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

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Letter

Update on Louisa Bonelli

I was pleased to receive an email from Waldo Perkins responding to my article on the wives of Jacob Hamblin (“Civilizing the Ragged Edge: Jacob Hamblin’s Wives,” *Journal of Mormon History* 33, no. 2 [Summer 2007]: 155–98). In note 106, I cited Perkins’s excellent article on Daniel Bonelli, “From Switzerland to the Colorado River: Life Sketch of the Entrepreneurial Daniel Bonelli, the Forgotten Pioneer,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 4–23. Perkins suggests some corrections and clarifications for my paper, for which I am greatly indebted to him. They are as follows:

On page 184 I stated that Louisa Bonelli was baptized in 1852. Two family histories of Louisa Bonelli give 1852 as the year of her baptism. However, Perkins states that the Record of Members collection in the LDS Historical Department gives December 24, 1854, as the date. All the Bonellis were baptized in 1854, according to this source.

On page 180 I give the date of the 1862 Santa Clara flood as mid-January 1862, which is correct. However, in footnote 92, I mention “the disputed dating” of the flood. While it is true that the date of the flood has been disputed (it has often been incorrectly dated on January 1, 1862, or in February), Perkins points out that a January 19, 1862, letter from Daniel Bonelli to Brigham Young, partially quoted in his article, dates the flood solidly from January 17 to 19, 1862. Perkins deserves great credit for bringing this important letter to the notice of the Mormon historical community.

On p. 185 I stated that “the Bonellis were called to help colonize Santa Clara” in late 1861. But Perkins states that only Daniel Bonelli and wife came south in 1861. The other Bonellis, including Louisa, apparently came later. “The earliest I find any of them in Santa Clara is in 1864 when Daniel’s brother George went with him to the Meadow Valley and helped him stake out mining claims,” Perkins writes. Louisa married Hamblin on November 16, 1865, in Salt Lake City, and I assume that Hamblin got to know Louisa in Santa Clara, so perhaps the Hans Georg Bonelli family followed Daniel south in 1864.

On p. 192, I stated that Louisa stayed with her brother Daniel Bonelli at Bonelli’s Ferry in western Arizona after Jacob Hamblin’s death for a while. While Bonelli’s ferry service included Arizona (Bonelli ferried people across the Colorado between Nevada and Arizona), Perkins points out that Daniel lived on the Nevada side of the river, in Rioville, not in Arizona.

Todd Compton
Cupertino, California
THE MANY USES OF HUMOR

Leonard J. Arrington

Mournfully, Brother Lythgoe entered the offices of his burial society. “I’ve come to make arrangements for my dear wife’s funeral,” he said.

“Your wife,” asked the astonished secretary, “but we buried her last year!”

“That was my first wife,” sighed the lugubrious Lythgoe. “I’m talking about my second.”

“Second? I didn’t know you remarried. The Lord has blessed you. Congratulations!”

In all the world there is nothing like a joke to gather together the small cruelties, the unknowing injustices, the deliberate diminishing of life. Against the slings and arrows of outrageous prejudice, innumerable persons and groups have turned to humor for psychic sur-

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1Leonard J. Arrington, then LDS Church Historian, prepared this paper for delivery at the Last Lecture Series at Brigham Young University, January 17, 1974. In his note accompanying the paper, he expresses thanks to Richard Daines and son Carl Arrington, then seniors at Utah State University, for their assistance and to Davis Bitton, Ronald Walker, Dean May, and Maureen Ursenbach [Beecher] for their suggestions. The Journal of Mormon History thanks Richard H. Cracroft for calling the essay to our attention; Susan Arrington Madsen, Leonard’s literary executor, for permission to print this version; and the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University for supplying the copy. It has been slightly edited for stylistic consistency with the rest of the Journal and occasionally updated in the notes.
vival. “Oh Lord, I know we are thy chosen people,” intones the exiled Jew, “but why did You have to choose us?”

Stupidity, inconsistency, absurdity, meaninglessness, and all the other plagues called down upon the head of modern humanity find an antidote in humor. In a park high atop a bluff overlooking a small Midwestern town stands a decorative brass cannon. Some time ago the town fathers gathered together and decided to employ one of the citizens to climb the bluff each day to shine the cannon. After forty years on the job, the polisher returned home one night and told his wife that he had quit his job. When she asked why, he replied: “I can’t see any future in it. I’ve got a little money saved up; I’m going to take it and buy another cannon and go into business for myself.” A guest at a sumptuous dinner recently reached both hands into a brimming bowl and then massaged the substance ceremoniously into his scalp. The hostess reprimanded him with a sharp, “Are you aware that that is creamed cauliflower.” Horrified, he answered, “Good grief! I thought it was creamed turnips!”

Whether it provokes a belly laugh, a grin, a grimace, or a groan, humor plays an important role in social relations. Faced with that which is fearful, mournful, absurd, or challenging, the humorist defuses it by making it the object of a joke. Several notable psychiatrists and psychologists have delved deeply into the question of humor to reveal new insights into human character. Sigmund Freud devoted an entire volume to a study of jokes and the relationship to the unconscious. Martin Grotjahn, an eminent Freudian psychiatrist of recent years, suggests that humor is essentially an expression of the subconscious, often equal to dreams in its power to make known the secret desires and fears of the inner self. The innocent pun, the practical joke, and the barbed witticism all reveal hidden attitudes inexpressible in plain language—inexpressible by reason of their privacy, aggressiveness, or the fact that, as in dreams, they reveal something the joker has yet to consciously enunciate. Often the roots of what we consider to be humorous lie deep in childhood experiences or in the peculiar and personal truce each individual must reach with his world. The dominating, obsessive individual—the person who has yet

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to declare that truce—is least likely to develop a true sense of humor.

Practicing psychologist Harvey Mindess identified seven qualities characteristic of the humorous person: flexibility, spontaneity, unconventionality, shrewdness, playfulness, humility, and most importantly, enjoyment of the ironies that permeate life. The ironic element, the gap between the ideal and the real, the gulf between preachment and practice, the contradictions, misunderstandings, confusions, and dilemmas of life build up a reservoir of frustration in even the most outwardly contented persons. In some people the conflict remains internal. In others it becomes manifest as nervousness or aggression. In still others, as Mindess suggests, it finds a socially acceptable outlet as humor. The frustration of the eternally henpecked Mormon husband must find some comic relief in the story of the unremitting shrew who pursued her husband through the house and finally cornered him under the bed with a rain of blows. “Come out,” she cries. “No,” he retorts, “I’ll show you who holds the priesthood in this home!”

But the coin has two sides. While humor often proves valuable in equalizing internal and external pressures, it can become merely another burden heaped on the already overburdened. Victor Hugo’s *The Man Who Laughs* contains a description of the Comprachicos, mythical bands of banditti who purchased and then deliberately deformed children to sell in medieval courts as monsters. Why? So the court might be amused; so the lords and ladies might laugh. While Hugo’s history may be imaginary, his insight is superb. All too often the weak, the deformed, the friendless, the odd, and the frightened become objects of laughter. And sadly, in many cases, the joke and anecdote help to accentuate the unfortunate consequences of the deformity.

The cause of such perverted humor varies. Often the laughter amounts to a nervous prayer of thanksgiving that the laugher is not so afflicted. It may represent a release of the tension caused by attempting to ignore the reality of deformity or misery. More often it indicates insecurity on the part of the one who laughs. The Nazi who laughed uproariously over supposed Jewish cowardice more than

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likely sought to mask his own feelings of fear and shame. On one side of the coin is healthy good humor; on the other side is scathing ridicule. Often the toss is uncertain. Usually the difference is defined not by content, but by direction. To poke fun at one’s own foibles is considered healthy; the same difficulties, pointed out in others, might result in hurt or shame. As Arthur Koestler observed, comedy and tragedy are built of the same materials, and only a tiny shift in the prism shaping our point of view determines whether the response will be a belly-laugh or tears.  

While humor is an individual quality, its expression is a supremely social activity. Humor occurs between a teller and a listener; and while each may enjoy his own part, laughter implies a social event or “happening” between the two. The infectiousness of laughter is well known to anyone who has ever witnessed the degeneration of a dignified table of diners into a circle of gasping, teary-eyed juveniles, all at the instigation of a single innocent comment not even heard by more than half of those present.

To see humor as a social event, as a barometer of the internal and external pressures of a social group, and as a relief valve for those pressures adds a new importance to the enjoyable task of documenting the cultural development and the growth of social awareness in various societies. Each different group develops its own peculiar brand of humor, and thus elaborates on its own identity. Two cautions must be listed before one attempts to correlate humor and social identity. First, humor is usually an underground movement; leaders, institutions, and ideologies generally shy away from humor as both dangerous and frivolous. Second, though usually based upon at least a remote reality, the tendency of humor is toward caricature. Thus, neither a group’s own humor nor the humor directed at it from without give an accurate picture of the group; rather, the humor furnishes a set of overblown images derived from both teller and subject, often only remotely related to reality. The point is well illustrated by

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the series of Austrian jokes about Jews, cited by Freud. The punch line of each anecdote concerns a supposed Jewish abhorrence of bathing. An equally large body of Yiddish tales chides a supposed Jewish obsession with cleanliness. In both cases, the conjured image portrays the group as the storyteller would see it, not the group as it is in fact. And whether the listener “catches” the joke or not depends on the degree to which he shares the teller’s distorted conception of the group.

The conflict between a culture’s own self-image and the image aliens would impose on it is clearly shown in the development of humor in and about America’s black subculture. Soon after the institution of slavery became firmly settled in the South, a grandly comic image of the black was born in white minds. Irresponsibility, childishness, colorful dialect, fervent religious excess, shambling servility, and high-pitched fearful stammering fused into an image of the black that stayed on in many white minds well into the twentieth century. Undoubtedly the institution of slavery placed a premium on black acceptance of many of the above cultural traits that the white society found so comic. At the same time the white culture gained a subliminally perceived justification for slavery by continually conjuring up the image of the black as unable to fend for himself or herself.

Beneath the comic surface, however, was concealed another level of counter comedy. Shambling shiftlessness to the black often represented a wry self-parody and a jibe, masked as childishness, at the white culture that demanded such servility in order that it might feel superior. Some of the very elements that white culture found most childish among the blacks—the fervor of their religious behavior, for example—often concealed a deep longing for freedom and dignity, the same thrust which gave birth to the spirituals and sermons about Moses and the Promised Land. Today humor about blacks has adopted a wry, ironic stance. Who better than the black person can point out the gap between the ideal and fact of the American dream?8

If any group may jostle the blacks for a position on the bottom rung of traditional American society, it is the Indians. Examples of

pre-Columbian Indian humor are hard to come by, but teasing seems to have been employed by many tribes as a means of kindly social criticism. Once the depredations of the white man had begun, a new source for bitter Indian humor was discovered. Vine Deloria reports that a favorite Indian joke concerns the elegance with which Custer was clothed when the Indians found his body on the battlefield—at least he was wearing an Arrow shirt. Custer’s supposed last words also provide a good deal of Indian humor. Some contend that he cried out, “Take no prisoners!” Others suggested that he exclaimed, “I don’t know why these Indians is so mad; they was singing and dancin’ all last night!”

Current Indian humor extends in the same direction as its antecedents. In *Custer Died for Your Sins* Deloria prefaces a chapter on anthropologists by stating: “Into each life, it is said, some rain must fall. Some people have bad horoscopes; others take tips in the stock market. McNamara created the TFX and the Edsel. Churches possess the real world. But Indians have been cursed above all other people in history. Indians have anthropologists.” One intertribal joke concerns a banquet for the Sioux sponsored jointly by the Crow tribe and the local dog pound.

A subject close to my own heart is the humor of the southern highlanders—in other words, hillbillies—since my own ancestors come from the Blue Ridge Mountains. Every devotee of the Sunday comics is aware of the Al Capp image of the hillbilly—strong and dumb as an ox, yet wise and crafty as only the savage can be. Indigenous hillbilly humor reflects many of those same qualities. A favorite North Carolina tale concerns the poor boy and rich boy who were both in love with the same girl. When they both showed up courting at the same time, the poor boy cut off the tail of the rich boy’s horse. When the rich boy found out, he cut the throat of the poor boy’s ox from ear to ear. “Go on out and see your ox a-laughin’ at my horse,” he said to the poor boy. Infinite variants of another hillbilly joke still appear. It seems that one of the mountain folk kept his hogs underneath his own sleeping quarters. The county health officer took him to task for the practice, saying that it was extremely unhealthy. “They ain’t one of

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10 Ibid.
them hogs died yet,” replied the mountaineer. Mountain humor is rooted in reality but parodies both the people who perpetuate it and the “flatlanders”—outsiders at whom they always enjoy poking fun. Direct, uncouth, often unprintable, it chides the hillbillies themselves as often as it does outsiders. The isolation and casual violence that characterize it are well documented in their subculture.

Perhaps the greatest single body of humor built up over the years is that of the Jews. While a rough outline of that people’s turbulent history strikes most of us as anything but comic, the Jews themselves have turned their tribulations into a pervading sense of humor. If we add to the Jewish sense of humor the innumerable Gentile anecdotes in which Jews play a prominent role, we have perhaps uncovered one of the comic axes of Western civilization. The nature and strength of Jewish humor gives support to the psychoanalysts’ contention that humor is a way of allowing inner fears and frustrations to surface in a socially acceptable manner. Imagine the Jews, continually impelled to dwell in a society not of their own making, hemmed in on all fronts by rude Gentiles, rarely granted hegemony over even the smallest plot of ground or facet of life, yet at the same time burdened with a sense of being a chosen people. What outlet other than humor is left to make the dichotomy of fact and ideal bearable? The Jew chides himself, his family life, his religious practices, his plight in the diaspora, and his attempts to accommodate to the outside world. In doing so he disarms the Gentile who might ridicule him. Grotjahn summons the image of the Jew seizing his opponent’s dagger, sharpening it, and plunging it into his own self, and then returning it to his assailant who then need neither add injury nor deepen the insult.

The particular qualities of Jewish humor owe much to the Jewish way of life. The humor is intellectual, as are the people. The comparative high literacy of the Jewish people has resulted in the preservation of a higher proportion of its folk humor than that of other cultures. Often the Jewish family stood alone amid a sea of Gentiles. Consequently the scene of many anecdotes is the Jewish household, where several generations of the same family live together by force of circumstance. One elegant Yiddish anecdote easily sums up several of the larger elements of Jewish humor. Says Ben: “Considering how

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12 Grotjahn, *Beyond Laughter.*
many heartaches life holds, death is really no misfortune. In fact, I think it is sometimes better for a man not to have been born at all.” Replies Abe, “But how many men are that lucky? Perhaps not more than one in ten thousand.”

The preceding examples of the development of humor in individual societies should serve as ample background for a discussion of Mormon humor, its history and importance to Mormon society, and its possible future role among us. Persecution, isolation, religious identity, and self-preservation play equally large roles in Mormon history as they do in black, Indian, southern highlander, and Jewish history. Humor in Mormon culture, as would be expected, illustrates important similarities, too, as well as definite differences from that found in other cultures. It, too, reveals much about the society that spawned it.

Elements of early Mormon society acted both to encourage and to discourage the development of a humorous outlook on the part of members. Many of the Church’s early leaders were from rural New England, a region noted for its tight-lipped solemnity and mirthless religious forms. Undoubtedly, early members expected the new church to follow established puritanical patterns of worship and deportment. Soon, however, it became apparent that the movement was attracting many who had rebelled against the joyless New England heritage. Those attracted to the struggling new Church were often the very individuals characterized by psychologist Mindess’s humorous qualities—spontaneity, flexibility, unconventionality, and so on. Leaders in the new Church were young, vigorous, often athletic, and given to dancing, wrestling, and intellectual inquiry. They spawned a new outlook in the Church’s early days.

Simultaneous with the self-selection of potentially humorous individuals, another historic process was acting to relax cultural structures against humor. Rapidly the Latter-day Saints were becoming a frontier people. Missionaries proselyted the settled areas of the East and then moved the converts to Missouri, Illinois, and finally to the Far West. The Saints performed wonders in civilizing the wilderness, yet at the same time they were changed by the frontier experience. As the theory goes, they become more egalitarian, less bound by tradi-

tion, more inventive. Certainly an element of the extravagant, boisterous quality of frontier humor, described by Kenneth S. Lynn in *Mark Twain and Southwestern Humor* was added to Mormon humor at this time.\(^{14}\) New arrivals in Nauvoo were said to be shocked to see the Prophet himself wrestling on the floor of his home, exchanging jokes with craftsmen, and enjoying a hearty laugh like anyone else. How far he was from the stiff-collared preacher of their past!\(^{15}\)

The missionary effort itself must have been a rich source for humor in the early Church. The miseries, disappointments, language barriers, and hostility encountered by generations of missionaries provide some of the most beloved anecdotes of the young church. What modern missionary could not sympathize with Parley P. Pratt who, upon returning to his digs one cold, wet, disappointing night, is said to have disrobed, bounced onto one knee with a quick, "Dear Lord, bless Parley, Amen," and then scrambled into bed before his startled companion could even get the door closed!\(^{16}\) Parley is a prime example of the individual who adopts a humorous outlook as a means of lessening frustration. His story of a footrace with a bulldog, which I have told before on this campus and won’t repeat here, is a classic. (See Appendix.) Told in a different way, the story might have been bitter—a missionary set upon by a dog. Or it might have been spiritual—a miraculous delivery. Elder Pratt, however, chose to tell it as a comedy and probably derived a good deal of pleasure at each retelling.

Our early leaders were fond of self-directed humor, but several factors acted to limit the use of humor. Missionary successes led to a polyglot society with representatives from several different countries and backgrounds. The first result was a diminution in the potential audience for humor. What seemed funny to the New Englander was often meaningless to the English or Danish convert. Language barriers and cultural differences acted to increase oratorical emphasis on the bare essentials of doctrine and practice. But, as with the Jews,


\(^{15}\)An interesting characterization of Joseph Smith is in Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past: From the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 376–400.

\(^{16}\)I have heard this anecdote several times but have not been able to locate it in *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, edited by Parley P. Pratt (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1961).
their doctrine and ecclesiology were but one phase of an all-encompassing and joint social, cultural, and economic identity. By the mid-pioneer period the Saints could probe humorously at the very foundations of their faith in the knowledge that their identity was unshakable. They might safely chide their Mormonness so long as they remained faithful in observing the commandments.

Davis Bitton, who read and was assisted in reading some two thousand Mormon diaries in preparation for a guide to Mormon diaries,\textsuperscript{17} reports that diaries were not a favorite vehicle for expressing humor. Life, after all, was fundamentally serious business for the Saints—pursuit of salvation in God’s kingdom or of the success of the Church on the earth was no laughing matter. Still, some of the diarists had their eyes open for amusing situations and could enjoy the foibles of humankind as they observed them. One of the most sensitive of pioneer humorists was Charles L. Walker, whose diary recounts, along with the many hardships he encountered in pioneering Utah’s Dixie, the various public toasts and poems he wrote. Many of these are touched with the kind of humor that enabled Walker and his fellows to survive in a harsh environment, making light of what were in reality highly discouraging experiences.

One of his poems about the settling of St. George, titled “St. George and the ‘Drag-On’” (and incidentally prepared to honor a visit of Brigham Young and George A. Smith), made it possible for the settlers to laugh at the obstinacy of the landscape they had been called to settle and cultivate:

\begin{verbatim}
The sun it is scorching hot,  
It makes the water siz, Sir,  
And the reason why it is so hot,  
Is just because it is, Sir.  
The wind like fury here does blow,  
That when we plant or sow, Sir,  
We place one foot upon the seed,  
And hold it till it grows, Sir.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{verbatim}

An example of the kind of situational humor that occasionally


\textsuperscript{18}Quoted by Andrew Karl Larson in “I Was Called to Dixie”: The Virgin
crops up in diaries, is the following story about Sarah Kirkman and her husband, which was told in Perregrine Sessions’s diary in 1853. It seems that Brother Kirkman had been “slack” about saying his prayers. After several evenings passed and he did not pray, she told him that something would happen. So she took a chain and put it under the bed with a string to it. After she had said her prayers while he, in the bed, laughed at her, telling her that she could pray for both, she again told him something would happen. Directly after she was in the bed, she began to snore as though she were asleep. She then pulled the string and the chain began to rattle. John says, “Sarah, Sarah, did you hear that?”

“Why, what now? I told you something would happen. Hold your tongue and go to sleep and don’t bother me. You would have heard nothing of it had you said your prayers.” Directly she was asleep and the chain began to clink on the floor.

He again called, “Sarah,” and began clinging to her. She began to push him away from her and told him to hold his noise and if he didn’t she would kick him out of bed. Directly she was asleep again and the chains began to jingle.

He got out of bed and kneeled down, and with his hair on end said, “Oh, Lord, if you will forgive me now, I will do better for the time to come and not let the Devil have me. O Lord, have mercy on poor me!” At this point he began to cry for mercy, and once in a while the chain would rattle. This alarmed him even worse. At length he stepped into bed, clung to Sarah, and covered up his head and ears. According to the diary, “He has not forgot to say his prayers since.”

After the Civil War, for reasons too complicated to explore here, the Saints became the brunt of a number of British and American joke-makers: Robert Buchanan, Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde, Marietta Holley, Artemus Ward, George D. Prentice, and Bill Nye. In times of crisis, it seems, two men are indispensable—the leader and the hu-

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19Perregrine Sessions, Diary, September 14, 1853, Archives of the Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

morist; the king and his fool. The structure of the medieval court dis-
played the social function of comic relief by personifying the concept
of humor; the fool not only entertained royalty but gave the court
someone to laugh at as well. The community of Latter-day Saints
served that function during the two decades that followed the War be-
tween the States. They served as scapegoats for a nation racked by
anxiety and guilt. It was almost as though the derision of the Saints sa-
tiated a national need to ridicule and taunt a far-out group which in it-
self posed no threat. Any social order that develops a strong identity
and character, of course, lends itself to buffoonery and exaggeration.
And just as tears can come from exquisite happiness or excruciating
sorrow, laughter can be benign or malevolent. That many in the na-
tion chose to laugh derisively at a religious group—a group which, be-
cause of religious and other differences, had been physically assau-
lated and driven from its gathering place in the bitter cold of win-
ter—suggests a macabre irony about American attitudes. The humor
hurt and was cruel, as two decades of hostile federal legislation con-

While our culture and heritage are now a fully integrated part of
the American dream, many lingering attitudes are the psychological
scars left by the cruel sniggers of yesteryear. In a historical sense, the
chides and vagrant ridicule of anti-Mormon humor left wounds far
deeper than those inflicted by hot lead and mobs. As Shakespeare’s
character Iago puts it, “Who steals my purse steals trash . . . . But he
that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not en-
riches him, and makes me poor indeed.”

If Mormons go to occasional extremes today to convince the
world of their cheerful wholesomeness, might it not be because the
popular press has until recently portrayed them as penurious, drab,
desert derelicts? If Mormons see themselves as last-ditch defenders of
traditional American home and family life, might it not be because
they earnestly desire to prove the lie in the nineteenth-century charge
that plural marriage was destructive of home and family? If Mormons
seem at times excessively patriotic, might it not be because they wish
to compensate for the profound ambivalence their parents felt toward
the American government of the last century?


The contrast between humor as entertainment and humor as ridicule—between the heavy-handed distortion of truth and the mirthful interpretation of reality is illustrated by the difference between Bill Nye and Mark Twain, both western humorists who attained national stature. Nye was one of the nastiest of the anti-Mormon genre. Lonely but talented, self-righteous though espousing many Christian concepts, he was a victim and advocate of his own miserable, degrading life. For years he entertained eastern American audiences with columns and lectures which belittled Indians for their race, immigrants for their poverty and language problems, and Mormons for their religious doctrines. He would be labeled a bigot today, but somehow he had a wide audience in nineteenth-century America. Listen to his description of a Mormon emigrant train—a description that in our setting today does not seem at all clever or witty:

He [the Mormon emigrant] comes among us from every benighted land under the sun, bringing with him the flavor of his native hog pen, and the choice fragrance of the steerage passenger. He lands upon our shores unable to speak our language or to adopt our style of soap. The first words he learns are those necessary to ask some cross-eyed old hag with a wen on her nose to marry him, and he goes on inducing the old condemned hens of Zion to be sealed to him till a merciful providence cuts him down and leaves a herd of snorting widows with feet like a sack of flour and complexions like an old hair trunk.22

Mark Twain’s well-known treatment of the Mormons in Roughing It, on the other hand, is a good example of the good-natured fun-poking we all enjoy. Twain treated subjects which were inherently mirthful—and did so by the effective use of hyperbole. His story of meeting Brigham Young and the comic implications of Brigham giving each of his children a whistle entertains Latter-day Saints as much as others. Unlike Bill Nye, Twain was blessed with a full spectrum of emotions—anger, joy, pride, compassion, and even humility on occasion. Twain’s humanity, as contrasted with Nye’s bigotry, is illustrated by the former’s description of a group of immigrants headed for Salt Lake City. Twain wrote:

Just beyond the breakfast-station we overtook a Mormon emigrant-train of thirty-three wagons; and tramping wearily along and

22Bill Nye, Forty Liars, and Other Lies (Chicago and St. Louis: Belford, Clarke & Co., 1882), 149.
driving their herd of loose cows, were dozens of coarse-clad and sad-looking men, women, and children, who had walked as they were walking now, day after day for eight lingering weeks, and in that time had compassed the distance our stage had come in eight days and three hours—seven hundred and ninety-eight miles! They were dusty and uncombed, hatless, bonnetless, and ragged, and they did look so tired.25

With that compassionate description in our ears we can accept with good humor Twain’s really funny jibe at our noble pioneer women, whom he describes as “pathetically ‘homely’ creatures.” Twain continues: “No—the man that marries one of them had done an act of Christian charity which entitles him to the kindly applause of mankind, not their harsh censure—and the man that marries sixty of them has done a deed of openhanded generosity so sublime that the nations should stand [heads] uncovered in his presence and worship in silence.”24

Serving themselves as objects of what became nearly a distinct genre of American wit, Mormons learned quickly to cast humorous barbs back at the opposition. A group of young Mormons, assisted by Orson Pratt and with the apparent approbation of the Church hierarchy, began publication in 1867 of a four-page semi-monthly humor magazine devoted, as the editor maintained, to “Cents, Scents, Sense, and Nonsense.” When the Reverend J. P. Newman of Washington, D.C., traveled to Salt Lake City in an effort to engage the wary Brigham Young in a debate on polygamy, the editors of the magazine, called Keep-A-Pitchinin, took it upon themselves to offer a counter-challenge. The Doctor, they suggested, should try polygamy for six months, in order that he may get a practical knowledge of it, and we . . . enter into monogamy for the same length of time, at the end of which period, should the Dr. survive, we are to discuss the matter in the presence of our wives, socially, intellectually, physically, spiritually, morally, practically, syllogistically, somatically, materially, theoretically, temporally, and eternally; neither to speak more than six hours at a time; and, should the Dr. prefer it, we furthermore agree to occupy his pulpit in Washington, and edify his congregation there as much as he possibly could and draw his salary, as close as he dare to, while he takes our place in this city.

24Ibid., 1:101.
and draws our salary.\textsuperscript{25}

When William S. Godbe began to gather about him a group of followers hostile to the Church hierarchy, the editors made them a special object of their satire. Godbe and his chief followers, Harrison, Tullidge, Salisbury, and Eli Kelsey, appeared in the pages of \textit{Keep-A-Pitchinin} as “Goodboy,” “Harrassing,” “Gullidge,” “Sourberry,” and “Ye Lie Kelsey.” The Godbeite magazine \textit{Diogenes}, which was intended to fend off the attack, was hailed in the pages of \textit{Keep-A-Pitchinin} as a “weakly.”\textsuperscript{26}

The editors did not direct their wit solely against those attacking the Church, however. In one article, for example, they parodied the excessive hyperbole used in speeches by Church leaders commemorating the settling of the Valley. “Twenty-three years ago today, at six o’clock in the morning,” they wrote, “this whole Territory was one vast howling wilderness. The red Indian scoured the plain where now our plain women scour the floors, while the sagebrush and greasewood, towering in majesty over it, lent a grateful shade to the blood-thirsty cricket and the carnivorous grasshopper. . . . The modest mouse and timid bed bug went forth, hand in hand peacefully, over this broad land, with none to molest or make them afraid.”\textsuperscript{27}

Leaning heavily on outrageously heavy-handed puns and free-wheeling frontier braggadocio, the editors nonetheless made strides toward the elimination of the condition which, they claimed, had inspired them to found the magazine. Before \textit{Keep-A-Pitchinin}, they maintained, “Everything was dull, dark and torpid. . . . The world needed waking up.”\textsuperscript{28} Their publication was the closest example of clearly Mormon humor that undertook to do what persons like Will Rogers, Art Buchwald, and Herb Caen have done for western and American humor in more recent years.\textsuperscript{29}

During those same pioneer years, we were developing a humor-

\textsuperscript{25}Quoted in Ronald Walker, “The \textit{Keep-A-Pitchinin}—or the Mormon Pioneer was Human,” \textit{BYU Studies} 14 (Spring 1974): 339.
\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., 343.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 338.
\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., 331–32.
\textsuperscript{29}Another example of this humor is \textit{Yankee Story: View of the Utah War} (Salt Lake City: n.pub., 1857), a seven-page pamphlet in the style of Josh Billings which Hiram B. Clawson, son-in-law of Brigham Young, wrote and
ist with national stature of our own. He was, of course, J. Golden Kimball, son of Apostle Heber C. Kimball and uncle of President Spencer W. Kimball, born in Salt Lake City in 1855. 30 Departing from the idealized pattern for Mormon youth, this six-foot-three-inch beanpole spent his early years working as a freighter and mule skinner, then went to the Bear Lake area with some brothers to establish a cattle and horse ranch. The effort was far more a cowboy endeavor than one of Mormon colonization. In later years he attributed his colorful vocabulary to his unrestrained youth: “I never intend to cuss,” he said in his shrieking magpie voice. “When I get up to speak, I’m not thinking about cuss words. But they just come out. They’re left over from my cowboy days. They used to be my native language. And I can assure you that they are leftovers from a far larger vocabulary.” 31 In 1892, Kimball was appointed to the First Council of Seventy and thus was given a wide audience for his creative wit, homespun wisdom, and fervent testimony.

J. Golden Kimball’s brand of humor relied heavily on tersely worded but colorful descriptions, anecdotes concerning his own miscues and mistakes, and most memorably his frequent injudicious use of swear words. The descriptive element comes through strongly in such phrases as, “so hungry he was licking the paste off signboards,” or “I feel like a damned dirty string”—uttered when this tall, rail-thin General Authority completed a long buggy ride to Delta, Utah.

The principal object of most of J. Golden’s humor was his own foibles. What better target for a good joke than a gaunt bald-headed lamppost of a man continually plagued by accidents, slips of the tongue, and excusable weaknesses of the flesh? Kimball carried on a lifelong feud with the automobile; apparently it was just too foreign to

set “late one night and early the next morning” and ran off a dozen copies for friends in February 1858.


31 Cheney, The Golden Legacy, 37; slightly adapted.
his cowboy nature. Several of his best yarns concern being jostled in the street by cars. Once he was reported to have picked himself up while shouting in his high-pitched voice, “There’s some people with eyesight so damned poor they can’t tell the difference between a Gentile and the Lord’s anointed.” The best automobile yarn finds him dodging a speedy car on Salt Lake’s slick winter streets only to be flattened by a large woman avoiding the same car. The two slid several yards down a hill before coming to rest abruptly against a curb, the woman still atop Brother Kimball. “You can get off now, lady,” he suggested. “This is as far as I go.”

Elder Kimball died in an automobile accident in 1938, leaving, at age eighty-five, a personalized legacy of unwearying dedication to the gospel, liberally spiced with instructive and entertaining folklore.

The humorous tradition of Kimball stories is in marked contrast to the bulk of Mormon folklore, which is dominated by tales of miracles and the supernatural—all serving the didactic function of teaching that God still actively intervenes in the lives of men. Humorous folklore among the Mormons is much less common. Every Mormon, of course, has enjoyed laughing at the credulity of visiting eastern Gentiles who are reported to have been genuinely surprised to find that Mormons do not have horns. And Mormon missionaries, as we shall see, have created a tradition of humorous stories which bids fair to rank as genuine folk humor. But the most common examples of folk humor are still tales of pranks and pranksters (such as the southern Utah story of Ithamar Sprague, who terrorized a small Utah town by secretly planting a series of huge footprints where townspeople would be sure to find them).32 A modern folklore, or “jokelore,” as Jan Brunvand has termed it, is thriving in Utah cities today, especially in university areas, based upon the traditional rivalry between Mormon and Gentile factions of the population and upon the presumed irreverence of a more sophisticated college-educated Mormon youth. Much of the humor in these traditions serves to reinforce an unfortunate disdain for those of the opposite party. A significant portion, however, such as “B.Y. Woo” for “BYU” or the story of the earnest Mormon youth who rejects coffee and coke at a party in favor of milk because “someone has to drive home,” provide the healthful catharsis

of permitting Mormons to laugh together with non-Mormons at their own foibles.\textsuperscript{33}

A study of humorous stories told among Ephraim, Utah, residents, suggests that perhaps a much larger body of Mormon folklore is available were we to take the time, as Lucile Butler has done, to gather it. The wry humor of this southern Utah community is exhibited in the nicknames townspeople have invented for one another (such as “Absolutely” Mortenson, or “Annie-on-the-hill”), as well as in the stories they enjoy telling on winter evenings. Residents swear, for example, that Ole Olson, lost one day in the mountains east of Ephraim, was heard shouting, “I am Ole Olson. I come from Ephraim. I am lost. There’s two and a half in it for anybody that can find me.”\textsuperscript{34}

The word \textit{humor} derives from the Greek word for fluid or moisture. So its very opposite, etymologically speaking, is dryness. We are, of course, counseled to avoid light-mindedness, and we have resented the attempts of so-called humorists to attack the things we hold most sacred—our testimonies, our missionary work, and our temple ceremonies. We have wanted to be regarded as serious, sober-minded Christians. We have tended to regard the raucous buffoonery of Shakespearean comedy, the manic antics of Charlie Chaplin, and to some extent even the frontier wit of J. Golden Kimball as unseemly and unsaintly. We have sought for the legitimizing aura of noble thoughts and sweet sincerity. Perhaps, as a result, our published and spoken humor seems in recent years to have become increasingly more didactic—less self-revelatory. There is a tendency to treat our past only as an ideal, illustrated with tales of courageous motherhood, sacrifice, and piety. The humor derives almost without exception from situations having no particular connection with Mormon society. Stories of Abraham Lincoln, canny Scotsmen, noted business and political leaders, and even priests and rabbis abound. Revelatory self-directed humor concerning the weaknesses and special difficulties of Mormons is rare. What we have, in many instances, is comparable to what Jewish humor would be if all references to the foibles of Jewishness were removed.


A renaissance of Mormon humor could provide us with a strong sense of our Mormon identity, as distinct and apart from our national identity. It may not be as important that a family laughs together as that it prays together, but both are helpful in solving the day-to-day problems of living. When we can recognize our heritage, its weaknesses and its strengths, without fear, we are bound to develop the cultural pride which one would expect of God’s chosen people. How much healthier to laugh at our shortcomings than to brood over them! How much more honest to celebrate our leaders as the red-blooded, jolly, vital human beings they were! How much more pleasant is the shortling emotional catharsis felt during Carol Lynn Pearson’s marvelous *The Order Is Love* than an hour of weeping into a pillow! Laughter is not a Pandora’s box of evil and vice, but a jack-in-the-box that allows us to spring open with a startled surprise and purge ourselves of the hang-ups that come with being human. As smugness and self-righteousness replace persecution and hostility as the chief problems of some Church members, the Saints may expect to hear occasional witty sermons designed to disinflate overblown egos and puncture rose-colored misconceptions.

The humor pages of the *New Era* and the *Ensign* contain hopeful signs. Though there is a tendency to overuse jokes and anecdotes not rooted in Mormon experience, the “Mormonisms” of the *New Era* and an occasional anecdote in the *Ensign* are distinctly Mormon. Who can fail to be delighted with the innocent insight of the little girl who, when asked by her Sunday School teacher, “What do we have to do before we ask the Lord to forgive us?” answered confidently, “Sin.”

Certain of our General Authorities, including President Kimball, are noted for their sense of humor. President Kimball, for example, is able to see the humorous side of a frightening and potentially disastrous paralysis which came over part of his face as a young child. His smile, during the few weeks he suffered from the affliction, was, according to President Kimball, “a one-sided affair.” The incident is a perfect example of how humor can serve the healthful

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35Carol Lynn Pearson, *The Order Is Love* (Provo, Utah: Trilogy Arts Production, 1971). This theatrical production tells the story of Orderville in southern Utah, site of the longest United Order experiment; music by Lex De Azevedo.

36*Ensign*, September 1972, 97.
function of helping to relieve tension when no other outlet is available.  

I have been particularly impressed with the healthy attitudes of our young missionaries. While the importance of public relations to the missionary effort may at times contribute to a diminution of self-directed humor, the missionary experience itself is too profound in its influence not to spawn original humor. Whole books could be filled with nothing but the endless missionary elaborations of classic “Dear John” letters, jokes, and stories; the myriad gastric and eliminatory upsets that plague missionaries; language difficulties, poor beds, worse food, new missionaries, old missionaries, new converts, hostile contacts, dogs, parents, and readjustments after the mission. (Bert Wilson and John Harris have a marvelous collection of these.\(^{38}\)) The materials for missionary humor are endless, distinctly Mormon, and nostalgically attractive to those who have rendered this dedicated service in the Lord’s work. And our studies of Parley Pratt, Heber Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, Joseph F. Smith, Matthew Cowley, and other great missionaries suggest that the deep spirituality and seriousness of missionary labor is not hampered by appreciation of its rich ironies. In fact, most missionaries I have discussed this with—and this includes two sons of my own—seem to feel that without the safety valve of humor the hardships and frustrations of mission life might well have been unbearable.

I do not contend that light-mindedness is more virtuous than sobriety. What I am suggesting is that we avoid becoming afflicted with what physician-turned-comedian Jonathan Miller called the disease of cataplexy whose sufferers are plagued with an inability to laugh,

\(^{37}\)Quoted in *Improvement Era*, October 1954, 704ff.

even when they would like to.\textsuperscript{39} Too often we hesitate to laugh when we desperately need to. A situation may cry for comic perception, but it is squelched by cataplectic silence. Perhaps the greatest vice of the young revolutionists of the 1960s, as well as their ideological opposites, the Nixon confidants, was their deadly seriousness—their laughless faces. “Who can laugh at a time like this?” they said. Perhaps when sociologists of the future perform a historical autopsy they will discover the cause of the counterculture’s demise to be its undue seriousness—its widespread affliction with cataplexy.

Brothers and sisters, we learned to laugh and smile before we learned to talk. Does not this suggest that the Lord intends us to laugh just as He intends us to cry? As with Adam and Eve, humor seems to be a rib of creation—an accompaniment of our mortal condition. May a healthy sense of humor help us to realize our heavenly goals and our humanly failings!

\textbf{APPENDIX}

\textit{Note:} The incident of Parley’s race with the bulldog appears in \textit{Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt}, edited by Parley P. Pratt (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1961), 49–51. He was being taken to prison after being arrested and convicted on “frivolous charges.”

In the morning the officer appeared and took me to breakfast; this over, we sat waiting in the inn for all things to be ready to conduct me to prison. In the meantime my fellow travellers came past on their journey, and called to see me. I told them in an undertone to pursue their journey and leave me to manage my own affairs, promising to overtake them soon. They did so.

After sitting awhile by the fire in charge of the officer, I requested to step out. I walked out into the public square accompanied by him. Said I, “Mr. Peabody, are you good at a race?” “No,” said he, “but my big bull dog is, and he has been trained to assist me in my office these several years; he will take any man down at my bidding.” “Well, Mr. Peabody, you compelled me to go a mile, I have gone with you two miles. You have given me an opportunity to preach, sing, and have also entertained me with lodging and breakfast. I must now go on my journey; if you are good at a race you can accompany me. I thank you for all your kindness—good day, sir.”

I then started on my journey, while he stood amazed and not able to step one foot before the other. Seeing this, I halted, turned to him and again invited him to a race. He still stood amazed. I then renewed my exertions,

and soon increased my speed to something like that of a deer. He did not
awake from his astonishment sufficiently to start in pursuit till I had gained,
perhaps, two hundred yards. I had already leaped a fence, and was making
my way through a field to the forest on the right of the road. He now came
hallooing after me, and shouting to his dog to seize me. The dog, being one
of the largest I ever saw, came close on my footsteps with all his fury; the offi-
cer behind still in pursuit, clapping his hands and hallooing, “stu-boy,
stu-boy—take him—watch—lay hold of him, I say—down with him,” and point-
ing his finger in the direction I was running. The dog was fast overtaking me,
and in the act of leaping upon me, when, quick as lightning, the thought
struck me, to assist the officer, in sending the dog with all fury to the forest a
little distance before me. I pointed my finger in that direction, clapped my
hands, and shouted in imitation of the officer. The dog hastened past me
with redoubled speed towards the forest; being urged by the officer and my-
self, and both of us running in the same direction.

Gaining the forest, I soon lost sight of the officer and dog, and have
not seen them since. I took a back course, crossed the road, took round into
the wilderness, on the left, and made the road again in time to cross a bridge
over Vermilion River, where I was hailed by half a dozen men, who had been
anxiously waiting our arrival to that part of the country, and who urged me
very earnestly to stop and preach. I told them that I could not then do it, for
an officer was on my track. I passed on six miles further, through mud and
rain, and overtook the brethren, and preached the same evening to a
crowded audience, among whom we were well entertained.

