance on the Clare Middlemiss diaries as the major source for this book. Middlemiss, McKay’s secretary for thirty-five years, was a careful recordkeeper, but also a gatekeeper who would sometimes limit McKay’s access to those who were not of her own ultra-conservative views. One incident will illustrate this point. Hugh Nibley, an outspoken Democrat, told me of one occasion when he went to McKay’s office to meet with the president. When he arrived and asked to see President McKay, Middlemiss declared that “President McKay will not see you, now or ever.” Nibley was surprised because he had an appointment, and McKay had never indicated any displeasure about either his conduct or the content of his books or lectures. Just as he was about to leave, President McKay emerged from his office. He immediately greeted Hugh with a big warm smile, wrapped an arm around him, and said, “Why, Hugh, how good to see you. Please come on in.”

It is clear that Middlemiss was a detailed record keeper. The diaries, as Prince explains, contain abundant first-person dictations, minutes from many meetings, memoranda, letters, newspaper clippings, and photocopies of Alvin R. Dyer’s daily record (xv). Nevertheless, the possibility of Middlemiss’s own views being entered as McKay’s is real. However, as I read the biography I grew more confident that the picture that emerges is mostly accurate.
First, the portrait of McKay that Prince constructs is far from one-sided. McKay comes across as a genuinely three-dimensional human being. Second, while Middlemiss’s record is the biography’s foundation, Prince also drew on (1) the published record of books, magazines, scholarly journals, newspapers, pamphlets, master’s theses, and doctoral dissertations; (2) the unpublished record of manuscripts at the LDS Church Archives and the University of Utah’s special collections; and (3) the 5,000 pages of transcribed interviews conducted by Wright and Prince.

My only major complaint about the book is its focus. Prince begins with a very moving and intimate look at President McKay. In the first chapter, he relates several anecdotes that reveal the depth of President McKay’s character. In one incident that shows both McKay’s reverence for the sacrament and his respect for all living creatures, Prince tells of McKay’s visit to a ward sacrament meeting. When a deacon stumbled on the steps of the stand, a few pieces of bread fell off the tray near McKay. McKay inconspicuously picked up the pieces, put them in his pocket, and, after the meeting, he went outside and placed the bread on top of the shrubs near the chapel where the birds could eat them (20).

Some anecdotes show McKay’s belief that rules are made for people, not people for rules. For example, Prince tells of McKay being served rum cake at a social function. Everyone was anxious, but he simply began eating it. When one guest asked him if he knew he was eating rum cake, President McKay “smiled and reminded the guest that the Word of Wisdom forbade drinking alcohol, not eating it” (23). In this example and several others, McKay’s sly sense of humor is evident. He particularly loved jokes about Scotsmen, which he would tell with a Scottish brogue.

Chapter 2 describes McKay’s spiritual side, his personal conversion to the gospel, and the small miracles he witnessed but usually kept confidential. Chapter 3 treats the theme of free agency and tolerance manifest in McKay’s encouragement of intellectual inquiry and his tolerance of differences of opinion. It documents his acceptance of evolution, his frustrations with Mormon Doctrine, his refusal to authorize disciplinary action against Juanita Brooks for Mountain Meadows Massacre or Sterling McMurrin for his unorthodox doctrinal positions, yet he presumably allowed the excommunication of his niece, Fawn McKay Brodie, for No Man Knows My History.

With Chapter 4, the focus of the book shifts to the institutional church and President McKay begins to slip into the background. In several chapters, he hardly seems present. Chapter 7, which documents the rise of correlation, is more about Harold B. Lee than about McKay. Chapter 8 on Church education is more about Ernest Wilkinson than about McKay. Chapter 10 on the missionary program is more about Alvin R. Dyer, Henry D. Moyle, and T. Bowring Woodbury than about McKay. In light of this shift in focus, a
better title might have been *The Rise of Modern Mormonism During the Presidency of David O. McKay*. I doubt I would have felt this way had this book not started off with such an intimate portrait of McKay; but as the book’s focus shifted, I found myself longing for more personal details about McKay.