The Book of Mormon, which I dropped at the house of Simeon Carter,
when taken by the officer, was by these circumstances left with him. He read
it with attention. It wrought deeply upon his mind, and he went fifty miles to
the church we had left in Kirtland, and was there baptized and ordained an
Elder. He then returned to his home and commenced to preach and baptize.
A church of about sixty members was soon organized in the place where I
had played such a trick of deception on the dog.
AN “AMERICAN MAHOMET”: JOSEPH SMITH, MUHAMMAD, AND THE PROBLEM OF PROPHETS IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

J. Spencer Fluhman

In 1851, Charles Mackay, the noted British poet and journalist, treated the reading public to a lively rehearsal of Mormon history, such as it was after scarcely two decades. The book’s five English, six American, French, German, and Swedish editions testified to the Mormon story’s appeal (or infamy), marked the entrance of Mormonism as a topic into the world of an international educated class, and set the framework for many subsequent treatments of Mormonism.¹ His title also sounded a telling comparison: The Mormons; or, Latter-day Saints, with Memoirs of the Life and Death of Joseph Smith, the “American Mahomet.” That same year, the American Whig

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Review ran a retrospective piece on Smith (who had been assassinated in 1844), under the title, “The Yankee Mahomet.” The latter author, certain that in Smith the nation had seen the “most dangerous religious impostor that has appeared for centuries,” explained that while Mormon theology appeared to share much with American Christian churches, Mormonism’s “main features [bear] considerable resemblance to [those] propagated by Mahomet.”

These efforts to cast Smith as an American Muhammad reinforced, rather than inaugurated, the association of the two religious leaders. As early as 1831, opponents of Joseph Smith saw in Islam’s founding prophet a cautionary religious tale with obvious implications for Mormonism. Antagonists, too, reveled in reports by Latter-day Saint apostates that Smith had made the comparison himself in 1838, promising to be “a second Mahomet to this generation” if his enemies did not “let him alone.” In their “exposing” or “unveiling” of early Mormonism, anti-Mormon writers often claimed that though Smith’s “imposture” was atypically dangerous, he was one in a long line of religious impostors, Muhammad being perhaps the signal example. Early explanations of Mormonism thus depended on a Protestant version of religious history that fixated on religious “frauds,”


2Charles Mackay, The Mormons: or, Latter-day Saints, with Memoirs of the Life and Death of Joseph Smith, the “American Mahomet” (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851); “The Yankee Mahomet,” American Whig Review 13, no. 78 (June 1851): 554–64.

3The allegations appear in the Missouri General Assembly’s Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c. in Relation to the Disturbance with the Mormons . . . (Fayette, Mo.: Printed at the Office of the Boon’s Lick Democrat, 1841), 57; Warren Parrish, “Mormonism,” The Evangelist [Carthage, Ohio] (October 1, 1838): 226–27; James H. Hunt, Mormonism: Embracing the Origin, Rise and Progress of the Sect, With an Examination of the Book of Mormon; also, Their Troubles in Missouri, and Final Expulsion from the State (St. Louis: Printed by Ustick and Davies, 1844), v; Primitivus, “Mormonism,” Practical Christian and Church Chronicle, April 16, 1841, 63.

4For the theme of counterfeit detection pervading early anti-Mormonism, see J. Spencer Fluhman, “Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Antebellum America” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madi-
which, in turn, assured that a major strain of early anti-Mormon polemics centered on Smith himself and his “pretensions” to prophetic authority. Antebellum anti-Mormon polemics were by no means monolithic, but “anti-Smithism” arguably dominated the genre during Smith’s lifetime and perhaps until anti-polygamy rhetoric came to predominate after the mid-1850s.\(^5\) Tracing the various histories of religious imposture and the corresponding links anti-Mormons discerned between Smith and Muhammad provides clues to the intellectual and cultural environment from which Mormonism sprang and illuminates the reasons so many critiques of early Mormonism took the form of exposing Smith as a religious fraud.\(^6\)

Historians of Mormonism have long noted the Smith-Muhammad comparisons, but few have sought to explain them, perhaps in part because the analogues seem obvious: Both men issued prophetic claims, offered extra-biblical scripture, and so on.\(^7\) Even so, the following attempt to reconstruct the mental world grounding the

\(^5\)The terminology here follows William Swartznell, who referred to Mormonism as “Joe Smithism.” See Swartznell, *Mormonism Exposed, Being a Journal of Residence in Missouri from the 28th of May to the 20th of August, 1838, Together with an Appendix, Containing the Revelations Concerning the Golden Bible, with Numerous Extracts from the “Book of Covenants”* (Pittsburg: O. Pekin, Published by the Author. A. Ingram, Jr., Printer, 1840), iii.

\(^6\)Peter Harrison, “Religion” and the Religions in the English Enlightenment (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16, writes that “the imposture theory was the most popular of all seventeenth and eighteenth century accounts of religion.” The concept has a complicated past. The use of imposture as an explanatory device during the century or so preceding the advent of Mormonism was so tangled that, Leigh Eric Schmidt concludes, “it is difficult to mark where the Protestants’ polemic ends and the rationalist’s begins.” Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 85–86. See also Frank E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 47–53, 65–70.

comparisons reveals the considerable interpretive challenge both religious figures posed to antebellum Protestants. Most who compared the two prophets in the nineteenth century offered no extended or detailed descriptions—often, in fact, they simply invoked Muhammad’s name, apparently assuming the audience “got the point,” much as Smith’s biographer Fawn M. Brodie did when she titled a chapter “The Alcoran or the Sword.” In the end, works like *Mohammctanism Unveiled* (1829) and *Mormonism Unveiled* (1834) shared more than just similar titles; each betrayed the tacit admission that not all religious claims are created equal and that, in a newly disestablished United States, religious liberty and perceptions of religious authenticity were inherently linked.

The ambivalences about the relationship of Christianity to the republic, the pitfalls of religious freedom, and the management of religious variety that had flared as colonies became states were by no means resolved by the time Joseph Smith added his voice to the cacophony. Indeed, it was the antebellum religious scene’s boisterousness that sent some writers into action. Leigh Eric Schmidt has aptly described the dilemma facing conventional Christians: “With the Swedenborgians . . . Mormons, Adventists, Shakers, and Methodists, one thing was clear: God was hardly falling silent. Instead, with the crumbling of established authorities, God had more prophets, tongues, and oracles than ever before; thus, the modern predicament actually became as much one of God’s loquacity as God’s hush.”

That prominent religious commentators experienced early national

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religious liberty and diversity as a profound, if somewhat subterra-
nean, tension is arguably most evident in their efforts to organize
American religion into a comprehensive narrative or to situate Pro-
testant Christianity in the context of other religious traditions.

Notably, many of these writers saw their efforts to educate a
sometimes fractious body of Christians as a vital step in realizing a
kind of denominational détente. Hannah Adams, whose Dictionary of
All Religions was published in several editions in the United States
and England after 1784, endeavored to avoid “judgment on the senti-
ments” of Christian groups and even refrained from employing divi-
sive terms such as “Heretics, Schismatics, Enthusiasts, [and] Fanatics,”
but her concern for fair representation had limits. It did not, for
instance, extend to the “heathen nations,” whose ceremonies ap-
peared “obscene and ridiculous.” In Adams’s account, Islam was the
result of Muhammad’s “pretensions to a divine mission” and strategic
use of “polygamy and concubinage to make his creed palatable to the
most depraved of mankind.” What sensuality could not do, she con-
tinued, the sword certainly did.¹¹

Similarly, Thomas Branagan intended his 1811 volume “as a
persuasive to Christian Moderation.” As an antidote to “religious big-
ocry and intolerance,” Branagan offered readers the “true senti-
ments” of various groups; but, again, the descriptions that followed
seem, to modern eyes at least, to repudiate Branagan’s assertion of
impartiality. Catholicism, Unitarianism, and Shakerism received
less-than-flattering appraisals, and when describing what he called
“Anti-Christian” groups, Branagan candidly related that he purposed
“to shew the superiority as well as super-excellence of the Christian
system.” His portrayal of Islam thus charted Muhammad’s rise “from
a deceitful hypocrite” to his becoming the “most powerful monarch
of his time.”¹²

Other Protestant writers were similarly torn. “Enlightened” in-

¹¹Hannah Adams, A Dictionary of All Religions and Religious Denomi-
nations, Jewish, Heathen, Mahometan, and Christian, Ancient and Modern, 4th
ed. (New York: James Eastburn and Company, 1817); the first edition was
published as An Alphabetical Compendium of the Various Sects . . . (Boston:
1784), 1–3, 6, 12, 23, 132, 156–61.

¹²Thomas Branagan, A Concise View of the Principal Religious Denomi-
nations in the United States of America, Comprehending a General Account of
Their Doctrines, Ceremonies, and Modes of Worship (Philadelphia: Printed by
terest in world faiths and aspirations to objectivity notwithstanding, as ardent Christians they were duty bound to compare, to weigh, to assign value—to “educate” in the more dogmatic sense. Accordingly, other writers felt no need to adjust Adams’s or Branagan’s approach. In works such as David Benedict’s History of All Religions (1824), J. Newton Brown’s massive Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (1835), Charles Goodrich’s Religious Ceremonies and Customs (1836) and History of the Church (1849), John Hayward’s Religious Creeds and Statistics (1836) and Book of Religions (1843), and Robert Baird’s Religion in America (1844), Protestant writers narrated religious history in such a way that religious “impostors” from Muhammad to Joseph Smith functioned as ever-present foils to God’s saving work in the world. Anti-Mormons, then, found ready-made conceptual tools when they plunged headlong into this long-standing cultural conversation about religious authenticity. When anti-Mormons explained Joseph Smith by locating him in a history of religious impostors, they included all the usual suspects. Abner Cole, Joseph Smith’s neighbor and part-time newspaper editor, was one of the first to publish his objections to Smith. Unconvinced by Smith’s account of book’s provenance, Cole took it upon


himself to warn the public by publishing excerpts from the Book of Mormon in his *Reflector* (Palmyra, New York) before the volume was ready for sale and, thereafter, by decrying the young church even after Smith and his followers trekked to Ohio.\(^{14}\) The “spindle shanked ignoramus” Joseph Smith, he wrote, was hardly a prophet. Rather, he was best understood in the context of “ancient impostures” like Muhammad and more recent frauds Jemima Wilkinson and Joanna Southcote.\(^{15}\)

Disciples of Christ co-founder Alexander Campbell, whose *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon* offered the first extended, systematic response to Smith and his new scripture, presented a more extended list of religious charlatans. Every age had seen its share of “impostors and delusions[,]” Campbell wrote, from ancient “frauds” like Shabbatai Tsvi and Muhammad to more recent impostors like the Anabaptists, Shakers, or the “Barkers, Jumpers, and Mutterers” among Campbell’s more ecstatic contemporaries.\(^{16}\) Ohio newsman Eber D. Howe, whose prodigious *Mormonism Unvailed* (1834) became the standard for anti-Mormon tomes for decades thereafter, excoriated the early Ohio Saints by placing them in company with the “Mahometan, the Pope, the French Prophets, the Swedenborgians, the followers of Ann Lee, Joanna Southcote, [and] Jemima [Wilkin-


\(^{15}\)Abner Cole, *Reflector* [Palmyra, NY], June 30, 1830, January 6 and 18, and February 14, 1831.

\(^{16}\)The quotation is from Campbell’s first anti-Mormon piece, published in his own paper: Alexander Campbell, “Delusions,” *Millennial Harbingers* 2, no. 2 (February 7, 1831): 85–96. The material was subsequently published as a tract: Alexander Campbell, *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon; with an Examination of Its Internal and External Evidences, and a Refutation of Its Pretences to Divine Authority* (Boston: Benjamin H. Green, 1832).
inson].”

Showing surprisingly little variation, anti-Mormon writers found ready precedents for Smith and his followers among history’s religious upstarts, controversial innovators, and “false prophets”—and in the process rhetorically helped render the Mormon prophet deviant, controversial, or false.

Even so, anti-Mormon writers typically settled on two figures in particular as especially exemplary of the kind of deception Smith was allegedly perpetrating. One, the New York prophet Robert Matthews, known to followers and detractors alike as “Matthias,” drew comparison with Smith in part because of their shared proximity in both time and place. The other, Muhammad, served for many antebellum Americans as history’s arch-imposter. Interestingly, commentators found that the failures of the former had exposed him for what he was and that the latter’s successes had done the same for Muhammad. This insight helps to explain the place of Muhammad as arguably the explanatory device anti-Mormons chose for Smith. While Smith’s presumably imminent failure drew immediate comparisons with Matthias after the latter had been “exposed” in the mid-1830s, Muhammad ultimately helped anti-Mormons cope with both Smith’s assumed chicanery and his otherwise inexplicable success.

Anti-Mormons found similarities between Joseph Smith and Matthias that were almost too good to be true. Robert Matthews created a stir in New York during the mid-1830s with his outlandish dress and long beard, his confrontations with established authorities, his short-lived religious commune financed by well-to-do disciples, and, especially, rumors of sexual impropriety and the controversial death of one of his followers. His brief rise to infamy did nothing to help Joseph Smith, but many—including anti-Mormons, modern historians, and apparently Matthias himself—have drawn parallels between the two prophets.

Testament to both Matthias’s notoriety and the lack of debate about either prophet’s legitimacy, most writers comparing the two New York prophets did little more than mention Matthias’s

17Eber D. Howe, “The above was handed us . . . .” Painesville Telegraph, February 22, 1831, 3.
18See Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Their prologue (3–11) details the meeting of Matthias and Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, where Matthews apparently sought some kind of alliance with Smith. See also Dean C. Jessee, ed., The Papers of Joseph Smith,
name. Christian Palladium editor Joseph Badger could only lament the fact that both prophets had progressed as far as they had by 1834. “While we reflect,” he wrote, “on the fanaticism of Mormons in the West . . . and of Matthias in New York, we are astonished that such false systems should have any adherents.” “All the churches,” he concluded, “should be on their guard.”

Whereas Matthias’s short-lived experiment and abrupt exit from public gaze provided commentators with a relatively easy example of a self-evident fake, giving their comparisons with him and Joseph Smith a hopeful tone that the latter would meet a similar end, Islam’s prophet provided a very different simile for anti-Mormons, one that became seemingly more fitting over time. Anti-Mormons, after all, were associating Smith with Muhammad long before Smith was charged with inappropriately mingling church and state in Missouri or Illinois, and years before Mormon polygamy and removal to the great Western desert made the analogy irresistible. Not only does the prevalence of Muhammad in early anti-Mormon writing demand a more nuanced explanation than has been offered in the past, but it also illuminates an early American mental world that was surprisingly less provincial than one might suppose. The specter of Islam, while admittedly hardly the paramount menace for antebellum Americans, loomed large in their thinking about religious difference, history, and the relationship between Christianity and civilization.


Islam was informed by exposure to more contemporary Muslims (African Muslims, for instance, through either the slave trade or naval conflict off the North African coast) many American Protestants were versed in Christian versions of Islamic history through the previously mentioned religious reference works or—as anti-Mormon literature reveals—from popular biographies of Muhammad.21

The biographies of the Muslim prophet written before the Civil War almost never took up the problem of Joseph Smith, but they pondered some of the same dilemmas that anti-Mormons wrestled with. Biographers, most often writing as Christians for a Christian audience, took on the interpretive burdens of dismissing Muhammad’s claims, providing an alternative provenance for the Qur’an, explaining the appeal of a religious “scheme” that Americans found utterly unappealing, and accounting for Islam’s successes, which, antebellum writers were forced to admit, seemed to be only increasing with time.

While most biographers used Muhammad’s life as a prime arena in which to detail “the true nature of imposture,” as one of them put it, a survey of the major narratives available to Americans reveals considerable ambivalence about the Arabian prophet and the lessons his life and legacy held for American Christians. Englishmen penned the earliest biographies of Muhammad available to English-speakers, but they found an eager audience in the early republic. Humphrey Prideaux’s *The True Nature of Imposture, Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet*, composed in the late seventeenth century, went through several English editions and was still popular (and useful—Prideaux’s critical insight was that too much liberty leads to tyranny) enough for American printings in 1796 and 1798. Prideaux’s Muhammad used religion as a shroud for his political ambitions. Having observed the divided, fractious state of Arabia, Prideaux reasoned, the would-be prophet “concluded, that nothing would be more likely to gain a party firm to him . . . than the making of a new religion.” In Prideaux’s narrative, Muhammad then mingled Judaism, various “Christian heresies[,]” and an ample dose of “sensual de-

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lights” to delude an unsuspecting Arab populace.\textsuperscript{22} The notion that Islam was something of a cheap rip-off of other religious traditions, repeated time and again throughout the genre, became thoroughly self-serving for Christians. Not only was Muhammad denied the credit of original thought, but anything noteworthy in his “system” could be easily dismissed as a mere borrowing from real religion.\textsuperscript{23} Prideaux, moreover, noted with scarcely concealed delight that Muhammad’s rise roughly corresponded with the Bishop of Rome’s claims to supremacy. “From this time,” he wrote, “both having conspired to found themselves an empire in imposture,” Catholics and Muslims had each been seeking “by the same methods . . . those of fire and sword,” to trample upon the Church of Christ.\textsuperscript{24}

An anonymous \textit{Life of Mahomet}, informed by Prideaux’s work but critical of it on several important points, followed at the end of the eighteenth century and was available in American editions in 1802 and 1813. The author noted at the outset the rather chilling fact that “the arch Imposter” had deluded a larger “portion of the habitable globe” than had been redeemed by Christianity. Christian readers were soothed, though, by the promise that a revelation of the means whereby Muhammad “accomplished this stupendous effect” would not only earn him the “execration” of “every rational being” but would “heighten the importance and beauty of the Christian religion.” The means, described in detail, included Muhammad’s “pretending” to receive revelations in a cave and his pilfering of religious ideas from a Christian monk in his employ. The narrative similarly made short work of Islam’s subsequent successes. Convinced that the “free exercise of reason” would liberate the world of Islam, the author nevertheless anguished that “while it continues to be crammed down the throats” of humanity, it would not die out “on a sudden.” Such a perspective not only rhetorically depicted Muslims as passive pawns

\textsuperscript{22}Humphrey Prideaux, \textit{The True Nature of Imposture Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet} (Fair Haven, Vt.: James Lyon, 1798), 10–11. See Allison, \textit{Crescent Obscured}, 42.

\textsuperscript{23}For examples, see Adams, \textit{Dictionary of All Religions}, 161; Benedict, \textit{History of All Religions}, 31; Branagan, \textit{A Concise View of the Principal Religious Denominations}, 128; George Bush, \textit{The Life of Mohammed; Founder of the Religion of Islam, and of the Empire of the Saracens} (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1832), 17–18.

\textsuperscript{24}Prideaux, \textit{True Nature of Imposture}, 12–13.
under their leaders’ thumbs but altogether denied that thinking people would ever voluntarily subscribe to such a system.25

Like Prideaux, the author of *Life of Mahomet* found parallels between Islam and Catholicism too glaring to ignore.26 He credited Muhammad with providing the “church in Rome” with the idea of “forcing men to believe” and wryly added that the Catholics “had faithfully improved it.” With the specter of the Islamic delusion apparently fully exposed, the logic of “any protestant government” placing “certain restraints” on Catholics ostensibly made more sense. The writer continued that “such a step” was not designed to make Catholics “believe anything” but simply to “prevent that moral, and especially political mischief” that “unavoidably” followed from Catholic “principles.”27 So, while Muslims or Catholics served as rhetorical foils to English and then American liberty, those fervently opposed to Islam, Catholicism, or Mormonism paradoxically sought to decry perceived religious or political authoritarianism while providing a rationale whereby arbitrarily defined religious “extravagances” could be controlled.

American biographers of Muhammad added variations to the English themes but were no less ambivalent about faith, power, and coercion. Edward Gibbon, whose *Life of Mahomet* appeared in 1805, credited the prophet with “genius” but nevertheless narrated his life as being one marked by duplicity and intrigue. Indeed, while Gibbon seemed at points impressed with Muhammad’s timing and shrewdness, in the end the “genius” descriptor served only to heighten the danger. Gibbon concluded that, since the prophet was either enlightened by the “spirit of fraud or enthusiasm,” Islam’s confession of


27[Anon.], *Life of Mahomet*, 68–70.
faith—there is no God but the one God and that Muhammad is his prophet—was “compounded” of “an eternal truth . . . and a necessary fiction.” The latter part of the confession was necessarily false given Gibbon’s Christian commitments, but he and other American Protestants were forced to grapple with the at least apparently partial truth of Muhammad’s monotheistic message. Muhammad had, in the logic of their narratives, happened onto a surprising theological leap forward in his conniving; the question for Gibbon and others was what to do with it. Gibbon’s response was characteristic. Yes, the Qur’ an “is a glorious testimony to the unity of God”; but, he reminded his readers, “conversation [presumably with Christians and Jews] enriches the understanding,” and Muhammad doubtless borrowed those insights.\(^\text{28}\)

Gibbon’s work also hints at another conundrum facing Christian biographers of the prophet. While Gibbon ultimately concluded that “ambition” was the prophet’s ruling passion, it was so only during his “last years.” Unlike Prideaux, who had seen unholy ambition in Muhammad from the start, Gibbon charted a progression of sorts, from the “enthusiasm of his youth” to the full flowering of imposture once the prophet found a willing audience. For Gibbon, then, Muhammad was consecutively deceived and deceiving. Originally carried away in flights of religious fancy—stemming no doubt from his being “addicted to religious contemplation”—Muhammad’s character “must have been gradually stained” by repeated acts of injustice and violence. Gibbon’s summation of the prophet’s life and concomitant moralizing about the relationship between enthusiasm and imposture was perhaps intended as something of a middle ground: “From enthusiasm to imposture, the step is perilous and slippery: the daemon of Socrates affords a memorable instance, how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others, how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self-illusion and voluntary fraud.” Gibbon could thus grant good intentions to Muhammad, at least early on; but in the end, such an association not only still ultimately repudiated the prophet’s career, it also served as a cautionary tale against enthusiastic religion generally. Conflating these two different claims about Muhammad offered a more textured picture than other Christian biographers had but hardly redeemed

the prophet in any significant way.  

New York University professor George Bush incorporated many conventions of earlier biographies, but his attempt to find theological meaning in the broader contours of Islamic history was novel. He no doubt surprised readers by aiming to “exhibit the Arabian prophet as a signal instrument in the hands of Providence.” Bush concluded that the “pseudo-prophet” used religion to “cloak” his “unbounded ambition” and vile “sensuality” to become “decidedly the most successful imposter, that ever lived,” but not before arguing that Islam was used in an apparently indirect way by “Infinite Wisdom” as “a most terrible scourge” upon apostate “Christendom.” Finding a dearth of “sufficient human causes to account” for such a phenomenon as Islam, Bush was left with God as the prime mover behind it, awkward though it was to have the Christian deity inspiring unwitting Muslims to work his wrathful will on errant Christians.  

Washington Irving added a biography of Muhammad in the late 1840s. Irving’s portrait was more moderate than many earlier treatments, leaning as it did toward delusion as the primary cause of Muhammad’s religious errors. Given the descriptions of the prophet’s early religious “paroxysms,” Irving concluded that epilepsy was the real source of his revelations. A “disordered state of mind and body” was by no means a flattering explanation of the origins of Islam, but it was a step away from the conscious deception posited by other Christian biographers.  

Added to these biographies was a notable attempt to narrate
Muhammad’s life for the theater. George Miles’s *Muhammad, the Arabian Prophet*, published in 1850, portrayed the prophet’s career in five acts. His Muhammad had a career that ran from the sincere to the diabolical, which in turn helped establish Miles’s primary point, namely, “the inability of the greatest man, starting with the purest motives, to counterfeit a mission from God, without becoming the slave of hell.” Though Miles’s Muhammad had pure aims at the start, his turn to “willful deceit and imposture” to accomplish those ends doomed him to use his “doctrine . . . as a pretense” for a purely secular pursuit of power. Early on, Muhammad soothes his conscience by reasoning with God:

If I have falsely worn the Prophet’s mantle,  
And falsely sworn to be thy messenger,  
‘Tis to reclaim the erring soul of man  

. . . if I bring  
A nation to adore thee, shall I not  
Deserve the splendid title I usurp,  
And be the Prophet I pretend to be?  

American readers no doubt identified with various characters initially skeptical of Muhammad’s claims. One urges the prophet to “drop this sacrilegious mask”; another sums up the imposter as a “vile composite Jew and Christian.” The unwise Omer, though, reckons that if “he be mad, ‘tis manliness to spare him; If sane, we should reflect before condemning.” His tolerance ultimately provided one of the play’s cautionary lessons. In hesitating to expose Muhammad for what he was, his initially wary hearers unwittingly function as accessories to his crimes. For audiences agitated by waves of religious trouble ranging from Shakers to Catholics to Mormons, the message was no doubt unmistakable.  

As anti-Mormons concurred and made Muhammad the princi---

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32George H. Miles, *The Arabian Prophet: A Tragedy in Five Acts* (Boston: Phillips, Samson & Company, 1850), v–viii, 38. Miles’s offering follows in the tradition of Voltaire, who wrote *Le fanatisme ou Mahomet le Prophete* to decry religious intolerance in the mid-eighteenth century, and English clergyman and playwright James Miller, who translated Voltaire’s play into English and refashioned it into a warning against the dangers that religious fa-
pal metaphor for explaining Joseph Smith, they incorporated ready-made conventions but also inherited the interpretive questions that plagued treatments of Muhammad’s life. If little creativity was needed, in other words, to narrate Smith’s later career as a tale of lust for political power (or women), anti-Mormons first had to decide for Smith what others had had to decide for Islam’s prophet, namely (as one writer titled his review of an English edition of the Qur’an), “Was [he] an Imposter or an Enthusiast?” The question was apparently somewhat less complicated with Smith, as almost no one found him to be anything but a crafty deceiver. As one anti-Mormon had it: “The scheme of Mormonism is too deep ever to admit the supposition that he [Smith] is the dupe of his own imposture. His claims are such that they must be admitted as true, or he must be branded as a consummate knave—for his works plainly show that he is neither a fool, nor a fanatic, but a deliberate designer, who intends the whole scheme which he has set in operation, for the gratification of his own vanity and selfishness.”

Second, anti-Mormons were forced to grapple with both the Book of Mormon and its limited but growing appeal, which they did in some of the same ways that Christian writers engaged the Qur’an. And finally, Mormonism’s early history demanded that they reckon with the implications of an admittedly suc-

33 “Was Mohammed an Imposter or an Enthusiast?” *North American Review* 63 (October 1846): 496–513. The author cautioned, “Let us not, even if we can, shut our eyes to the fact, that in the success of Mohammad God has placed before us a riddle worthy of our reading” (497).


35 For a surprisingly favorable comparison of the two scriptures, see “Editor’s Table,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 3, no. 17 (October 1851): 701–2. Others were less impressed. David Marks wrote that, far from being on par with the Bible, the Book of Mormon did not deserve to be compared with the “Apocrypha, or the Alcoran[.]” Anti-Mormon Origen Bacheler agreed: “To name [the Book of Mormon] the same day with the Koran of Mohammed, would be an outrageous libel on that book.” Origen Bacheler, *Mormonism Exposed, Internally and Externally* (New York: Published at 162
cessful Joseph Smith, who, by the mid-1840s, had established a prosperous city with thousands of faithful followers.

The first two questions—was Smith either a deceiver or deceived and was the Book of Mormon authentic—were of course inherently linked. In contrast to the Mormons, who took the Book of Mormon as evidence of Smith’s prophetic calling, anti-Mormons found it the glaring marker of his imposture. That bifurcation notwithstanding, it is not surprising that anti-Mormons, most wedded to a decidedly Biblicist understanding of Christianity, often rejected the Book of Mormon out of hand. Thus, the editor of the *Wayne Sentinel* could confidently guess at the nature of the text and invoke the imposture framework months before the book was published:

> Just about in this particular region, for some time past, much speculation has existed, concerning a pretended discovery through superhuman means, of an ancient record of a religious and divine nature and origin, written in ancient characters, impossible to be interpreted by any to whom the special gift has not been imparted by inspiration. It is generally known and spoken of as the “Golden Bible.” Most people entertain an idea that the whole matter is the result of a gross imposition and a grosser superstition. It is pretended that it will be published as soon as the translation is completed.36

Indeed, many saw no pressing need to read the text at all after its publication. The *Boston Recorder*, for instance, noted: “Of the book, it [is] only necessary to say that it is a ridiculous imitation of the manner of the Holy Scriptures,” adding without self-consciousness, “We have never seen the ‘Book of Mormon.’”37 To be sure, it was the Book of Mormon along with claims to prophetic power that drew the Smith-Muhammad comparisons in the first place. New York anti-Mormon

Nassau St., 1838), 36; David Marks, *The Life of David Marks, To the 26th Year of His Age . . .* (Limerick, Maine: Printed at the office of the Morning Star, 1831), 341.

36 “Just about in this particular region . . .,” *Wayne Sentinel* 6, no. 40 (June 26, 1829), 3.

37 “Mormonism,” *Boston Recorder* 17, no. 41 (October 10, 1832): 161. Mormons could apparently feel equally strongly about the book despite not having read it. Tyler Parsons reported that the “Mormons that have come to Boston, and with whom I have conversed, do not appear to be conversant with the Book of Mormon. One of them asserted in a public meeting, that he had never read it through, but he knew it was all true, by the power of
James M’Chesney, for instance, needed little more than the Book of Mormon to make up his mind about Smith. “Here we have both the book of Mormon,” he wrote in 1838, “and the Alcoran before us. They both breathe the same spirit—are both in the same style—twins were never more alike.”

James G. Bennett, one of the young nation’s journalistic giants, intuitively connected false prophet and false scripture and thereby helped set the trend of associating Smith and Muhammad. Bennett toured upstate New York in 1831 with Martin Van Buren and published reports of his trip in several articles in his Morning Courier and New York Enquirer. After interviewing several up-state New Yorkers somewhat familiar with Mormon beginnings and being introduced to the Book of Mormon (his diary entry for June 29 notes that a copy was on the book table of the canal boat he rode from Utica to Syracuse), he described Martin Harris, an early convert to Mormonism, as “the Ali of the Ontario Mahomet.” Bennett would conclude that “Mormonism is the latest device of roguery, ingenuity, ignorance, and religious excitement,” but he hardly needed to detail the point, given his audience’s likely appraisals of Muhammad.

As was the case with Christian commentators and the Qur’ân, anti-Mormons had to decide if the Book of Mormon was completely inane or if it evinced a mixture of tedium and intelligence. Protestant narrators of early Islam had all rejected the Qur’ân as scripture but disagreed about the text in important ways. To some it was gibberish, testament to the meanness of Muhammad’s mind and the ignorance of the Arabs. More moderate writers found more substance, though those admissions typically served to buttress the claim that Muhammad had borrowed his ideas from Judaism or Christianity: “It does

God.” Tyler Parsons, Mormon Fanaticism Exposed: A Compendium of the Book of Mormon, or Joseph Smith’s Golden Bible (Boston: Printed for the Author, 1841), 15.


not contain one single doctrine,” wrote David Benedict, “which may not be fairly derived either from the Jewish or Christian scriptures, from the spurious and apocryphal gospels . . . from the Talmudic legends, or from the traditions . . . of the Arabs.” Even Washington Irving, who thought the Qur’an verged on sublimity in some passages, found its insights, which he considered mostly borrowed from the “Mishnu and the Talmud,” compromised by “wild notions derived from other sources.”

Reasoning on the true nature of the Qur’an, not surprisingly, influenced the various estimations of the prophet, whether he was regarded as an evil genius or merely a swindler lucky enough to be surrounded by idiots.

Anti-Mormons, whether or not they had ever read the Muhammad biographies, rehashed these arguments and were similarly hard-pressed for a unified conclusion about Smith and the text. Explanations can be generally grouped into two broad perspectives or some combination of them. One set found the Book of Mormon so preposterous or dull as to necessarily have been the creation of an unlearned, backwoods imposter (i.e., Mark Twain’s quip that the Book of Mormon amounted to “chloroform in print”). Others claimed that Smith had only pilfered the text, a grudging admission that some aspects of the work seemed beyond Smith as they understood him. The editor of the Boston Daily Advisor, for instance, seemed relieved to have received word of the Book of Mormon’s alleged original author (i.e., Solomon Spaulding), because it had been “difficult to imagine how a work containing so many indications of being the production of a cultivated mind” could be connected with Smith. Various explanations creatively straddled the two claims, but whatever their posi-

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40 Benedict, History of All Religions.
41 Irving, Mahomet and His Successors, 56, 78.
42 Mark Twain, Roughing It, 2 vols. (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing, 1899), 1:132.
43 Reprinted in Alexander Campbell, “The Mormon Bible,” Millennial Harbinger, June 1839, 267. Edwin DeLeon’s represented this view when he wrote that the Book of Mormon amounted to “a book far beyond the powers of Smith to compose, and which as an imaginative fiction, will take a high rank in American literature, long after Mormonism[.]” Edwin DeLeon, “The Rise and Progress of the Mormon Faith and People,” Southern Literary Messenger 10, no. 9 (September 1844): 526–38; the quotation is on p. 533. For the “Spaulding theory,” see Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith:
tion, anti-Mormon writers found Smith culpable of some deception and capable of borrowing material from other sources, whether from his own culture, the Bible, or another author. The complexities of the book’s content, origins, and reception left anti-Mormons, as Richard Bushman has noted, with some explaining of their own to do, but it remains true that the Book of Mormon functioned in anti-Mormon writing as the primary indicator that Joseph Smith was something other than a prophet.44

And so it went with other aspects of Smith’s prophetic career. Anti-Mormons exulted at almost every turn at the ways that Mormonism, in their eyes at least, seemed to emulate Islam. Critics discerned Islamic tendencies in Mormon arguments for the Book of Mormon, including emphasis on Smith’s lack of schooling, which, they countered, Muslims also claimed for Muhammad.45 Others saw in the Mormon gathering to Missouri an echo of Muslim “pilgrims” gathering “to the tomb of Mahomet.”46 After an 1836 visit to Mormon Kirtland and its prominent temple, one skeptical visitor was sure that the Mormons were hatching dark schemes: “I am confident that a knowledge of the truth respecting Mormonism, will place it on a par with Mahometanism.”47 James M’Chesney warned that, given what he viewed as elements of “war and bloodshed” in the Mormon revelations, Americans should beware lest they fall prey to a Mormon/Indian alliance and a violent grab for power. Worried that readers would “laugh at such an idea,” M’Chesney cautioned that others scoffed “at Mahomet, no doubt, till his system filled the East, scourged that side of our earth, and has held dominion for twelve


hundred years.”

In the wake of the 1838 Mormon War in Missouri, reports of Mormon militarism sparked an anti-Mormon field day. In a characteristic example, William Swartznell roared that Mormonism, “like the religion of Mahomet . . . carries in one hand the sword of vengeance and rapine, and in the other the pretended revelations of the Most High.” In Mormon Nauvoo, where Smith found himself at the head of his church, city government, and the local militia, detractors found their predictions seemingly verging on reality. William Harris fumed that though the “idea of a second Mahomet arising in the nineteenth century, may excite a smile[,]” the “steps now taking by the Mormons to concentrate their numbers[,]” coupled with their overtures to Indians and their sizable city militia, placed Smith within reach of “scenes unheard of since the days of Feudalism.”

As anti-Mormons took up the question of Mormonism’s American-ness in earnest in the 1840s, Islam figured more prominently than ever, Muhammad serving as the archetypal example of tyranny cloaking authoritarian political designs behind a veneer of religious piety.

The Smith-Muhammad comparison proved both incredibly elastic and entirely durable. After Smith’s death and the Mormon removal to the Great Basin, the analogy was reinvigorated and eventually, with the rise of the pictorial magazine, given a visual element, complete with exotically dressed Mormon “harem” girls and camels.

Looking back on Mormonism’s first decades, writers in the 1850s evinced a mixture of disdain and disbelief at what had transpired and, still, Islam helped make sense of it all. “Since the intro-

48 M’Chesney, An Antidote to Mormonism, 17.
49 Swartznell, Mormonism Exposed, iii; emphasis his.
50 Harris, Mormonism Portrayed, 44. See also John A. Clark, Gleanings by the Way (Philadelphia: W. J. & J. K. Simon, 1842), 311.
52 For examples, see Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834–1914 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 26, 49.
duction of Christianity,” wrote Philadelphia author and publisher Charles Peterson in the mid-1850s, “the world has seen two great religious impostures—remarkable for the absurdity of the pretensions, not less than for their astonishing success.” Mormonism, like “Mohamedanism[,]” defied understanding: “Thirty years scarcely have elapsed since this imposture began; but already it has made converts of three hundred thousand souls—has founded a commonwealth—has sent forth missionaries to Moscow, to Rangoon, to the Isles of the Pacific.” Though the two “false faiths” shared belief in “the books of Moses,” “the teachings of Christ,” “new revelation,” founding “prophets of God,” a “love of the marvelous,” and “gross sensuality,” Peterson could not help but bemoan the fact that, unlike Islam, Mormonism had “sprung up in an age the most civilized and intellectual mankind has ever seen” and that its “earliest converts were from the Christian Church.” Dumbfounded, Peterson concluded that “in spite of ridicule, in spite of the vices of its founder, in spite of positive proof of its being an imposture, it has not only steadily increased, but increased faster than any Christian sect in the same period of time.”

In like manner, the editor of Harper’s New Monthly Magazine knew a remarkable story when he saw it. Anticipating sociologist Rodney Stark—who famously dubbed Mormonism the first “new world religion” since Islam—by some 133 years, the editor marveled that, “for the first time since the days of Mohammed,” Mormonism had both appropriated earlier traditions and constituted something entirely new and seemingly enduring. The history of Mormonism, he wrote, troubling though it may be, marked no more nor less than the “rise of a new religion, and of a distinctly new religious people in the 19th century.” Whatever utility exists in “objectively” comparing the careers of Muhammad and Joseph Smith—and there may indeed be some, especially given Mormonism’s recent graduation to “world religion” status—it must be understood that there were historically

specific reasons for the comparison in the first place. In a religious scene vexed by disestablishment and a dizzying array of spiritual voices, Americans made sense of their new religious environment as best they could, utilizing what interpretive tools they had. In the end, Muhammad served Americans as a metaphor to explain the unexplained, to dismiss what would not go away on its own, and to rhetorically place on the margins what seemed an all-too-immediate threat.

THE LAST SMITH PRESIDENTS
AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE RLDS CHURCH

William D. Russell

Wallace B. Smith was president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for eighteen years, 1978–96. He was the last of five direct descendants of Joseph Smith Jr. who led the Church continuously from 1860 until 1996.¹

¹ Not only was he succeeded by the first non-Smith president, W. Grant McMurray, but four years later, the World Conference also voted to change the Church’s name to Community of Christ (effective April 6, 2001). Under Wallace B. Smith’s leadership, the Church underwent a dramatic transition from a religious movement that defined itself as the one true church of Jesus Christ on earth to a church which sees itself as one manifestation of the whole body of believers in Christ. When the Church was centered on a self-concept of uniqueness,
Wallace B. Smith, the fifth and last Smith president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (1978–96). Unless otherwise noted, all photographs in this article are courtesy of the Community of Christ Archives.
much of the focus of its mission was on the Church’s founder, Joseph Smith Jr. As the Church made the transition away from uniqueness, the focus of its mission shifted from Joseph Smith to Jesus Christ. It is sometimes said by Church leaders, “We used to see Jesus through Joseph’s eyes; now we try to see Joseph through Jesus’ eyes.” During his presidency Wallace B. Smith did much to bring about this dramatic shift in the Church’s theology and mission. This article briefly reviews the history of the RLDS Church up through the accession of W. Wallace Smith as president, surveys the theological shifts that occurred in the 1960s, the appointment of Wallace B. Smith as the last Smith president, then concentrates on the seven major changes that occurred during his presidency. The article concludes with a look at what may be considered issues yet remaining with which the Community of Christ must deal.

**The First RLDS Century**

The founder of the RLDS Church was Jason W. Briggs, a little-known figure in Mormon history. At age twenty, Briggs was baptized on June 6, 1841, in Petosi, Wisconsin, ordained an elder a year later, and soon began a branch in Beloit, Wisconsin. After Joseph Smith’s death in 1844, Briggs, unconvinced by Brigham Young’s claims, accepted James J. Strang as God’s choice to succeed the martyred prophet.

Strang’s initial success seems to stem from how closely his prophetic persona paralleled that of Joseph Smith: a letter of appointment from the martyred prophet, an alleged supernatural visitation confirming the appointment on the day of the martyrdom, digging up plates, and translating them, receiving frequent revelations, etc. His downfall was abandoning monogamy in 1849 and having himself crowned king in 1850, both of which were also imitations of Joseph

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2. Two leaders who I have heard say this are the Church’s Theologian-in-Residence Anthony Chvala-Smith and the Church’s Peace and Justice Coordinator, Apostle Andrew Bolton.


Smith. He was also assassinated and his followers scattered.

Many of Strang’s followers ultimately joined the Reorganization, which stayed firm in its dedication to the western Christian ideal of monogamy. Possibly if Strang had remained committed to monog-

amily, the Reorganization would have never come into existence; but Jason Briggs continued to look for a Mormon movement he could espouse. After breaking with Strang in 1850, he briefly (1850–51), affiliated with William Smith, Joseph Smith’s only surviving brother, but he left Smith for the same reason he left Strang—polygamy. On November 18, 1851, Briggs had a spiritual experience which prompted him to create a “New Organization” which ultimately became the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Briggs and others who formed the organization concluded that the successor to the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr. should be of “the seed of Joseph.” Mormonism has a strong Old Testament flavor and values lineage. Joseph Smith’s four sons were then living in Nauvoo with their mother and stepfather, Emma and Lewis Bidamon. Succession by lineage became a defining marker of the RLDS movement as succession by senior apostle became a marker for LDS Mormons.

At the New Organization’s conference in the fall of 1856, delegates decided to send two missionaries, Samuel H. Gurley and Edmund C. Briggs, to visit young Joseph, age twenty-three, and invite him to join and lead the new church. They arrived at Joseph’s house in Nauvoo on December 5. Although he welcomed them hospitably, he cut them off firmly when they approached the purpose of their visit: “Gentlemen, I will talk with you on politics or on any other subject, but on religion I will not allow one word spoken in my house.” His only concession was that he would have to receive divine confirmation of such a call. Happily for the new Church, Joseph finally came to believe that he had such a calling and accepted the leadership of the RLDS Church at the General Conference at Amboy, Illinois, on April 6, 1860, at age twenty-seven.


At first it was not clear how much of the Joseph Smith Jr. theology the new Church would accept. Especially in doubt were some of the new doctrines Smith introduced in Nauvoo, 1839–44. In the years that followed young Joseph’s ordination in 1860, the RLDS Church gradually discarded most of Joseph Jr.’s major Nauvo innovations and, by about 1880, had settled on a “Kirtland theology,” approximat-

7In addition to polygamy, the Reorganization rejected the doctrine of plurality of gods, baptism for the dead, and temple rituals. It also decided to keep a clearer separation of church and state and discouraged “gathering” at a central location, probably because of the turmoil Joseph Jr.’s policy of doing so had so consistently caused during his lifetime. Joseph III also presented a revelation in 1865 approving the ordination of African Americans, setting those whom Jan Shipps calls “the prairie Mormons” apart from the “mountain Mormons” on race for 113 years, until President Spencer W. Kimball announced in 1978 that the LDS Church would begin ordaining men of African descent. On the differences between the two churches, see William D. Russell, “The Community of Christ and the LDS Church: Closer Friends, Clearer Differences,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 177–90; Roger D. Launius, “An Ambivalent Rejection: Baptism for the Dead and the Reorganized Church Experience,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 23, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 61–84; Roger D. Launius, Invisible Saints: A History of Black Americans in the Reorganized
ing major Mormon beliefs of 1838 when Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon fled from Kirtland. This “Kirtland theology” was largely in place until the 1960s.

For many years, the RLDS Church published “The Epitome of Faith,” a statement that, like the LDS Articles of Faith, was excerpted from Joseph Smith’s Wentworth letter. Outsiders looking at the two faith statements could reasonably conclude that the two churches closely resembled each other because, in 1842, Joseph Smith Jr. didn’t include such creative doctrines and practices as polygamy, the plurality of gods, or temple rituals, none of which are mentioned in the LDS Articles of Faith, either. Reorganites often complained that outsiders often couldn’t tell the two churches apart, when in fact they were quite different. But the official faith-statements were practically identical, both coming from the same 1842 source.

In 1960 the RLDS Church leaders established a Committee on Basic Beliefs, chaired by one of the brightest minds in the Church, F. Henry Edwards, a counselor in W. Wallace Smith’s First Presidency (1946–66). In 1966 Edwards retired and was replaced as committee chair by Apostle Clifford A. Cole, who had been a mentor to many of the young intellectuals at Church headquarters. In 1968 and 1969 the Saints’ Herald published a series of theological articles prepared by the committee, each beginning with a concise, one-paragraph statement of the essence of the doctrine at hand, followed by three or four pages of discussion. In January 1970 the Church published these theological statements as Exploring the Faith, with some revisions or


reorganization. The headline paragraphs became the Church’s new faith statement and have, over the years, been published with slight revisions from time to time. After the publication of *Exploring the Faith* in 1970 the Church ceased publishing the pamphlet, “Epitome of Faith,” since it no longer accurately reflected the Church’s beliefs.

79, Howard identifies the following persons as having served on the committee, although not all of them served for the entire time. Apparently only members of the First Presidency and apostles were full members of the committee. In addition to Edwards and Cole were Apostles Percy E. Farrow, Reed M. Holmes, Cecil R. Ettinger, Russell F. Ralston, William E. Timms, and Earl Higdon. Harry L. Doty, Charles A. Davies, Clifford P. Buck, Alfred H. Yale, Merle P. Guthrie, Geoffrey F. Spencer, and Jacques V. Pement were “associate” members of the committee. All were men and all were Church officials.

10Carl Bangs, a professor of historical theology at Saint Paul School of Theology, a Methodist seminary in Kansas City, reviewed *Exploring the Faith* in *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* 1, no. 4 (June 1971): 255–58. He regarded the statement as watering down but not abandoning traditional RLDS beliefs while introducing elements of Protestant theology popular at that time.
Theology as the leaders saw it. Exploring the Faith was republished in 1987 with minor editing by First Presidency member Alan D. Tyree. At this writing, a theology task force is working on a new faith statement for the Church.\textsuperscript{11}

Reorganites never wanted to be confused with the “mountain Mormons”\textsuperscript{12} so they rebelled at being called “Mormon,” constantly working to educate inquirers about what they saw as “abominable doctrines” that they attributed to Brigham Young in Utah. Few of them realized that Joseph Smith Jr. had actually developed them in Nauvoo. The vast majority of RLDS members really believed that Brigham Young introduced polygamy and the plurality of gods in Utah, the two most offensive Utah doctrines.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Theological Shifts in the 1960s}

After about a century of proclaiming the Kirtland theology, by the 1960s the RLDS Church was clearly undergoing a theological reconstruction, downplaying the distinctive Latter Day Saint aspects of the RLDS theological heritage. More emphasis was given to the concepts that they were held in common with their Protestant neighbors in the Midwest. W. Wallace Smith, Church president from 1958 until 1978, called to high office capable men who were known for their education, intelligence, and liberal views. Outstanding calls were F.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11}I am grateful to retired First Presidency member Peter Judd and retired World Church Secretary Bruce Lindgren for some of the information in this paragraph. Judd, email, January 9, 2007; Lindgren, email, January 10, 2007.
  \item \textsuperscript{12}Jan Shipps coined the terms “mountain Mormons” for the Latter-day Saints and “prairie Mormons” for the RLDS/Community of Christ.
  \item \textsuperscript{13}Three classic twentieth-century RLDS books on the differences between the two churches are: Elbert A. Smith, \textit{Differences That Persist between the RLDS and LDS Churches} (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1945), Russell F. Ralston, \textit{Fundamental Differences between the LDS and RLDS Churches} (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1960), and Aleah G. Koury, \textit{The Truth and the Evidence: A Comparison between Doctrines of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints} (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1965). Ralston and Koury had been missionaries in Utah and became apostles not long after their books were written. See also Russell, “The LDS Church and Community of Christ: Clearer Differences, Closer Friends.”
\end{itemize}
Henry Edwards, Maurice L. Draper, and later Duane E. Couey as his counselors in the First Presidency, Charles D. Neff and Clifford A. Cole to the Council of Twelve Apostles, and Roy A. Cheville as Presiding Patriarch. Cheville, called in 1958, was the only Church member at the time with a Ph.D. in religion, earned at the University of Chicago in 1942.\footnote{I was one of Cheville’s students at Graceland College, 1956–60, and remember him saying in class that he had made the acquaintance of Sidney Sperry when they were both students at the University of Chicago.}

These high Church officials, along with younger professionals in certain departments at Church headquarters and at Church-sponsored Graceland College,\footnote{Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, was a two-year college, granting the A.A. degree; it became a four-year college in 1956 and achieved university status in 2000.} abandoned the traditional claim to be “the true church.” They found that the “true church” claims—associated with such traditional teachings as Jesus Christ’s establishment of a church, a great apostasy, and a restoration—failed to find support in

W. Wallace Smith, president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1958–78.
16 Much of the revised thinking came from people doing graduate studies in religion at Protestant seminaries and historical evidence.  

While graduate studies in religion were clearly a major factor in this theological reconstruction, at least two other factors were at work. In the 1960s the Church began serious missionary activity in non-Christian nations, especially in Asia and Africa. Led by Apostle Charles D. Neff, Church leaders began to consider which aspects of the Church’s theology were universal truth and what were American culture, and therefore need not be taught in other countries. See Matthew Bolton, *Apostle of the Poor: The Life and Work of Missionary and Humanitarian Charles D. Neff* (Independence: John Whitmer Books, 2005). Finally, there appears to have also been a class factor. Prior to the 1960s many Church members were working-class people, whereas by the 1960s a much larger share of the members were in the middle class. A variety of professional organizations were formed. Many of the professional people wrote for Church periodicals. I hypothesize that, when most members are in the working class with little social status, the idea of being in the “one true church” has more appeal, as does the conferral of priesthood offices with a hierarchy of titles such as deacon, teacher, priest, elder, high priest, seventy, patriarch, bishop, apostle, and even president and prophet. But professional, affluent Church members are less
secular universities. As time went on some Church members attended Catholic universities for graduate work in religion, adding to the mix of theological ideas in the Church.

The revisionists came to see the traditional “one true church” idea and concepts associated with it as an unfortunate combination of ignorance and arrogance, so they embraced an ecumenical spirit with regard to other Protestant churches. Many of the young professionals began to attend Protestant seminaries, most especially the University of Chicago (e.g., Roy Cheville, Robert Speaks, Edward Warner, Robert Smith, and Robert Mesle), Union Theological Seminary in New York City (e.g., Leland Negaard, Verne Sparkes, Harold S. Schneebeck, and David Irby), and the Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri.¹⁷ At Graceland, professors Robert B. Flanders and Alma R. Blair in history, Paul M. Edwards in philosophy likely to believe (or need to believe) that their church is better than those of their colleagues in the company, the university, the law firm, etc.

¹⁷ The first two RLDS graduates were Richard Lancaster and Clifford Buck (1965), followed soon thereafter by William Russell, Wayne Ham, and many others, including two who became members of the First Presidency (Grant McMurray and Peter Judd) and Apostles Geoffrey Spencer, Paul Booth, and Lloyd Hurshman.
and history, and Lloyd R. Young, Leland W. Negard and R. Robert Speaks in religion were among those engaged in historical and theological revisionism. In the departments at Church headquarters in Independence, Church Historian Richard P. Howard, Church Statistician James E. Lancaster Jr., and Department of Religious Education leaders Clifford P. Buck, Richard B. Lancaster, Wayne Ham, Donald D. Landon, Geoffrey F. Spencer, and Verne Sparkes likewise engaged in theological and historical revisionism. At the Church publishing house, Managing Editor Roger Yarrington (1960–62), and his successor, Paul A. Wellington, published articles and books which sometimes alarmed conservative Church members.18

Herald House also published several books in the 1960s which charted new paths in Church thought. A 1960–61 series of four quarters on the Old Testament for high school youth by Garland E. Tickemyer was the earliest and most controversial.19 During the 1960s, Herald House also published several books for adult study reflecting the revisionist thinking of RLDS graduates of Protestant seminaries employed by various Church departments. They included Man’s Living Religions by Wayne Ham (1966), Treasure in Earthen Vessels: An Introduction to the New Testament by William D. Russell (1966), The Body of Christ, by Harold S. Schneebeck (1968), and The Theological Enterprise, by Vernone Sparkes (1969). Herald House also published For What Purpose Assembled: A Study of Congregation and Mission (1969) by Robert Smith, a graduate of the University of Chicago Divinity School and Donald D. Landon, a sociologist who in 1970 resigned from Church appointment and became a professor and later a dean at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield. Grace-land history professor Robert B. Flanders’s widely praised 1965 classic history of Mormon Nauvoo was the most controversial. Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965) upset many RLDS members because it was the first time an RLDS historian acknowledged publicly that Joseph Smith Jr. was a poly-gamist.

By 1967, the RLDS Religious Education Department made the

18 Perhaps the two most controversial Saints’ Herald articles were James E. Lancaster’s 1962 article on the method of translation of the Book of Mormon and Lloyd Young’s 1964 article on the virgin birth of Jesus.

decision to produce new Sunday School curriculum materials reflecting the shift in theological thinking among some Church leaders. A curriculum committee was appointed, and four members of the department drafted theological papers for discussion by the committee, with the expectation that these papers would inform the direction of the curriculum. The papers, reflecting the theological developments that had been taking place among the members of the department, soon leaked to conservative Church members who photoduplicated hundreds of copies and distributed them to Church members to show how far astray the Religious Education Department was leading the Church. The papers came to be known as “The Position Papers.”

For the traditionalists another sign of a growing apostasy in the Church was the fact that, in the late 1960s, the members of the Joint Council (the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric) began holding meetings with three professors at Saint Paul School of Theology, a Methodist seminary in Kansas City. These professors (Paul Jones, Carl Bangs, and Dale Dunlap) discussed with the Church leaders major issues in scripture, history, and theology. Church leaders knew that many traditionalists would be uneasy about these meetings, so there was no attempt to make these Joint Council Seminars generally known. In fact, the Saints’ Herald carried an article in its March 15, 1968, issue, “Joint Council Seminars,” which briefly discussed the first three seminars, all held in 1967. But this article and the First Presidency’s “1967 in Review” in the same issue, which briefly mentioned the seminars, do not mention that non-RLDS professors were leading these seminars. From these official sources alone, the reader would get the impression that the eighteen members of the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric sat around the table discussing scripture, history, and theology among themselves. Predictably, when more details were known, many Saints were quite upset. For instance, at the 1970 World Conference one delegate, referring to Saint Paul’s, stated in a business meeting, “These other churches have nothing to

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20The Position Papers are available for sale at Richard Price’s Restoration Bookstore, 915 E. 23rd Street, Independence, MO 64055; (816) 461-5659; {editors@restorationbookstore.org).

Surprisingly, the old issue of polygamy revived in the late 1960s. In that decade, the Church began serious missionary efforts into Asia and Africa—places where Christianity was a minor religion if it existed at all and where, in some places, polygamy was a traditional form of marriage. Before long, polygamists were presenting themselves for baptism. Apostle Charles D. Neff brought the issue to the attention of the Council of Twelve. Obviously, requiring polygamists to abandon plural wives and children would be irresponsible and cruel. In 1968 the Twelve and the First Presidency decided to allow the baptism of polygamist men in non-Western cultures on condition that they understand the Church’s teachings, keep their current wives, and promise not to marry any additional wives. Nonpolygamist converts would, of course, accept monogamy permanently. It was a humane and consistent compromise; but to many conservative members, the Church had retreated from the major original reason for the Reorganized Church’s existence.

**WALLACE B. SMITH’S APPOINTMENT**

Most Church members assumed that being Church president was a divine calling for life. All of W. Wallace Smith’s predecessors had served until death, and presumably W. Wallace would, too. Fortunately, none of the previous Smith presidents had been incapacitated by health problems during their last years. But W. Wallace Smith determined that he would retire rather than serve until death.

In 1976 he proposed, and the World Conference approved, the appointment of his son Wallace B. Smith, as “president designate,” to become Church president two years later, at the 1978 World Conference. (World Conferences are held in the spring of even-numbered years.) Wallace B. Smith would resign from his ophthalmology pract...
tice and spend the intervening two years preparing to assume the Church presidency. W. Wallace Smith was seventy-seven when he retired in 1978. Wallace B.’s appointment continued two traditions in the Church—lineal succession in the office of President of the Church and the outgoing president-prophet’s calling his successor.

Wallace B. Smith had wanted to be a doctor from an early age because he felt strongly motivated toward a healing profession, “a commitment to a Christian life—to help humanity.” His parents approved of his goal. He also didn’t want to be waiting around for a call to Church leadership. He attended Graceland College (1946–48), graduated from Kansas University, then completed his M.D. degree from the Kansas University Medical School. He practiced his specialty in Independence (1962–76). He served as president of the Church from 1978 until his retirement in 1996. Seven major changes in the Church can be seen as resulting from the leadership of Wallace B. Smith.

Doctrinal Revisionism

Wallace B. Smith was the first President to clearly embrace the revisionist thinking that had been taking place in the Church in the 1960s and 1970s. His father had appointed men to high positions who led out in new ways of looking at the Church’s heritage, but he personally had never shown himself as having revisionist leanings. One of the objectives the Church established at the 1966 World Conference was to clarify the theology of the Church. W. Wallace Smith had not been theologically inclined. But his son had spent two years studying scripture, history, and theology and was alert to many of the theological issues of the time. Thus, at the beginning of his presidency Wallace B. Smith and his two counselors, Duane Couey and Howard (“Bud”) Sheehy decided to convene Church appointee ministers to discuss theology.25

Paul Booth, director of the Division of Program Planning, was asked to do some first drafts of theological papers which members of

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25Ibid. Sheehy became a member of the First Presidency in 1978; Couey had been a member of the First Presidency since 1966 and was replaced by Alan D. Tyree at the 1982 World Conference.
the Presidency would revise to fit their thinking. The appointees gathered in Independence in January 1979. Wallace presented a paper on the nature of God. Duane Couey presented a paper on Christology, and Bud Sheehy dealt with the nature of the Church. On the first day the appointees were told that these were only working papers to stimulate thought and discussion. They were not ready for publication and should be considered confidential. However, conservative appointees were upset by these “Presidential Papers” and surreptitiously circulated them widely, accompanied by warnings about the heretical teachings of the new president and his counselors. In these papers, President Smith revealed his preference for the revisionists in the theological struggle then going on. Couey was clearly a revisionist but Sheehy had never been identified as such.

Dealing with Polygamy

A second major change was a decision to deal more candidly with controversial aspects of Church history, including whether Joseph Smith had been involved in polygamy. Early in his presidency Wallace B. Smith was confronted with the issue. His father, two uncles, and a grandfather—his predecessors as Church presidents—had all declared,

26Ibid.
sometimes adamantly, that Joseph Smith Jr. had never initiated, taught, or practiced plural marriage. But when Apostle William T. Higdon attended the Mormon History Association meeting in Kirtland in the spring of 1977, he heard a paper by Lawrence Foster, then working on his book, Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community. It seemed clear from Foster’s discussion of Mormon polygamy that the RLDS denial of Joseph Smith’s involvement was not tenable. So upon returning to Independence, Higdon suggested to President W. Wallace Smith that the Church should take a new look at the issue. At a meeting attended by W. Wallace Smith, Wallace B. Smith, Clifford A. Cole (president of the Council of Twelve), Presiding Bishop Francis E. (“Pat”) Hansen, and Church Historian Richard P. Howard, Howard was asked to research the subject and produce a document that could be used to educate Church members. Wallace B. himself, who was preparing to assume the presidency of the Church one year later, in April 1978, seemed unusually open to new ideas.

However, it was not until 1982 that Howard completed the assigned paper on polygamy. Howard first shared his findings with the Church’s History Commission, a group of about twenty people who advised Howard on matters of Church history. The commissioners met on Sunday, December 5, 1982, in the DuRose Room (a Restoration History Collection) at the Frederick Madison Smith Library at Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa. The next day Howard met in Independence with the Joint Council of the First Presidency, the Council of Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric. “The consensus of the Commission meeting at Lamoni was that the paper was too mild,” recalls Howard. “The Joint Council generally felt the paper was too radical.” Wallace B. Smith recalls becoming aware that there was more acceptance among Church members on the issue of Joseph Smith’s involvement in polygamy when the subject came up in a class he was teaching on Church history at a family camp, called a “re-

union” in 1980.

Some Church leaders thought the article should not be published, but President Smith and one of his counselors, Alan Tyree, among others, disagreed. However, they did not want it to appear in an official Church publication like the Saints’ Herald. The proposal was made to inquire whether the John Whitmer Historical Association might be interested in publishing Howard’s article in its annual journal. Clare D. Vlahos of Independence was the editor at that time, and he agreed to publish it in the 1983 issue, which would be released on the weekend of the annual meeting, scheduled for the weekend of September 23–25, 1983, in the Walnut Gardens congregation in Independence. Howard presented the paper at the conference on Saturday, September 24, the same day that the journal containing the paper was released.

The publication of Howard’s article was itself a significant event in Church history, because the official Church Historian was admitting, though cautiously and with an elaborate rationale, that Joseph Smith Jr. was probably a polygamist. Howard’s paper received strong criticism from conservative Church members who rejected the evidence that the founding prophet had engaged in polygamy. Howard’s most vocal critic was Richard Price, a conservative member from Independence who has made it an important part of his life’s work to defend Joseph Smith against the allegation of polygamy. On Saturday, October 22, 1983, Price wrote a full-page paid advertisement that ran in the local newspaper, the Independence Examiner, criticising Howard’s paper. In 2000 Price and his wife, Pamela, published...

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30 Smith, interviewed by Russell. A traditional summer activity for RLDS members has long been summer camps of usually one week held in forested or lakeside areas. The camps typically feature sermons by Church leaders, classes on scripture, history, and theology, worship services such as prayer and testimony meetings, and recreation.


Richard Price, conservative member of the RLDS Church and critic of its shift toward liberalism.


Richard Howard was deeply disappointed that the First Presidency never acknowledged its role in assigning, editing, and approving his article for publication in the *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal.* But the end result was that, after 1983, many more Church members were able to admit or at least feel less threatened by the idea that Joseph Smith Jr. might have practiced polygamy. In my opinion, Wallace B. Smith and Richard Howard helped free the minds of the Saints to look at their history with more openness on sensitive issues like polygamy.* The Church’s official website (www.CofChrist.org) currently declines to take a position on whether Joseph Smith was a

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34Since Howard’s 1983 article, some Church leaders have been even bolder. Mark Scherer, Howard’s successor as Church Historian, has stated that Joseph Smith “figured out a way to commit adultery and do it sacramentally” and also called Joseph’s polygamy “ministerial abuse.” Scherer,
polygamist, saying members are encouraged “to explore all issues pertaining to [the Church’s] story in an open atmosphere” and “draw their own conclusions.”

The Ordination of Women

Perhaps the issue of Joseph Smith’s polygamy would have been enough to produce the schism that erupted in the RLDS Church in the late 1980s; but its contribution was overshadowed by another, even more explosive, issue. Six months after Howard’s article, Wallace B. Smith announced at the April 1984 World Conference a revelation that called for the ordination of women. The ordination issue was the third major change that occurred during Wallace B. Smith’s presidency. This revelatory document reversed the Church’s official policy of restricting ordination to men, a policy affirmed in a General Conference resolution in 1905.  

Theological tension between the traditionalists and the revisionists over this issue had been increasing for at least fifteen years. Each biennial World Conference from 1970 through 1984 had included some consideration of women’s role in the Church. When Smith’s revelation was approved by the conference delegates, it was the final straw for many troubled conservatives.

Prior to the conference, some sharp-eyed readers predicted its coming after reading a First Presidency editorial in the February 1984 Saints’ Herald, two months before World Conference, titled “The Na-

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36For an overview of World Conference actions on the role of women in the Church, see Richard P. Howard, The Church Through the Years, 2:381–408.
The editorial said that if revelation is genuinely new, it “is disjunctive with the past—not merely a restatement of former revelation.” Such revelation “brings new insights to the Church and points us in new directions.” Many readers assumed the editorial was written by President Smith and that it was specifically intended to prepare the membership for a revelation calling for the ordination of women. However, Alan Tyree, a member of the First Presidency, had actually written the editorial, and it was published before President Smith knew that he would be presenting a revelation to the conference.38

Wallace B. and Anne Smith had three daughters and no sons, so many members speculated that he was preparing the way for succession by a daughter. However, it seems clear that Wallace believed women should be ordained as a matter separate from succession. One rumor that circulated widely was that Wallace’s mother, Rosamond Smith, had tried to get her son to change his position on women’s ordination. “Contrary to some of the folklore, Mother did not ask me to change on [Section] 156,” says Wallace. “Mother had a strong testimony and worried about the effect of 156—not because she didn’t think women were capable. But she was concerned and had a view of priesthood—early on—that was fairly traditional. She was good friends with people who were later in the Restoration Branches, but she never made a statement trying to get me to change with regard to women in the priesthood.”39

An estimated 20 percent of the conference delegates voted against canonizing the document; but by majority vote of the World Conference delegates, Smith’s statement became canonized as revelation and was added to the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants as Section

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37The First Presidency, “The Nature of New Revelation,” Saints’ Herald, February 1984, 51–52. I recall that John Edwards, a conservative professor of biology at Graceland, commented after reading this editorial that it was preparing the way for a revelation on the ordination of women. That revelation came two months later.

38Smith, interviewed by Russell. Alan Tyree also confirmed in a personal conversation that he was the author of the controversial editorial. It is possible, nevertheless, that both Smith and Tyree understood that women would eventually be ordained—that the only questions were when and how.

39Smith, interviewed by Russell,
“Disjunctive revelation” became a byword, an epithet for many conservative Saints who, in conversations and interviews with me, still frequently express their distress at the fact that the First Presidency embraces “disjunctive revelation.” In their view, a prophet who endorsed—and then presented—disjunctive revelation symbolized how far down the road toward spiritual darkness and apostasy that Church leaders had traveled. More than 20 percent of the active members split from the Church over the next six years.

After the approval of the revelation in 1984, the First Presidency determined that Sunday, November 17, 1985, would be the first day women could be ordained. The Church leaders wanted time to prepare some guidelines, and they didn’t want an unseemly race to the first ordination. The number of women ordained grew very rapidly. Today it is likely true that in the United States and Canada there are as many women active in the priesthood as men. Women have been pastors in many congregations in the Church. Over the past twenty years all three Utah congregations—Ogden, Salt Lake City, and Orem—have had women pastors.

The leaders had a number of advantages in their effort to gain acceptance for this change. First, recent scripture (D&C 156) had been approved by a large majority of World Conference delegates. Second, the First Presidency could use the Saints’ Herald, its house organ, to promote their agenda and prepare for policy changes.

Third, the president appoints the apostles and other high leaders. Wallace B. Smith’s appointments to the highest offices strongly favored revisionists over traditionalists. In the first four years of his

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40The vote was not counted, but observers in the balcony to whom I spoke later estimated the approximately 20 percent negative notes. “Official Minutes of Business Session, Thursday, April 5, 1984, in 1984 World Conference Bulletin, 330–34; “A Transcript of the Legislative Session,” The 1984 World Conference Transcript (Independence: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1984), 113–53. The Bulletin is a newsletter created daily and compiled weekly.

41Needra Troyer, Norma Hope and Thelma De St. Jeor have been pastors in Orem; Harriett A. White and Adda M. (“Bunny”) Leigh have been pastors in Ogden; Diana J. Henderson and Penny E. Young have been pastors of the Salt Lake City branch. In 2005, the first Community of Christ branch was established in St. George; its first pastor is a man named Jerry Jamriska.
Presidency he carried over a revisionist counselor from his father’s administration, Duane E. Couey. While his first new appointment to the presidency, Howard S. (“Bud”) Sheehy, Jr. (1978) was a moderate, his other counselor was a revisionist, Alan Tyree (1982). Finally, in 1992 he appointed Grant McMurray, a revisionist, to replace Tyree during the final four years of his administration, after which he called McMurray to be the new president. His appointments to the Council of Twelve were also strongly on the revisionist side. 42

Fourth, the mobility of modern society gave the First Presidency another advantage. Women ordained in one congregation frequently move and affiliate with another congregation. If the new congregation has been resisting women’s ordination, it will be hard for them to prevent these women from exercising priestly ministry over the long run. It could also be assumed that some traditionalists who opposed women in the priesthood at the outset would change their minds after experiencing priestly ministry from women.

And finally, the President has considerable control over the World Conference. When traditionalists brought a motion to the 1986 conference calling for the rescinding of Section 156, Wallace B. Smith, rather than allowing discussion, ruled the motion out of order using the argument that, since only the prophet can bring a revelation to the World Conference, only a prophet can propose that a revelation be rescinded. 43 The delegates overwhelmingly supported this ruling, thereby giving up an important democratic check on the power of the Church president. Seven years later Church Historian Richard Howard, in his two-volume history of the Church published by the official Herald Publishing House, noted that the chair’s ruling “closed off the possibilities of jurisdictions, quorums, or even the


World Conference initiating measures that work in any way to modify the modern Church canon.” Howard characterized it as a “radical shift in canonization principle and procedure.” If President Smith had allowed a discussion of the issue, it would still probably have passed by an overwhelming margin, but the resolution’s supporters may have been less angry about the result. From my interviews, the refusal to allow discussion contributed to the largest number of individual defections and the creation of separate restoration branches in next two years.

The Temple as an Ensign for Peace

The fourth major change which can be credited to Wallace B. Smith was dedicating the new temple in Independence as an “ensign for peace” and thereby creating a peace emphasis in the Church. Doctrine and Covenants 156 is most remembered for calling for the ordination of women but perhaps of more importance in the long run was another proviso: “The temple shall be dedicated to the pursuit of peace. It shall be for reconciliation and healing of the spirit” (RLDS D&C 156:5a). In a 1968 revelation, President W. Wallace Smith had called the Church to take up the task of building a temple in Independence: “The time has come for a start to be made toward building my temple in the Center Place. It shall stand on a portion of the plot of ground set apart for this purpose many years ago by my servant Joseph Smith Jr.” (RLDS D&C 149:6a).

The goal of peace, reconciliation, and healing became a central message in the RLDS Church in the 1990s, thanks to Wallace B. Smith’s leadership. While these statements might seem to some to be mere slogans rather than serious theology, they do establish a stan-

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44 Howard, The Church Through the Years, 2:153.

45 In a possible precedent, four years earlier the British Mission brought a resolution to the 1982 World Conference calling for Mark Hofmann’s “Joseph Smith Blessing Letter” to be placed in the Doctrine and Covenants. The First Presidency did not rule that it was out of order for someone other than the prophet to bring a motion regarding the contents of the Doctrine and Covenants. When the resolution came to the floor for discussion, it was amended to call for the blessing letter to be placed in the Appendix of the Doctrine and Covenants instead. 1982 World Conference Bulletin, 288, 365. This action was fortuitous because the letter was soon revealed as a forgery by Hofmann, who is now serving a life sentence at the Utah State Prison for murder.
standard that helps focus the Church’s thinking on Jesus’s example of peace, love, and healing, helping to shift the focus away from the narrower, more self-absorbed identity of being “the true church” that God favors above all other churches. One effect, as reflected in the news section of the Herald, has been an impressive array of community outreach programs, many of them undertaken by very small congregations and sustained over long periods of time. They show a serious emphasis on being disciples of Jesus Christ, trying to live out the meaning of the revelation of God in Christ in the world in which we live. As originally conceived by Joseph Smith Jr., the temple to be built in Independence was inward looking, a place of refuge from a violent exterior world, a place where Christ would return to vindicate and exalt a chosen people. Instead, the temple constructed in Independence in the late 1980s and early 1990s looks outward, attempting to be an ensign for peace.

The construction of the temple and the accompanying transformation of the Reorganization into a peace Church was, in my view, actually a bolder step than the ordination of women. There was little likelihood in the long run that the Church would go the way of the Roman Catholics, the Southern Baptists, and the “mountain Mormons” in refusing to ordain women. The greater inclusion of women was destined to happen eventually in the RLDS Church, if not by revelation then a World Conference resolution or by approving calls for specific women at the local level. In fact, several such calls had been put on hold by the First Presidency prior to 1984. The presidency was probably cautious about proceeding without conference action or a revelation because General Conference Resolution 563 adopted April 18, 1905, stated that since there “are no prescribed rules of the

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47 For a fundamentalist RLDS critique of the temple’s purpose, design, and location, see Richard and Pamela Price, *The Temple of the Lord* (Independence: Price Publishing Company, 1982).
church, or provisions by revelation, directing ordination of women” then the Church does “not now see our way clear to report favorably upon ordination of women.” Interestingly enough, this resolution was not strongly worded as a theological prohibition and sounds more as if the reasons for women’s ordination were merely inadequate at that particular time.

As another point of interest, if the 1984 revelation had reaffirmed the policy of denying ordination to women instead of supporting it, there may well have been a liberal defection comparable to the conservative defection that followed the canonization of Section 156. In fact, in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Church had already suffered defections by feminist Saints—men as well as women—impatient with the slow pace of reform.

Open Communion

A fifth major change during Wallace B. Smith’s tenure as Church president was the adoption of the policy of open communion, by vote of the delegates at the 1994 World Conference. The Minnesota District had adopted a resolution in favor of open communion and forwarded it to the World Conference. While the First Presidency was supportive of open communion, prior to the 1994 conference they had decided not to ask the conference to adopt a new policy, preferring to continue the dialogue in the Church. “We were open to it, and supportive of it, but we were not ready for another big division in the church,” recalls W. Grant McMurray, then a counselor to President Wallace B. Smith. But the delegates at the conference were ready for this change and passed the resolution, stating: “The World Conference of 1994 has expressed its support for the principle of extending the Lord’s Supper to all Christians” and directing the First Presidency to “develop guidelines for the administration of the sacrament.”

Open communion was a major departure from the Church’s

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49W. Grant McMurray, interviewed by Bill Russell, July 31, 2003, at Graceland University.

50RLDS World Conference Resolution 1240, in Community of Christ, World Conference Resolutions, 2002 ed. (Independence: Herald Pub-
traditional practice of allowing only baptized RLDS members to participate in the Church’s celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Like ordination for women, support for open communion had existed for some time. The editors of the scholarly quarterly *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* had endorsed open communion in an editorial in September 1971, while W. Grant McMurray, then a young seminarian and an intern at Church headquarters, wrote the lead article in the same issue on communion in the early Christian church and the history of RLDS closed communion.51

Furthermore, various congregations had already been quietly serving the communion to non-RLDS people. According to my conversations with two former Graceland Campus Ministers, Everett Graffeo (1978–80) and Rick Bunch (1980–89), the Campus Congregation at Graceland College had been practicing open communion for more than a decade before the official policy changed. In the LDS Church, deacons typically distribute the sacrament by taking it to the first person at the end of each row, and those sitting in the pew pass it from hand to hand to the end of the row where another deacon takes it and moves to the next row. In the RLDS Church, those who distribute the sacrament must be priests or elders and they retain the tray, offering it individually to each person in the congregation. When a nonmember spouse comes to Church regularly and is seen as part of the fellowship, even though raised and baptized in another denomination, local priesthood members might be unwilling to withhold the bread and wine at sacrament service. So when the 1994 conference adopted World Conference Resolution 1240, it was ratifying what had already occurred gradually over time in some but not most congregations.

Open communion was a significant theological change. With the decline of the “one true church” belief among the Saints, it made little sense to continue the closed communion policy. The Church had come to see baptism as baptism into Christ rather than admission into membership in the RLDS Church. Many members had

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come to believe that closed communion was a barrier for outsiders who otherwise might want to participate in the fellowship of the Church.  

While the transition from closed to open communion occurred gradually and quietly for twenty years or so in receptive congregations, the transition from a male-only to a gender-inclusive priesthood could not come quietly because every person called to the priesthood has to be approved by vote of the membership at stake or district conferences. Therefore critics of women’s ordination had a political weapon at their disposal and succeeded in defeating several early calls of women.  

Succession Outside the Smith Line

A sixth major change occurred when Wallace B. Smith broke the oldest tradition in the Church—the tradition of lineal descent in the

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52Editorial Committee, “A Call for Open Communion,” 325; McMurray, “Closed Communion in the Restoration.”

53Charles Burke, “Blue Valley Stake Rejects 7 Women for Ordination,” Independence Examiner, October 15, 1986, 1. The seven women were Stephanie Kelley, Marilyn Plowman, Leslie Palmer, Marcia Legg, Ruth Ann Wood, Barbara Howard, and Donna Sperry. Howard was then an editor at the Church publishing house and is married to Church Historian Richard Howard. Sperry is Grant McMurray’s sister. The first priesthood calls for women in several other jurisdictions were also turned down. In most cases, later conferences approved these calls.
the office of the Church president. In a letter in the September 1995 Saints’ Herald President Smith said he would designate W. Grant McMurray as his successor, subject to the vote of the delegates at the next World Conference in April 1996. In this letter President Smith states: “The principle of lineage in the calling and choosing of a successor is important but not controlling.”

54 His call of McMurray was ratified by the delegates at the April conference. 55

Succession in the presidency and polygamy were the two central issues in the division between the “prairie Mormons” and the “mountain Mormons” in the 1850s. Polygamy was probably the most important; but after the LDS manifestos of 1890 and 1904, polygamy was no longer a doctrinal difference between the two churches, even though debates on the issue continued long into the twentieth century. As noted above, Wallace B. and Anne Smith had only daughters; but none of them pursued a career as a Church employee minister or gave other indications of wanting to lead the Church. Nor does it seem likely that Wallace would have turned the position over to an untrained person. As a medical doctor, he respected expertise and training. He had spent the two years between his call and ordination studying scripture, history, and theology, some of it with professors at Saint Paul School of Theology. In choosing McMurray, Smith was selecting a man with a master of divinity degree—the first leader of any of the Latter Day Saint churches with a graduate degree in religion—and more than twenty-four years working at Church headquarters, ten in the History Department, ten as executive secretary for the First Presidency, and four as a counselor in the First Presidency.

Many fundamentalist members who have left the Church and created separate branches over the last two decades still expect the “seed of Joseph” to occupy the Church presidency. But only one, the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, has succeeded in bestowing the office of president and prophet on a descendant of Joseph Smith. 56

daughter, Lois. Many RLDS fundamentalists who didn’t join Larsen’s church argued that Larsen’s call is not legitimate because his Smith lineage comes through his mother rather than his father.

From a historical perspective, McMurray should be viewed as a unique Church president in the sense that he could not have reasonably sought or expected the office. Until McMurray, all of Joseph Smith’s successors were Smiths who wrestled with the question of whether they wanted to assume Church leadership. McMurray resigned on November 29, 2004, and was replaced by Stephen M. Veazey, then president of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, at a special World Conference held in June 2005 in Independence, Missouri, af-

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ter the intervening six months of “discernment” by individuals and jurisdictions. It seems likely that future apostles and counselors in the First Presidency will reflect whether the highest office may also come to them.\footnote{I discuss the issue of McMurray’s declining to name a successor in my “Grant McMurray and the Succession Crisis in the Community of Christ,” \textit{Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought} 39, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 27–57. Over thirty years ago, I wrote an editorial, “Needed: A New Method of Succession,” \textit{Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action} 2, no. 1 (September 1971): 326–27, arguing that neither lineal succession nor seniority is a particularly good method of choosing a Church president.} Although it is not clear whether this same process of “discernment” will be followed in the future or whether the retiring president will continue to name his successor, it is certain that McMurray himself could not have imagined that he would one day be the President of the Church.

\textit{The “Community of Christ” Name}

The seventh and last major change occurred after Wallace B. Smith’s 1996 retirement as Church president, but it was one set in motion during his term of office. In April 2000, the World Conference voted to change the name of the Church to “Community of Christ.” For many years, a sizeable number of Saints had wanted a new name for the Church because it was too long, because listeners still tended to confuse it with the LDS Church, and the distinguishing word, “Reorganized,” did not necessarily capture a clear sense of identity. Furthermore, by the late twentieth century the old name no longer fit the Church’s newly evolving mission. There is very little expectation among Church members today that these are, in fact, the latter or last days.

The immediate path to the name change can be traced to World Conference Resolution 1231, adopted in 1992.\footnote{Mark Scherer, “‘Called by a New Name’: Mission, Identity, and the Reorganized Church,” \textit{Journal of Mormon History} 27, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 40–63, discusses the lengthy history of proposing new names for the Reorganization.} Difficulties with the Church name were especially acute in the international church. Some governments were opposed to registering the Church, sometimes due to confusion with the LDS Church. Stephen Koehler, president of the Sixth Quorum of Seventy, which included Africa, pub-
lished an article, “What’s in Our Name?” published in the March 1992 Saints’ Herald, and the Sixth Quorum presented a resolution to the World Conference, calling for the First Presidency “to select a name for the Church which reflects our mission in all cultures” and present it at the 1994 World Conference. The motion passed with a margin of only 5 percent, 1,285–1,152.

After the conference, a committee was formed to discuss the issue and present possible names for consideration by the First Presidency. The committee submitted several names, including Koehler’s recommendation to the committee, “Community of Christ.” The “Community of Christ” and the other suggested names were discussed at a retreat the Church Leadership Council held at Estes Park, Colorado, in September 1994. The First Presidency, Council of Twelve, the Presiding Bishopric, and a few other top officials gathered to work on a new mission statement for the Church. They agreed on: “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.” The statement picks up on the Zionic ideal in the Church’s heritage and appears on the masthead of each issue of the official Church magazine, the Herald.

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With the new focus on promoting community, perhaps it was inevitable that “Community of Christ” would resonate with Church leaders. Some participants recall Wallace B. Smith as first stating that he favored Koehler’s suggested name “Community of Christ.” Smith himself recalls that he was one of the first. Grant McMurray, then a counselor to Smith, remembers, “I’m not sure if Wally was the first one to suggest it, but he did suggest [the name] ‘Community of Christ’ at some point. We decided to float it and see the reaction.” Many leaders reported a strong conviction of the Spirit that “Community of Christ” was the name that was needed, but they decided not to present it to the 1994 World Conference as required by the 1992 action. This decision was probably strategic, based on the assumption that it would take time for the membership to support the new name in large numbers. Six years later, Church leaders were confident that the new name had gained wide acceptance and presented it to the 2000 World Conference. Prior to the discussion and voting, President McMurray ruled that the motion to adopt a new name would require a two-thirds majority for approval, because it was of the nature of a constitutional amendment. Probably the most important speech in swaying undecided delegates was that of President Emeritus Wallace B. Smith, who lives in Independence, but was then attending the conference as a delegate representing the Dominican Republic. He was one of the first to speak in favor of the change, stating, “I remember with joy the meeting of the Joint Council at Estes Park in 1994. . . . The unity of feeling we experienced at that time regarding the name ‘Community of Christ’ was truly inspiring. I personally feel that this name represents quite clearly what we are seeking to become; perhaps not having fully achieved but seeking to become today and in the future. While at the same time preserving our heritage, rooted as it is in a strong sense of community and grounded in Jesus Christ.”

But the name change did not satisfy some. During the conference discussion, Andrew Shelton, a young delegate from Dallas, Texas, strongly opposed changing the name because he felt “we don’t

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64 Smith, interviewed by Russell.

65 McMurray, interviewed by Russell.

deserve” the name “Community of Christ.” He explained: “I do not believe that we can accurately describe ourselves as a true Community of Christ dedicated to the pursuit of peace, justice, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit until we resolve at least two moral issues of profound theological and cultural importance.” The two issues were (1) the failure of the Church to end the requirement of rebaptism for those who were baptized in another Christian communion before joining the Saints’ Church, and (2) the failure to grant equal rights to homosexual members. Shelton concluded: “I cannot support a name which describes us as something we’re not. Until we make these changes, we are nothing more than a small church that sounds Mormon. We are not a true community of Jesus Christ.”

Most of the delegates did not share Shelton’s opinion. The resolution received a 78 percent favorable vote: 1,979–561. The First Presidency selected the date of April 6, 2001, for the new name to become operational.

From my perspective, the name change represents more significant internal changes in refocusing the Church’s identity toward Christ and His central message of peace, love, and healing rather than the centrality of latter-day prophets. I hypothesize that the membership accepted without great difficulty becoming a peace church, open communion, and having a non-Smith as president, because the schism over the ordination of women led so many to leave the Church. Many people who left the Church over that issue are probably among those who would have most likely objected to the later changes.