Prince all but ignores family relationships; the beautiful example of marriage the Church saw in the relationship between David O. McKay and his wife Emma Ray is almost completely absent from this book. Known for his quotation, “No success can compensate for failure in the home,” McKay is almost never seen in interactions with his own children. Even his relationships with colleagues and friends are largely ignored.

In some cases, this lack of analysis of the personal dimension makes it hard to understand McKay’s motivations. For example, McKay defended Sterling McMurrin when he was being threatened with excommunication for his unorthodox beliefs saying he would be happy to serve on his defense at the Church court (55–58). Yet we are given little about the relationship between the two men. Why did McKay come to McMurrin’s defense? Would he have come to anyone’s defense? Was this relationship somehow special? Prince does not mention that McMurrin was the grandson of Elder Joseph W. McMurrin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy during the 1930s. Did this fact make McKay’s attitude toward Sterling McMurrin somehow different?

A similar problem is that the author refuses to explore the inner workings of McKay’s mind. For example, McKay’s attitude toward Ezra Taft Benson is confusing. On several occasions, McKay agreed with other General Authorities that Benson’s political involvement with the John Birch Society needed to be reined in. But then McKay would, either explicitly or implicitly, tell Benson to keep up what he was doing (286–322). We are left to guess why McKay says one thing to one group and something else to another. What was going on in McKay’s thoughts? Was McKay a people-pleaser who said whatever his audience wanted to hear? Did something change his thinking? It is certainly laudable that Prince refuses to put thoughts in McKay’s head, but at times I really did want his educated opinion on what was motivating McKay’s actions.

Despite these few weaknesses, this book is an important work in documenting the organizational Church in the twentieth century. It provides an inside view of the inner workings of Church leadership as well as a clear picture of how the Church has become what it is today.

Prince reminds us that President McKay “inherited a church that was provincial and backward looking” but transformed it with both his charisma and leadership.

Clean-shaven, immaculately dressed, and movie-star handsome,
McKay immediately caught the attention of member and nonmember alike, and held it. He democratized Mormonism, calling upon every member to be a missionary and thus participate in moving the church into a “New Era.” He told converts to grow where they were planted, and built chapels and temples to allow them to do it without feeling like second-class citizens. . . . He emphasized the paramount importance of free agency and individual expression, for he understood that improvement of the parts would inevitably improve the whole. “Let them conform” was replaced by “Let them grow.” He willingly discarded institutional uniformity for the higher goal of individual excellence. He pitched a wide tent and then told members of all stripes that he welcome them to join him and build the church within it. (404)

In this, McKay serves as a welcome model for our times.

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Reviewed by Samuel J. Passey

In 1834, Joseph Smith led a group of nearly two hundred men from Kirtland, Ohio, to help recently displaced members of the Mormon Church regain their homes and land in Jackson County, Missouri, which had been taken over by hostile Missourians. This group became known as Zion’s Camp. The expedition was not a military success, as the camp failed to restore Church members to their homes. Instead the citizen-soldiers suffered through periods of illness (including cholera) and intense discomfort from the weather and travel conditions. James L. Bradley argues, however, that Zion’s Camp was successful in an “eternal perspective” and that it was a training ground for future leaders of the young Church. The Eternal Perspective of Zion’s Camp is the second edition of his 1990 Zion’s Camp 1834: Prelude to the Civil War, also privately published.

In the introduction Bradley seemingly sets the stage for his book by writing, “Few understand the relationship between the Mormon beliefs and the principles on which the camp was based and the ideals which were basic
to the formation of our nation. In Zion’s Camp, one sees the joining of Mormon revelatory government with the principles of the Constitution and its first ten Amendments” (xxi). This thesis offers some intriguing ideas. Unfortunately, Bradley does not revisit this theme, and his argument that the camp was successful because it trained future leaders has been the traditional interpretation since the days of Brigham Young. Instead, his text takes the form of a travel log, listing the day-to-day activities of both Joseph Smith, who led the Kirtland contingent, and Hyrum Smith, who was bringing a party from Michigan. This chronological arrangement of information about each camp enables the reader to compare and contrast the daily experiences of each group. Immediately evident is that the company led by Hyrum Smith does not seem anywhere near as militaristic as the one led by Joseph Smith.