**Future Issues**

By the time the new name took effect, the RLDS Church had changed a great deal under the two presidents named Wallace Smith who had held the office for thirty-eight years (1958–96). W. Wallace Smith had not pushed for these kinds of changes, but he had appointed to high office liberal and well-educated men who did. His successor-son, Wallace B., embraced many of their revisionist ideas;

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67 Andrew Shelton, Statement at World Conference Business Meeting, April 7, 2000; email copy in my possession, courtesy of Shelton.
69 Scherer, “Called by a New Name.”
and under his leadership, some of these ideas became Church policy. The name change at the 2000 conference can be seen as the culmination of a forty-year theological struggle in which the RLDS Church broke from its nineteenth-century exclusivist worldview and tried to reshape its faith to make Christ more central to its mission and to be more relevant to a changing, highly educated society.

The nineteenth-century worldview was hard to shake because much of it had been canonized in latter-day scriptures. For example, the first sentence of the Inspired Version of the Bible, which Joseph Smith added before “translating” Genesis 1:1 in the King James Version, reads: “And it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven and this earth; write the words which I speak.” Thus, the Inspired Version opens in Genesis with an assumption that revelation is verbal and literal, with God speaking in an audible voice in the language of the recipient. It also asserts that Moses authored the book of Genesis and presumably the entire Pentateuch. This and other traditional beliefs about the authorship of such scriptural books as Isaiah, the four Gospels, the book of Revelation, and some epistles attributed to Paul, are also no longer supported by most biblical scholarship. The Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants are accepted as authoritative scripture by the Community of Christ, with the attitude that scripture should be studied seriously and contextually, with the recognition that scriptures are “treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Cor. 4:7).

An issue that seems to lie in the Community of Christ’s future is whether it will establish even closer ties to mainstream Protestantism of the type associated with the National Council of Churches. This group is characterized by liberal policies on Christian social concerns and ecumenical cooperation. Given the earlier RLDS identity as the “only true church,” such rapprochement was unthinkable. For years some conservative Church members were convinced that the Church was either secretly a member of the National and/or World Council of Churches, or was plotting to become one.70 In 2002 the World Conference went on record in favor of officially investigating joining

70Richard Price of Independence has been the strongest voice of protest, publishing a full-page paid advertisement: “RLDS Hierarchy Espouses the WCC and NCC,” Independence Examiner, March 8, 1987, 11.
the National and the World Councils of Churches.\textsuperscript{71} But as of this writing, Church leaders are not actively pursuing membership in either body.

A major issue, articulated during the discussion on the name change by Andrew Shelton, is how the Community of Christ should deal with its homosexual members. This large social issue had also become more visible by the end of Wallace B. Smith’s tenure as Church president. Were they eligible for priesthood ordination, for example? A policy established in 1982 allowed celibate homosexuals to be priesthood members in good standing.\textsuperscript{72} A related question is whether the Community of Christ should recognize and respect committed same-sex relationships. In my 2002 interview with President Emeritus Wallace B. Smith, he recognized this issue as a difficult conflict between the gospel and culture. Articulately, he explained the dilemma: “Homosexuality is probably inborn. The Church needs to be completely true to the best Christian principles, and probably ought to accept homosexuals, including priesthood [ordination]. But to do that is going to tear the Church down the middle again. It is once again one of those problems of the tension between the pastoral and the prophetic. At what point do you make your stand?”\textsuperscript{73}

This issue was being discussed much more by the end of Wallace B. Smith’s tenure in 1996, leaving Grant McMurray to deal with it more directly during his years as Church president, 1996–2004. Conference discussion and resolutions were proposed in 1996 and 1998. In giving the keynote sermon for the 1998 conference, McMurray made the most direct statement to date by a Church president:

We struggle today with the proper way of expressing the sense of calling and giftedness of persons with varying lifestyles and orientations, including those who identify themselves as gay and lesbian. We often do not speak openly of this issue. Tonight I will. Let me make a heartfelt plea with all of you, whatever your views on this difficult is-


\textsuperscript{73}Smith, interviewed by Russell.
sue may be. In a world that cannot come to common ground on any of the medical, psychological, cultural, and social issues that swirl around this topic, the church cannot be expected to have those ready answers.

But here is what we can expect—that every person who walks through our doors will be received with open arms. We will listen to the life stories of each person who graces our fellowship and embrace them in love. On this there can be no compromise.74

The Church’s Temple School produced resource materials and curriculum for priesthood courses and class discussion in 2000, and another resolution was submitted at the 2002 World Conference. President McMurray made another supportive speech at the 2002: “I read scripture contextually. I believe that scripture carries a powerful witness of the love of God but that it has to be read in its totality and not in phrases and fragments here and there. When it comes to people and our many differences, I will always choose to love rather than to judge. My instincts are toward inclusion and not exclusion.”75

He was criticized sharply over the next few months for acknowledging in the same sermon that he had not intervened when “persons I knew to be in long-term, committed homosexual relationships were approved for priesthood in jurisdictions where their lifestyle was known and their ministry was accepted.” He asked for patience from people on both sides of the issue; and the issue remains unresolved.

Critics of the two Smith presidencies are correct in noting that the “Mormon” themes were deemphasized, but their defenders point out the greater challenge in being a community of peace, love, and healing in a culture saturated with violence, discrimination, materialism, poverty, and sexual exploitation. Wallace B. Smith’s leadership clearly ended the Church’s history as a “Mormon” church, aligning it more closely with mainstream, ecumenical Protestantism.76 This movement came at a high cost. More than a fourth of its active mem-

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75W. Grant McMurray, “Called to Discipleship: Coming Home in Search of the Path,” 2002 World Conference Address, World Conference Bulletin, 2002, 193; reprinted in the Herald, June 2002, 8-21. The Saints’ Herald became the Herald with its April 2001 issue, the month the church’s name was changed to “Community of Christ.”

76For a discussion of the Reorganized Church as a “sect” or “denomi-
bers withdrew from involvement after 1984. Possibly some may have stayed if the First Presidency and other Church leaders had responded more gently and tolerantly to these critics. Instead, there were several hundred silencings of priesthood members who resisted the new directions the Church was taking. (“Silencing” means that the person is removed from the priesthood and no longer has authority to act in that capacity.)

Appraisal of the last two Smith presidents depends on the viewer’s attitude toward the changes that were implemented. For those who were deeply invested in a traditional “only true church” identity, rejection of Joseph Smith’s initiation of polygamy in Nauvoo, and male-only priesthood, Wallace B. Smith was unworthy of his office and led the Church into darkness and apostasy, triggering the greatest schism in the movement’s history. But for those believed that the Church’s future lay in a Christ-centered theology of peace, justice, and greater inclusiveness, Wallace B. Smith stands out as a supremely prophetic figure.

THE WIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS

Irene M. Bates

WHEN E. GARY SMITH AND I were researching the lives of the Presiding Patriarchs of the Church, a project that resulted in our book, Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch, we developed a deep admiration for the long-suffering, sometimes feisty, women in the lives of these men. Personally I felt a sense of sisterhood as I imagined what their lives must have been like. Presiding patriarchs for the first twenty years contended with the repeated moves, persecution, and physical hardship common to all members of the Church, while later Presiding Patriarchs dealt with dissonance in the Church associated with the calling. The men who occupied this hereditary office often became the focal point of a struggle for authority between those born to leadership positions in the Church and those appointed to office. Those struggles ended in 1979 when Eldred G. Smith, the last presiding patriarch and a “prophet, seer and revelator,” was made emeritus and the calling itself was retired.

Through the years, the wives of the patriarchs shared the pains of uncertainty as well as the criti-

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2He still has an office and, until recently, gave patriarchal blessings by appointment. He celebrated his 100th birthday on January 9, 2007.
cism encountered by their husbands. They remained, however, uniformly in the background.

Their obscurity was part of the larger silence in which most women lived their lives until the emergence of the new social history in the United States during the 1960s and the feminist movement that turned Mormon historians, both men and women, to examining with greater awareness and appreciation, the lives of their foremothers in the faith. Two women auxiliary leaders now speak in each general conference, wives of new General Authorities are interviewed with their husbands, and newly called mission presidents appear with their wives in their official photographs. But earlier, to a degree that now seems astonishing, women were invisible. Most accounts of life in the Western hemisphere were concerned with political, military, economic, and religious history, areas in which women were rarely acknowledged. The Church’s patriarchal structure and ideology has been a further contributory factor toward the tendency of rendering women obscure in its official histories. The *Deseret News Church Almanac*, in its short biographies on members of the Church hierarchy, still includes no information on wives and children except for those currently in office. I suspect that this decision is motivated by the need to conserve space and a desire to avoid providing such conspicuous evidence of polygamy right up through Heber J. Grant, who died in 1945.

Thus, Gary and I were not surprised to find little information about the patriarchs’ wives in official records, but this article provides brief biographical sketches on the eight women total who served supportively beside their husbands, who held the office of presiding patriarch in the LDS Church.

The information on the first, Lucy Mack Smith, is ironically the most extensive, thanks to the fact that she left her memoirs, an achievement that, unfortunately, none of the successor-wives, emulated. Lucy was born at Gilsum, Cheshire County, New Hampshire, July 8, 1775, although she consistently gave her birth year as 1776, year of the Declaration of Independence. Her parents were Solomon Mack, a farmer and Revolutionary War privateer who found religion late in life, and Lydia Gates Mack, a well-educated and pious woman who stepped in as her children’s teacher when they lived in an area without schools. Lucy married Joseph Smith Sr. on January 24, 1796, at Tunbridge, Vermont, and they became the parents of eleven chil-
Lucy Mack Smith, wife of Joseph Smith Sr., the first patriarch. All photographs in this article courtesy of the LDS Historical Department Library.

Lucy’s autobiography conveys not only her devotion to her family and unwavering faith in her prophet-son’s calling but also her own emotional and spiritual strength. She began writing her history six months after the martyrdom of her two sons, Joseph and Hyrum. The fair copy’s title, “The History of Lucy Smith, Mother of the Prophet,” and the copyright description suggest a degree of confidence unusual for a woman of her time. The copyright refers to the book as “The History of Lucy Mack Smith wife of Joseph Smith, the first Patriarch of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, who was the father of Joseph Smith, Prophet, Seer & Revelator;—containing an account of the many persecutions, trials, and afflictions which I and my family have endured in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, and establishing the

Their children were a son born in 1797 who died shortly after birth; Alvin, born February 11, 1798; Hyrum (second patriarch), born February 9, 1800; Sophronia, born May 16, 1803; Joseph Jr., born December 23, 1805; Samuel Harrison, born March 13, 1808; Ephraim, born March 13, 1810, died March 24, 1810; William (third patriarch), born March 13, 1811; Catherine, born July 28, 1813; Don Carlos, born March 25, 1816; and Lucy, born July 18, 1821.
church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints. . . .“4 When Orson Pratt published it in England in 1853, he gave it the title Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations. 5 Although Brigham Young harshly condemned it as containing “many falsehoods and mistakes,” historian Richard Lloyd Anderson has concluded that Lucy’s story is one of the essential sources for Mormon origins. 6

Joseph Smith Jr. ordained his father as “Patriarch to the Church” on December 18, 1833, followed by a blessing for Lucy: “And blessed also is my mother, for she is a mother in Israel, and shall be a partaker with my father in all his patriarchal blessings.” 7 In at least one instance, Lucy acted on that promise. In her memoirs Caroline Barnes Crosby recalls a meeting where Joseph Sr. was giving blessings to her family. She says, “Mother Smith was in the room. She also added her blessing or confirmed what we have already received.” 8 Apparently Lucy’s involvement was welcome, since on another occasion, according to Lucy’s reminiscence, she had been shaken by a fall on the stairs and wanted to stay home from a blessing meeting that she had been

5Lucy Mack Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853).
7Manuscript History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, December 18, 1833, Archives of the Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).
8Caroline Barnes Crosby, Memoirs, February 21, 1836, LDS Church Archives; copy at Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
planning to attend with Joseph Sr. “I told him [Joseph Sr.] that I was afraid that I should take a cold, that it would affect me seriously on account of my fall, but he refused to go without me. . . . I went.”

Lucy was a practical, strong-minded woman. When the family fell on hard times, she gave her husband a wedding gift from her brother and his business partner of $1,000 to pay off their debts. When Lucy and the children were joining Joseph Sr. in Palmyra, New York, she oversaw the packing, paid off their last debts, and fired the teamster who attempted to cheat her. She then continued on, selling possessions to finance their trip so that they arrived in Palmyra with only a few cents in cash.

While the men plunged into clearing the land and planting, Lucy began painting oilcloth covers for tables and did well enough that she could state, “I furnished all the provisions for the family and, besides this, began to replenish our household furniture, in a very short time, by my own exertions.”

An unwavering supporter of her son’s prophetic mission, Lucy hid the Book of Mormon manuscript under her bed for safety when reports reached her that neighbors had threatened to steal it. She defended its veracity when an official delegation from a church she had joined called on her to persuade her to renounce it and return to her former affiliation. She also boldly testified of its truthfulness in both public and private and wrote a stirring letter to her brother Solomon, urging him to accept it. As examples of her leadership ability, she led a party of about eighty converts from Colesville, New York, to Kirtland, Ohio, in early 1831 and, during Zion’s Camp, personally undertook the responsibility of seeing to the completion of a new meetinghouse in Kirtland. She raised money, instructed the workmen, and supervised the construction. The building was completed by the time Joseph and Hyrum and the rest of the brethren returned. There are other such stories illustrating what a strong-willed woman she was.

After her sons, Joseph and Hyrum, were killed, the Church un-

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11Ibid., 70.
derwent a succession crisis, and Lucy, with Brigham Young’s permission, addressed general conference on October 8, 1845. She was the first woman to do so and the last for almost 140 years. Brigham Young spoke immediately after Lucy, promising that if she would accompany the group west, he would ensure that when she died her bones would be returned to Illinois to rest near those of her husband and children. However, Lucy remained behind in Nauvoo with her daughter-in-law Emma until she died on May 14, 1855. At that point, she had seen her husband and two of her sons become Presiding Patriarch.

The second Presiding Patriarch was Hyrum Smith, ordained by his father before his death on September 14, 1840. Jerusha Barden was Hyrum’s first wife. Historical records yield little more information than her birth on February 15, 1805, at Norfolk, Litchfield County, Connecticut, to Seth and Sarah Barden. There is no mention of siblings. She married Hyrum Smith on November 2, 1826, and was baptized June 9, 1830, one year after her husband. Jerusha died on

October 13, 1837, in Kirtland at age thirty-two, shortly after giving birth to her sixth child. Hyrum was then in Far West. Just before she died, Jerusha said to one of her children, “Tell your father when he comes that the Lord has taken your mother home and for him to take care of you.”

Lucy speaks of Jerusha’s death as “a calamity . . . that wrung our hearts with more than common grief. . . . She was a woman whom everybody loved that was acquainted with her, for she was every way worthy. The family was so warmly attached to her, that, had she been our own sister, they could not have been more afflicted by her death.”

Jerusha’s patriarchal blessing, pronounced by Joseph Sr., provides a glimpse of what her conversion had cost her:

Jerusha, my daughter-in-law, the Lord will reward thee for all thy labors and toils. Thou hast had many sorrows in consequence of the hardness of the hearts of thy father’s family; and thou has sought by prayer, before the Lord, mercy for them; and notwithstanding they have openly rebelled against the truth, and knowingly turned from the light of heaven, yet some of them will be saved, but it will be through great tribulation. Thou shalt be blessed with thy husband; and his joy shall be thy joy; thy heart shall be lifted up for him while he is afar off, and thou shalt be comforted. The Lord will watch over thee, and thy children, and in the times of thy sorrow, the angels shall minister unto thee. Thy children shall be blessed and thy children’s children to the latest generation. Thy name is recorded on high, and thou shalt rise with the just to meet the Lord in the air, even so, Amen.

It seems that Jerusha had been alienated from her family when she joined with Hyrum in the Restoration.

Two months after Jerusha’s death Hyrum married Mary Fielding on December 24, 1837. She had been born July 21, 1801, at Honidon, Bedfordshire, England, to John Fielding and Rachel Abbotson Fielding, was baptized in May 21, 1836, and had emigrated with her siblings, Joseph and Mercy Rachel. On October 8, 1842,

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15Ibid., 2:519.
17Patriarchal blessing recorded by Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland, Ohio, December 9, 1836, Eldred G. Smith Collection, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Smith Collection).
Mary became a member of the Quorum of the Anointed. According to the minutes: “Quorum present; also in addition, Sisters Adams, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, my aunt Clarissa, and my mother. My brother Hyrum and his wife were blessed, ordained and anointed.”

They had two children: Joseph F. (Fielding) born November 13, 1838, and Martha Ann, May 14, 1841.

As late as May 1843 Hyrum had not been taught the concept of plural marriage and experienced initial antagonism toward it. However, Brigham Young persuaded him that the principle was a revelation from God, and he became a supporter. It was later reported that, when Joseph mentioned the possibility that Hyrum could be sealed to his first wife by proxy, Hyrum expressed concern about his eternal relationship with his second wife, Mary Fielding. When he was assured that he could be sealed to her also, Hyrum responded, “I would not

18 History of the Church, 6:46.
bear it.”

It is difficult to know what Hyrum meant by this remark, but in August 1843, he married at least two other women: Mercy Fielding Thompson and Catharine Phillips. Although Hyrum was functioning as the Church Patriarch during this period and gave numerous blessings, the records are silent about any role Mary may have played in supporting him or any thoughts or feelings she may have had on that calling, and it was Mercy, not Mary, who acted as the scribe for most of his blessings.

When Hyrum and Joseph were killed in June 1844, the official Church contrasted Mary’s demeanor to Emma’s when they first saw the bodies of their martyred husbands: “On first seeing the corpse of her husband, Emma screamed and fell back, but was caught and supported by Dimick R. Huntington. She then fell forward to the Prophet’s face and kissed him, calling him by name, and begged him to speak to her once.” In contrast, “Mary (the Patriarch’s wife) manifested calmness and composure throughout the trying scene, which was affecting in the extreme.”

This passage must be read in light of the official disapproval of the Utah-based Church for Emma, who refused to come west, contrasted with Mary, who was viewed as a model of faithfulness. Mary eventually took her family to Salt Lake City with the help of her stepson, John Smith, also a future patriarch, who drove the wagon part of the way. She died September 21, 1852.

Although the greatest concern about succession focused on the office of Church president, the office of Presiding Patriarch was far from trouble-free. Samuel H. Smith, Joseph and Hyrum’s younger brother, was apparently injured when he tried to reach their bodies in Carthage and died within the month, leaving William as the only surviving Smith brother. Although the same case could have been made that Hyrum’s oldest son, John, should succeed him as that Joseph III should succeed Joseph Jr., both boys were too young. (John was only twelve.) But William, who was also an apostle, asserted his right to the office vigorously, a claim that the Twelve initially recognized.

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19 Hyrum Smith, Address, April 8, 1844, Thomas Bullock Report; Brigham Young, Address, October 8, 1866, both in LDS Church Archives, quoted in Andrew F. Ehat, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Succession Question” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), 261 note 158.

20 Anderson, Lucy’s Book, 868.

21 History of the Church, 6:627.
William’s wife was Caroline Grant, born January 22, 1814, at Windsor, Broome County, New York, to Joshua Grant and Athelia Howard Grant. She married William February 14, 1833, and was baptized that same year. She and William had two children, Mary Jane, born in January 1835, and Caroline, born in August 1836. Caroline Grant was the sister of Jedediah Grant, later Brigham Young’s counselor in the First Presidency. During the succession crisis, William went beyond his patriarchal claims to insist that he had also inherited the office of assistant president from Hyrum. Jedediah Grant was hostile toward William, possibly feeling that he had neglected the ailing Caroline, but also for causing dissension among the branches in the East.

Caroline was in poor health much of her short life, and her care reappears as a theme in William’s explanations of why he could not undertake a particular mission or return to Nauvoo. A long letter that Caroline, staying in Philadelphia, wrote to Jedediah the month before the martyrdom, has survived. It is a gentle, poignant, and loving letter, cheerful but hinting at some of the hardship that wives suffered while their husbands were away on missions during the early days of the Church.

This morning all nature wears a smile and how can I wear a frown (in the midst of the beauties and splendors of a May day morning). [I] who had such a happy heart and boyant spirits, but lo the distroyer has drawn a cloud on my sky, a frown on my brow, and a veil oer my once happy face but yet I look forward to a day not far distant when the distroyer shall leave my horizon clear of his poysnous influence and then I can enjoy life with a knowledge of the enjoyement, for most assuredly I understand the bitter and then why not appreciate the sweet. . . . I am about the same as when you left with the exception of a dreadful blister which kept me in bed one or two days. I haven’t been anywhere since you left only once to meeting and that made me sick so I shall have to stay close at home. . . . Now tell Wm. he must keep up his spirits and do the best he can and not give himself trouble about my sufring for want of means for I have been very well provided for so far. last Sabath Br. Walton took up a collection for me and got two dolars and forty cents.22

Other church members had given her a few cents and “a basket” (presumably of food). Caroline adds that her little daughters keep ask-
ing for their father and asks Jedediah to tell William that she “would like to see him an hour or two mighty well about this time.”

Despite suffering from severe dropsy, Caroline did eventually manage to travel to Nauvoo, dying only a few days after arrival, on May 22, 1845, at age thirty-one. William was ordained Patriarch on the day of her funeral, which he did not attend because of concerns for his safety. Therefore, she was not alive during the period when he was giving patriarchal blessings, which came to an abrupt end after five turbulent months. William had spent the intervening time challenging the leadership of the Twelve and referring to the Smith family (meaning primarily himself) as the rightful heirs. At the October conference 1845, four months after being ordained as Patriarch, William failed to receive a sustaining vote. Parley P. Pratt raised the objection, saying that the Patriarch was “an aspiring man.” William was excommunicated on October 19, 1845, for “apostasy” and for opposition to the authority of the Twelve.

He had not remained a widower long, but none of his subsequent wives had the role of “wife of the patriarch” as one of her responsibilities. Only a month after Caroline’s death, William married Mary Jane Rollins on June 22, 1845, and was granted a decree of divorce on May 12, 1847, when Mary Jane was accused of adultery with John Jones, and others unnamed, in the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court, State of Illinois. During this same period, William was also married to Mary Ann Sheffield West, who testified in 1893 that she had been sealed to William Smith for eternity by Brigham Young sometime between 1843 and 1845 and that Young had also sealed Priscilla Morgridge to William. A fourth woman, Priscilla Staines, testified that she was married to William Smith and that sisters Sarah and

Jedediah M. Grant Papers, LDS Church Archives.

23Ibid.

24History of the Church 7:458–59 incorrectly attributes the objection to Orson Pratt. In his journal Orson Pratt names his brother Parley as the speaker. See Elden J. Watson, ed., The Orson Pratt Journals (Salt Lake City: E. J. Watson, 1975). See also “Conference Minutes,” Times and Seasons 6 (November 1, 1845): 1008. Willard Richards also confirms that it was Parley P. Pratt. Willard Richards, Journal, October 6, 1845, LDS Church Archives.

25Willard Richards, Journal, August 31, 1845. See also Warsaw Signal, September 3, 1845.

26Copy of these proceedings courtesy of D. Michael Quinn.
Hannah Libbey (later sealed to George A. Smith) had also been married to William in Nauvoo.  

None of these marriages survived past 1845 or 1846 or produced children. In May 1847, William married his deceased wife’s younger sister, Roxie Ann Grant. She was born on March 16, 1825, at Naples, Ontario County, New York, and was baptized in 1833, at the same time as her sister, Caroline. Roxie and William had two children: Thalia, born on September 21, 1848, and Hyrum Wallace, born August 17, 1850. William served briefly (a matter of a few months) as a Strangist apostle and patriarch, but apparently none of his wives joined him on his speedy trajectory through that movement. Roxie evidently left William and died March 30, 1900, at Lathrop, Clinton County, Missouri.

William married Eliza Elsie Sanborne sometime during the late 1850s. Eliza was the daughter of Enoch Sanborn and Louie Slayton Sanborn, born in July 1827 at Cattaraugus, New York. Eliza and William had three children. Eliza died May 7, 1889, and ten years later, eighty-year-old William married a French woman, Rosanna Surprise.

Following William’s excommunication on October 18, 1845, the Church was without a patriarch for more than two years. The First Presidency then appointed Uncle John Smith (brother of Joseph Smith Sr.) as the fourth Presiding Patriarch, and Brigham Young or-

27 *Complaints: Abstract of Pleading and Evidence in the Circuit Court of the United States, Western Division at Kansas City—The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints vs. The Church of Christ at Independence* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bindery, 1893): 380–88, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

28 Eliza Sanborn had been married previously to James Brain, and they had one daughter, Mary, born April 9, 1848, died January 11, 1865. *Utah Genealogical Magazine* 26 (July 1935): 105.

29 Eliza and William Smith’s three children were: William Enoch, born July 24, 1858, at Erie, Pennsylvania; Edson Don Carlos, born September 6, 1862, at Elkador, Iowa; and Louie May, born May 8, 1866, at Elkador, Iowa. Edson Don Carlos later joined the LDS Church in Salt Lake City.

30 Eulogy given by Judge Samuel Murdock at William’s funeral, November 1893; Graceland College Archives, Lamoni, Iowa. Photocopy courtesy of Professor Margaret F. Maxwell, Tucson, Arizona.
dained him after the conference sustained him.\textsuperscript{31}

His wife, Clarissa Lyman Smith, was born June 27, 1790, at Lebanon, New Hampshire, daughter of Richard and Philomena Lyman. She married John Smith on September 11, 1815, and was baptized on January 9, 1832. Her husband followed her into the icy waters, although at the time he was suffering from consumption. Clarissa and John had three children.\textsuperscript{32} Little is known about Clarissa herself, but their lives as Mormons were a chronicle of suffering. After moving to Kirtland, six families crowded into their small home during the month of November 1838. In 1839 they lived in tents in the middle of winter, suffering frostbite and a severe shortage of food.\textsuperscript{33}

In one of the few mentions of Clarissa in his journal, John comments on July 29, 1839, “I was taken sick . . . and our three children were all sick. My wife was the only one about the house that could do anything and the Lord had given her an uncommon degree of health and strength which enabled her to take care of us in our helpless condition.”\textsuperscript{34} Other records rarely mention Clarissa, although she attended meetings of the Anointed Quorum with John and was apparently supportive when he became a polygamist after the martyrdom. During January 1846, Uncle John married seven plural wives. One of them was Mary Aiken Smith, the widow of his brother Silas.\textsuperscript{35}

After leaving Nauvoo, seven of Clarissa’s and John’s grandchil-

\textsuperscript{31}I call him “Uncle John” (he was Joseph and Hyrum’s uncle) to distinguish him from “Young John” Smith, Hyrum’s son, who became the fifth patriarch. Uncle John was released as Salt Lake Stake president to accept this calling. See Bates and Smith, \textit{Lost Legacy}, 115; Irene M. Bates, “Uncle John Smith, 1981–1854: Patriarchal Bridge,” \textit{Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought} 20, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 84–85.

\textsuperscript{32}The children of Clarissa and John Smith were: George A. (the apostle), born June 26, 1817; Caroline, born June 6, 1820; and John Lyman, born November 17, 1828, all at Potsdam, New York.

\textsuperscript{33}John Smith, Journal, 1833–49, April 23, 1838, George A. Smith Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

\textsuperscript{34}John Smith, Journal, 1781–1854, LDS Church Archives.

\textsuperscript{35}John Smith’s plural marriages were: (1) Mary Aiken Smith (widow of his brother Silas Smith), sealed on January 13, 1846, to John Smith for time and to Silas Smith for eternity, John Smith acting as proxy; (2) Sarah M. Kingsley, sealed on January 15, 1846, to John Smith for time and to Jo-
dren died. On June 28, 1846, Hosea Stout records the burial of one child on the plains en route to the Salt Lake Valley.36 When John Smith’s wagon tipped over during the journey, Clarissa was injured, though not seriously. She died in Salt Lake City during the winter of 1853–54.37 On April 4, 1854, John Smith married Mary Franky. He died only a month later on May 15, 1854. His obituary noted that when he moved to his own city lot in February 1849, he was able “for the first time in twenty-three years to cultivate a garden two years in

seph Smith Jr. for eternity, John Smith standing as proxy; (3) Ann Carr and Miranda Jones, sealed on January 15, 1846, to John Smith; (4–6) Julia Hills Johnson, Asenath Hulbert, and Rebecca Smith sealed on January 24, 1846, to John Smith for eternity. Nauvoo Temple Records, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Family History Library, Salt Lake City. Some family records list Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith as being sealed to John on January 25, 1846. She was not a plural wife, however. On that day, Brigham Young “anointed” Bathsheba and George A.’s two children “to the birthright and they were sealed to us upon the altar. . . . We were then sealed to father [John Smith] in the same manner.” Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846 (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 492. The editors comment (492 note 32): “This may mark the first such sealing of children to their own parents in the Nauvoo Temple.” Patty Bartlett Sessions, Journal, February 1849, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, refers several times to John and his “wives.” On December 25, 1847, Eliza R. Snow, Diary, LDS Church Archives, also refers to “J. Smith and wives attending a Christmas party at br. L. Young’s” where “father S. blessed the babe of Sis. Y. I served as scribe.” Julia Hills Johnson’s son, Benjamin, in My Life’s Review (Independence: Zion’s Printing and Publishing, 1947), 20–21, commented: “My mother having finally separated from my father, by the suggestion or counsel of the Prophet, she accepted and was sealed to Father Smith.”


37I have been unable to determine the exact date of Clarissa’s death. In March 1854, nephew Jesse N. Smith stated, “We had the privilege of meeting Uncle John Smith, though quite feeble at the time mourning death of his wife Clarissa Smith, which took place some months before.” Jesse N. Smith, Journal, Huntington Library. Bathsheba Smith writes, “In the winter of fifty-four my husband’s mother (Clarissa Lyman) departed this life.” Bathsheba W. Bigler Smith, Autobiography, Special Collections, Marriott Library.
succession.”\footnote{John Smith, Obituary, \textit{Deseret News}, May 15, 1854.} All those moves could only have represented a hardship for Clarissa. Yet because her husband was an obedient and loyal follower of Brigham Young and the Twelve, Clarissa was spared the discomfort of the internal dissension encountered by William Smith and some of the later Patriarchs.

Following the death of Uncle John Smith, Hyrum’s eldest son, John, age twenty-two, was called as the fifth Patriarch to the Church, and was often called “Young John” to differentiate him from his uncle. His wife was Hellen Fisher, born September 20, 1835, at Falston, Beaver County, Pennsylvania, to Joseph and Evelyn Fisher. She was baptized by Newell Knight in the Mississippi River in the spring of 1844. Hellen married John Smith on Christmas day in 1853, and they had nine children.\footnote{John and Hellen’s children were: Hyrum Fisher, born January 19, 1856; Elizabeth Maria, born October 8, 1854; Lucy, born July 11, 1858; Don Carlos, born June 7, 1861; Joseph, born September 10, 1865; Alvin Fisher and Evaline (twins), born October 13, 1867 (Evaline died November 4, 1878); John David, born May 1, 1870 (died September 16, 1878); and Hellen Jerusha, born October 26, 1872.}

After the sparse records available on the wives, especially the plural wives, of the previous patriarchs, Hellen emerges in her letters to John with unexpected vividness with a distinctive voice of her own. She became quite my favorite. Hellen’s and John’s relationship was one of trusting honesty, deep affection, and mutual respect. Hellen was certainly her own person in voicing her opinions, as was John.

Neither Hellen nor John was enthusiastic about plural marriage, which caused some negative comment from the Church hierarchy. During the Reformation a great deal of pressure was placed on priesthood members to enter into plural marriage.\footnote{For example, Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, April 6, 1884, LDS Church Archives, noted: “At a priesthood meeting held in the evening (after the Hall was cleared of all those who were not worthy of being present . . .) the strongest language in regard to Plural Marriage was used that I ever heard, and among other things it was stated that all men in positions who would not observe and fulfil that law should be removed from their places.”} Hellen wrote to her half-brother-in-law, Joseph F. Smith (later president of the Church) when he was on his mission in Hawaii, that “Brother
Young told John to get another wife.”⁴¹ Five months later, John had obeyed this counsel, and Hellen reported to Joseph F.: “Well, John has got another wife, perhaps you know her, her name is Milisa Lemins. [The marriage took place on February 18, 1857.] Dear Joseph, it was a trial to me but thank the Lord it is over with . . . I care not how many he gits now, the ice is broke as the old saing is, the more the greater glory . . . all the girls is giting maried from 10 to 18. If there is any left till theyre are 18 they are on the oald maids list.”⁴²

To John himself, absent in May 1857, she was even franker: “Talk about me apostizing, God forgive me for I am a later day saint, but the Lord knows that I am know poligamist, and with the help of the Lord I will have nothing to do with it, can you understand that.”⁴³ Hellen reminded John that he had asked to know her mind, so he must not complain if she told him. She added a caution: “Report is that you are bringing a lady-wife with you. I wood advise her to leave a portion of her refinemen on the plains and it will not go so hard with her when she gets here . . . May the Lord bless you and bring you home in safty is the prare of your wife as ever.”⁴⁴

The plural wife of John Smith, Nancy Melissa Lemmon, was born September 6, 1833, near Payson, Adams County, Illinois, the daughter of Washington Lemmon and Tamar Stevens Lemmon. She and John had one son, John Lemmon Smith, born March 16, 1858. He died at age nine, on May 1, 1867.

Another of Hellen’s letter, written in 1860 when John was visiting relatives in Nauvoo, shows her in an angry but resolute mood: “John when you left you said you wood gow away and when you came back I wood bee a betar girl, for beter or worse you will find me changed from a weeke girl to a stronge minded woman that will have her writes if there are writes for a woman. I have borne all I can bare from them that I have treated like friends and worked for and made as

⁴³Hellen Smith, Letter to John Smith, May [day illegible], 1857, Smith Collection.
⁴⁴Ibid.
comfortable as I could and what do I receive for frendship. Curses." Hellen never gives any clue about who the “friends” were.

In 1862 John was sent on a mission to Denmark, officially so that he might “gain experience” but possibly reflecting Brigham Young’s uneasiness with John’s on-going cordial relationships with his cousins in the Midwest. Joseph III had accepted the presidency of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in April 1860. The letters exchanged between John and Hellen while he was in Copenhagen are interesting and full of deep affection. John addresses her as “Ever Dear Hellen.” In one John teases her about polygamy:

You again advise me to get two more wives when I get home. . . . you say also that if I do get more wives I will take them on your terms, how am I to understand you? if I am to understand it as this reads I would suppose that you was a going to hunt up two wives for me (or had found them allready) and to do all in your power for my good and for my comfort without a word of complaint, for this kind offer except [sic] my thanks, for your kindness. I know that your generous hart is ever ready to do me good, but for the present alow me to say that I have wives enough. but if you have any picked out for me do not be offended if I request you to wait untill I get home before you make a final bargen with them.  

In a more serious vein, John also tells Hellen “be not afraid to trust me. I think that I can look at a woman without lusting after her if you think otherwise you do not know me.”

From Copenhagen on October 12, 1863, he wrote philosophically: “My Dear, I notice in one of your notes that you are very mad about something. let me say you must not get mad for that is very bad to get mad it makes one feel uncomfortable. . . . you must not talk so about the Authorites. I think it was to my interest to send me out here. if it was not the intension first it will prove to my interest, and I have learned some things which I would not have learned at home.”

Hellen’s anger is a measure of her loyalty to her husband. During their years together Hellen shared John’s humiliation when members

47Ibid., January 9, 1863.
48Ibid., October 12, 1863.
of the hierarchy expressed their dissatisfaction with him.\textsuperscript{49} The General Authorities disapproved of John because he would not live with his plural wife, Melissa, nor would he take other wives. Also, he was re-proved twice from the pulpit in the October conference 1894 because, in common with other General Authorities at that time, he found it difficult to give up tobacco.\textsuperscript{50} At one time he was called a “Josephite” because of his close relationship with members of his family in the RLDS Church.\textsuperscript{51}

Hellen also received letters from President Joseph Smith III of the RLDS Church. On May 17, 1890, he wrote, expressing his affection for her and John and telling her how much he had enjoyed being with them in Salt Lake City. He refers to an evening spent at “cousin Samuel’s on the Saturday before I left,” when “Aunt Bathsheba” and “Aunt Zina” were present. He says to Hellen, “What a fix we would all have been in had I not staved off Aunt Zina’s testimony. Did it ever occur to you, what a bad feeling might have taken the place of our pleasantness and peace that evening? One careless word might have stirred up a ‘Hornet’s Nest.’ I am glad it did not stir up.”\textsuperscript{52} “Samuel” was Samuel Harrison Bailey Smith, the son of Samuel H. Smith and therefore Joseph III’s first cousin. The two women were Bathsheba Wilson Smith, George A. Smith’s widow, and Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young was a plural wife of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Obviously the “testimony” was the prickly subject of polygamy, on which Joseph III adamantly took the position that his father had not been involved.

\textsuperscript{49}For a discussion of the hierarchy’s attitude toward the Patriarch, see Bates and Smith, \textit{Lost Legacy}, 136 and note 37.

\textsuperscript{50}Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), October 6, 1894, LDS Church Archives. Wilford Woodruff called on John to resign “if he can not put away his tobacco and smoking.” See John M. Whitaker, Journal, October 1, 1894, LDS Church Archives, quoted in Paul H. Peterson, “An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972).


\textsuperscript{52}Joseph Smith, Letter to Hellen Smith, May 17, 1890; photocopy in my possession.
Ralph Smith, grandchild of John and Hellen, recalled that Hellen was an excellent seamstress. She gave him a “crazy patch” quilt which she had made out of odds and ends from dozens of dresses and blouses. Ralph had used it until it was threadbare.53

Hellen died in 1907, four years before John; and on December 9, 1909, John confessed his loneliness to Joseph III: “We had been married 54 years, less 3 months, 22 days.”54 His plural wife, Melissa, was still alive, however, and when John died, his obituary in the Deseret News stated: “Besides the five children, Patriarch Smith is survived by his wife, Mrs. Melissa L. Smith, 27 grandchildren, and 27 great grandchildren.” The only mention of Hellen, the great love of his life, is a brief mention of their marriage, buried within the long account of John’s life that accompanied the announcement of his death.55

John’s eldest son, Hyrum Fisher Smith, was not called to succeed his father. At the time, Hyrum Fisher was not living with his wife, Hannah (“Annie”) Maria Gibbs Smith, and their nine children. He had acted as scribe for his father and had also taken care of farms and other properties left in wills to his father, but he had to move when properties were sold, which made it difficult for him to establish any lasting economic security for his family. This put a great strain on his and Annie’s marriage. John’s grandson, Hyrum Gibbs Smith was called as patriarch instead, and the slight to his father caused some distress to Hyrum Gibbs as well as to the rest of the family.56

His wife was Martha Electa Gee. She was born in 1883 to George W. Gee and Sophrina A. Fuller of Provo. She married Hyrum G. in 1904, and they had eight children.57 Like Hyrum’s grandparents, they had a wonderful marriage, which comes through quite

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55 John Smith, Obituary, Deseret Evening News, November 7, 1911.
56 John Smith, in a letter to Hyrum G. Smith in 1912, writes about their father’s birthright, criticizing President Joseph F. Smith for leaving the matter to the Twelve. Quoted in Joseph E. Robinson, Diary, April 18, 1912, LDS Church Archives; photocopy courtesy of D. Michael Quinn.
57 The children of Martha and Hyrum G. Smith were: Cleone, born 1905; Eldred Gee, born 1907; Helen, born 1909; Miriam, born 1913; Barden Gee, born 1916; Hyrum Gee, born 1919; Verona, born 1923; and
clearly in the loving letters they exchanged almost daily while Hyrum G. was visiting branches in the Northwest during April and May 1928. He and the children wrote to each other as well.

Hyrum G. Smith, sixth Patriarch, tried to fulfill his calling diligently. Although he was not an ambitious man, Hyrum G. took his responsibilities seriously. This dedication, ironically, was a matter of serious concern to President Heber J. Grant, for reasons that are not completely clear. A possible reason is that, according to an 1913 diary entry, Hyrum G. had concurred with President Joseph F. Smith in suggesting that, following scriptural precedent (D&C 124:124), the patriarch should be sustained before the apostles in general conference.58 Martha, who was on the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association general board, was experiencing strains of her own. In one letter, she mentioned some discord on the board, although she provides no details, and exclaims disgustedly, “I have never felt so much like quitting the whole thing as I do tonight.”59

When Hyrum G. died on February 4, 1932, at age fifty-two, Martha was left with the care of eight children, ranging from five to twenty-five. The oldest child, Eldred Gee Smith, dropped out of school to help support the family. Although the only time the office had gone directly from father to son was from Joseph Sr. to Hyrum, the expectation was strong that Eldred would be called as Presiding Patriarch. Instead, the office floundered into inactivity. From 1932 to 1942, the Church had no Presiding Patriarch. For those ten years, the Quorum of the Twelve and President Heber J. Grant could not agree on a successor. Grant wanted to make the office non-lineal, the Twelve insisted that the right to the office “was inherent in the blood.”60 Finally in 1942 a compromise was reached. Sidestepping Eldred G., the direct descendant, the First Presidency called Joseph Fielding Smith, a descendant of Hyrum Smith and Mary Fielding

Donna, born 1927.

58 Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 160–64, discuss this concern, which helps explain why President Grant later wanted to make the office non-hereditary; our thanks to D. Michael Quinn for information on the matter from Heber J. Grant’s records.


60 Draft of letter by Council of the Twelve to President Heber J. Grant, March 22, 1933, Council of the Twelve Correspondence, LDS Church Archives; quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 183, 224, 231 note 7.
Smith. He should not be confused with Joseph F. Smith (Hyrum’s son and Church president) nor with Joseph Fielding Smith (Joseph F. Smith’s son and future Church president). This Joseph F. was the eldest son of Hyrum Mack Smith (a son of Church President Joseph F. Smith and hence a half-brother of Joseph Fielding Smith) and Ida E. Bowman Smith, born January 30, 1899. He was ordained as Church Patriarch October 8, 1942, by Heber J. Grant, at age forty-three.

His wife was Ruth Pingree, the daughter of Frank Pingree and Pauline Taggart Pingree (born June 24, 1907, Coalville, Utah; died ca. 2005). Ruth and Joseph were married June 5, 1929, and had five children. The seventh Patriarch served only four years, from 1942 to 1946. Ruth must have suffered a great deal of anguish when her husband was released due to allegations of homosexual activity. The official explanation for the Patriarch’s release, however, was “ill health.” No Church trial was held but there was certainly evidence of disquiet among Church leaders. On July 10, 1946, George Albert Smith, Joseph’s cousin and Church president, recorded in his diary, “Met in office with Council of Presidency & Twelve… Jos Patriarch case considered. Bad situation. Am heartsick.” Ruth attended at least one of the meetings with the General Authorities where the situation was discussed. When the family moved to Hawaii, the local Church authorities were instructed that Joseph F. was not to assume any Church responsibilities or callings. Ten years later his stake president appealed to President McKay to lift the restrictions. After making a full confession, Joseph F. was restored to full participation in the stake. He was serving as a stake high councilor in Hawaii when he died on August 29, 1964.

Later, when interviewed by Gary Smith, Ruth did not discuss this unhappy time nor its effect on her family. She referred only to her husband’s poor health. One of Joseph F. Smith’s daughters did ad-

61 The children of Ruth and Joseph F. Smith were: Ruth S., born 1931; Ida, born 1932; Rauel Pingree, born 1935; Denis, born 1939; and Lynne Esther, born 1942.

62 Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 3, 1946 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 157 (hereafter cited as Conference Report).

63 George Albert Smith, Diary, July 10, 1946, LDS Church Archives.

64 Notes on David O. McKay, Diary, April 10, 1957, July 10, 1957, and December 9, 1957, courtesy of D. Michael Quinn.
dress the subject, however, when I talked with her shortly before our *Lost Legacy* manuscript reached its final stages. She told me that she felt it had been a misunderstanding because the men in the Church were then quite open in their displays of affection. For instance, she said, they would kiss each other if they met on the street.

While it is true that American culture has shifted sharply in the past half-century, this explanation does not seem adequate. D. Michael Quinn provides a more comprehensive treatment of this sad situation which occurred during a time when homosexuality was not discussed openly, making a case that Joseph F. had struggled unsuccessfully for years with what was regarded as his “problem.” 65

Following Joseph F.’s release, Eldred G. Smith was called and sustained as Patriarch to the Church during April conference 1947. He had married Jeanne Ness on August 15, 1932, with President Heber J. Grant performing the ceremony. They had five children. 66 Eldred became the eighth and final Patriarch.

During the ten-year hiatus after Eldred’s father had died, Jeanne must have endured a good deal of tension; and then when her husband was rejected in favor of Joseph F. Smith in 1942, she must have shared Eldred’s humiliation as well as the uncertainties with which Eldred had to contend. Given the strong expectation that Eldred would succeed his father, there was a good deal of speculation, or innuendo, about possible “unworthiness.” Some reports reached Eldred and Jeanne, but little was voiced in their presence, so they were never given the chance to refute the rumors. 67 Also, for ten years Eldred had been denied job opportunities because prospective employers felt he would be called at the next general conference. It was a


66 Audrey Jean (later Jeanne) Ness, was born June 14, 1908, in Salt Lake City, to Lars Raynor Ness and Mary Anderson Smellie Ness. The five children of Eldred and Jeanne Ness Smith were Miriam, born 1935; Eldred Gary and Audrey Gay (twins), born 1938; Gordon Rayner, born 1941; and Sylvia Dawn, born 1948.

67 As one example of such rumors, Martha Smith, Eldred’s mother, told Eldred that a friend staunchly defended Eldred in a Sunday School class in Provo when the teacher stated authoritatively that only unworthiness could have precluded Eldred’s appointment. The bitter debate that fol-
very uncomfortable position for Eldred and his family. When he was finally made patriarch in April 1947, he had a backlog of hurt and humiliation to deal with.

Eldred made it clear during his initial talk at conference that there was nothing of which he had to repent:

Brethren and sisters, I think you are all aware of the fact of the hereditary nature of the office to which I have been called. For that reason I was prepared to give a speech for this occasion fifteen years ago, but not today. Maybe it’s because I don’t like to get burned in the same fire twice. . . . Many people said, after that occasion, I was not called because I was not worthy, and I would like to say something regarding that now. I don’t think that I have had to do any reforming or change my habits in order to make myself worthy of this calling.68

Eldred related an incident that occurred when Joseph F. Smith had been called as patriarch in 1942. President Grant had called Eldred into his office to tell him what was going to happen. Eldred said, “President Grant, are you doing this because I am not worthy?” and President Grant replied, “Oh, no, no, on the contrary. In fact you have made quite a reputation for yourself in your Church activities.”69

The talk did not go down well with some members of the Twelve, and some of the brethren felt that Eldred owed them an apology for his implied criticism of their 1942 decision. A cryptic comment in the Quorum of the Twelve minutes for April 15, 1971, mentions a discussion of “Patriarch Matters.” They referred to the minutes of April 10, 1947, when Eldred was ordained as patriarch to the Church. After these 1947 minutes were read in 1971, the clerk recorded: “Others mentioned that his [Eldred’s] mother may have influenced him unduly in the years that he was not called to serve as Patriarch to the Church.”70 Other suggestions of a continuing troubled relationship between Eldred and members of the hierarchy appear in correspondence of the period. Jeanne did not enjoy good health, and

followed between the participants lasted many years. Bates and Smith, Lost Legacy, 217 note 1.


69Ibid.

70Quorum of the Twelve, Meeting Minutes, April 15, 1971, extract in Smith Collection.
it seems likely that the tension involving her husband’s calling, which he performed diligently and consistently, must have added to her distress. She died in June 1977.

One year later Eldred married Hortense Child, then a counselor in the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association general presidency. Hortense had served in responsible positions in the Church for many years, and she became a great source of comfort and help to Eldred in his work. But in October 1979 Eldred was made emeritus and the office of Patriarch to the Church was itself retired.

All of these wives of the Patriarchs shared the effects of the varying degrees of dissonance and uncertainty, as well as the financial and other hardships accompanying the office. Michael Quinn has documented that the Presiding Patriarchs, compared with other General Authorities, were always at the lowest end of the income spectrum and, furthermore, did not have access to the personal income that other authorities derived from appointments in Church business corporations. 71

These women married a man, but he came with an office. Unlike the men themselves, who had observed their fathers or grandfathers (or other male relatives) performing their roles, the women had no role models. Expectations for them, beyond general supportiveness, were never clear. I admire these women greatly and regret that their contributions have received so little recognition. This article is a

small step toward the fuller treatment that still awaits attention.

Since the office of Presiding Patriarch went directly from father to son only once, how did the wives prepare their sons and daughters-in-law for a calling that might or might not come to them? Although transmission of the office was never routinized, as transmission of the Church president’s office has been, did these women attempt to prepare their oldest son for the office or recognize the ambiguity inherent in having a hereditary office in a Church that functioned as a bureaucracy? How did the wives respond to the ambivalence of their husbands’ status compared with that of other General Authorities? Being the wife of a patriarch seems to have been a largely invisible position—with no authority but with real responsibility. How did it shape their lives? And how, in turn, did they contribute to it? These questions remain unanswered.
EMILY DOW PARTRIDGE SMITH
YOUNG ON THE WITNESS STAND:
RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLURAL WIFE

H. Michael Marquardt

On Saturday, March 19, 1892, sixty-eight-year-old Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young reluctantly climbed in a buggy with Charles A. Hall, president of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), and drove to an office in downtown Salt Lake City where she gave a deposition, her second in five days, that became part of the legal record in the struggle between the Church of Christ (also known as the Hedrickites) and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints about possession of the lot that Joseph Smith had designated as the site of the New Jerusalem’s temple. At issue were her father’s purchase sixty years earlier of part of the property currently under dispute and especially the practice in Nauvoo of plural marriage. Forty-nine years earlier, Emily and her older sister Eliza had both been sealed to Joseph Smith as plural wives. Emily wrote in her diary that her testimony, given under oath on “the witness stand” was a distasteful experience: “I was there several hours and underwent a rigid examination. I felt sometimes as though the top of my head might move off. I was very weary and sometimes quite indignant but had to pocket my pride and indignation and answer all the impertnent questions the lawyers chose to ask.”

The Church of Christ won the case, giving it possession of two...
and a half acres in Independence, now occupied by a large grassy area, places for parking, with a congregational building on the north-east corner of the lot, serving as its headquarters. One year later, the RLDS Church (now Community of Christ) published an abstract of the proceedings in a thick volume of 507 pages; but approximately forty pages of the original transcript pages of Emily’s testimony, particularly about plural marriage, were omitted.

Although most events of Emily’s life are well known, thanks to her successive marriages to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, this article focuses on the information available in her deposition, quoting lengthy excerpts dealing with plural marriage that have not been generally available. Although she was responding by memory to events many years in the past, it adds valuable insights into the practice of Nauvoo polygamy, including her testimony that an angel revealed the practice, that the first wife was asked to place the plural wife’s hand in her husband’s, and that her relationship with Joseph Smith included a sexual component.

**EMILY DOW PARTRIDGE’S EARLY LIFE**

Emily Dow Partridge was born February 28, 1824, in Painesville, Geauga County, Ohio, the third of five daughters and two sons born

_1_ Emily Dow Partridge Young, Diary, 1874–99, March 19, 1892, typescript, 95, Emily Dow Partridge Young Collection, Vault MS 5, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

_2_ The site was originally two and a half acres; but in 1963 when the city closed an adjacent street, the Church of Christ purchased it, making the current site two and three-quarters acres. R. Jean Addams, “The Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Its Emergence, Struggles, and Early Schisms,” in _Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism_, edited by Newell G. Bringhamurst and John C. Hamer (Independence: John Whitmer Books, 2007), 213.

*seep Smith (Longwood, Florida: Xulon Press, 2007); The Rise of Mormonism: 1816–1844 (Longwood, Florida: Xulon Press, 2005) and The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999). He is webmaster for “Mormon Central,” “Mormon Origins” and “Family and Church History.” He and his wife Dorothy live in Sandy, Utah, and are the parents of five children. He presented an earlier version of this article at the Mormon History Association annual conference in Cedar City, Utah, on May 18, 2001.
to Edward Partridge, a hat manufacturer, and Lydia Clisbee Partridge. About 1828 Sidney Rigdon baptized Edward and Lydia into the Disciples of Christ (Campbellite).3

In November 1830 when Emily was six, her mother became the family’s first Mormon, baptized by Parley P. Pratt, one of the four missionaries en route to Missouri to proselytize among the Native Americans. More cautious, Edward wanted to meet Joseph Smith first and went to New York State with Sidney Rigdon. On December 11, 1830, questions satisfied, Partridge was baptized by Joseph Smith who received a revelation assuring Edward that he was blessed, that his sins were forgiven, and that he would be ordained to preach the gospel.4 Sidney Rigdon ordained the thirty-seven-year-old Edward an elder four days later.

After Edward’s return to Ohio, Joseph Smith revealed that he should also be ordained the Church’s first bishop.5 From then until his death in 1840, Edward Partridge stood at the center of the fledgling Church’s turbulent first decade. As Church members left New

3Manuscript History A-1:94, Archives of the Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives). See Dean C. Jessee, ed., The Papers of Joseph Smith. Vol. 1: Autobiographical and Historical Writings (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:348. According to the Painesville Telegraph 6 (January 18, 1828): 3, Edward Partridge announced that his house, hatter’s shop, barn, and hundred-acre farm were for sale. The Painesville Telegraph, and Geauga Free Press 1 (September 1, 1829): 3, further indicated that Partridge was “wishing to quit the Hatting business, and leave Painesville.”

4H. Michael Marquardt, The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 97; LDS D&C 36/RLDS D&C 35.

5Rigdon ordained Partridge as bishop on February 4, 1831, in Kirtland. A conference on June 3, 1831, chose John Corrill and Isaac Morley as his assistants. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 7. Lyman Wight ordained Partridge to the “High Priesthood.” While elders were ordained from April 6, 1830, to June 3, 1831 it was not until the June 3, 1831, conference that, for the first time, the High Priesthood (order of Melchizedek) was conferred upon some of the elders. Those so ordained received authority like Melchizedek who was a high priest. This is the origin of the office of high priest in the church. In 1832 the office of elder was considered as belonging
York in 1831, bound for Kirtland, Ohio, some of them traveled through Painesville and stopped at the Partridge home. Soon afterward Emily caught a serious case of measles, probably with an ear infection as a complication, for her “ear was sore for years.” Fifty-three years later, she wrote: “I can’t tell you how I suffered with it both from pain and mortification of pride. When my ear did get well, it left me deaf and I have been deaf (in that ear) ever since.”

In mid-June 1831, Smith, Rigdon, Partridge, and others went to Independence, a frontier town in Missouri where Joseph Smith received a revelation designating the locale as the Saints’ City of Zion. A temple should be built “westward upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse,” and the Saints should purchase that lot and “every tract lying westward even unto the line run[n]ing directly between Jew [Native Americans] and Gentile and also every tract bordering by the prairies.” The City of Zion, therefore, would cover the territory from the town of Independence to the Missouri River.

Edward Partridge was assigned to “divide unto the saints their inheritances” (LDS D&C 57:7). Another revelation on August 1 or 2 instructed Martin Harris to “be an example unto the church, in laying his moneys before the bishop of the church” (LDS D&C 58:35). On August 3, the temple site was dedicated. Oliver Cowdery, who was present, recorded: “Sidney Rigdon dedicated the ground where the city is to Stand: and Joseph Smith Jr. laid a stone at the North east corner of the contemplated Temple in the name of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth. After all present had rendered thanks to the great ruler of the universe. Sidney Rigdon pronounced this Spot of ground wholy
to the high or Melchizedek Priesthood (LDS D&C 84:29). Partridge’s beautifully preserved bishop’s license is in the LDS Church Archives, signed not only by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, but also bearing the names of other elders who came to Independence between August 1831 and about January 1832. For a photograph, see the LDS Institute of Religion manual, Church History in the Fulness of Times (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 121.

6Emily D. P. Young, “What I Remember,” April 7, 1884, 7, Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young Papers, MS 113, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter Marriott Library).

7Marquardt, Joseph Smith Revelations, 142; LDS D&C 57:3–5; RLDS D&C 57:1, July 20, 1831.
According to John Whitmer, the stone that Joseph Smith laid was the “cornerstone of the Temple.” William E. McLellin, who visited Independence soon afterward, showed visitors the spot in 1881 and commented that Joseph Smith “cut his way in through this thick growth of trees, brush and saplings, marked the spot by blazing a tree near by, cutting away the under brush for a few feet around and setting up a small stone that had been picked up in the ravine below. This was all the corner stone that was ever laid upon it, and it [was] only to mark the place of the corner.”

Ezra Booth, in a letter to a friend, gave directions for finding the temple site as “one half of a mile out of Town [west], to a rise of ground, a short distance south of the road.” Here they should look for “a sappling,” debarked on the north and west sides. “On the south side of the sappling will be found the letter, T. which stands for Temple; and on the east side ZOM for Zomar; which Smith says is the original word for Zion. Near the foot of the sappling, they will find a small stone, covered over with bushes, which were cut for that purpose. This is the corner-stone for the Temple.”

Two days after the dedication of the temple site, Edward Partridge wrote to Lydia in Kirtland that he planned to stay through December, because either he or Sidney Gilbert “must be here to attend the sales in December.” He half-apologized: “You know I stand in an important station, and as I am occasionally chastened I sometimes

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9Westergren, From Historian to Dissident, 85.


fear my station is above what I can perform to the acceptance of my Heavenly Father.”

The next month, Ezra Booth, who had become disaffected, wrote to Partridge, recounting Joseph Smith’s inaccurate vision of not finding a large church containing Native American converts established by Oliver Cowdery. Booth reminded Partridge of the time when he told Smith, “I wish you not to tell us any more, that you know these [things] by the spirit when you do not; you told us, that Oliver had raised up a large Church here, and there is no such thing.” Smith replied “I see it, and it will be so.” A revelation to Joseph Smith in Kirtland admonished Partridge for his “unbelief and blindness of heart” and warned: “Behold his mission is given unto him, and it shall not be given again.” However, a second revelation said that, when Partridge repented he would be forgiven (LDS D&C 58:15–16; 64:17). Partridge did not leave the Church as Booth expected.

Because Edward decided to stay in Independence, Lydia left the family property in Painesville under Harvey Redfield’s management and, with five children, ranging in age from one to eleven, left for Missouri in October 1831 with the families of William W. Phelps and Sidney Gilbert. At Independence, they rented a room from Lilburn W. Boggs, whose path would later collide with the Mormons with negative consequences to both, and later built a log house “on the corner of the temple lot, or quite near it.” The children attended school, and the youngest son, Edward Jr., was born on June 25, 1833. When Emily was about nine, she was baptized by John Corrill, an assistant or counselor to Bishop Partridge.

Among the land purchases Edward Partridge made in the Independence area was the temple site, within a tract of a bit more than

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14Collette, “In Search of Zion,” 43. David Harvey Redfield was a Kirtland merchant.

15Emily Young, “What I Remember.”
sixty-three acres purchased December 19, 1831, from Jones H. Flournoy and Clara Flournoy for $130. In 1848, Martin Harris reportedly had possession of the warrantee deed, suggesting that some legal arrangement had been made to transfer the property to him. Two and a half acres of this original purchase was at issue in the Temple Lot Case almost sixty years later. Although Emily was only a girl at the time, her family connections and documents made her an important witness. However, how much she actually recalled from her preteen years is hard to determine since she extracted material from the Joseph Smith's history for her autobiography and admitted that, even though she remembered “many of the circumstances that transpired at that time,” she was “too young then to be able to remember the particulars well enough to tell them.” Among these events were the tarring and feathering of her father on the public square in Independence on July 20, 1833, when he refused to promise the old settlers that the Mormons would leave Jackson County.

In November 1833, the Saints, including the Partridge family, were forced from their homes in Jackson County and crossed the Mis-

17 Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830-present), April 26, 1848, LDS Church Archives, microfilm copy at Marriott Library. Former apostle William E. McLellin knew about the deed from his association with Martin Harris, and McLellin inquired in 1869: “I want to know if Martin’s deed was ever recorded in Jackson Co.” McLellin, Letter to “Our very dear friends,” July 12, 1869, William E. McLellin Correspondence, Community of Christ Archives.
19 His assailants also threw the press for the Evening and the Morning Star from the upper story of the printing office, dedicated May 29, 1832, scattered the type, and destroyed most of the building. According to Emily, Mary Elizabeth and Caroline Rollins, then young teenagers, gathered unbound pages from the newly printed Book of Commandments from a table and hid in a cornfield. Ibid.; see also Edward Partridge, May 15, 1839,
souri River into Clay County. The families of Edward Partridge and John Corrill shared a one-room home during a season so bitter, according to Emily, that “the ink would freeze in the pen as father sat writing close in the corner by the fire.”

From January 27, 1835, to May 6, 1836, Edward left Lydia and the children in Missouri while he did missionary work, visited Kirtland, and participated in the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. In the fall of 1836, the Partridge family moved to Far West in Caldwell County, Missouri, and built a new home.

Two years later in the fall of 1838, General John B. Clark took Edward from his home “without any civil process” and brought him to Richmond, thirty miles away in Ray County, where he was charged with high treason but released after three or four weeks. In February 1839, the Partridge family went to Quincy, Illinois, where they lived until June 1839.

The Nauvoo Years

After spending some time in Pittsfield, Pike County, Illinois, the Partridge family moved to Nauvoo, where Edward became the bishop of the “Upper Ward.”

Destitute, they lived in a tent; and Emily, now about fifteen, recalls spending time at Ebenezer Robinson’s home. Then her father “rented a room, in what was called the ‘upper


21Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions, 513. According to “Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young,” Woman’s Exponent 14 (June 15, 1885): 10, “After Far West was laid out father built another house and we moved into the city.”

22Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions, 514.


store house,' built at the steam-boat landing," a building in which "several families occupied other portions of the house. Bro. Hyrum Smith's family had a room adjoining ours." Desperate for shelter, Edward saw that they could not wait for a house to be built, so he constructed "a stable for his cows and move[d] his family into that." To relieve the crowded conditions, Emily and Eliza went to Jane and William Law's home where they were treated with kindness.

Emily was sixteen when her eighteen-year-old sister Harriet died of an unknown illness on May 16, 1840. Eleven days later, her forty-six-year-old father also succumbed. Emily recalled: "After father's death Brother Law took our whole family and administered to our wants and with such good and kind care we began to improve in health, and when we had sufficiently regained our health we went back into our little hut once more." Four months after Edward's death, Lydia married William Huntington Sr., whose wife had died fourteen months earlier.

Just before her seventeenth birthday, Emily received her first patriarchal blessing from Isaac Morley on February 3, 1841. It promised: "If thou wilt listen to the voice of wisdom length of days shalt be given unto thee, and thou shalt have the blessing to see the winding up scene of this generation; peace and tranquility restored to man." Sister Eliza, a good seamstress, began working to help support the family. Emily, four years younger, says her only skills were in such housekeeping areas as washing dishes, sweeping, and scrubbing floors. Thus, she was delighted when "Sister Emma [Smith] sent for

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29“Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young,” Woman’s Exponent 14 (August 1, 1885): 37. Although the last part of this blessing remained unfulfilled, Emily experienced “length of days.”
me to come and live with her and nurse her baby. It seemed as if the Lord had opened up my way, it was so unexpected, and nothing could have suited me better, for tending babies was my delight. My sister Eliza, also, went there to live, which made it pleasanter for me and more home-like. Joseph and Emma were very kind to us; they were almost like a father and mother, and I loved Emma and the children, especially the baby, little Don Carlos."

While living in the Smith home, Emily became a member of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo on April 28, 1842. She and Eliza also learned from Joseph Smith himself what must have seemed God’s most demanding requirement: the revelation on plural marriage. Emily’s autobiography touches only briefly on this marriage to Joseph Smith: “I was married to him on the 11th of May [1843], by Elder James Adams. Emma was present. She gave her free and full consent. She had always, up to this time, been very kind to me and my sister Eliza, who was also married to the Prophet Joseph with Emma’s consent, but ever after she was our enemy.”

This published autobiography, however, is silent about a preceding and more secret plural marriage to Joseph Smith in March 1843. Before Emma Smith’s death in 1879, she had publicly denied her prophet-husband’s participation in polygamy; hence, Emily’s autobiography may have sidestepped this complicated double marriage to stress Emma’s approval of the second.

Eight years earlier, Emily had written “Incidents of the Early Life of Emily Dow Partridge,” a more telling and more detailed account of that first plural marriage. According to that account, the eigh-

30Ibid. Don Carlos Smith, named for Joseph’s deceased younger brother, was born June 13, 1840, but died August 15, 1841. “Obituary,” Times and Seasons 2 (September 1, 1841): 533. Another son, born February 6, 1842, died the same day.

31“A Book of Records Containing the Proceedings of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo,” April 28, 1842, typescript, LDS Church Archives. Emily also attended school at Robert B. Thompson’s house, where Howard and Martha Coray taught during the summer of 1841. Charles D. Tate, Jr., “Howard and Martha Jane Knowlton Coray of Nauvoo,” in Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Illinois, edited by H. Dean Garrett (Provo, Utah: BYU Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1995), 339.

eighteen-year-old Emily had been doing her household chores in the spring of 1842 when Joseph Smith said to her, “Emily if you will not betray me, I will tell you something for your benefit.” Emily, startled, refused to listen further. His plural sealing with a known date had occurred a year earlier to Louisa Beaman on April 5, 1841, and he had been sealed to several women by the time he approached Emily.

Approximately a year later, Elizabeth Durfee, wife of Jabez Durfee, invited Eliza and Emily to her home. According to Emily’s reminiscence, “She introduced the subject of spiritual wives as they called it in that day. She wondered if there was any truth in the report she heard.” Emily did not confide in the older woman; but her own devout prayer, faith in Joseph Smith as a prophet, and desire to obey the gospel calmed her fears. Later, Mrs. Durfee again sought Emily and told her, in Emily’s words, that “Joseph would like an opportunity to talk with me. I asked her if she knew what he wanted. She said she thought he wanted me for a wife. . . . I was to meet him in the evening at Mr. Kimballs.” After Emily finished the washing, she left the Smith home in the evening, still wearing her wash dress, and went to see her mother, Lydia, then walked to the Kimball home. Heber told Emily that his wife, Vilate, was not at home; Emily left but Heber called to her and she returned to the house and had the long-delayed conversation with Joseph. Emily continued: “I cannot tell all Joseph said, but he said the Lord had commanded [him] to enter into plural marriage and had given me to him and although I had got badly frightened he knew I would yet have him. So he waited till the Lord told him. My mind was now prepared and would receive the principles. . . . Well I was married there and then. Joseph went home his way and I going my way alone. A strange way of getting married wasn’t it. Brother Kimball married us, the 4th of March 1843.”

Joseph was thirty-seven at the time, and Emily turned nineteen in February. Four days later, twenty-two-year-old Eliza Partridge, to

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33Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the Early Life of Emily Dow Partridge,” 4.

34Ibid. Although Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo records do not document his plural marriages explicitly, his diary for that date, has the words recorded in Taylor shorthand, “and Kimballs”—meaning that he went to the Kimball home. Joseph Smith, Journal, March 4, 1843, LDS Church Archives. See Scott H. Faulring, ed., An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association
whom Joseph had taught the principle without Emily’s knowledge, also became his plural wife.  

Unaware of the Partridge sisters’ sealings to her husband, Emma Smith was briefly converted to the principle of plural marriage two months later. Joseph explained to Emma, and Brigham Young to Joseph’s older brother Hyrum, that the marriage relationship was an important part of the restored gospel. Although Emma had resisted such information—and would again—she signaled her acceptance of the principle on condition that she could choose his plural wives, perhaps thinking, at the time, that they were the first women to become his plural wives: “Sometime in the first part of May, Emma told Joseph she would give him two wives if he would let her choose them for him. She chose my sister and I and helped explain the principles to us. We did not make much trouble, but were sealed in her presence with her full and free consent. It was the 11th of May but before the day was over she turned around, or repented what she had done and kept Joseph up till very late in the night talking to him. She kept close watch of [sic] us.”

Within a few weeks—possibly less—Emma found the young sisters’ presence in her home intolerable. According to Emily, Emma Smith asked the sisters to come to her room: “Joseph was there, his countenance was the perfect picture of despair. I cannot remember all that passed at that time but she insisted that we should prom-

with Smith Research Associates, 1987), 327. Willard Richards was keeping Joseph’s diary.

35Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Affidavit, July 1, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 2:32, typescript, LDS Church Archives. Again, Heber C. Kimball also performed the sealing ceremony.


37Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the Early Life,” 4–5. Ten years later Emily wrote, “To save the [Smith] family trouble Brother Joseph thought it best to have another ceremony performed.” Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Young, (Emily Dow Partridge),” Historical Record 6 (May 1887): 240. Her memory that the ceremony was performed on May 11, 1843, seems to be faulty. James Adams, who performed the sealing ceremony, did not arrive in Nauvoo from Springfield until May 21. Emily Dow Partridge Young, Affidavit, May 1, 1869.
ise to break our covenants, that we had made before God. Joseph asked her if we made her the promises she required, if she would cease to trouble us, and not persist in our marrying someone else. She made the promise. Joseph came to us and shook hands with us and the understanding was that all was ended between us. I for one meant to keep the promise I was forced to make."

Upset, Emily went downstairs. “Joseph soon came into the room where I was, said, how do you feel Emily. My heart being still hard, I answered him rather short that I expected I felt as anybody would under the circumstance. He said you know my hands are tied. And he looked as if he would sink into the earth. I knew he spoke truly, and my heart was melted, all my hard feeling was gone in a moment.” Emma came in just then, Joseph left, and Emma demanded that Emily relate the details of the conversion. Emily flatly refused to tell her anything.

William Clayton, one of Joseph Smith’s clerks, kept a detailed personal journal. Emma, who had been in St. Louis, returned on August 12, and on August 16, Clayton records that Joseph told him that, since her return, “she had resisted the P. [priesthood principle of plural marriage] in toto & he had to tell her he would relinquish all for her sake. She said she would [have] given him E. & E. P [Emily and Eliza Partridge] but he knew if he took them she would pitch on him & obtain a divorce & leave him. He however told me he should not relinquish any thing.”

This conversation, confusingly, sounds as if Joseph had not yet married the two sisters once (let alone twice) and, furthermore, that the incident had not occurred in which, at Emma’s insistence, Joseph shook hands with the girls, thereby dissolving his sealings to them—an action that Emily, at least, took seriously.

Obviously the situation was extremely uncomfortable all around. Although Emily says that the sisters “remained in the [Smith] family several months after this,” it seems unlikely that Emma Smith would have tolerated their presence very long after this blow-up. Both girls found lodgings and work elsewhere. Emily

38Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the Early Life,” 5.
39Ibid.
41Young, “Young, (Emily Dow Partridge),” 240.
says that she never saw Joseph "but once to speak to after I left the Mansion house and that was just before he started for Carthage."

He and Hyrum Smith were killed June 27, 1844. Both sisters were then sealed to apostles who accepted their prior sealings to Joseph Smith. In the fall, probably November, 1844, Emily was sealed by proxy to Joseph Smith for eternity and to Brigham Young for time. When the Nauvoo Temple was completed, the ceremony was repeated—a sealing to Joseph Smith for eternity and a sealing to Brigham Young for mortality—on January 14, 1846, with Heber C. Kimball officiating. Emily’s first child by Young, Edward Partridge Young, was born October 30, 1845, but died on November 26, 1852. Eliza was sealed to Apostle Amasa M. Lyman as one of his plural wives, along with younger sisters Caroline and Lydia and with deceased sister Harriet.

THE TEMPLE PROPERTY

During the exodus from Nauvoo, the temple lot property, which lay fifteen years in Emily’s past, reemerged as the means of financing her family’s travel to Utah. On April 26, 1848, in Winter Quarters, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, and Wilford Woodruff met to discuss selling the temple lot in Jackson County. The minutes record: “The lot had been deeded to Martin Harris, but he had neglected getting the deed recorded; the title was now in the hands of the heirs of the late Bishop Edward Partridge, and a certain party was offering $300 for a quit claim deed to the same. After a lively discussion, the brethren decided to advise the Partridge heirs to make the transfer, and thus to obtain means to emigrate to the Valley.”

The would-be purchaser was one James Pool; and on May 5, 1848, Lydia, whose second husband had now died, signed a quit claim deed with Eliza, Caroline (both now plural wives of Amasa M.
Lyman), and Emily, for “consideration of the sum of three hundred dollars.”

**EMILY'S UTAH YEARS**

Emily reached Salt Lake City in the fall of 1848 and her second child, Emily Augusta, was born March 1, 1849, one day after her twenty-fifth birthday. Uncle John Smith pronounced her patriarchal blessing on June 26, 1849, declaring her “a lawful heir to the priesthood, which shall be conferred upon thee in fulness in due time.”

She gave birth to five more children: Caroline (February 1, 1851), Joseph Don Carlos (May 6, 1855), Miriam (October 13, 1857), Josephine (February 21, 1860), and Laura (April 2, 1862; died in infancy).

Emily seems to have had warm feelings for Brigham Young. On June 30, 1850, she wrote a letter to him: “My ever beloved friend and benefactor . . . You may think my affections are entirely placed upon Joseph but there your mistaken, true I love him but no more than yourself.”

Still, the marriage did not bring her economic security. In April 1874, the city gave her the choice of having a man contribute labor on a water ditch or paying the city seventy-five cents. She recorded, “I had better pay it, and I do not think the President[s] men will help me in that. They know very well that he wishes me to take care of my self, and I do not know why he does not tell me himself. I almost wish he would, (although it would be very hard on me)[.] It would be preferable to being told of it so much by others.” At the year’s end, she lamented being too exhausted to finish a batch of washing. “There

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46Emily Dow Partridge Young, “Incidents of the Early Life,” 7.


49Emily Dow Partridge Young, Diary, 1–2, April 16, 1874. She had begun keeping the diary only the month before, and one of her earliest entries on March 6 reads: “The fourth of this month (31) thirty-one years ago I was
seems to be no way for me, but work, work.”

Still, when Brigham Young died in 1877, she wrote: “I believe Pr[esident]. Young has done his whole duty towards Joseph Smith’s family.”

In 1869, Church leaders encouraged Joseph’s former plural wives to confirm the Nauvoo beginnings of polygamy; and both Emily and Eliza made affidavits concerning their marriages to Smith. Emily actually signed two affidavits, both on the same date, on May 1, 1869, taking her oath before Elias Smith, a cousin of Joseph Smith and probate judge in Salt Lake County. The first affidavit concerns her first sealing on March 4, 1843, and the second affidavit concerns the repeated ceremony in May 1843. Twenty-three years later during the Temple Lot Case in 1892, Emily repeated the testimony of this second affidavit.

The first affidavit, almost a hundred words long and written in a single sentence, simply identifies Emily, the fact of the marriage, its date and place, and Heber C. Kimball as officiator. Part of the sentence reads “in the presence of” but a blank follows where the witnesses’ names would normally be. The second affidavit is identical except for the facts of the marriage: “...on the eleventh day of May A. D. 1843 at the City of Nauvoo, ...She was married or Sealed to Joseph Smith, ...by James Adams, a High Priest in said Church; according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage, in presence of Emma (Hale Smith,) and Eliza Maria Partridge (Lyman).”

On March 11, 1892, she called on Church President Wilford Woodruff, finding him with Joseph F. Smith. Unbeknownst to her, they had wanted to see her

on business pertaining to the Temple lot in Jackson County. I must have been led by inspiration for I knew nothing of their wanting me at the time. When we were speaking of br. Joseph and br Young bro

sealed to Joseph Smith.”

Ibid., 4, December 28, 1874.

Ibid., 25, August 29, 1877.

Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 1:11, typescript, LDS Church Archives, in Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery Papers, MS 447, Box 21, fd. 17, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library.

Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 1:13, typescript, LDS Church Archives. This affidavit when published in “Joseph the Seer’s Plural Marriages,” Deseret Evening News, October 18, 1879, 2, omitted the words “according to the laws of the Same regulating marriage.”
Woodruff said—They are praying for you up there and when you go you will find a warm welcome and a good home prepared for you. I asked him about my children’s names as there is a difference of opinion on that subject. He and brother Joseph F. Smith said that my children’s names were, Young Smith and should so be called while working in the Temple, and if any one in the Temple objected I was to say that they both said so.  

This instruction clarified that her children, though biologically Brigham Young’s, were considered to be Joseph Smith’s children, fathered by proxy and belonging to him in the next life. Although this information was the most important to Emily because it was personally comforting, the business about the temple lot would draw her into more disclosures about plural marriage.

### The Temple Lot Case

Granville Hedrick became a Mormon in 1843 at Crow Creek, Illinois. After Joseph Smith’s death, he attended meetings in the area commencing in 1852. Hedrick was ordained an apostle in the “Church of Christ (Of Latter Day Saints)” on May 17, 1863, by John E. Page. Hedrick announced a revelation in 1864 that 1867 was the time to return to Jackson County, Missouri, and his followers were naturally interested in purchasing the temple site. By this time, the original sixty-three acres had been incorporated within the Independence city limits. Hedrick, as trustee-in-trust, obtained lots 15–22, consisting of two and a half acres which included the actual site.

The basis for the Temple Lot suit was a deed that Edward Partridge had allegedly executed in March 1839, transferring all of the land entered in Partridge’s name in Jackson County, specifically “embracing the lot known as the Temple Lot,” to three of Oliver Cowdery’s children: John (age seven), Jane (three), and Joseph Smith.

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54Emily Dow Partridge Young, Diary, 94, March 11, 1892.
58Deed Book 73:432 and following; the deed was recorded February
This deed was a fraudulent document—and not a particularly skillful one since Oliver and Elizabeth Cowdery had no children by those names. It was probably created in the 1860s by an unknown person.\(^{59}\)

On May 29, 1886, Elizabeth Cowdery signed a quit-claim deed for one dollar to her daughter Marie Louise Cowdery Johnson, conveying more than 130 acres of property in Jackson County.\(^{60}\) This was eight years after Hedrick had acquired lots 15–22. The next year on June 9, 1887, Marie Johnson and her husband, Charles, executed another quit-claim deed transferring lots 15–22 to George A. Blakeslee, bishop and trustee-in-trust of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) for $100.\(^{61}\) Two churches now claimed the temple site.

In August 1891, the RLDS Church brought suit in U.S. Circuit Court, Western District of Missouri, against the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) for possession of the temple lot, thus launching what became known as the Temple Lot Case.\(^{62}\) The verdict, rendered in March 1894 by Justice John F. Phillips, was that the RLDS Church obtained judgment on the two-and-a-half-acre temple lot. The Church of Christ appealed to the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeal, which reversed the decision on September 30, 1895, on the grounds that the

\(^{59}\) The date is an estimate based on testimony by Charles Johnson, widower of Marie Louise Cowdery Johnson (a genuine daughter of Oliver and Elizabeth): “I think it was about thirty years ago when I discovered that my wife had rights in real property here in Independence, and in Jackson county.” Ibid., 196.

\(^{60}\) Deed Book 146:139, quoted in Complainant’s Abstract, 246–47.

\(^{61}\) Deed Book 146:544, quoted in Complainant’s Abstract, 243–44.

Church of Christ had the only recorded title in forty years, had paid taxes on the property since 1867, and had erected a house of worship in 1882. Even though the lots were not actually occupied for the full term of ten years before the suit commenced, the court could not see clouding the title to much other valuable property within the city. This decision granted the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) possession of this important spot in Latter-day Saint history.

Among those who gave depositions were three plural wives of Joseph Smith (Emily Dow Partridge Young, Lucy Walker Kimball, and Melissa Lott Willis) and Church president Wilford Woodruff. Emily gave two depositions at the Templeton Hotel in Salt Lake City. The first deposition, taken March 14, 1892, focused on the deed to the sixty-three acres in Independence. Emily recalled that she, her mother, and two of her sisters executed the deed in Missouri in 1848. She said, “Neither myself, nor any of my brothers and sisters, nor my mother while she was living ever made any claim to the property.”

The second deposition concerned her status of being Joseph Smith’s plural wife, an element in the argument of which of the two churches was the original church of Joseph Smith and its “true” successor. The Church of Christ took the position that Joseph Smith had taught and practiced polygamy. The RLDS Church’s position was that Joseph Smith did not preach, teach, or practice polygamy. Thus, this issue became a major contention in the Temple Lot suit. Furthermore, although Wilford Woodruff’s Manifesto about eighteen months earlier had withdrawn support for new plural marriages, the topic still held lively interest in the public mind.

**TESTIMONY OF EMILY DOW PARTRIDGE YOUNG**

When the RLDS Church published the Temple Lot case in 1893, it omitted more than forty pages of Emily’s testimony about plural marriage—and references by other witnesses as well. James E. Elliott, a student of RLDS history, explained that the editors “delet[ed] key words, phrases or entire sections of testimony that was...”

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64Complainant’s Abstract, 177.

65Ibid., 363–64.
not in harmony with RLDS practices of the 1890s."  

Although Emily gave this testimony at age sixty-eight, forty-nine years after the events she described, and with considerable reluctance, it is a good source of information. She was making the deposition for the respondents in the suit (the Church of Christ), with questions being asked by Charles Hall, Church of Christ president. Unfortunately, there are no details about the room in which Emily gave her testimony or about the others who were present, except for Parley P. Kelley, an attorney representing the RLDS Church in the suit, who cross-examined Emily. The leading question relating to plural marriage was: “I will ask you to state what you know in regard to the principle of plural marriage, or what is sometimes called polygamy, as to its being taught or practiced in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, before the death of Joseph Smith, at Nauvoo, Illinois?”

Emily balked. “Do I have to answer the question?”

When Hall told her yes, she said, “Personally I think he taught the doctrine, for he taught it to me with his own lips.”  

Much of what she said reinforces the material she had already recorded in her autobiographical sketches and autobiography; but she added more details and, since she was speaking, not writing, frequently backtracked or repeated details:

he came there into the room [in the Smith home] where I was one day, when I was in the room alone, and he asked me if I could keep a secret. I was about eighteen years of age then I think,—at any rate I was quite young. [.] He asked me if I could keep a secret, and I told him I thought I could, and then he told me that he would some time if he had an opportunity,—he would tell me something that would be for my benefit, if I would not betray him, and I told him I wouldn’t.

Another approach came when Joseph Smith was sitting alone in a room that Emily entered. He said “he would write me a letter, if I

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67 Deposition of Emily D. Partridge Young in Salt Lake City, March 19, 1892, Respondents’ Testimony, 349 (hereafter cited as Respondents’ Testimony). Complete transcripts of this lawsuit are located in both the LDS Church Archives and the Community of Christ Library-Archives.

68 Respondents’ Testimony, 350.
would agree to burn it as soon as I had read it.” She initially thought something was not right about this suggestion and told him so. Emily said she prayed about his request for she was “greatly troubled over it.” As she prayed for guidance, “I became convinced that there was nothing wrong about it, and that it would be right for me to hear what he had to say.” In her 1876–77 autobiographical sketch, she described a more tentative response. When he asked her to promise to burn a letter he would write, she first “promised to do as he wished,” then prayed for direction. Based on her feelings about that prayer, Emily told Smith that she “could not take a private letter from him” and, when he asked her if she “wished the matter ended,” Emily quickly said she did.

In giving her testimony, Emily condensed this account, omitting her own reluctance. “He told me that this principle had been revealed to him but it was not generally known; and he went on and said that the Lord had given me to him, and he wanted to know if I would consent to a marriage, and I consented.” She continued “I was married to him on the 4th day of March 1843, and after that in the same year, I think it was in May,” married him again when Emma gave her consent.

As in her autobiographical sketches, Emily emphasized that Emma “had chosen myself and my sister, and we were married in her presence again because we thought [it] proper to say nothing about the former marriage, and it was done over again on the 11th of May 1843 in her presence, and she gave her consent fully and freely and voluntarily.” Hall pressed her to explain why the ceremony was performed for a second time. “Well Emma had a good many feelings we supposed,” Emily suggested. “She was a rather high strung woman of a very nervous organization, and we thought that she had her feelings, and so we thought there was no use in saying anything about it, so long as she had chosen us herself,—there was no use of having another ceremony only for that reason. That is the only reason I know for not saying anything about it.”