Bradley uses some twenty-three diaries from members of Zion’s Camp as well as fourteen autobiographical sketches written long after Zion’s Camp, making the book rich in documentation. From these accounts, Bradley has compiled what seems to be the definitive name-list of participants that also identifies whether the individual remained connected to Mormonism and his priesthood ordinations. The Eternal Perspective of Zion’s Camp is probably worth purchasing for this list alone. Of concern to some readers will be that his notes fail to refer to any work published after 1987.

After Bradley’s introductory chapter setting the stage for Zion’s Camp, he devotes a chapter apiece to each of the eight weeks of the camp. The book includes six valuable appendices. Three recount Bradley’s trips to retrace the steps of Zion’s Camp. One discusses Sylvester Smith’s post-Zion’s camp activities and another lists more information about Zion’s camp participants. Appendix E contains Kenneth W. Godfrey’s well-written “A Twentieth Century Epilogue: The Story of Zelph and Book of Mormon Geography,” which gives a good survey of the extant primary source accounts of Joseph Smith telling his companions about Zelph’s Mound.1 “Appendix F” discusses the discovery of the location of the Mount Pleasant Primitive Baptist Church near the site of the Fishing River revelation and mob skirmish.

This new paperback edition is seventy-three pages longer than the first edition, but much of this increased length can be attributed to a larger (albeit distracting) font and increased margin size. Visually, the book is less appealing than the first edition. The second edition features updated maps which are still below the quality for maps published in most books today. The text (including the appendices) remains virtually identical to the first

1This article earlier appeared under the title of What Is the Significance of Zelph in the Study of Book of Mormon Geography? (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 70–79.
Bradley frequently relies on lengthy block quotations to tell his story. While at times useful, in most cases they seem misplaced and undigested. On a whole, the book offers useful information and features intriguing supplementary materials in its appendices but seems rough in but its design and prose.

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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.


These twenty-three essays have been selected from the five Sperry symposia at Brigham Young University (1979, 1984, 1989, 1992, 1996) that concentrated on the Doctrine and Covenants (vii). Except for this overview, no information is included about the date of original presentation. The essays are arranged roughly in the order of the sections they discuss, beginning with the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, and ending with the two Official Declarations. They begin, however, with five addresses delivered in various venues by LDS General Authorities (James E. Faust, Dallin H. Oaks, Jeffrey R. Holland, Bruce R. McConkie, and John K. Carmack) that also focus on the Doctrine
of the sections they discuss, beginning with the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, and ending with the two Official Declarations. They begin, however, with five addresses delivered in various venues by LDS General Authorities (James E. Faust, Dallin H. Oaks, Jeffrey R. Holland, Bruce R. McConkie, and John K. Carmack) that also focus on the Doctrine and Covenants.

While nearly all of the essays have a historical component, most of them concentrate on doctrinal and theological issues. Of particular interest to Mormon history readers, however, are five essays that concentrate on historical material and interpretation. Elder Carmack’s “Fayette: The Place the Church Was Organized” (48–55) states: “I have firmly concluded that there is no reason to doubt that the Church was organized in Fayette” (49) and offers several explanations why early documents sometimes refer to the birthplace of the Church as Manchester, instead of Fayette. He also documents personal efforts to find the New York certificate of incorporation, especially given the fact that it was legally incorporated in Illinois:

I too have searched for the certificate. On March 28, 1988, thinking that the certificate may have been transferred to Albany, New York’s state capital, I searched the state archives. . . . I found no trace of the certificate. In Waterloo, New York, the county seat of Seneca County, . . . on April 29, 1988, President Richard Christensen of the New York Rochester Mission and I searched unsuccessfully. . . . Seneca County historian, Betty Auten, . . . confirmed that her ongoing search . . . had found no such certificate.