She also confirmed that there had been a revelation, an important point in establishing that the practice had a religious basis. She de-
scribed it as “not printed or generally known” but that after Smith married her and her sister, “there was one given that was made more public.” On being asked more specifically, “How do you know that there was any revelation at all?” Emily said simply, “He told me himself that he had had a revelation,” adding, “Joseph Smith told me himself that the angel had appeared to him and had given him that revelation.”

Although Emily was not unique in receiving this information from Joseph Smith, he is known to have mentioned it to only a few persons. Apparently the first was Joseph B. Noble, the high priest who in 1841 sealed Louisa Beaman to Smith. Noble had made an affidavit in June 1869, stating: “In the fall of the year A.D. 1840 Joseph Smith, taught him the principle of Celestial marriage or a ‘plurality of wives,’ and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a Revelation from God on the subject, and that the Angel of the Lord had commanded him, Joseph Smith, to move forward in the said order of marriage.”

Lorenzo Snow, apparently the third to learn this information, returned from his mission to England on April 12, 1843. A few days later, Joseph Smith explained to him “the doctrine of plurality of wives. He said that the Lord had revealed it unto him and commanded him to have women sealed to him as wives, that he foresaw the trouble that would follow and sought to turn away from the commandment; that an angel from heaven then appeared before him with a drawn sword, threatening him with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment.”

Helen Mar Whitney, another of Smith’s plural wives wrote, “Joseph’s own testimony was, that an angel was sent to command him to teach and to enter into this order. This angel, he states, stood over him with a drawn sword prepared to inflict the penalty of death if he

permission, “it would have been the same with or without her consent.” Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young, “Testimony That Cannot Be Refuted,” Woman’s Exponent 12 (April 1, 1884): 165.

Respondent’s Testimony, 352.

Affidavit of Joseph B. Noble, June 26, 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Book 1:38–39, typescript, LDS Church Archives. See also Andrew Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” Historical Record 6 (May 1887): 221.

should be disobedient.”

Joseph Smith dictated the revelation on plural marriage later canonized as Section 132 in the LDS Doctrine and Covenants to William Clayton on July 12, 1843. Hyrum Smith read it that same day to Emma who angrily rejected it. The revelation ordered Emma to “receive all those that have been given unto my Servent Joseph [Smith], and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have Said they ware [were] pure Shall be destroyed.”

Emma responded to this obvious threat, according to William Clayton’s account, by saying “she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious.” With Joseph’s permission, Hyrum read the revelation to the Nauvoo High Council on August 12. However, Joseph Smith had already privately taught the doctrine to at least two dozen men and women by that point, and the practice was hardly a secret. John C. Bennett, one of Joseph’s converts and a close confidante (he lived in the Smith home for nine months), had become disaffected and wrote a series of stinging exposé letters about his former friend, including considerable detail about the practice of plural marriage. These letters were published first in a local newspaper, then as a book.

After Hall had finished his questioning Emily was cross-exam-

76 Helen Mar [Kimball Smith] Whitney, *Plural Marriage as Taught by the Prophet Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 13. Catherine Lewis, prior to 1846 heard that the doctrine of plurality of wives was a commandment, “an immediate revelation, and that by an Angel.” Catherine Lewis, *Narrative of Some of the Proceedings of the Mormons* (Lynn, [Mass.]: Author, 1848), 11.

77 Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 327; LDS D&C 132:52.

78 William Clayton, Journal, July 12, 1843, typescript, LDS Church Archives. The next day, Clayton continued, he met with Joseph and Emma at Joseph’s request in private. The couple “stated their feelings on many subjects & wept considerable.” Obviously feelings still ran high. See also Joseph Smith, Journal kept by Willard Richards, July 13, 1843, Faulring, *An American Prophet’s Record*, 396.

79 John C. Bennett’s book-length exposé was *The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842). Emily corroborates: “John C. Bennett made his home at the Prophet’s house at this time.” “Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young,” *Woman’s Exponent* 14 (August 1, 1885): 37. See also Andrew F. Smith, *The Saintsly Scoun-
ined by Parley P. Kelley. Kelley, though not a member of the RLDS Church, was a brother of RLDS Bishop Edmund L. Kelley. Emily repeated details about her reason for living with Joseph and Emma, describing her role as that of “a nurse girl, for they had a young baby and they wanted me to tend it for them. That is what I delighted in,—attending babies, and that is what they got me there to do more particularly.”

Kelley showed a particular interest in the March 1843 encounter at the Kimball home where Emily, still wearing the dress in which she had spent the day working at the wash tub, married Joseph Smith.

Q:—Did he offer to take your hand then? A;—No sir.
Q:—Or put his hand around you? A;—No sir.
Q:—He never did any such a thing as that? A;—No sir.
Q:—At any time or place? A;—No sir,—not before we were married.
Q:—Now did he tell you there about the principle of sealing? A;—Yes sir.
Q:—He did? A;—Yes sir.
Q:—He told you all about the doctrine or principle of sealing? A;—Yes sir.
Q:—Was it sealing for eternity? A;—Yes sir,—time and eternity.

Under questioning, Emily confirmed, though somewhat confusedly, that she already had heard rumors of polygamy: There were “reports around that made me think,—that gave me an idea of what it was he wanted to say to me but I did not know what it was about, or had no idea what it was that he wanted to speak to me about any more than that I had heard, which gave me a suspicion of what it was. . . . [T]here was so many reports flying around there in Nauvoo, that I did not pay much attention to it until he spoke to me about it, and then I found out that the reports I had heard were connected with what he had to tell me. I did not think so much about it until he told me himself.”

When asked if she had seen the written revelation, Emily responded, “No sir.” Then she was questioned:

Q:—How did you come to marry him without seeing it? A;—Well he told me it was all right and I just took his word for it.


\textsuperscript{80}Respondents’ Testimony, 356.

\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., 358.
Q:—Well did you go and get married without ever knowing it was the law of the church? A:—I got married on his own teachings,—he was the prophet of the church and he told me it was all right and I took his word for it.

Q:—You took his word for it and got married to him in that way on his own teachings? A:—Yes sir, and on my own convictions, for I believed it was all right or he would not have taught me and told me what he did.

Q:—Now did he teach you that a man could have more women than one? A:—Yes sir.

Q:—As wives? A:—Yes sir. 82

When Kelley asked about the second ceremony in May 1843, Emily could not remember whether it occurred in the morning or afternoon, but stated positively that it was May 11. The attorney continued:

Q:—Who roomed with Joseph Smith that night,—the night of that day the 11th of May 1843 when you say you and your sister were married to Joseph Smith? A:—Well I don’t want to answer that question.

[By Mr. Hall, –] Q:—Well answer it if you can, if you know?

A:—Well it was myself.

Q:—Now you have answered it, and that will do?

[By Mr. Kelley, –] Q:—You roomed with Joseph Smith that night?

A:—Yes sir. 83

Kelley read into the record an 1874 affidavit by William Clayton reporting Hyrum Smith’s description of Emma after he read the revelation to her as “very bitter and full of disap[p]ointment and anger.” Emily was asked if Emma turned bitter from the minute she was married. Re-questioned on that point, Emily replied, “Well I might have said that, but I meant from a short time after we were married,—It might have been from the hour we were married. I know she was bitter soon after that, but I can’t say how long it was afterwards that she got that way, but I know it was very soon after that. . . . Well after the next day you might say that she was bitter.” Kelley was obviously trying to ascertain the degree of Emma’s bitterness and asked Emily if the sisters left the Smith home immediately afterward. Emily responded, “We did not leave the house for several months after that. 84 This testimony overlapped her 1887 autobiographical sketch, in which she had written: “From that very hour, however, Emma was our bitter enemy”;

82 Ibid., 360.
83 Ibid., 363–64.
84 Ibid., 366.
still they "remained in the family several months after this."\textsuperscript{85} It is difficult to determine which version most accurately represents 1843 events.

Kelley then read the "History of Joseph Smith" for May 11 as it had been published in the \textit{Millennial Star}.\textsuperscript{86} The day had begun at 6:00 A.M. with baptisms. Emma had gone to Quincy in a new carriage, and Joseph had ridden out on the prairie outside Nauvoo. Obviously there seemed little time for the sealing ceremony involving both Joseph and Emma that Emily had described. Pressed on the point, she responded, "Well it is possible that I have made a mistake in the dates, but I haven’t made any mistake in the facts" and admitted that "it must have been before that."\textsuperscript{87}

Neither sister was keeping a diary at the time; but a more likely reconstruction is that the date of May 11 stuck in Emily’s mind because she was actually among those rebaptized that morning. Joseph had announced the possibility of rebaptism for sins at the April 1841 conference; and both he and Sidney Rigdon were rebaptized on April 11.\textsuperscript{88} Wilford Woodruff, who had joined the Church in 1833, and John Taylor were, with many others, "Baptized for the remission of my sins" on March 27, 1842.\textsuperscript{89} Willard Richards made the following entry in Smith’s journal on May 11, 1843: “Thursday, May 11th 6 A.M. Baptized [blank space] Snow, Louisa Beman, Sarah Alley, &c.”\textsuperscript{90} Louisa Beaman was Joseph’s first plural wife in Nauvoo, and Sarah Alley was Joseph B. Noble’s plural wife. Thus, although Emily and Eliza Partridge’s names were not recorded, they may have also received the same ordinance, giving the date significance that Emily later attached to the second sealing to Joseph.

Confirming the fact that May 11 is erroneous is the fact that Emily

\textsuperscript{85}Young, “Young, (Emily Dow Partridge),” 240.
\textsuperscript{86}“History of Joseph Smith,” \textit{Millennial Star} 21 (January 29, 1859): 75.
\textsuperscript{87}Respondents’ Testimony, 367.
\textsuperscript{88}“Minutes of the General Conference . . . ,” \textit{Times and Seasons} 2 (April 15, 1841): 388; William Huntington, Journal, April 11, 1841, Perry Special Collections.
\textsuperscript{90}Joseph Smith, Journal, May 11, 1843, in Faulring, \textit{An American Prophet’s Record}, 377.
ily recalled James Adams as the officiator. He arrived in Nauvoo from Springfield on May 21.\textsuperscript{91} May 23 is the more likely date when Adams sealed the Partridge sisters to the Prophet Joseph with Emma’s participation. Willard Richards, who was then keeping Joseph’s diary, recorded that the Prophet was “at home in conversation with Judge Adams and others.”\textsuperscript{92}

Kelley then asked Emily:

\begin{itemize}
\item Q:—Have you got a marriage certificate? A:—No sir.
\item Q:—Did you ever have one? A:—No sir.
\item Q:—Why did you not get one? A:—Well it was not thought necessary in those days.\textsuperscript{93}
\end{itemize}

Emily was obviously groping for an answer; this one, though unconvincing, sidesteps the obvious fact that plural marriages were illegal. By this point in Utah, an important part of a plural sealing was obtaining the first (legal) wife’s consent, symbolized by her placing the new wife’s hand in the right hand of her husband. In 1853, the year after the public announcement of plural marriage, Orson Pratt had published part of a plural marriage sealing ceremony. The officiator asks the first wife: “Are you willing to give this woman to your husband to be his lawful and wedded wife for time and for all eternity? If you are, you will manifest it by placing her right hand within the right hand of your husband.”\textsuperscript{94} This portion of the ritual had apparently been established in Nauvoo. James Whitehead, a clerk who worked in Joseph Smith’s store and as William Clayton’s assistant, was interviewed by William W. Blair, a counselor in the RLDS First Presidency in 1874. Blair recorded the conversation, with many abbreviations, in his diary: “[Whitehead] Says [Josepth] did t[each]—p[olygamy]—and pr[actice]—too. That E[mma]—knows it too that She put h[and] of Wives in Jos[h] hand W[hitehead]. Says Alex H Smith asked him when sleeping with him at his house in Alton [Illinois on May 14, 1864], if [Joseph]—did p[ractice] & tea[ch]. p[olygamy], and he,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[93]Respondents’ Testimony, 367.
\end{footnotes}
[snapshot of the text]
trine and Covenants?  

Q:—Still you violated what you knew to be the church law, and married a man whom you knew had more than one wife?  

A:—Yes, sir,—well I did not know that either.  

Q:—You married Joseph Smith?  

A:—Yes, sir.  

Q:—And you knew at the time that you married him that he had a wife named Emma?  

A:—Yes sir I knew that too,—but if Joseph Smith had one revelation he could have others too. He had a revelation permitting,—  

Q:—Well never mind about the revelation he had,—You say you knew that Joseph Smith had a wife named Emma at that time?  

A:—Yes sir I knew that.  

Q:—And still in the face of that knowledge,—of the knowledge of what the law of the church was on the question of marriage as printed in the book of Doctrine and Covenants at that time, and the further knowledge that he had a wife living, you married him?  

A:—Yes sir.  

Kelley returned to his earlier point about Emily’s intimate relationship with the Prophet Joseph Smith. Although obviously distasteful to Emily and blunt to the point of crudeness, even by modern standards, this portion of the deposition is important in clarifying that at least some of the Prophet’s plural marriages were physically consummated, an issue that has been a matter of some debate among historians, given the apparent absence of children by any wife but Emma.  

Q:—Well do you make the declaration now that you ever roomed with him at any time?  

A:—Yes sir.  

Q:—Do you make the declaration that you ever slept with him in the same bed?  

A:—Yes sir.  

Q:—How many nights?  

A:—One.  

Q:—Only one night?  

A:—Yes sir.  

Q:—Then you only slept with him in the same bed one night?  

A:—Yes sir.  

Q:—Did you ever have carnal intercourse with Joseph Smith?  

A:—Yes sir.

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\textsuperscript{100}The article on “Marriage” included the language “we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife” (1835 D&C 101:4). It was accepted as Church law at the General Assembly of August 17, 1835. In printings of the Doctrine and Covenants from 1844 to 1869 it was numbered Section 109. In the 1876 edition, published in Salt Lake City, it was removed and replaced by Section 132. The new publication was canonized in October 1880.  

\textsuperscript{101}Respondents’ Testimony, 374–75.
Q:—How many nights? A:—I could not tell you.
Q:—Do you make the declaration that you never [sic] slept with him one night? A:—Yes sir.
Q:—And that was the only time and place that you ever were in bed with him? A:—No sir.
Q:—Were you in bed with him at any place before that time? A:—Before what time?
Q:—Before you were married? A:—No sir, not before I was married to him I never was.
Q:—Do you mean that you were in bed with him after the 4th of March 1843? A:—Yes sir, but that was after I was first married to him.102

Kelley also returned to the point that Joseph had told her that their marriage was authorized by revelation. She replied that Smith told her “in so many words that he had a revelation, and that was the revelation we were married under. I just took his word for it, and I believed he had it.”103 She also clarified that the ceremony included both time and eternity. Being asked what they agreed to when they were married, Emily responded, “We agreed to be each others companions,—husband and wife.”104

Exhausted after her deposition, Emily returned home. The ordeal was still on her mind four days later when she wrote in her diary:

I can now think of a great many things that seemingly might have been better answers. And I have been asked, why did you not say this and why didn’t you say that. Well I said there is no use asking these questions now. If I could have thought of them I might have answered them but as I did not I had to say what come into my mind. I asked God to assist me and if I did not do as well as I might I done as well as I could.105

Emily’s responses concerning plural marriage in Nauvoo did not make an impact on what was a legal issue concerning the consecrated land in Independence. In fact, her testimony remained unpublished for a hundred years.

102Ibid., 384.
103Ibid., 385.
104Ibid., 387.
105Emily Dow Partridge Young, Diary, 95, March 23, 1892.
The deposition apparently had one firm outcome. About six weeks later on May 6, 1892, Emily took “the original copy deed to the Temple lot in Independence” to Woodruff’s office. Its value was as a historic document only. It had no legal significance, since the property had been sold by a quit-claim deed in 1848. Apparently the deed that Martin Harris had once had in his possession had been lost.

During Emily’s declining years, she made special mention on March 4 that it was the anniversary of her sealing to Joseph Smith. Twice she mused in more detail on that experience:

4 March [1895] Fifty two years ago today, I was married to Joseph Smith the Prophet. I went to one of the neighbors (Heber C. Kimbals) after dark and alone. When I went in, no one was in the house but br. Kibbals oldest son and daughter. I did not know what to do, or what excuse to make, but Well I don’t like to think of those times, and will say no more now.

March 4th. [1896] 53 years ago this evening about 8 p.m. I was married to the Prophet Joseph Smith, at the house of Heber Kimble, and he performed the ceremony. It was a rather peculiar wedding. I would be pleased to meet him again, if I could without going behind the veil, but not exactly as I did that evening. I desire to live some years longer.

On Saturday, February 22, 1896, Emily recorded a rather poignant dream concerning the Prophet Joseph: “Last night—or rather this morning, I dreamed that the Prophet Joseph had returned home, and he was as busy as he could be. . . . I was thinking, as I had been deprived of Joseph’s society all my life, would it be the same now he had returned. I thought, verily likely it would. As he had so many wives it seemed that some would have to be neglected. . . . [H]e then spoke and said, Emily I shall keep you with me. I said thank you for those

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106Ibid., 96, May 6, 1892. The original deed is in the LDS Church Archives. See “Jackson Temple Lot Deed Found in Church Relics,” LDS Church News, January 23, 1932, 1.
107Emily Dow Partridge Young, Diary, 97, March 4, 1893.
108Ibid., 103, March 4, 1895.
comforting words.”110

Emily died December 9, 1899, at age seventy-five, hopeful for a joyful reunion with Joseph Smith in the bonds of celestial marriage. Life for her was hard but she persevered. In 1884 while the federal “raid” was driving Mormons onto the underground and jailing them, Emily wrote a spunky statement that could stand as her epitaph: “For my part I am not ashamed of my religion . . . Neither am I ashamed of my name, nor would I be even if it was, EMILY DOW PARTRIDGE SMITH YOUNG, ETC.”111

110Ibid., 105–6, February 22, 1896.

111Emily Dow Partridge Smith Young, “Testimony That Cannot Be Refuted,” Woman’s Exponent 12 (April 1, 1884): 165.
THE CONCEPT OF A “REJECTED GOSPEL” IN MORMON HISTORY, PART 2

William Shepard

Note: Part 1, published in the spring 2008 issue, describes the Book of Mormon passages and Joseph Smith revelations that were foundational in launching the doctrine of the “rejected” gospel, and traces its history during the Nauvoo period. It gradually waned among members of the Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints headed by Brigham Young, only to be revived by fundamentalist and schismatic Mormons, frequently in association with the ambiguous doctrine of “the one mighty and strong.” An example is James Harmston’s True and Living Church of the Saints of the Last Days. Although Sidney Rigdon saw this doctrine as a weapon to wield against Brigham Young, he gave it up soon. James J. Strang made more effective and extensive use of the doctrine, although his own assassination curtailed his movement.

A variety of beliefs about “rejection” burst forth after the death of Joseph Smith. These beliefs did not just spontaneously occur. They resulted from scriptural concepts, prophecies, internal dissension, creative interpretations, and anger against the Bringhamites. During this period, the doctrine of Gentile rejection developed as ammuni-

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tion in the internal war for preeminence as the lawful successor to
Joseph’s authority. These battles were vicious affairs, marked by sar-
casm and self-righteousness, along with testimonies and scriptural
interpretation. Terms like “apostates” and “usurpers” were common
appellations, and former “brothers and sisters” often became bitter
enemies.

CHARLES B. THOMPSON

Charles B. Thompson was born in Schenectady County, New
York, on January 27, 1814, to Quaker parents. His biographer, Junia
Silsby Braby, whose progenitors lived under Thompson at his settle-
ment in Monona County, Iowa, in the second half of the nineteenth
century, indicates that he “was left motherless at the age of three,”
and his father then “hired him to be kept by the week until he reached
the age of eight, then put him out to earn his own living. At fourteen,
he learned the tailoring trade.”¹

After learning of the Mormon gathering at Kirtland, Ohio, he
journeyed there and was baptized by Apostle John F. Boynton, then
was ordained an elder by Joseph Smith in February 1835. After a
short mission in New York, he became a member of the Second Quo-
rum of Seventies in Kirtland, then served another mission to New
York where he married eighteen-year-old Elizabeth Jencks of Bath,
Stuben County, New York, on December 4, 1836. They gathered with
the Saints at Far West, Missouri, and, following the forced exodus
from Missouri, lived briefly at Quincy, Illinois, where their first child,
Amelia Elizabeth, was born on March 4, 1839. Elizabeth died five
months later, exact date and place unknown. A successful four-
year mission by Thompson in the Batavia, New York, area followed, result-
ing in approximately a hundred baptisms.²

By 1841, he had written a long polemic work, *Evidences in Proof of
the Book of Mormon*. His congregation “enthusiastically endorsed its
publication.”³ Thompson returned to Nauvoo, Illinois, at the time of
Joseph Smith’s death and settled at Macedonia in Hancock County

¹Junia Silsby Braby, “Charles B. Thompson: Harbinger of Zion or
Master of Humbuggery?” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 23

²Ibid., 149–50.

³Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church: Vol-

where he married nineteen-year-old Catherine Ann Houck on December 24, 1845. He initially accepted the Twelve Apostles, then became a Strangite. He attended the Strangite April 1846 conference at Voree, Wisconsin, where he not only testified against Brigham Young and the other apostles who rejected Strang, but served on the high council that excommunicated these Brighamite apostles. His allegiance to Strang was brief. Hiram P. Brown, also a Strangite high priest, reported that, shortly after the conference, Thompson “began to cry wolf” after not being ordained an apostle and protested he was “just as able and competent” as Jehiel Savage who was ordained to that office.

By April 1848, he was in St. Louis, Missouri, where he wrote Strang a long, rambling, badly spelled letter that Strang printed in the *Gospel Herald* without editing. Thompson explained at the end of the letter: “N. B. I have written these few thoughts, for publication in your Paper, believing it due to myself, to you, and to the saints, that I should state to them, the evidences that have corresponded, to effect the changes in my sentiments; relative to your claims, and appointment, you will Please therefore, publish this letter. I am as ever, Charles B. Thompson.” At the beginning of the letter, Thompson announced that he had rejected Strang after “a candid and Prayerfull investiga-

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4Virginia Mae Thompson, Audubon, N.J., 1997, compilation of family members titled “Charles Blancher Thompson Family,” mailed to Junia Braby in the early 1990s. Photocopy in my possession and used with permission.

5“Conference of the Church at Voree,” *Chronicles of Voree*, April 6–8, 1846, 62–67. His office is listed as high priest. I use the nineteenth-century designations of Strangite, Brighamite, Rigdonite, Josephite, etc., for their clarity in identification and because they are the historic terms used by the participants; no pejorative connotation is attached to their use.


7“Charles B. Thompson, *Gospel Herald* 3 (October 12, 1848): 149. This letter written from St. Louis, Missouri on April 29 1848, was published in two parts: the first as “Charles B. Thompson,” *Gospel Herald* 3 (October 5, 1848): 140–42 and the second under the same heading (October 12, 1848):148–51. Strang or an editor commented extensively throughout the
tion of the subject.” Then, after some inconsequential comments, he explicated his concept of rejection:

First, A revelation given though Joseph, on the 19th of Jan. 1841, . . . “But I command, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me; and I grant you a sufficient time to build a house unto me, . . . But, behold, at the end of this appointment, if you do not these thing [sic] ye shall be rejected as a church with your dead, saith the Lord your God.” You will observe that all the saints are included in this command, and the whole church is in cluded [sic] in the Penalty. . . . Again in the same revelation, on Page 400. . . . “I will show unto my servant Joseph all thing [sic] Pertaining to this house, and the Priest. Hood thereof.” Now from this we learn that the acceptance, or reJection of the whole church as an Or- ganization, depended on their building, or not building that house, within the sufficient time—for sufficient signifies Just enough, and nothing over, or equal to. And that Joseph (to whom the pattern, both of the house and of the Priesthood to be Organized therein, was given,) lived to the end of that sufficient time; is evedent: 1st, by the fact that he lived after this commandment was given three years, five months, and 8 days, truly a sufficient time, for a church of two hundred thousands members, to build a house, not costing at most over one hundred thou-sand Dollars; only about fifty cents a peace.8

Thompson then explained that Joseph Smith was the “marred one” (3 Ne. 21:10) who, after his death, had been healed “and become a spirit messenger to Thompson.”9 In a postscript Thompson added: “But you might ask, what is to become of the work of God, if the church was rejected, and disorganized as above stated? I answer, the Priesthood remains, and it must be clensed and Organized for the ac-complishment of the work.”10

Thompson started a newspaper at St. Louis, Zion’s Harbinger and

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8Ibid., 141; emphasis his.
9Ibid., 142. 3 Nephi 21:10 reads: “For behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.” After Thompson quoted this scripture, Strang added the bracketed question/critique: “Do you mean to prove by this that Joseph was not hurt? That, though marred, he is not slain, and that Christ will heal him? Or what do you mean by it?”
10Ibid., 151.
Baneemy’s Organ, and its first issue in January 1848 reported his exalted status as “the Patriarch and Apostle of the Free and Accepted Order of Baneemy and Fraternity of the Sons of Zion.” He also described at least part of his divine mission as “having received from the Lord, Jehovah . . . and his Messiah, the Lord of Hosts, the pattern and keys of authority to build the Temples of His Holiness on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.”

Thompson taught that the Church had actually been rejected twice, once on Joseph Smith’s death and a second time for failure to complete the Nauvoo Temple:

How any honest man can assert that the penalty of rejection . . . applies only to the church at Nauvoo is a mystery which none will be able to solve. For nothing can be more plain than that the acceptance or rejection of the whole entire church, as an organization, depended upon their building or not building that House within the sufficient time appointed.

The point being established, we naturally come to the conclusion that the Church is rejected with her dead; for the House was never finished, but was abandoned by the Church and has since been destroyed by fire.11

Thompson bestowed a series of titles on himself: “Ephraim born again among the Gentiles,” “Baneemy, Patriarch of Zion,” “Apostle of the Free and Accepted Order of Baneemy,” and the “Chief Teacher of the Preparatory Department of Jehovah’s Presbytery of Zion.”12 He alternately claimed to be either Baneemy or Baneemy’s agent. Additionally, according to Newell G. Bringhurst, William McCary, an African

11The Rejection of the Church,” Zion’s Harbinger and Baneemy’s Organ 1 (January 1, 1848): 4; emphasis his.

American/Native American prophet, influenced Thompson to believe in the transmigration of the soul. At St. Louis, Ida Eliza Amanda was born (August 8, 1847) followed by David Leo (August 29, 1849), Isabelle (July 1, 1851), and Charles William (July 5, 1853).

From St. Louis, Thompson organized his church mainly by letter and through Zion’s Harbinger and Baneemy’s Organ. Thompson established “schools of preparation” and required his converts to take a series of covenants which bound them to give him total allegiance.

His most important convert was William Marks, who had been president of the Nauvoo Stake during Joseph Smith’s lifetime and briefly a Strangite. Marks worked hard to further Thompson’s church from his conversion in early 1852 to his defection by the winter of 1853–54. During that period of affiliation, Marks served as Thompson’s first Chief Evangelical Teacher in the School of Faith, published supportive letters in Thompson’s newspaper, encouraged old acquaintances to join Thompson’s church, and headed an exploration committee that selected a gathering site, named Preparation, in Monona County, Iowa, where fifty or sixty families settled in 1854.

Here he regulated and controlled all the affairs of the colony, both temporal and spiritual, pretending that he had authority to do so under the direction of a spirit which he called Baneemy. Among other assumptions, he pretended that he was the veritable Ephraim of the Scriptures, and directed his people to call him Father Ephraim. A strict compliance with his teachings divested his followers of all worldly care, and prepared them for the further essential doctrine of his reli-

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14 Thompson’s record, “Book of the Law of God” (a title he borrowed from Joseph Smith’s record of blessings of the same title), contained these covenants. The original is in the Iowa State Historical Society, Des Moines; photocopy in my possession. The relevant covenants include pledges to serve the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to uphold Thompson as head of the Church, and to support him by consecrating property and money.

gion, that in order to obtain the kingdom, they must sacrifice all their earthly possessions. They accordingly conveyed to him all their lands and other property, including even their wearing apparel, and the right to their services.  

At Preparation, Catherine Ann gave birth to her fifth and sixth children: Osnath (“Ozzie”) E., on September 10, 1855, and Abraham Daniel on September 11, 1857. Also at Preparation, Thompson announced strong opposition to slavery. Newell G. Bringhurst, who has conducted pioneering studies into race and gender in Mormon groups, explained: “According to one observer, ‘many’ of Thompson’s religious writings were against slavery.” By 1857–58, Thompson’s anti-slavery sympathies were apparently so strong that he sent two of his principal followers into Virginia and Kentucky to petition the legislatures of these two slaveholding states to abolish black involuntary servitude, warning the Southerners that if they did not do so “the vengeance of the Lord would be upon them.”

The inevitable break-up of the Church came when Thompson deeded property—several thousand acres—to his wife, himself, and one Guy C. Barnum. Fearing for his life, Thompson fled Preparation in October 1858, pursued by enraged former believers. He and Barnum, driving a two horse light wagon . . . started towards Onawa with as much speed as possible . . . but finding that we were pursued by from ten to fifteen horsemen we stopped and stripped the harness from our horses and mounted them barebacked. By this time our pursuers were within a few rods of us, but we dashed on. . . . Some of them continued to pursue us fifteen miles to Onawa. Here I concealed myself in the house of a friend. . . . I now learn from my wife whom I found in Onawa, that my family had been driven out of their house by the mob, barely escaping with their lives and the few clothes they had on their back.  

Members of the Preparation community, who had suffered un-

18“From Handwritten Deposition of Charles Blancher Thompson Found in Trial Transcripts of Members of Preparation Colony vs. C. B.
der Thompson’s tyrannical rule, sued to obtain the property they had preemted and developed. Junia Silsby Braby, a historian of this period, explained: “Litigation surrounding the ‘lands in controversy’ lingered in the courts for eight years until December 1866 when Thompson’s conveyances were all declared to be fraudulent and were set aside. The Supreme Court of Iowa ruled that Thompson held the property only as a trustee and not as sole owner.”

Thompson was back in St. Louis by 1860 where, now forty-six, he tried unsuccessfully to revitalize his movement. By this point, he had reversed his thinking about slavery and “assumed a militant proslavery position which was forcefully articulated in a book, The Nachash Origin of the Black and Mixed Races” and the publication of at least one issue (August 1860) of a newspaper titled Nachashogan which defended black slavery. According to the RLDS History of the Church, among other radical beliefs, Thompson defended slavery on the grounds that “the negro race are descendants, by natural generation, from the Nachash, (which name is erroneously rendered ‘serpent,’ in the first verse of the third chapter of Genesis,) who was the instrument used by the Evil Spirit in effecting the fall of Adam, and who is shown to have a terrigenous [sic] soul and species of the human genera, inasmuch as he was created more wise than all the brute kingdom, but inferior to Adam. Hence his posterity, the negro race are jure divino, de facto the natural subjects and slaves of the white race, thus fully establishing the moral right of the white race, jure humano, either to make of negroes individual property, as they are in the Southern States, or public subjects,—to possess nominally freedom, as they do in the northern portion of the American Union, according as the citizens of any sovereign commonwealth may elect.”

Thompson also taught that slavery allowed blacks to “maintain
the level of cultivation” they had achieved after becoming slaves and that they would otherwise retrogress and assume “habits and appearance . . . scarcely . . . above their brute creation.”21

Thompson played no known role during the Civil War, but three more children were born during the 1860s in St. Louis George Washington (June 4, 1860), Benjamin (October 17, 1862), Earl (October 21, 1865, at Neosho, Missouri), followed by their tenth, Lillian Violet, on September 17, 1867, at Philadelphia, where Thompson lived for the rest of his life.22 Little is known of his activities except that he attempted to revive his ministerial career and preached against granting citizenship to blacks. In the early 1890s, his former members at Monona heard that Thompson was living at Philadelphia “in destitute circumstances.”23 At that point, his Mormon years were far behind him. The 1895 Philadelphia directory that year listed him as “C. Blancher Thompson (Rev.).”24 He died on February 27, 1895, at age eighty-one, followed four days later by Catherine, age sixty-eight.25

ALPHEUS CUTLER

A different form of rejection was set forth by Alpheus Cutler. Born at Painfield, New Hampshire, on February 29, 1788, Cutler married Lois Lathrop in 1808; and they settled at Upper Lisle, Broome County, New York, where four children were born. Following his participation in the War of 1812, they moved to Chautaugua County near Lake Erie in western New York where six additional children were born. David W. Patten baptized the family and ordained Cutler an elder following the miraculous healing of a critically ill daughter in January 1833. They moved to Kirtland the same month where Cutler, a stonemason, worked on the temple, testified that he saw “heavenly visions” at the temple dedication, and defended Joseph Smith from attacks from dissident Mormons.26 He was ordained a high priest in 1836. By early 1837, the Cutlers had settled in Ray County, Missouri.

22 Thompson, “Charles Blancher Thompson Family.”
24 Ibid.
26 Rupert J. Fletcher and Daisy Whiting Fletcher, Alpheus Cutler and
According to his biographers, Rupert J. and Daisy W. Fletcher, “When the cornerstones were laid for the [Far West] Temple on that Fourth of July 1838, Alpheus Cutler was ordained by President Smith to be the ’chief architect and master workman of all God’s holy houses.’”27 After suffering privations and property loss during the forced exodus from Missouri, Cutler returned to Far West in April 1839 with Apostles Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, John E. Page, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith and others. There he assisted in laying the southeast chief cornerstone of the temple.28

At Nauvoo, Cutler was a member of the high council, a member of the Nauvoo Temple Building Committee, and a participant in logging operations in the Black River Falls area of Wisconsin to obtain lumber for the Nauvoo Temple.29 Cutler became a polygamist, marrying Luana Hart Beebe Rockwell, Margaret Carr and her sister Abigail, Sally Cox, Daisey Caroline McCall, and Henrietta Clarinda Miller.30 He was initiated into the Anointed Quorum on October 12, 1843, and received his second anointing on November 15, 1843.31 However, of more significance was his membership in the Council of Fifty, to which he was appointed on March 11, 1844.32 According to historian Danny L. Jorgensen, who has extensively researched the Cutlerite movement: “Evidently he
was ordained by special divine revelation through [Joseph] Smith to head a committee . . . responsible for Lamanite ministries. Cutler’s participation in the Council of Fifty symbolized and defined his membership in the elite, inner circle around the charismatic Smith.”

Rupert and Daisy Fletcher in their biography of Cutler described this ordination as the Cutlerites understand it:

Joseph Smith, sometime prior to his death, organized a Quorum of Seven, all of whom were ordained under his hand to the prophetic office; with all the rights, keys, powers, privileges, and blessings, belonging to that condition. The only difference in the ordination of the seven, was in the case of Alpheus Cutler, whose right to act as prophet, seer, and revelator was to be in force upon the whole world from that very hour. Under this ordination, he claimed an undisputed right to organize and build up the kingdom the same as Joseph Smith had done. . . . However, he did not commence, or attempt to organize [the church] until after the reminder of the Seven had either died or given up their rights.

After Joseph Smith’s death, Cutler initially supported William Marks but then accepted the Twelve, serving as president of the Winter Quarters High Council in 1846. In November 1847, he received Brigham Young’s blessing to undertake a mission to the Delaware Indians. That mission, near Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, was generally unsuccessful; but in 1848, Cutler and other Mormons founded a community at Silver Creek, Iowa, where he continued to seek Indian converts. The high council at Winter Quarters, now headed by Apostle Orson Hyde, became alarmed by Cutler’s


34Fletcher and Fletcher, “Alpheus Cutler and the Church of Jesus Christ,” 53. See also D. Michael Quinn, “The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844,” *BYU Studies* 16 (Winter 1976): 197-99. Quinn, “The Council of Fifty,” 183, acknowledged the existence of the little-known “Quorum of Seven”: “Within the organization of the Council of Fifty, there were committees, but most were temporary in nature and did not [comprise] any set number of committeemen. There was, however, an executive committee within the Council of Fifty that consisted of seven members whenever it was formed.”
independence and Indian doctrines and attempted to persuade Cutler to move west. Cutler not only refused but signaled his defiance on January 1, 1849, by ordaining Luman H. Caulkins patriarch of Silver Creek. D. Michael Quinn explained that, since only apostles could ordain patriarchs, “Cutler was asserting authority equal [to] or higher than Young’s apostleship.” Interactions became stormier, and Orson Hyde ultimately took the lead in having Cutler excommunicated by the Winter Quarters High Council on April 20, 1851. After efforts to convert Indians around Silver Creek failed, the Cutlerites founded Manti, Iowa, in present Fremont County in 1852.

Cutler reported seeing “two half moons with their backs together,” a sign by which, he said, Joseph Smith had told him he would know it was time to ‘organize the Church.’ He therefore organized the Church of Jesus Christ in September 1853 and was sustained as

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35Cutler evidently reasoned that his friendship with the Delaware and other Indian tribes could result in an “alliance” of Indians along the Missouri River who would become an army of redemption to harass Missourians. Richard E. Bennett, foremost authority on the trek from Nauvoo to Utah, explains in “Lamanism, Lymanism, and Cornfields,” *Journal of Mormon History* 13 (1986–87): 51: “In a series of wintertime investigations into this ‘Indian Cutlerism’ or ‘Lamanism,’ the [Winter Quarters] high council queried a noncooperative Bishop Caulkins and a taciturn Alpheus Cutler, who seemed more and more influenced by his outspoken supporters. From Cutler’s point of view, he was responsible only to Brigham and, perhaps, to Joseph. From the perspective of the high council, any secret pacts or alliances to stir up the Indians to open warfare were totally beyond the mark.”


38Fletcher and Fletcher, “Alpheus Cutler and the Church of Jesus Christ,” 47.
“our head or chief Counselor.” Historian Biloine Whiting Young, who was raised in a Josephite home at Independence and who visited Cutlerite relatives at Clitherall, Minnesota, during the summers, summarized Cutler’s understanding of his theological claims to leadership:

There are two inspired organizations, the Church and the Kingdom. The Kingdom is over the Church. Joseph Smith was not only head of the Church but also First Elder of the Kingdom, which was the highest office. The keys of the Kingdom had been delivered to Smith personally, in a vision, by Peter, James, and John. Alpheous Cutler’s ordination in Kirtland, Ohio, had to be in the position of Elder of the Kingdom, not the Church. . . . Cutler had been one of the fortunate seven men to have been ordained to the Kingdom office by Joseph Smith. Therefore, reasoned Cutler, he outranked Brigham Young who had not been among the seven ordained.

The Cutlerite concept of the rejection of the Church and the Gentiles was less strident than that of other Mormon factions. It apparently evolved simultaneously with Cutler’s perception that his “special authority” required him to break with the Brighamites, but its scriptural basis seems vague. According to Rupert and Daisy Fletcher, a primary reason seems to have been failure to finish the Nauvoo Temple: “The seeds of apostasy, greed, speculation, and distrust, sown years before in Kirtland, had sent out sturdy roots in Far West, and here in Nauvoo they were flourishing at an alarming rate and threatening to overthrow the Church if some means of reversing the trend was not found. . . . Many others seemed unconcerned and provided little or nothing toward the work [of completing the Temple]. Scores of new brick homes began to take shape and consequently the temple was neglected.”

The culminating event was Joseph Smith’s death: “When the Prophet, sealed his testimony by giving his own life, the ‘rejection’ which has been spoken of became a fact.” The Fletchers concluded that this rejection revoked the right to confer priesthood authority

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41Fletcher and Fletcher, “Alpheus Cutler and the Church of Jesus Christ,” 31.
and send out missionaries; the Holy Spirit withdrew. Emma L. Anderson, in her history of the movement, dates the understanding of rejection as solidifying about 1855 at Manti: “When the Gentiles rejected the gospel and killed the prophets, no more preaching should be done to them, . . . [T]he gospel was now taken from the Gentiles, and had turned to the Jews and the house of Israel, among whom were the Lamanites.” Richard E. Bennett similarly concluded: “Since gentile Americans had spilled the blood of God’s prophets, the gospel must now be taken away from them and given to the Lamanites.” Danny L. Jorgensen summarized the Cutlerite concept of rejection as “Lamanism,” which “held that God’s rejection of the original Mormon Church constituted a renunciation of the Gentiles. With the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Cutler argued, the Gentiles had repudiated God’s work in this dispensation. As the Lamanites were not participants in this act, they were not rejected by God.”

Cutlerite numbers apparently peaked at about five hundred during the late 1850s; but the decline began in 1859 when missionaries from the New Organization converted twenty-three at Farm Creek and established a branch. The missionary zeal unleashed when Joseph Smith III accepted the presidency of the newly organized RLDS Church in April 1860 swept many additional Cutlerites into the RLDS camp. An RLDS branch was established at Manti in 1863. Alpheus’s son Thaddeus, his heir apparent and first counselor, and other leading Cutlerites became Josephites. Cutler was unable to resist these defections. Partly paralyzed by a stroke, he could not speak distinctly. He was also suffering a form of pulmonary tuberculosis and died in August 1864.

Cutler had received visions of a new gathering site “in the

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42Ibid., 36–37.
north,” and the remaining Cutlerites, numbering approximately 125, decided to move away from the growing strength of the Josephites. Under the leadership of Chauncey Whiting Sr., seven families resettled in Otter Tail County, Minnesota, near Clitherall Lake in May 1865. Other Cutlerites followed, and the community of Clitherall briefly flourished; but as Danny Jorgensen explained:

The Josephite missionaries followed the Cutlerites to Minnesota in the 1870s and converted many of the younger members. By the 1920s, most of the younger people who remained Cutlerites had moved and founded a second branch of the church at Independence, Missouri. They still own a meetinghouse, cemetery, and other property around Clitherall, Minnesota, today. Some of them travel to Clitherall for the summer and hold Sunday meetings, but only one Cutlerite resides in Minnesota today. The Cutlerite church in Missouri is sustained by fewer than a dozen active members today. They nevertheless believe that, according to a prophecy attributed to Father Cutler, a mighty leader eventually will rescue and revitalize the Cutlerite church.47

In fact, a prophecy “attributed to Cutler” warns that “they may dwindle down to perhaps as few as three members before a new prophet emerges to lead them to Zion.”48 The few remaining Cutlerites, like the Strangites, look forward to a time of deliverance.


48Jorgensen, “The Old Fox Alpheus Cutler,” 179 note 58.
GRANVILLE HEDRICK

In November or December 1852, three perplexed Mormon elders, including Granville Hedrick and David Judy, met at the home of Granville Hedrick in Woodford County, Illinois, and agreed that the Brighamites (who had publicly announced polygamy in August 1852) were guilty of “high and wicked crimes,” and therefore withdrew their fellowship “from all such as departed from the principles of righteousness and truth.”

Under the leadership of Hedrick, a farmer and schoolteacher, a small organization was formed consisting of small branches of Mormons from Half Moon Prairie, Crow Creek, Eagle Creek, and Bloomington, scattered in and around Woodford County, Illinois, and Vermillion, Indiana. Hedrick, born September 2, 1814, in Clark City, Indiana, was probably baptized and ordained an elder by Harvey Green in 1842 or 1843. According to the memoir of RLDS missionary William W. Blair, Hedrick “soon apostatized entirely from the faith” after his baptism but later rejoined the Church near Galena, Illinois. Following a period of support for Gladden Bishop, Hedrick rejoined the members in Woodford County. At a number of conferences in 1853, they declared themselves “united upon the

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49 Crow Creek Record: From Winter of 1852 to April 24, 1864, typescript publication (Independence: Church of Christ [Temple Lot], n.d.), 1. Unfortunately, no minutes were kept for many important Hedrickite meetings (there are none, for instance, between October 1853 and June 7, 1856), and extant minutes are often incomplete. See also R. Jean Addams, “The Church of Christ (Temple Lot): Its Emergence, Struggles, and Early Schisms,” in Scattering of the Saints: Schism Within Mormonism, edited by Newell G. Bringhamurst and John C. Hamer (Independence: John Whitmer Books, 2007), 206–23.

50 It is impossible to determine the early Hedrickite membership. Julius Billeter, The Temple of Promise (Independence: Zion’s Printing and Publishing, 1946), 106, recorded that the Bloomington Branch numbered thirty-five when it arrived at Independence in February 1867 and a reasonable estimate is that the 1852–67 membership was under one hundred.

51 Hedrickite records give Hedrick’s baptism date as 1840, 1842, and 1843. According to his daughter-in-law Estella R. Hedrick, he was baptized in 1838. Quoted in Billeter, Temple of Promise, 101. According to William W. Blair, quoted in History of the [RLDS] Church, 3:636, “Mr. Hedrick told me that he joined the Church . . . not long before Joseph’s death.”

52 William W. Blair, “Church of Christ,” Journal of History 11 (July 1,
principles of the Church of Jesus Christ” and declared themselves “free from all wicked factions,” by which they meant the Brighamites, Strangites, and every other Mormon organization. They initially accepted the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the 1835 Doctrine and Covenant.53

Hedrick authored a pamphlet of 106 pages titled *Spiritual Wife System Proven False* in 1856 in which he agreed with the New Organization, the group which coalesced into the Reorganized Church in 1860, that Joseph Smith Jr. was a faithful prophet of God and that apostates such as James J. Strang, William Smith, Charles B. Thompson, and especially Brigham Young initiated false doctrines and heresies. He said, in part: “The order of the doctrine of the priesthood to Joseph [Smith] and from Joseph to the Church, and that too, for the last time, and the ordaining of high priests, Elders, teachers, deacons &c., have been done and performed by that man of God.”54 Concerning Brigham Young, he proclaimed: “But my first tact [sic] will be to show, by the helping hand of God, that polygamy, or the spiritual wife system, of Brigham Young is positively and absolutely false; and that all their pretensions to divine authority for such things is a perfect humbug.”55

An important doctrine developed early that they were a righteous remnant but that God had rejected all other claimants. On March 5, 1857, they issued “A Declaration of Independence and Separation”: “We believe that God has a remnant of ordained members (who have not fallen with apostasy) . . . whose right it is to unite their efforts as gospel ministers in co-operation together according to God’s written word and renovate and save the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.”56

A few weeks later in April 1857, Hedrick was “set apart to pre-

55 Ibid., 25.
side over this branch [Crow Creek] as presiding Elder.”

Six months later, Hedrick and his associate Jedediah Owen attended a conference of the New Organization at Blanchardville, Wisconsin, “where they were received as representatives of the Saints in Woodford County, Illinois, and vicinity.” Hedrick and Jason W. Briggs, a leader of the New Organization, were appointed “to write a pamphlet setting forth the true position and doctrine of the church” but “for some reason he [Hedrick] failed to cooperate with Elder Briggs.”

According to current Hedrickite Apostle William A. Sheldon, “the doctrine of lineal descent in the presidency was rejected by Hedrick, et al, in their conferences held in 1857.” Historian Jason R. Smith alleged it was “the summer of 1857” when “Hedrick realized that Joseph Smith was, in fact the author of polygamy.” William W. Blair and Edmund C. Briggs, New Organization missionaries, attended a conference with the Hedrickites during the winter of 1857–58. Blair recalled, “It [Hedrick’s sermon] consisted mainly in a tirade of abuse about him [Smith], the telling of which by his vilest enemies would have been to their everlasting shame.” Briggs dramatically remembered:

They treated us very kindly, though they would not extend to us the privilege of presenting our views and the hope of the Reorganization. It seemed to us that Elder Granville Hedrick was the sole adviser and leader of their society. His claims for himself were extraordinary, and he took peculiar positions as regards the reputation of the Choice

will be seen that from the very beginning . . . the Church of Christ considered themselves as, not only a remnant of the original Church, but that as such remnant they might become a nucleus around which all saints might gather” (101).

57Ibid., 99.

58Blair, “Church of Christ,” 279. Hedrick and Blair were apparently to define and address items of agreement.


61William W. Blair, quoted in History of the [RLDS] Church, 3:637. It is unknown who convinced Hedrick that Joseph Smith was a polygamist. John E. Page or William E. McLellin, former apostles under Smith, are possibilities.
Seer. In my life, I have heard many hard things said against Joseph the Martyr, but never so many things clustered in a three-hour discourse as did Mr. Hedrick in a talk at their conference. He even resorted to the silly stories of the money-digging and the black sheep to charm the hidden treasures, as published in some unreliable literature of the present age, and told them as facts with all seriousness. Brother Blair listened for about an hour and a half, then took his hat and left. He was gone about an hour and returned in time to hear the close of the onslaught.

Hedrick became Church president at a conference held at the home of William Eaton on May 17, 1863. John E. Page, a successful missionary and apostle under Joseph Smith who had successively supported and rejected Brigham Young, James J. Strang, and James C. Brewster, ordained Hedrick, David Judy, Jedediah Owen, and Adna C. Haldeman to the apostleship. After Page nominated Hedrick "to preside over the High Priesthood," he ordained him "to the office of the First Presidency of the Church, to preside over the High Priesthood and to be a prophet, seer, revelator and translator to the Church of Christ."  

A revelation received by Hedrick on April 24, 1864, was published in the first issue of his newspaper *The Truth Teller of Latter-Day Saints* published at Bloomington, Illinois, which announced to his fol-

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lowers that Christ “prepared for you, that you may return [to Jackson
County, Missouri] in the year A. D. 1867.” It also warned an “awful ca-
lamity of war and famine” would fall “upon this people of the North-
ern States, beginning in the year 1871.” Hedrick’s revised under-
standing about Joseph Smith’s standing before God was presented as
a revelation dated May 5, 1864:

Therefore I [Christ] say unto you that Joseph foreseeing that an-
other [presumably Hedrick] should arise and deliver Zion by power
which caused my servant Joseph to fear and quake exceedingly lest he
should lose the honor and glory of delivering of my people. . . . [Yet]
he did not humble himself sufficiently before the Lord wherein Satan
had power to deceive him and lead him astray in coveting that which
was not appointed to him. Therefore I withheld my spirit from him.
Satan having power, tempted him to practice a fraud by assuming that
he was the servant spoken of in the parable of the vineyard which was
given concerning that servant of the Lord who should deliver Israel or
the Lords’ people wherein he suffered himself to be called Barukeale,
[sic] by a name that the Lord gave not. Thus I say unto you my friends,
I, the Lord withheld my counsel from the Church through Joseph
Smith because of their iniquities and thus the Church was left without
a seer from that day.

The Hedrickite Church’s maturing organization rejected sev-

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64 “Revelation,” April 24, 1864, *The Truth Teller of Latter-Day Saints* 1
(July 1864): 4.

65 “Revelation Given August 16, 1863, to the Church of Christ
through Granville Hedrick, President of the Church,” *The Truth Teller* 1
(July 1864): 6. Hedrick may have been influenced by William E. McLellin
to believe Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet and a polygamist. McLellin,
an apostle under Joseph Smith Jr., was excommunicated at Far West in 1838
and later affiliated successively with George M. Hinkle, William Law,
Sidney Rigdon, James J. Strang, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris before
approaching the Hedrickites as late as 1864 and uniting with them for several
months in 1869. McLellin claimed in 1847 that the Church “fell in 1834,” in
1854 said the Church “became a sect in all its bearings,” and six years later
said “Joseph Smith transgressed so as to be rejected in 1834.” Stan Larson
and Samuel J. Passey, eds., *The William E. McLellin Papers, 1854–1880* (Salt
Lake City: Signature Books, 2007), 450 note 1, 435, and 460 respectively.
Another possibility is that John E. Page may have negatively influenced
Hedrick when he started informally meeting with his group in 1857. Page
eral doctrines that had earlier been acceptable. It dropped the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants in favor of the 1833 Book of Commandments and discontinued the offices of the First Presidency and high priest. It also changed its name from “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints” to “Church of Christ.” This is the name it still uses, often with “Temple Lot” in parentheses to distinguish it from other groups of the same name.

Several of these conservative actions resulted from Hedrick’s theological convictions that God had rejected Joseph Smith after 1834 when Zion’s Camp failed to redeem Zion. Notably, Smith’s revelation designating Nauvoo as the gathering place (D&C 124: 25–26) was considered spurious because Missouri “was the place of gathering of the Saints,” and gathering to Nauvoo “makes God take back his word and withdraw His appointed place of safety from the state of Missouri.” Baptism for the dead was labeled as blasphemy, comparable to “the purgatorial doctrines of praying souls out of hell.”

Hedrick also dubbed the doctrines of the plurality of gods and eternal progress as “a high handed attempt of a sacrilegious perversion of the word of the Lord.” Other evidence that Joseph was a fallen prophet was plural marriage: “Will any person pretend that Polygamy could have been practiced at Nauvoo by the leaders of the church, before the death of Joseph Smith without his consent? The Brighamites in the practice of Polygamy are only carrying out what Joseph Smith interduced [sic].” For good measure, Hedrick added that the Danite band in Missouri was under Joseph Smith’s supervision and that his failure to redeem Zion by allowing Zion’s Camp (1834) to retreat from armed confrontation was briefly a polygamist at Nauvoo but repudiated the doctrine as well as other Mormon beliefs he once held sacred. By 1849, his bitterness toward Joseph Smith is apparent in letters published in James C. Brewster’s newspaper The Olive Branch. This possibility is strengthened by an undated letter from Page, “Ordaining Bro. G. Hedrick,” The Truth Teller 1 (September 1864): 41; emphasis his, in which Page refers to Joseph Smith as “the FALLEN Prophet.”

with the Missourians signified that “Joseph, a fallen prophet” had “led his Spartan band into the vortex of despair.”

In December 1864, Hedrick made his belief that Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet totally clear:

> Although it has been made sufficiently plain in the first five numbers of the T.,[ruth] T.,[eller] that Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet from the year A. D. 1834, which has been fully and forcibly illustrated beyond the power of all successful contradiction—that he did positively give false revelations, and also taught many false doctrines, which subsequently proved to be most disastrous to the church. . . . But it has been wholly in view of the great amount of mischief that has resulted from the many false doctrines that came through him after he fell, though still pretended to be of divine origin, and is now believed by many thousands, which has long since proved to have had the most ruinous effect upon the church.

In accordance with the April 24, 1864, revelation telling the Hedrickites to return to Jackson County, a caravan of perhaps a dozen wagons crossed the frozen Missouri River and arrived at Independence in February 1867. By 1877 they had purchased a plot of two and three-quarters acres which they believed was the original temple site.

Historian R. Jean Addams concluded that Hedrick was not among this group of intrepid pioneers and did not “move to Independence until late 1868 or early 1869.” Addams added: “Hedrick left Independence with his family and on August 29, 1874, purchased a large farm consisting of an entire section of land or 640 acres in Johnson County, Kansas [thirty-five miles from Independence].” Hedrick, then referred to as “president,” died on August 22, 1881, and was succeeded by David Judy who served until his death in 1886. Richard Hill was the third

71Ibid., 85.
72Billeter, *Temple of Promise*, 104; Flint, *An Outline History of the Church of Christ*, 107–8. The site was originally two and a half acres; but in 1963 when the city closed an adjacent street, the Church of Christ purchased it, making the site slightly larger. Charles Brantner, Presiding Bishop of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), email to William Shepard, April 6, 2008.
73R. Jean Addams, “Reclaiming the ‘Temple Lot’ in the ‘Center Place’ of Zion,” Paper delivered at the Mormon History Association Conference, Casper, Wyoming, May 27, 2006; photocopy in my possession, used by per-
leader of the Hedrickites, serving until April 1889.

In April 1926, seven apostles were ordained, and a council of apostles has headed the Church to the present. On August 6, 1891, the Josephites filed suit to recover the temple site from the Hedrickites in what historian Jason R. Smith said “was about much more than a property deed.” Rather, “the heart of the matter for both churches was which church was the true successor to the church established by Joseph in 1830.” Initially the Josephites won an affirmative judgment in district court but the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed this decision in 1895.

Hedrickite membership was estimated at about four thousand in 1929. However, after Apostle Otto Fetting announced on July 18, 1929, that John the Baptist as a heavenly messenger required that each member be rebaptized, a schism occurred. Fetting was disfellowshipped in 1936, and about a third of the Hedrickites (about 1,400 members) followed him.

The Fetting schism interrupted Hedrickite efforts to build the temple to which, Joseph Smith had promised, Christ would return. A groundbreaking ceremony had been held and the basement excavated, but the loss of members and the Great Depression prevented mission. This paper was printed as “Reclaiming the Temple Lot in the Center Place of Zion,” Mormon Historical Studies 7 (Spring/Fall 2006): 7–20.


any additional work. “Once again, this was a severe blow to both the membership and the finances of the church,” summarizes R. Jean Adams. “In 1936 Fetting’s revelations were formally disclaimed and rejected by the Church of Christ. At this point, however, plans to build the temple were languishing and by 1943 were officially terminated. In 1946 the foundation and basement excavation were backfilled. Subsequently, plans for the physical construction of the temple were relegated to a low priority by the leadership of the church. Today the temple project is not a ‘primary focus of the church.’”

Addams also reports the following information, obtained from Hedrickite officials: “The church currently claims 8,000–9,000 members. This is a significant increase in members from just nine years ago when the church membership numbered about 2,350 individuals. A sustained missionary effort, primarily in Kenya, Tanzania, and the Philippines has accounted for the majority of the growth. There are about 1,600–3,000 members in Africa and a like number in the Philippines. The third-largest foreign membership is in Yucatan, Mexico, with 400–500 members.”

Today, the Hedrickite Church and Visitors Center building sits solidly on the cherished two and three quarters acres, seeming to signal to other Mormon groups that they, guardians of the temple lot, will build the temple in Zion when God directs. As recently as 1999, Apostle William A. Shelton, while not explicitly announcing a doctrine of rejection, confirms an uncompromising identity: “We are a remnant of the Church as it was in 1830, having the same name, the same doctrine, and the apostolic form of government as originally intended; we have been neither disorganized or reorganized.” Shelton told R. Jean Addams in a phone conversation in April 2006: “The Church of Christ considers it their sacred duty to be not only the physical custodians of the Temple Lot property, but additionally, and more importantly, the spiritual custodians of the Kingdom of God.”

**The Josephite Challenge**

The New Organization was formed when dissenters, mainly

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77 Adams, “Church of Christ (Temple Lot),” 222.
78 Ibid., 223.
80 R. Jean Addams, email to Bill Shepard, December 18, 2007.
from the organizations of James J. Strang and William Smith, met in conference at Beloit, Wisconsin, June 12, 1852. They were united in their hatred of polygamy, their belief that no Mormon faction possessed a valid priesthood, and their belief that God would call Joseph Smith III to assume the leadership of the Church. Bolstering the third belief was a revelation to Jason W. Briggs on July 18, 1851, that God, in his “own due time” would bring forth a son of Joseph Smith Jr. who would be “mighty and strong” to preside over the Church. 

Thus, from the earliest days of the New Organization there was an expectation that Joseph Smith III would be “the one mighty and strong” or at least someone who functioned in that spirit. A few months later in the fall of 1851, a revelation to Briggs and others near Yellowstone, Wisconsin, clarified: “The successor of Joseph Smith is Joseph Smith, the son of Joseph Smith, the prophet. It is his right by lineage, saith the Lord your God.”

The doctrine of lineal descent was the single most important reason that Joseph Smith III was ordained to the Presidency of the High Priesthood by Zenos H. Gurley and William Marks on April 6, 1860. Smith explained in his testimony at the Temple Lot trial: “I claim to be his [Joseph Smith Jr.’s] successor by lineal right, and by his blessing, and lastly by the right of selection and appointment. It is not necessarily a birthright to be the President of the Church. It comes by virtue of fitness and qualification, I may say, good behavior and the choice of the people, recognizing a call or a right.”

To convince other Mormons that Young Joseph’s call and ordination were legal and necessary, Josephites referred to a blessing Joseph Sr. had given.

82Davis, Story of the Church, 392–93.
83Ibid., 403. According to W. Grant McMurray, “True Son of a True Father”: Joseph Smith III and the Succession Question,” Restoration Studies, Vol. 1, edited by Maurice L. Draper and Clair D. Vlahos (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1980), 135–37, leaders of the New Organization were initially unsure if the promised one would be Joseph Smith III or one of his brothers.
84Joseph Smith III, quoted in McMurray, “True Son of a True Father,” 142.
Joseph Jr. on February 18, 1834. The wording of this blessing in its published form was: "My father Joseph then laid his hands upon my head and said, 'Joseph I lay my hands upon thy head and pronounce the blessings of thy progenitors upon thee, that thou mayest hold the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, until the coming of the Lord; Amen.'"

As additional proof, Josephites widely quoted part of a November 22, 1845, letter by James Kay, a British convert living at St. Louis, Missouri, who was loyal to the Twelve Apostles. The letter dealt with William Smith, the only surviving brother of Joseph Smith Jr., who had been excommunicated the previous month at Nauvoo, and George J. Adams, who had been excommunicated in April for scandal. The emphasized portion was: "He [William Smith] contends the church is disorganized, having no head, that the twelve are not, nor ever were, ordained to be head of the church, that Joseph’s priesthood was to be conferred on his posterity to all future generations, and that young Joseph is the only legal successor to the presidency of the church, &c. G. J. Adams is William’s right hand man, and comes out as little Joseph’s spokesman."

Josephites also quoted other statements affirming that Joseph

85“History of Joseph Smith” Times and Seasons 6 (August 15, 1845): 994–95. Josephite historian Heman C. Smith explained the significance of this blessing: “Here the doctrine of lineal descent is recognized for the right to ‘hold the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’ belonged to Joseph’s progenitors, and descended to him. Now mark you, ‘his blessing shall also be put upon the head of his posterity after him.’ So we have it clearly defined that the blessing of Joseph’s progenitors was conferred on Joseph that he might ‘hold the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven;’ and this blessing was to descend unto his posterity.” Heman C. Smith, True Succession in Church Presidency (1898; rpt., Independence: Price Publishing, 1996), 44; emphasis Smith’s.

86“Correspondence by James Kay, Saint Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., November 22nd, 1845,” Millennial Star 7 (May 1, 1846): 134. William Smith, “A Proclamation and Faithful Warning to All the Saints Scattered around in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Salem, New Bedford, Jewell, Peterborough, Gilsom, St. Louis, Nauvoo, and Elsewhere in the United States; Also to Those Residing in the Different Parts of Europe and in the Isles of the Seas,” Warsaw Signal 11 (October 29, 1845): 1, included: “Further the saints are informed that the old pioneers, fathers and founders of this church of
Jr. had blessed or ordained Joseph III as his successor. A representative example is Lyman Wight’s July 1855 statement: “Now, Mr. Editor, if you had been present when Joseph [Jr.] called on me shortly after we came out of [Liberty] jail to lay hands with him on the head of a youth [Young Joseph] and heard him cry aloud. ‘You are my successor when I depart.’”87 To reinforce Wight’s statement, Heman C. Smith, Josephite apostle, historian, and spokesman (but no relation to Joseph III), quoted from an article written by John E. Page on August 31, 1848, and published in Strang’s Gospel Herald: “Lyman Wight seems to cherish the idea that is ignorantly held out by some others, that Joseph, the Prophet’s son, will yet come up and take his father’s original place in the church, as the prophet to the church; whereas there is not one single word in all the book of D. & C. to warrant the idea.”88

Joseph Smith III added: “In Liberty jail the promise and blessing of a life of usefulness to the cause of truth was pronounced upon our

Christ in this last dispensation, namely the Smith family, must and will stand at the head, as leaders of this dispensation in time and in eternity. According to our book of covenants, the priesthood must be handed down from father to son.” Roger Launius, Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 42, commented, “On 23 May 1845 William Clayton wrote that ‘William Smith is coming out in opposition to the Twelve in favor of [George J.] Adams. The latter has organized a church in Augusta, Iowa Territory with young Joseph Smith for President, William Smith for Patriarch.’ This effort with Adams was unsuccessful, however, and William dropped it during the summer of 1845.”


88 “Lyman Wight and His Position,” Gospel Herald 3 (August 31, 1848): 106. Heman C. Smith quoted Page’s statement in True Succession in Church Presidency, 38, but did not identify Page as the author and did not quote the continuation that emphasized Page’s personal opposition of the doctrine of lineal descent: “It is true, the son is warranted a claim to the priesthood that was conferred on his father by lineal descent, but not the Presidency of the church, that depends entirely on the appointment of his father. And as Joseph’s son has made no such claim, it is to be reasonably presumed that he does not recognize any such appointment. If he does, God has been slack
[my] head by lips tainted by dungeon damps, and by the Spirit confirmed through attesting witnesses. This blessing has by some been called an ordination.”

The Josephites also embraced the testimony James Whitehead gave at the Temple Lot Trial in 1892 as proof of Joseph III’s ordination. Then a member of the Reorganization, Whitehead was retrospectively relating events that occurred when he was a secretary to Joseph Smith Jr. at Nauvoo: “I recollect a meeting that was held in the winter of 1843, at Nauvoo, Illinois, prior to Joseph Smith’s death, at which the appointment was made by him Joseph Smith, of his successor. His son Joseph was selected as his successor. . . . He was ordained and anointed at that meeting. Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch anointed him, and Joseph his father blessed him, and ordained him, and Newell K. Whitney poured the oil on his head and he was set apart to be his father’s successor in office, holding all the powers his father held.”

As evidence that Joseph Smith Jr. had to appoint a single successor, Josephites generally quoted Doctrine and Covenants 28:7 (“. . . for I have given him [Joseph Smith Jr.] the keys of the mysteries, and the revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint another unto them in his stead”) and 43:4 (“But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed to this gift [prophet and revelator] except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead”).

William W. Blair, apostle and editor of the Saints’ Advocate, made the argument typical of many about Joseph III’s authority: “Joseph [Jr.’]s blessings including his calling as prophet, seer, revelator, translator, and President of the High Priesthood, was to be, and is, placed upon ‘the head of his posterity,’ even Joseph his eldest concerning his promises, and left his people to wander like sheep without a shepherd in a dark and cloudy night, subject to the practice of the most damnable impostures that ever cursed the earth with impostion, without an exception in the annals of ecclesiastical history.”

89Joseph Smith III, quoted in History of the [RLDS] Church, 3:506.
90Complaints: Abstract of Pleading and Evidence in the Circuit Court of the United States, Western Division at Kansas City—The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints vs. The Church of Christ at Independence (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bindery, 1893): 106 (hereafter Temple Lot Trial). See Quinn, “The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844,” 224, for an evaluation of this testimony.
son.” Blair also explicitly argued in January 1880 that Doctrine and Covenants 85:7, referring to the “one mighty and strong,” was “not Jesus Christ giving a revelation to the Church. . . . It is Joseph [Jr.] himself who speaks under the power of God that ‘maketh my bones to quake.’ He is speaking of his successor. This is in the name of the Lord, for thus speaks a prophet; . . . ‘Young Joseph’ is twenty-one days old. The Prophet is writing a letter to W. W. Phelps. The spirit of the destiny of his son rests upon him; for he who is born at this opportune moment is the one whose mission it will be to redeem Zion. Hence the revelation is the heart of that letter—the prophecy of his own son.” Blair emphasized that the mission of the one mighty and strong was not to the Mormons in Jackson County in 1832–33 but to their children:

We may boldly affirm, and challenge judgment of a council of experts in history, that this famous prophecy embodied in this letter in question was not as now headed in the Doctrine and Covenants by Orson Pratt and others as Section 85: “Revelation given through Joseph the Seer, in Kirtland, Ohio, November 27th 1832, concerning the Saints in Zion, Jackson Co., Missouri;” that the prophecy itself was incidental in the letter; that it was originally given to Joseph himself rather than through Joseph to the Church through Phelps; that the prophecy of the “one mighty and strong” did not directly concern those then in Jackson County, but rather a people who to this day have not set their foot in Jackson County—the children rather than the fathers;—and that the mission foreshadowed related to his son Joseph, who, like his father, should be sent in the spirit of the “one mighty and strong” to restore the “house of God” to “order” after it shall have been ruled out of order and the fathers plucked up out of the land of Zion because of their iniquities.  


92William Blair, “The ‘One Mighty and Strong,’” Saints’ Advocate 2 (January 1880): 73–74; emphasis his. Other Josephite references to “the one mighty and strong” include: “And now he [Young Joseph] having come in
This position of Blair, Briggs, and others that Joseph III was the one mighty and strong was challenged by Joseph Fielding Smith, then assistant LDS Church historian, in 1909. It was part of his response to polemic charges against the Brighamites made by aggressive RLDS missionaries in Utah. Smith delivered a lecture at the Ogden Tabernacle on March 10, 1907, “on the subject of the ‘Origin of the Reorganized Church,’ and the other April 28, 1907 [at the same location] on the question of ‘Succession.’” After these discourses were printed in the Deseret News, they were combined as a 138-page book collectively titled Origin of the “Reorganized” Church and the Question of Succession. One topic he singled out was Jason W. Briggs’s July 18, 1851, revelation that “the Prophet’s successor should be one mighty and strong and one of his seed.” He continued: “For years the claim was made that Joseph Smith the present head of the ‘Reorganization,’ was that personage.” He then quoted a number of statements to that effect (here omitted), and commented:

That’s the way they formerly gave it; but they have been forced to recede because their president has not come up to this standard of the one spoken of in the Prophet’s revelation. Therefore they have, since 1900, resolved: “Whereas, we have received no divine communication authorizing any particular interpretation of the revelation before us; and as the Reorganized Church has never taken action upon the matter. “Resolved, that we leave it an open question, to be decided as God may develop His purposes among us, while we acknowledge the leading features in it to be prominently characteristic of Jesus Christ.” This is rather a hard jolt to Mr. Briggs’ “revelation.”³⁹

Joseph Smith III never claimed to be the one mighty and


³⁹ Joseph Fielding Smith, Origins of the Reorganized Church and the Question of Succession (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909), 1–2, 34–35. The internal quotation is a letter from Joseph III to Joseph Fielding Smith. Smith added that, after Briggs withdrew from the Reorganized Church in 1886, he was asked by Mathias F. Cowley, in the presence of others, if his
strong but he did, however, allow members of his Church to publish articles in RLDS publications indicating that he was that exalted person.94 Joseph III also returned to the topic when he was dictating his final remembrances: “I had not been seriously concerned about, nor mixed up in any of the controversies about, the one mighty and strong named in a certain letter of Joseph Smith to W. W. Phelps, which epistle by some spiritual transposition or transformation has been endowed by some from God. While others have indulged in tones of argumentative debate and writing upon the topic, it has never appealed to me as one which was profitable for discussion.”95

The Josephite doctrine that the house of God was “out of order” meant they had to convince members of other Mormon factions that their church had been rejected by God. Their basic approach was that corruption had been growing in the Church from 1833 when Joseph Smith warned the inhabitants of Zion (Jackson County): “For if Zion will not purify herself, so as to be approved in all things, in his sight, he will seek another people.”96 This warning was typically followed by a statement such as Blair’s: “We see that evil and corruption was creeping into the Church to that degree that God warned, and continued to warn them, that if those principles [prevailed] in the Church it would wreck them; or in other words, disorganize the Church.”97 D&C 112:12 “And pray for thy brethren of the Twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name’s sake and let them be admonished for all their sins.”

1851 revelation was true. According to this source, Briggs said: “You know we learn by experience. I would not like to claim it to be a revelation now, but it is just as good as any revelation that was given to Joseph Smith” (34).


95 Mary Audentia Smith, ed., The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832–1914) (1959; rpt., Independence: Price Publishing, 2001), 451. This autobiography was first published in the Saints’ Herald, November 6, 1934 through July 31, 1937, the source of the Price reprinting.


97 William W. Blair, “Rejection,” Saints’ Advocate 1 (October 1878): 26. In November 1863, Blair outlined how the Church went from an organization acceptable to God to one in danger of being rejected. A sample of his references include:
Josephites considered other Mormon churches as apostate but focused particular attention on the Brighamites, their chief rival. They charged that a significant reason Mormons had been driven from Nauvoo was because the Twelve Apostles had usurped authority and, under their leadership and example, most Nauvoo Mormons had polluted God’s “holy grounds, ordinances, charters, and holy words” (D&C 124:45–46).

Josephites saw the most obnoxious “pollution” as polygamy, which they charged was solely introduced and implemented by the Twelve Apostles. William W. Blair wrote in 1876: “The facts of history are before us, and all know that as a people [the Brighamites] were moved out of our place,’ and because of ‘follies and abominations’ which were practiced there at Nauvoo, and because of the spirit of adultery which was then in the hearts of the people, and which since has been so fully developed in the valleys.”

Jason W. Briggs, in 1875 an apostle in the Reorganization, expressed a loathing for polygamy typical of others in his church:

I have been reading the Millennial Star, and lay down the book, sick at heart. I have heard and read a great deal about the sugar coating of the filthy pill of polygamy; but though almost every article I read, points to it as the one idea, the all absorbing theme, or rather three in one,—marry, pay tithing and obey counsel,—I have not found a single grain of sugar in it or over it. The drift of the entire system, from first to last; all their sermons and writings upon education, law, order, marriage, and everything else that refers to woman at all, tends

D&C 84:55: “Which vanity and unbelief have brought the church under condemnation.”

D&C 98:19: “Behold, I the Lord am not well pleased with many who are in the church at Kirtland.”

D&C 101:6: “Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifeis, and lustful and covetous desires among them [Mormons in Missouri]; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances.”

D&C 105:2: “Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people [in Missouri], speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now.”

98Blair, “Rejection and Succession,” Saints’ Advocate 1 (October 1876): 27.
to make her feel her inferiority; that God committed her and her rights to man. Of course if he did, she has none of her own, only what man in his kindness sees fit to grant her. She must be thankful for this and not murmur, for her future bliss depends, not upon her own virtue, but upon the glory of her husband. While they claim that they are going to become gods,* [*Such gods as he whom India serves, the monkey deity.] they point to the brutes as examples worthy of their imitation. Perhaps if the plural wife could forget that she is human and crush out every vestige of divinity from her nature, she might become as submissive and as silent as a cow, and her children might grow up as healthy and as perfect, and perhaps rather more intelligent than calves.99

In addition to using polygamy as “proof” of the Brighamite apostasy, the Josephites also chastised the Brighamites for the Adam-God doctrine, blood atonement, temple endowment ceremonies, rebaptism, and the reestablishment of the First Presidency. Of relevance to this discussion on the rejected gospel is Joseph Smith III’s insistence that the Nauvoo Temple had never been finished. He had lived at Nauvoo from 1839 to 1866 (age six through thirty-four) and, in January 1871, commented on the temple’s completeness:

It has been stated by those whose duty it was to know, that the Temple at Nauvoo was finished, “completed as Joseph [Smith Jr.] designed.” This statement is not true. In no sense can it be said truthfully,

that any part of the Temple at Nauvoo was completed, with the possible exception of the main assembly room into which the front doors opened. The basement, in which was the font, was incomplete; the stairway to the left of the font was not relieved of the rough boards laid on the risings, on which the workmen went up and down; the upper assembly room was not accessible, the floor not being laid, neither the doors hung nor the walls plastered. Besides this, the inside ornamentation was by no means finished even in those parts called completed. There are plenty of persons now living who were frequent visitors to the Temple after the people who built it left Nauvoo, who will testify that the building was not completed; among them, David LeBaron, who had charge of it for some time; Major L. C. Bidamon, for years proprietor of the Mansion house; Dr. Weld of Nauvoo, Amos Davis, living near the Big Mound, on the Nauvoo and LaHarpe road; George Edmonds, of Sonora, and the writer, with a host of others.  

On June 26, 1897, in the process of dictating his memoirs to scribes, Smith again insisted that the Nauvoo Temple had not been completed: “I knew of the work being done on the temple at that place from the time it began until the building was burned in 1848. It was not finished.” He then detailed the stage at which each room was left: “The basement was fitted for occupation, and the baptismal font was ready for use. The auditorium on the first floor was completed sufficiently to be seated and occupied for assembly purposes. The stairway on the south side was completed for use. The auditorium on the second floor, the stairway on the north side, nor any other portion of the building except those above-named were completed; though the small rooms above the second floor auditorium were used by President Young and the resident church authorities for various purposes.”  

Alexander H. Smith, Joseph’s next younger brother who also lived at Nauvoo from 1839 to 1866, gave a similar statement on July 2, 1897:

When I was a boy I was privileged to wander all over the building . . . The offices in the corner to the left of main entrance on the ground floor were finished, but not furnished. The auditorium main meeting room was temporarily finished; the seats and pulpit were only temporary.

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100“The Situation,” *The True Latter Day Saints’ Herald* 19 (January 1, 1872): 18; emphasis his.

The upper auditorium; the plastering was not done, the floor was only the rough boards, intended only for the lining, was laid, and from this floor upward the stairs, except in the tower, or circular main stairs, were also temporary; the upper floor which was to have been divided into numerous rooms was laid, and partitioned off with cotton factory cloth, and used for some purposes before the saints were driven away.

I was told that the cloth of those partitions was subsequently used for wagon covers, by the saints on their journey across the plains.

To my knowledge the temple never was finished, and those who have been led to believe it was, have been deceived. I make this statement freely for the benefit of the present and future generations.

The Smith testimonies became the key component in a round of polemic charges and counter-charges designed to prove that the Nauvoo Temple had never been completed and, consequently, that God had rejected them as a church and as a people. Other individual memories were also published. J. W. Brackenbury, a Josephite who had lived at Nauvoo from 1840 to 1846, testified at the Temple Lot trial in 1893: “The reason I know the temple was never completed, I have been to the temple perhaps twenty times and I have been over it from top to bottom time and again.” Josephite Bishop M. H. Siegfried explained in 1951: “When my wife and I lived in Nauvoo, . . . I met and conversed with many people living in and about Nauvoo when the Temple burned, and all told the same story—that the building was unfinished. My Grandfather Lampert

102 Alexander Hale Smith, quoted in ibid., 564–65. Don F. Colvin, “A Historical Study of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois (M.S. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1962), 155, evaluated the Smith testimonies and concluded: “[They] cannot be accepted at full value. They are disqualified in part because they viewed the building in early youth and apparently did not record their statements until at least twenty-three years after the temple was destroyed. In addition to this, they contradict themselves on some important items and conflict with other reliable evidence. However, due to the fact that they were personal witnesses and their statements do substantially agree in some areas, their testimonies cannot be entirely discredited. Their assertions that the building was not completed are also upheld by additional witnesses.”

103 Temple Lot Trial, 106.
was among them.”

It is apparent that strong cases, depending upon perspectives and agendas, could be made for “proving” that the Nauvoo Temple was not completed or, contrariwise, that it was functionally complete. LDS historian Don F. Colvin conceded that the building remained unfinished “from an architectural point of view,” by which he meant the placement of embellishments. However, he argued, “from a functional point of view, the temple was completed. All sections of the structure were given a rough finish, and many areas had received a final finish. The various portions of the building were both accessible and useable.” In 2006, Matthew S. McBride offered this summary and explanation in his *A House for the Most High: The Story of the Original Nauvoo Temple*:

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,

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104 “Question Time,” *Saints’ Herald* 98 (January 1, 1951): 11. Joseph Fielding Smith had a different interpretation of the Nauvoo Temple prophecy: “The faithful Saints ‘hearkened’ to them [the Twelve] and helped them to build the Temple. But the unfaithful rejected these servants whom the Lord . . . gave to the Church for the Saints to hearken to, departed from Nauvoo, refused to comply with the command of the Lord to build His house, and were consequently moved out of their place in the Church into the ‘Reorganization.’ The moving ‘out of their place’ did not refer to the location (Nauvoo) but to their place in the Kingdom of God; . . . And all who refused to obey this commandment and hearken to these servants were removed from the Church.” Joseph Fielding Smith, *Origins of the Reorganized Church and the Question of Succession* 37; emphasis his. Smith also used the same strategy as Orson Pratt when he determined that, in accordance with Doctrine and Covenants 124:49, there would be no punishment if the temple was not totally completed because of the Saints’ enemies and not because of a lack of diligence on their own part. He asserted: “I have now shown that the Temple was completed; that the Saints were diligent in their labors, and they were also hindered by their enemies . . . so far as the Church and its authority is concerned, even if the Temple had not been completed, or finished, in the technical sense of that word. Some of the embellishments, the ornamentations and fixtures, may not have been placed in the building according to the original intention, and in that technical sense the building may not have been ‘finished completely.’” *Ibid.*, 47–52.

(now Community of Christ) . . . interpreted this revelation (D&C 124:31–33) as meaning that the LDS Church, led by Brigham Young, had indeed been rejected by the Lord because the temple was never completely finished. . . . In reality, Brigham Young, did not claim that all of the finishing work on the temple was completed. On 1 January 1877, Young admitted to a congregation in St. George, Utah, that he “left brethren there with instructions to finish it, and they got it nearly completed before it was burned.” The point Young asserted was that the temple had been sufficiently completed that the ordinances could be performed.\footnote{McBride, \textit{A House for the Most High}, 334–35; emphasis his.}

A second string to the Reorganization’s bow was the doctrine of lineal descent. If Joseph Smith III was the man God had chosen to “set in order the house of God,” however, a case had to be made for how and when the Church became rejected or disorganized. Various markers of rejection included the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the Brighamite departure from Nauvoo, the introduction of polygamy at Nauvoo, and its announcement in Utah in 1852. Joseph Smith III and his son Frederick may have been trying to reduce speculation on this subject when they wrote: “We are not aware that a specific date or time, or any one specific act has been fixed upon [as] the time and the event when and why the Church was rejected.” However, they saw polygamy as the chief reason for such rejection: “The elements of mischief by which the rejection was made possible and justifiable were sown as early as in 1843, and culminated ten years later when the so-called revelation on celestial marriage was forced upon the people, after the practice of plural marriage or polygamy had been carried on secretly for a number of years by some, and many [were] involved in such practice.”\footnote{“Editorial: Church Rejected—When?” \textit{Saints’ Herald} 51 (February 17, 1904): 145; emphasis in original.}

From the Josephite perspective, the interregnum between Joseph Jr.’s death in 1844 and Joseph III’s ordination in 1860 did not mean that God’s authority had been removed from the earth. Rather, the Church as a body was rejected; but the hundreds of Mormons who remained apart or withdrew from evil leaders did not break the “everlasting covenant” of the priesthood (D&C 45:9). The remnant that emerged from this group, guided by the Holy Spirit, prepared the way
for Joseph Smith III. Smith “came to this ‘remnant,’ claiming to be sent of God and this remnant, ‘by command of God,’ reorganized the Church.”

The hostilities between the Josephites and Brighamites waxed and waned but were never really forgotten until a rapprochement occurred during the 1960s. Richard P. Howard, Reorganized Church Historian, summarized Brighamite-Josephite interaction:

“Nearly everywhere the LDS Church confronted the RLDS Church, it built a wall of studied silence. When RLDS elders or missionaries openly challenged Mormon elders on street corners or in public meetings, the Mormon representatives would usually ignore the interruption as long as possible, and either close the meeting or leave. The crowd usually dispersed, leading the RLDS representatives alone. This calculated response had two effects. It minimized the RLDS presence as an influence in Mormon areas, and it infuriated and frustrated missionaries. To be ignored was even worse than to debate the hated Mormon elders—and lose the debate!”

Several factors contributed to the Josephites’ turning from conflict to acceptance and mutual assistance. According to W. B. “Pat” Spillman, Josephite bishop and educator, during the presidencies of W. Wallace Smith (1958–78) and Wallace B. Smith (1978–96), the Josephite need to prove that other Mormons were rejected became anachronistic. As the Church expanded into Africa and Asia in the 1960s and 1970s, it developed a missionary philosophy which did not rely on the “only true church” doctrine. “The most likely explanation is that the Church’s decision to identify with the larger Christian community in its missions abroad allowed the leaders to consider new scriptural and historical purity or upholding traditional practices.”

William D. Russell, professor of history and government at the

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110 W. B. “Pat” Spillman, “Adjustment or Apostasy? The Reorganized Church in the Late Twentieth Century,” Journal of Mormon History 20 (Fall
Graceland College (now University) at Lamoni, Iowa, explained some of the liberalizing elements within the RLDS Church in the 1960s that led to change. He correlated members of the hierarchy taking graduate classes at Saint Paul School of Theology, a Methodist seminary in Kansas City, with “a liberalizing effect on the materials published for church school use and on the materials published in the Saints’ Herald and other church publications.” In 1960, twenty-nine-year-old Roger Yarrington, “a professional journalist with a moderately liberal theology,” assumed the editorship of the Herald, and the content of articles shifted from “traditional Reorganization teachings” to the frequent questioning of those beliefs. The arrival of new liberal and critically trained faculty members at Graceland resulted in complaints from traditional members that they were “undermining the faith of students.” Position papers by the First Presidency and others of the hierarchy were often interpreted as “liberalizing” and added to the developing split between the fundamentalists and liberals. W. Wallace Smith in 1958, the year he became president of the Reorganization, “broke lineage in the office of presiding patriarch by calling Roy A. Cheville to that office, passing over Lynn Smith—son of the presiding patriarch.” Russell added that polemic conflict with other Mormon factions was “wholly irrelevant to these new leaders and the key staff they employed during the 1960s and 1970s.”