. . . We next went to Canandaigua, New York, the county seat of Ontario County, in which Manchester is located. . . . So far as we could determine, the certificate was not on file there either.

Other searches have been made . . . but to date nothing has been located. The Church Historical Department has instituted a further search of old New York state and county files through Columbia University. (51)

Robert J. Woodford’s “The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ and the Book of Mormon” (103–16) relates the interesting story of how an 1829 three-page manuscript by Oliver Cowdery, “The Articles of the Church of Christ &c.,” which had been in Symonds Ryder’s possession came into the LDS Church Archives through a descendant whose relative was teaching two Mormon teenagers Spanish in Ravenna, Ohio. In his essay, Woodford “reconstruct[s] the events leading to the composition of both the 1829 “Articles” and our present Doctrine and Covenants 20,” which he considers a later, related development. He also
documents the extensive use of Section 20 by early members of the Church, the possibility that it may have been drafted to serve as a “certificate of incorporation” required in New York, and its continuing importance (106–7). For example, by Woodford’s count, only Sections 84, 88, and 121 are cited more frequently in general conference addresses (107).

Carol Cornwall Madsen has contributed this volume’s only essay either by or about a woman: “The ‘Elect Lady’ Revelation (D&C 25): Its Historical and Doctrinal Context” (117–33). She reads Section 25, often interpreted only as instructions to create a hymnal for the new Church, in the context of Emma’s self-written blessing, which Joseph promised to sign when he returned from Carthage in June 1844. Of particular interest is the instruction to Emma, unusual for the time for women, to “expound scriptures, and to exhort the church” (124).

A sensitive analysis of the stresses on the marriage of these two people, only in their mid-twenties when Section 25 was given, focuses on the commandment to Emma to “delight in [her] husband.” “The binding force of that counsel united Joseph and Emma in a supportive and truly complementary relationship for most of their seventeen years together.” After citing some examples of their mutual devotion, Madsen queries: “One can only wonder why the strength of their union was not sufficient for Emma to accept plural marriage, a principle accepted in faith by so many other devoted couples. Perhaps for Emma it was because of that unity, the oneness that had so characterized their relationship, that she was unable to open it to others. Could Emma’s reluctance to share her prophet-husband be a manifestation of the pride she had been warned against? Did her faith falter only in this final test when the sacrifice claimed too much of her own identity? The answers remain elusive” (122).

Ronald K. Esplin’s essay, “‘Exalt Not Yourselves’: The Revelations and Thomas B. Marsh, an Object Lesson for Our Day” (275–94) goes far beyond the usual presentation of Marsh as a prideful apostate contrasted to the ever-obedient Brigham Young. Esplin analyzes the dynamics of the emergent Quorum of the Twelve as the apostles struggled to understand their assignments in a context of poverty, illness, and intense emotional and psychological pressures. Esplin acknowledges that “Joseph Smith ruffled the feelings of his sensitive Apostles as often as he soothed them. Whether this was a conscious ploy to teach that humility and service must precede authority, as Brigham Young came to believe, or simply a consequence of his own style, the results were the same. Anxious to be powerful men in the kingdom, some of the Apostles bristled and complained at every slight” (279). This essay also quotes some little-known statements by Brigham Young, including his colorful description of Marsh’s leadership style as “like a toad’s hair comb[ing] up and
down” (280).

E. Dale LeBaron is long been known for his documentation of the pre- and post-1978 revelation on priesthood and its impact on missionary work in Africa. In “Official Declaration—2: Revelation on the Priesthood” (332–46), he retells the story of President Spencer W. Kimball’s long search for new understandings about the Church’s historic mission of taking the gospel to the whole world. He also tells a number of inspirational stories about the faithfulness of converts—before-baptism during the long period of limitation before 1978.
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