Adam Mueller, in his article on lineal descent in the Reorganized Church correctly stated: “The idea of lineal succession was a major reason the Reorganized Church had been founded in 1860. To break a one hundred and sixty-six year tradition is very astounding.” To many fundamentalist Josephites, it was tantamount to Strangites denying the validity of the Letter of Appointment or Brighamites denying that Joseph Smith introduced polygamy at


112 Adam Mueller, “Lineal Priesthood,” John Whitmer Historical Asso-
Nauvoo. The doctrine of lineal descent in the Church presidency was the most essential and effective argument RLDS missionaries like William W. Blair, Jason W. Briggs, and Zenos H. Gurley employed in their polemic battles with the Strangites, Brighamites, and Cutlerites.

This doctrine was shattered in April 1996 when Grant McMurray became Church president. His successor, Steven Veazey (2005–), was also a non-Smith. Other doctrines which fell by the wayside were the traditional emphasis on the Book of Mormon and the belief that Zion will be established at Jackson County. Renaming the Church the “Community of Christ” on April 6, 2001, punctuated the move away from traditional Reorganized values. However, this liberalizing trend brought, in its wake, a conservative backlash. In 1984, Wallace B. Smith brought a revelation to the conference not only announcing the construction of a temple but also the priesthood ordination of women (RLDS D&C 156). William D. Russell commented that, although “there were only a few small fundamentalist groups meeting outside the authority of the institutional church,” many of them found this revelation “the last straw.” Russell explained, “To their way of thinking, the gospel is unchangeable. They argued that no women had been called before, and therefore it was obvious that God did not want them in the priesthood.” By 1991, Russell had identified “more than 200 independent local groups in thirty-two states, Canada, and Australia. Fifty-five of these groups are in Missouri, many in the Independence area. Other states with large numbers of such groups are Michigan, Oklahoma, and Texas.”

In the wake of the Josephite Church’s reorientation, many con-
servative members rejected the institutional Church in favor of independent congregations which retained fundamental Josephite doctrines and values. Richard Price and his wife, Pamela, leaders of a “Restoration” or conservative schism, wrote in all-too-familiar terms that God had rejected the Church a second time:

But after Joseph [III’s] death, the Church was again “held captive a long Season,” Her “captors” were (and are) as before the Church leaders. They brought in supreme directional control and the present Liberal Apostasy. They have “degraded and dishonored her by rejecting the precious distinctives of the Restoration Movement. Today she is again in a “pitiable condition.” But just as Christ intervened to cleanse his only true Church after the 1844-1860 Apostasy by sending a true prophet, He will send another prophet who will give the guidance and power that is needed. God has promised.

After Richard Price’s expulsion from the Church for criticizing the hierarchy in 1987, he continued to encourage Restoration groups to remain associated through a series of independent branches. Russell commented: “According to Price, the branches should each have a president and two counselors and keep records of business meetings and ordinances performed. They should not be dominated by one leader, but should operate by common consent. They should seek to become stable, and then can send delegates to conferences to elect men to the temporary officers until God sends a new prophet.”

The independent Restoration congregations, however, con-


115 William D. Russell, “Richard Price: Leading Publicist of the Reorganized Church’s Schismatics,” in Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History, edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 335. After briefly examining the emergence of organizations after the RLDS reorientation, Russell wrote: “Price asserts that such efforts have been premature. There have also been several self-proclaimed prophets, none of whom have impressed Richard Price. The most famous and notorious is Jeffrey Don Lundgren, now on death row in Ohio, convicted of murdering a family of five in 1989. Lesser known are the prophets Bob Baker, Ron Livingston, Eugene Walton, Robert Murdock,
Continue to suffer fragmentation and confusion. For example, Stephen L. Shields describes the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, one of relatively few that have formally organized:

In a general conference held at Independence, Missouri, on 8 and 9 April 2000, more than 400 delegates voted to officially declare a church organization, adopted the interim leadership of the Council of High Priests, established a formal declaration of church beliefs, and adopted a revelation presented to the body by High Priest V. Lee Killpack, in which a committee was established to select seven men to serve as apostles. At a conference to be convened on 23 September 2000, these men will be presented to the church and ordained if accepted by the conference. The revelation concludes with an encouragement that a new prophet and president will be designated in the future.

... They also declared themselves to be the “continuation” of the church after a disruption, and not actually a new church. 116

It is apparent that the expectation of “one mighty and strong” continues to actively dictate events in some Restoration branches of the Reorganized Church. For example, Richard Price in 1986, when speaking about “inspired leaders,” observed: “Some ten or fifteen men [in the Reorganized Church tradition] had declared themselves the ‘One Mighty and Strong.’” 117

The Remnant Church has established a tradition of “Inspired Messages” being delivered by members of the hierarchy during annual conferences. The inspired message delivered at the May 1996 conference at Independence by an unidentified person contained this statement: “Many of you have discussed the coming of One mighty and strong. I say to you that One mighty and strong will come when My people have sufficiently purged themselves of all unrighteousness.” 118 V. Lee Killpack, chairman of the Council of High Priests, was the apparent author of another message received “through the Holy Spirit by way of wisdom and through revelation,” on March 23, 2000: “Be faith-

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118General Conference [Program of the Remnant Church], April 8–9, 2000, p. 20, William Chrisman High School, Independence, Missouri; photocopy in my possession.

and John Cato” (337). Lundgren was executed October 24, 2006.
ful little flock, and in My time I will send you one mighty and strong, again, to be your President, Prophet, Seer, and Revelator.” After the calling and ordination of seven men as apostles on September 23, 2000, Frederick Niels Larsen was ordained to the leadership of the Remnant Church as President of the High Priesthood on April 6, 2002.

Larsen claims this leadership position in accordance with the doctrine of lineal descent. He is a son of President Frederick M. Smith’s younger daughter, Lois Smith Larsen. (Fred M., a son of Joseph III, was the second president of the RLDS Church.) Richard Price and other fundamentalists discounted Larsen’s presidency because “priesthood lineage does not descend from mother to son, but rather from father to son.” Price also discounted Larsen’s claim to be the One Mighty and Strong: “The revelation in Joseph’s letter to W. W. Phelps, could not apply to Larsen, or to any other man, because the wording of it bears evidence that it is describing Christ. It is undoubtedly referring to Christ, as the One Mighty and Strong, for only He can set in order the house of God—and only He has the right to give the Saints their inheritances in Zion.”

I personally know and respect Richard Price and Fred Larsen.

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120 See Shepard, “To Set in Order the House of God,” 45 note 63: Larsen’s counselor in the First Presidency, David W. Bowerman, told me on February 28, 2003, in an interview at the Remnant Church headquarters in Independence that Larsen is the one mighty and strong in the same sense that Joseph Smith, Jr. and Joseph Smith III were “mighty and strong.” In an email to me on March 17, 2003, Larsen explained: “I do not attach any great significance to the term [one mighty and strong], only that it denotes a person of leadership, in the case of the Presidency and Prophetic leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ in these Last Days.”

121 The Remnant Church website explains that the law of lineal descent in the presidency “does not specifically indicate direct father-to-son lineage.” http://www.theremnantchurch.com/001/response (accessed December 2007).

and consider them to be God-fearing men who are doing their best to serve their constituents and preserve the truths of their Restoration tradition. Their separate and opposite actions are one example of the concept of rejection and restoration. A second example is the ever-widening gulf between the RLDS fundamentalists who believe that God has rejected the Community of Christ and who are sincerely attempting to return the Church to some level of acceptability before God. But the possibility of a rapprochement between these groups seems increasingly remote.\textsuperscript{123}

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

The trajectory of post-1844 beliefs about rejection began with the understanding based on the Book of Mormon that the Gentiles would be offered a brief season in which to repent and accept the gospel but that ultimately they would reject it and salvation would return to the house of Israel. The assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith seemed to be conclusive evidence that the Gentiles had indeed rejected the gospel and that the provisions of 3 Nephi 16:10–12 were fulfilled. Reinforcing this doctrinal interpretation was the all-too-human desire for vengeance and the hope that the United States would be sorely punished for allowing the Church to be persecuted, while personal hatred toward those who allowed and/or participated in persecuting the Mormons could be expressed through these scriptures.

While the view of the Gentile rejection endured among the Utah Mormons until the 1860s (or late 1870s, in Orson Pratt’s case), greatly intensified by the following death struggle over plural marriage and theocracy, the “rejection” concept rapidly broadened among all branches of Mormonism, not as a factor in missionary work but as part of the contest over authority. Different understandings about what constituted rejection, who was rejected, and the reasons for rejection added to the bitterness of the succession struggle

\textsuperscript{123}Spillman, “Adjustment or Apostasy?,” 14, comments: “Few leaders of either the RLDS Church or its many dissident factions seriously believe that current divisions will ever be overcome.” Pamela Price told me in a telephone interview on June 29, 2000, that there is no foreseeable possibility of reconciliation between the institutional church and the Restoration branches. She said that, before any reconciliation could be concluded, the institutional church would have to repent of the false doctrines it has introduced.
and provided additional ammunition to support factional attacks.

Each faction interpreted and used the concept of rejection to support its own unique claims. Brighamites believed that the Gentiles had rejected the gospel; Strangites accused the Brighamites of being rejected; Josephites determined they had to reorganize the Church because it had been rejected as an organization; Cutlerites believed Alpheus Cutler was the only remaining officer with keys and authority to lead the Church; Charles B. Thompson taught that the Church was totally rejected but that he was appointed to be a deliverer; and Granville Hedrick claimed leadership because he believed that God had rejected Joseph Smith by the end of 1834.

The concepts of rejection and reorganization did not cease with the Mormon factions examined in this article. All branches of Mormonism have been plagued by individuals who labeled themselves as “deliverers” and have claimed the mission of “setting the house of God in order.” They have argued, in essence, that reorganization would restore the Church to its previous purity and erase the stigma of being rejected of God. Nor, as the rise of such schisms as V. Lee Killpack’s Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints among the RLDS and James Harmston’s True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days among the Utah Mormons indicates, has this concept lost its dynamism.

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124Killpack became a member of the Remnant Church’s Quorum of Twelve Apostles in April 2003. The Hastening Times 9 (January–February–March 2008): 3, announced: “V. Lee Killpack has requested his release from the Quorum of Twelve. Brother Killpack cites health and personal reasons for his request.”
When Mary Lois Walker Morris began writing her memoirs in 1901, she boldly claimed “the dignity of truth and correct principles” while brushing aside any “literary merit, or poetic fire.” Morris was, however, much too modest. While both her “sketch of my humble life” (53) and the accompanying diaries ring with honesty and conviction, they also reveal the heart of a storyteller and poet. Even the seemingly mundane, often hastily composed diary entries on occasion revel in bits of irony or a well-turned phrase. Fortunately for lovers of Mormon history, these important resources are now available in print as the ninth selection in Utah State University’s important LIFE WRITINGS OF FRONTIER WOMEN series.

The volume is ably edited by Melissa Lambert Milewski, both a descendant of Morris and a doctoral candidate in history at New York University. Milewski had previously edited the diaries for her 2004 BYU master’s thesis, which she expands here by including Morris’s very engaging autobiography. The memoir, which comprises the first 150 pages of edited writings, is composed as a series of vignettes, artfully arranged and vividly described. Morris, who writes for her children and grandchildren, self-consciously defines herself as a pioneer. Thus, she carefully records particulars of pioneer life that are foreign to her readers. Combined with her diaries, the details about material culture, foodways, fashions, celebrations, and customs are a treasure trove for social historians, as in this excerpt in which Mary Ann re-
counts settling into her first home in Salt Lake City in 1854:

Though want stared us in the face we preferred it to obligation, so early in January we took a room in the home of Bro. Alfred Randall situated half a block north of the north-west corner of the Temple Block. The room was small but neatly finished. We had no wood for fuel but a kind hearted Scottish brother hauled some willows for us to burn. When we found one a little thicker than a broom handle we were glad. I do not know how we obtained flour, but I remember we had to content ourselves with “shorts” during nine days. We had no stove, but burned our willows in a small fireplace. We had one saucepan, but perhaps that was a borrowed one. When we had bread to bake my husband would go down to Sixth or Seventh West Street to borrow a baking kettle from a good natured Welsh Sister named Daniels, and when our loaf was baked, return it. It was a cast iron vessel and very heavy. I remember going with him once, and while he carried the vessel I carried the lid, but I know either was as much as one would care to lift. (109)

A comparison between the diary entries and the memoir demonstrates the careful and polished composition of the latter. In 1881, the Morrises’ son Nephi, who had a penchant for skipping Sunday School, broke his leg while his parents were at a meeting in the Tabernacle and he was under the watchcare of his older sister. At the time, Mary Lois noted simply, “was met by my Husband who told me that our little son Nephi’s leg was broken, it had occurred while he was pulling hay for the horses but was comfortable now. . . . Addie was left in care of the children and she had to stand the shock with out a mothers aid. his Father broke the news very gently to me; we watched him all night” (319). In the memoir, this same incident is expanded and placed in context. She begins by explaining that, “Nephi had a very strong will; He was not inclined to do evil, but not always aching to do what I knew to be for his best good” (193). She also provides substantial additional detail, painting a picture of the various scenes as they unfolded; first hearing the news from her husband, then recounting in flashback form the accident itself, and finally arriving at the bedside of the patient. She recalls, “By the time I reached home he had been made very comfortable by Dr. Joseph S. Richards. His precious leg was encased in leather splints and over this they had put one of a pair of red and gray striped stockings, which I had knitted for my own use, such being the style in those days. This fitted cozily over the splints and gave added support. He was put to bed on the lounge in the dining room, which was lofty, roomy and airy, so with the bright glow of the fire, made a pleasant room for an invalid boy” (194).

Mary Lois’s masterfully descriptive narrative allows the reader to picture the setting as if it were a tableau painting. Finally, as she helps Nephi try to climb the stairs for the first time, she confides, “My heart filled with loving compassion and tenderness as I helped him back into the dining room and drawing the lounge near the fire, took him in my arms as I would have
taken a newly-born baby, only love was so much stronger. His utter helplessness and his having suffered so much already, drew forth the deepest sympathy of my heart” (194).

Certainly the most poignant parts of the narrative are the accounts of loss and the inevitable sorrows of life in a plural family. Mary Lois Walker was born in northern England in 1835. She recounts a happy childhood, her family’s conversion to Mormonism, and their immigration to America in the spring of 1850. The family stopped in St. Louis for a time where she met John Thomas Morris, a fellow Latter-day Saint originally from North Wales. With considerable nostalgia, Mary Lois relates his marriage proposal, her father’s diffidence and weeks of uncertainty, followed by acceptance, and finally, a wedding. In 1853, the newlyweds traveled overland to Utah, settling first in Salt Lake City, where Mary Lois gave birth to a son, and then moving to Cedar City in January 1855. They hoped that the climate would improve John’s frail health. However, within a month the baby was dead and John was failing. As death approached, he importuned his brother Elias to take nineteen-year-old Mary Lois as a plural wife. She recalls the excruciating tension as she met with Elias and his first wife, Mary Parry Morris, to discuss the arrangements—“how very much easier for this girl widow to renounce the sacred covenant she had made with her husband’s brother, at the death bed of the former, than to be true to what the love of God required and to the life-long contract she had made?” And then she concludes with resignation, “No one was to blame for the circumstances which surrounded us, but this was one of the ordeals we had to meet, as all have their fiery trials to pass through who set their faces like steel to serve God to the end” (123). From this point forward, plural marriage is the theme which defines Morris’s life and this volume, hence its title, “Before the Manifesto.”

At first the two families lived in the same small home, but it is clear that for Mary Lois this living arrangement was distasteful. After moving to Salt Lake City in 1860, Elias established separate households, visiting each a week in succession. This new arrangement seems to have eased family tensions; and for many years, the memoir revolves around the daily rhythms and dramas of Mary Lois’s own household, giving little mention to her husband’s other family—a silence which is in itself telling. It was the federal prosecution of polygamists in the 1880s that brings plural marriage back to the forefront. Mary Lois’s brief exile in Provo and periods of lying low at home ended with Elias’s trial for unlawful cohabitation. It is clear from the diary entries that Mary Lois, in an effort to protect her husband, committed perjury when she testified that her marriage to Elias had ended four years earlier at her suggestion. It had actually been only two years since Elias had proposed that they separate due to threat of prosecution. Mary Lois rejoiced.

Unfortunately, this edition of both the memoir and the diary con-
cludes at this point. The editor’s informative introductory essay sums up the rest of Mary Lois’s life. An additional extract from the memoir in an epilogue covers 1902–05 when she accompanied her daughter into exile in Mexico, but we are missing both the reflective perspective of her memoir and the daily pattern of her diary to give substance to most of her remaining thirty-two years. By the time of her death in 1919, Mary Lois had filled eighty-nine daybooks with an account of her daily activities. Seventeen are no longer extant and only eight of the remaining sixty-nine are reproduced here. Nevertheless, they provide a fascinating glimpse into the everyday life of a Mormon woman from 1879 to 1887. Although there is some repetition from the memoir, the daybooks are actually a wonderful complement, providing details which Mary Lois thought too mundane for her narrative. We can follow her about the house as she rises early and labors long at housework, child-rearing, and her in-home millinery business, or sallies out to shop, visit friends or neighbors, minister to the sick and dying, attend worship services, or conduct meetings of the Fifteenth Ward Primary.

The volume is filled with the names of family, friends, and acquaintances, most of them identified in the extensive and useful biographical register. Some entries give us glimpses into the lives of the prominent. A sister, Ann Agatha, was a plural wife of Parley P. Pratt. A brother, Charles Lowell Walker, another important diarist, lived in St. George. A son, Nephi, became president of the Salt Lake Stake. Another son, George Q., was called to the Quorum of the Twelve. Two daughters married George M. Cannon, the son of Angus M. Cannon. The names of the dying, the poor, and recent immigrants appear equally often. A word of caution: the index is not comprehensive. Many people mentioned briefly in the text are not included in the index (for example, Jacob Hamblin, 132; Richard Cook, 169; and Mary Gould, 218).

In all, this is a fine collection of primary source material and the memoir, in particular, is an engaging read. The introductory essay, while seeming somewhat repetitious, actually provides important context for the memoir, especially when it comes to Elias’s business and mining endeavors. The editor has, however, missed one particularly important silence. Mary Lois never offers a reason for the family’s move from Cedar City to Salt Lake City in 1860. Milewski attributes the move to the failure of the Iron Mission but could have probed deeper. Coming on the heels of the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre, the move evokes questions about the family’s involvement. As it turns out, Elias, who was a militia captain and counselor to stake president Isaac Haight, was deeply involved in the decision-making process that led to the massacre, including the infamous “Tan Bark Council” with William Dame in Parowan, where Dame, Haight, and Morris were the only participants. Unfortunately, the editor misses this opportunity to examine
both Elias’s role and its impact on his family, as well as Mary Lois’s silence.

The annotation is thorough (every literary reference is identified) and typically helpful, although on occasion I wished for further commentary, such as an identification of the circumstances surrounding the death of a woman “killed in a most shocking manner” (178).

Regrettably, the handsome volume is plagued by the most maddening of typographical errors, the transposition of letters in the embossed title on the spine and on the dust jacket—Mary Lois’s maiden name appears as “Wlaker” rather than Walker. The publisher has since corrected the dust jacket, making mine a collector’s item.

The editor gives no hint of plans to publish the remaining sixty-four volumes of diaries/daybooks or the final section of the memoir. However, based on the selections presented here, they will undoubtedly provide an invaluable window on everyday life and on the painful dissolution of a peculiar social system “after the Manifesto.”

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Reviewed by Thomas G. Alexander

Carmon Hardy’s Doing the Works of Abraham is one of a series consisting mostly of documentary histories that provide collections of manuscripts with detailed commentary focused on aspects of the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the American West. Historians should thank Will Bagley, an independent historian, and Bob Clark of the Arthur H. Clark Company, now a subsidiary of the University of Oklahoma Press, for editing and publishing this series.

This book is an excellent study and ought to be required reading for anyone who wants to understand this significant nineteenth-century Mormon practice. Moreover, I believe that this book covers the ground of the Mormon polygamy story well. Nevertheless, in this review I will cite areas in which I have some disagreement with Hardy’s emphasis, documentary selection, or interpretation.

Hardy rightly credits the origins of the practice to Joseph Smith and dates its origin to the early 1830s. As he argues, it seems probable that Joseph Smith first anticipated that plural marriages would take place between priesthood holders and Native Americans, and it is clear that Joseph Smith married women who had already married others. Joseph, like some other nineteenth-century religious leaders, expected marriage to continue into eternity rather than ending at death; but unlike many other believers, the Latter-day Saints believed that polygamous relationships offered additional glory both to men and women. Hardy is absolutely right on these accounts.

Hardy quotes from Parley P. Pratt on the subject of the eternal significance of marriage relationships: “It was from him [Joseph Smith] that I learned the true dignity and destiny of a son of God, clothed with eternal priesthood, as the patriarch and sovereign of his countless offspring. It was from him that I learned that the highest dignity of womanhood was, to stand as a queen and priestess to her husband, and to reign for ever and ever as the queen mother of her numerous and still increasing offspring” (39).

Hardy offers a long quotation from Benjamin Johnson (43–46) which indicates that the practice of plural marriage, particularly Joseph’s sealing to Fanny Alger, caused some disruption in the LDS community at Kirtland, just as it did later at Nauvoo. Nevertheless, for some of those to whom Joseph proposed, like Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, the confirmation that she should enter into polyandry came in the form of a deeply moving angelic visitation (46–48).

The chapter on Nauvoo tells the well-known story of the problems in introducing plural marriage and opposition from a number of quarters, including Emma Smith. Hardy quotes from: a discourse by Udney Hay Jacob (56–47), the 1843 revelation that is now Section 132 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants (61–66), a letter to the Deseret News by William Clayton (58–60), a document from Joseph Holbrook, an editorial by Thomas Sharp from the Warsaw Signal, an editorial from the Nauvoo Expositor, and a letter by Sidney Rigdon published in the Messenger and Advocate.
After anti-Mormon mobs drove the Saints from Illinois, the practice flourished as an open secret until in 1852, when, under Brigham Young’s assignment, Orson Pratt gave an oft-cited sermon that officially acknowledged the practice and which provided a basic justification. Arguments in favor of plural marriage harked back to Joseph Smith’s 1843 revelation which Church leaders had copied but never previously made public. In the sermon, Pratt said that the Mormons grounded the principle on the eternity of the marriage covenant which began on this earth with the marriage of immortal beings—Adam and Eve. Pratt then linked the blessings of plural marriage to Abraham and to the restoration of all things: “We read that those who do the works of Abraham [the phrase from which Hardy took his title], are to be blessed with the blessings of Abraham. Have you not, in the ordinances of this last dispensation, had the blessings of Abraham pronounced upon your heads? . . . Why not look upon Abraham’s blessings as your own, for the Lord blessed him with a promise of seed as numerous as the sand upon the sea-shore; so will you be blessed, or else you will not inherit the blessings of Abraham” (78).

Although others have cited various sociological and other religious arguments for practicing polygamy, clearly, as Hardy rightly argues, the Mormon leadership grounded the practice on a theological basis: the restoration of the Abrahamic covenant. Hardy comments that “nineteenth-century apologists used Pratt’s defenses more frequently than all other writings on polygamy combined” (82).

Members of the Church in close contact with America’s political leaders recognized that the announcement and its open practice would create serious problems for the Saints. As John Bernhisel recognized, it would “prove a bitter pill” (80).

Following the announcement, as Hardy shows, members and leaders elaborated on the importance and sanctity of the principle. George Q. Cannon, Lorenzo Snow, and others argued that Christ had practiced polygamy and that some of the people then living were his literal descendants. Others called those who practiced monogamy “the biggest Whoremasters on Earth” (86). Charles Penrose (a future apostle), Belinda Pratt (a plural wife of Parley P. Pratt), and others argued that the practice would regenerate public and private morality. Anticipating the eugenics movement, George Q. Cannon said that it would improve the human race.

Hardy argues that Mormon leaders “insisted that impregnation was the only proper purpose for sexual congress” (130). It is true, as he indicates, that many Church leaders preached sermons that support this view. Nevertheless, Hardy’s bibliography includes Charles A. Cannon’s “The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign against Mormon Polygamy,” Pacific Historical Review 43 (Winter 1974): 61–82 which quotes Apostle Parley P.
Pratt’s authoritative Key to the Science of Theology. In it he states that, in addition to procreation, sexual intimacy existed “also for mutual affection, and the cultivation of those eternal principles of never ending charity and benevolence, which are inspired by the Eternal Spirit; also for mutual comfort and assistance in this world of toil and sorrow, and for mutual duties toward their offspring” (66–67; emphasis mine). Pratt thus not only contradicted the view that procreation was the only purpose for intercourse but also contradicted the anti-feminist assertions of Udney Hay Jacob (56–57), who unlike Pratt, was never a General Authority and had no calling to speak authoritatively on any subject. Hardy, however, neglects Pratt’s views which provide a more nuanced and pro-feminist view of polygamy.

Hardy provides examples and documents on the question of the effect of polygamy on women in Mormon society. Some like Jane Snyder Richards argued that, although wives encountered many difficulties, they lived in harmony with one another. Others like Martha Hughes Cannon said that the practice actually emancipated women. In some cases, wives encouraged their husbands to marry again, in at least one case, as Juanita Brooks wrote, “in order that he might be eligible for a higher church position” (155).

Frankly, we need a more careful analysis than Hardy’s of documents that provide information on the impact of polygamy on men. It is significant that the only document Hardy reproduced in the section titled “‘It Was Their Duty’: Male Life in the Principle,” was an interview with a woman. Hardy believes that “men generally found polygamy less emotionally bruising than their wives” (174). I doubt the accuracy of this assessment. The pressure that men felt to care for multiple families must have taxed both their emotional and economic strength. No man could have been pleased to have received a letter from Brigham Young chastising him for not caring for his family (179), or telling him that his wife had applied for a divorce (180), and studies have shown that divorce was more prevalent among polygamists than monogamists.

Most important, from my research on Wilford Woodruff’s life, I am certain that he felt enormous emotional “bruising” as he tried to live under the pressure of caring for multiple families, of dealing with the divorces of at least four of his nine wives, and of hiding out from U.S. marshals, sometimes for months at a time. His agony is apparent in the “wilderness revelation” he received while hiding in the San Francisco Mountains of northern Arizona, in his response to his divorce from his ninth wife, Eudora Young, and on his inability to attend the funeral of his first wife, Phebe.1

Hardy’s excellent selection of comments on polygamy by non-Mor-

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1Thomas G. Alexander, Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of
mons demonstrates the complexity of the responses. He found comments that were favorable, unfavorable, and some, like Mark Twain’s, that were humorous. As one might expect, the unfavorable comments generally heaped condemnation on both men and women participants but especially on the men. Two chapters of comments from apostates, political leaders, and representatives of national opinion, most of whom had never met with the Mormons first hand were almost uniformly unfavorable. Perhaps the epitome of such comments came from T. DeWitt Talmage, “Sodom and Salt Lake City are synonymous. You can hardly think of the one without thinking of the other. . . . it is the brothel of the nation. . . . Mormonism will never be destroyed until it is destroyed by the guns of the United States Government” (276–77).

Significantly, Hardy includes in his documents the Morrill, Edmunds, and Edmunds-Tucker acts. With these acts, he has included representative documents providing examples of the questioning of jurors, the oath taken by those who wanted to vote, and trials of accused polygamists. One of the most interesting documents is the testimony of John Taylor in the Rudger Clawson case. The testimony, as Hardy correctly interprets it, showed the extensive “diffusion of authority for performing plural marriages that took place in the 1880s” (289).

In considering the Mormon response to plural marriage, Hardy argues: “As often happens with ‘persecution,’ polygamous marriages seemed actually to increase” (309). This assessment agrees with Stanley Ivins’s assessment in “Notes on Mormon Polygamy,” *Western Humanities Review* 10 (Summer 1956): 229–39, but contradicts the more recent and more nuanced statistical research by Kathryn Daynes in *More Wives than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001) which argues that the peak number of families living in plural marriage came between 1857 and 1860. Although her figures come from Manti, I am convinced that they are representative.

In considering the Manifesto, Hardy agrees that Wilford Woodruff wrote it but argues that he borrowed much of the post-Manifesto rationale from George Q. Cannon (354). I would argue that Woodruff’s diary suggests that Woodruff’s post-Manifesto statements were substantially elaborations on the statement in his diary that the federal government was trying to destroy the Church by attacking polygamy: “And after Praying to the Lord & feeling inspired by his spirit I have issued” the Manifesto (344).

In a final chapter, Hardy assesses the importance of polygamy, an assessment with which I heartily agree except for his argument that nineteenth-century Mormons viewed sexual relations as solely for procreation.

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His assessment begins: “Any fair examination of nineteen-century Mormons must acknowledge its extraordinary career. Emerging from a milieu overrun with social and religious debate about marital life, the prophet Joseph Smith commanded patriarchal marriage in the name of God. It comported with Mormon claims that they were restoring the truths of earlier prophets and dispensations. More than this, Mormon polygamy boldly reinstated fabled contentions of the ancients, making sexuality a practice of the gods and, going yet further, exhorting its reproductive employment as a high road to divinity for mortals” (389).

Again, this is an excellent collection of documents and commentary. I would encourage all serious students of polygamy to study it carefully.

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Reviewed by William Shepard

After attending the 2007 Mormon History Association annual conference at Salt Lake City, my wife, Dianne, and I accompanied my brother-in-law and sister back to their home at Denver, Colorado. During this long drive, my sister read Emma’s Nauvoo and periodically read portions aloud, commenting enthusiastically about how much she was learning about Emma Smith and Nauvoo in the post-Joseph Smith period. Upon critically reading Emma’s Nauvoo a few days later, I was also captivated by this thoroughly researched and intelligently written book with its many pertinent themes, illustrations, and sketches.

Doubtless, producing this book was a labor of love by Ronald E. Romig, archivist of the Community of Christ, who used documents from that church’s archives supplemented by historical writings from a wide variety of sources. He explained by email to me in early September 2007: “By way of background, EM [Emma’s Nauvoo] emerged out of a desire to create a product designed to be sold at CofC [Community of Christ] historic sites. I started gathering this info several years ago. I was looking for sources about Nauvoo after the departure of the Saints. I was surprised to find so many sources about Emma’s experiences during this period.” Romig initially intended to serialize the information in a newsletter, but John Hamer con-
vinced him a booklet would be more appropriate. Hamer supported the project by doing the cover and attractive interior design, which communicates by its layout and type style a nineteenth-century newspaper.

The book opens with a three-page summary history of Emma Smith. Photographs of Emma taken in and after 1870 are featured along with individual pictures of Joseph Smith III and Emma taken in 1850. Romig takes the reader through Emma’s efforts to remain financially solvent immediately following the murder of her first husband; her remarriage to Lewis C. Bidamon December 27, 1847; her selling property to settle a $5,000 judgment on Joseph’s estate; her retention of the Nauvoo Mansion, the Nauvoo House, and other properties; Emma’s brief exile to Fulton, Illinois, during the period of greatest tensions with non-Mormon neighbors; and her return to Nauvoo. Romig also provides information on Lucy Mack Smith, Emma’s mother-in-law, who spent her last years with Emma. The account of her death on May 14, 1856, is moving.

Illustrations include Joseph Smith Jr. (paintings and daguerreotypes), and photographs of Emma’s children: Joseph III, Frederick Granger Williams Smith, Alexander Hale Smith, David Hyrum Smith, and adopted daughter Julia Murdock Smith. Also included are Emma’s sisters-in-law (Katharine Smith Salisbury and Lucy Smith Milliken), and her nephews Samuel H. B. Smith (son of Samuel Harrison Smith) and Joseph F. Smith (son of Hyrum Smith). These pictures add interesting depth to this fine book.

Aply selected quotations from newspapers and journals add to our understanding of Emma’s Nauvoo. For example, the Boston Courier published this description of Emma in mid-1847: “We found her at home and had considerable conversation with her. She is an intelligent woman, apparently about fifty years of age [she was actually forty-three], rather large and good looking with bright sparkling eyes but a countenance of sadness when she is not talking. She must have been a handsome women when some years younger” (17).

Emma bore a staunch and consistent testimony about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon:

When my husband was translating the Book of Mormon, I wrote a part of it, as he dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce or long words, he spelled them out, and while I was writing them, if I made any mistake in spelling, he would stop me and correct my spelling, although it was impossible for him to see how I was writing them down at the time. Even the word Sarah he could not pronounce at first, but had to spell it, and I would pronounce it for him. (35)

William E. McLellin recorded this 1847 recollection of Emma saying:
“I have all confidence in that spirit of intelligence by which the Book of Mormon was translated; and by which the revelations were given to the church in the beginning” (47).

Emma’s descriptions of such Mormon luminaries as William Marks, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Zenos H. Gurley, and Brigham Young are most interesting. She commented, “I was threatened by Brigham Young because I opposed and denounced his measures and would not go west with them” (38). Romig also presents Emma’s well-known description of Joseph’s revisions of the Bible (she felt that her house would never burn, despite arson attempts, because of the presence of this sacred manuscript) and her famous denunciation of polygamy and her testimony that her husband was never a polygamist. In the section titled “Emma, Joseph III’s RLDS Church Presidency and Polygamy,” Romig quotes an excerpt from a letter William E. McLellin wrote to Joseph Smith III January 10, 1861: “I do not wish to say hard things to You of your Father, but Joseph, if You will only go to your own dear Mother, she can tell You that he believed in Polygamy and practiced it long before his violent death! That he delivered a revelation sanctioning, regulating, and establishing it—and that he finally burned the Awful document before her eyes.” Emma denied both claims.

The booklet concludes with “Emma’s Last Testimony,” “The Interview with Emma, 1879,” “Emma’s Passing as Recounted by Alexander H. Smith, 1879,” obituaries, and the 1891 obituary of her second husband, Major Lewis Crum Bidamon.

This is a delightful book and I heartily recommend it for the knowledge it adds about this remarkable woman, her family, and Nauvoo.

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Reviewed by Jeff Needle

Martin Harris’s Kirtland is one in a series of slim volumes from the relatively young John Whitmer Books press. As an effort of the John Whit-
mer Historical Association, its focus reaches beyond the standard Utah Mormonism of other Mormon presses, bringing to the fore the people and places of the wider Restoration movement. And while both Harris and Kirtland are familiar subjects to many readers, the current volume aims to study both, but especially Harris, from a more holistic point of view.

Kirtland, as the first formally designated gathering place (“ye shall go to the Ohio . . .” LDS D&C 37:2), occupies a significant place in Mormon history. It is also the site of the first Mormon temple, whose completion marked an important moment. This significance was not lost on Martin Harris. Even as the Saints moved on under heavy persecution, Martin remained fixed on the idea of tending to that sacred place. To be sure, his steadfastness to the Mormon message wavered as he toyed with the Shakers for a few years and subsequently developed a rather dim view of the Church under the leadership of Brigham Young. But as he grew older, he returned to his first love, and finally died in the home of his son in Brigham Young’s Utah.

Harris emerges in this book as a peculiar fellow. His excitements led him to go to extraordinary lengths to show his support. Beginning his journey as a wealthy man, he died in poverty. And while he was always certain of his stands, he was often wrong. For example, in 1832, in the heat of his Mormon enthusiasm, he fancied himself something of a prophet: “I do hereby assert and declare that in four years from the date hereof, every sectarian and religious denomination in the United States, shall be broken down, and every Christian shall be gathered unto the Mormonites, and the rest of the human race shall perish. If these things do not take place, I will hereby consent to have my hand separated from my body” (29). To the best of my knowledge, not every Christian became a Mormonite, nor do we have evidence that Mr. Harris died with only one working hand.

Harris, in my opinion, emerges as a man excited about being excited. I think he was sincere in his testimony of the Book of Mormon, but I don’t know that he recognized his own willingness to sign on to, and financially support, a crusade if that crusade caught his fancy. Was his commitment heartfelt, or was he simply naive? That question is yet to be fully answered.

Martin Harris’s Kirtland is nicely produced, but spelling and punctuation errors, and some factual slips, will be found by the careful reader. On page 8, for example, Romig states without attribution that Mrs. Harris burned the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon in her stove. I’m not aware that this is settled history. Lacking a citation, it perhaps should have been phrased as a possible solution to the problem of the manuscript’s disappearance.

In the end, “in a remarkable way Harris’s very presence in Kirtland
helped preserve the Temple,” comments astute historian and editor Ron Romig. “Just being there kept the vision of the movement alive. No doubt, the Temple also helped preserve Martin. Regular encounters with old and new friends at the Temple gave him a purpose for living” (97). Martin Harris will remain an enigmatic figure in Mormon history, and this little book will give readers a good introduction to the man, his vision, his work and his life.

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Reviewed by Jonathan A. Stapley

Robert J. Matthews is perhaps best known for his work in changing common Latter-day Saint perspectives on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. His career spanned decades in the Church Education System and at Brigham Young University. His bibliography is large, and he was recently honored by the BYU Religious Studies Center’s publication of A Witness for the Restoration: Essays in Honor of Robert Matthews. As is common in festschrifts and recent CES-authored publications, the volume is a compilation from various contributors.

The book is divided into three sections, “Bible,” “Book of Mormon,” and “Church History and Doctrine.” As the last section is of greater interest to readers of the Journal of Mormon History, it forms the focus of this review; however, these essays are not history per se.

The first two papers, written by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet respectively, treat the revelation to Joseph Smith that his church was the “only true and living Church” with which God was pleased and the associated idea that all the creeds of contemporary churches were abominable to Him. McConkie offers an exercise in persuasion. Unsettled by ecumenism, he argues for an emphatic embrace of Mormon exceptionalism. Armed with anecdotes from his service as a mission president, a handful of de-
cades-old references (several of which are unverifiable) and a rhetorical tone, McConkie question-begs that the plan of salvation and priesthood are a requirement for any belief in God. He breaks with the usual pattern of finding shared ground with other churches by proclaiming, “Every similarity we identify leaves them one less reason to join the Church. When we cease to be different, we cease to be” (195).

Millet plays good cop to McConkie’s anachronistic bad cop. He offers a modern interlocution that reflects his years of evangelical outreach and the popular positions of recent General Authorities. Millet opens with the observation that creedal Christians react to Latter-day Saint claims of being the “only true Church” in a fashion similar to Mormons’ reactions to the accusation that they aren’t Christian. Well-organized with enumerated subheadings and undeniably smooth, Millet first outlines what he thinks Mormon claims of primacy do not mean. He illustrates, for example, that the idea of “two churches only” does not mean that non-Mormon churches are of the devil (206–7). Next, in describing what Mormon exclusive claims do mean, Millet deftly wields his understanding of evangelicism, even citing evangelical presses to highlight Mormon strengths. The Catholic or Buddhist would likely be left wanting, but they are not part of Millet’s intended dialogue.

Donald Q. Cannon’s short treatment, “Joseph Smith and Agency,” highlights the intended demographic for this volume. Cannon reviews teachings and revelations of Joseph Smith that deal with agency, without regard to Joseph’s application of these ideas. He does not cite Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith; however, he uses primary sources only when no secondary source is available. Cannon disregards historicity, claiming, for example, “In his diary for April 8, 1843, the Prophet wrote . . .” (246). However, the quoted statement is actually Willard Richards’s written summary of Joseph’s sermon. He also perpetuates a likely misattribution by citing Joseph Smith as author of a letter that was perhaps written by Oliver Cowdery and/or Orson Hyde (239).

Larry Porter offers a very interesting look into the Brigham Young family’s experience with the Reformed Methodist Church before and during their conversion to Mormonism. The Reformed Methodists were a group of charismatic Wesleyans who broke with the Methodist Episcopal Church to practice a more congregational form of worship. Porter contrasts the various levels of participation of Brigham’s immediate relations: “We do

1For example, the citation to a lengthy quotation by Bruce R. McConkie reads, “Personal Communication with the author” (note 3). Otherwise, he also quotes a “directive to priesthood leaders” which he cites as Boyd K. Packer, Directive, May 9, 1995 (note 5).
not know when Brigham Young chose to align himself with the Reformed Methodist Church. He would have participated in the local Mendon congregation in association with his father and brothers. He was not an active preacher for the Reformed Methodists as were John P. Greene and Phinehas and Joseph Young. Brigham’s apparent passiveness might be attributed to his arduous work schedule in support of his family and invalid wife” (261).

Porter relies heavily on what he refers to as the “Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1844–1846” (274 note 1). This citation is an unfortunate conflation with the history of Brigham Young that begins after the death of Joseph Smith and is included in the Selected Collections DVD in the “History of the Church.” After finishing the “History of Joseph Smith,” Church historians went on to prepare a biography and record of Brigham from his birth to the martyrdom. This biography was based on diaries, recollections, and interviews and was published in the Deseret News and Millennial Star as the “History of Brigham Young.” Howard Searle described a manuscript of this history as being included with the other histories of the Twelve in the manuscript “Book G.” Ronald Esplin, who also relied on manuscript editions of Brigham’s early history for his dissertation, described three separate and successive manuscripts. Thus, it is not certain which of these documents Porter refers to, but he does not cite the published versions in either the Millennial Star or the Deseret News. Further, this early history shares a similar historiography to the “History of Joseph Smith” and Porter makes no effort to qualify any of the excerpts or comments.

It is also likely that the first-person accounts of Phinehas Young, which Porter relied on, are extant as Wilford Woodruff instructed Orson Pratt to collect them along with histories of Brigham’s other siblings. Brigham’s early holograph diaries are also publicly available. Despite these flaws, this essay is a very good look at an important foundation of one of Mormonism’s most important figures.

In the final essay entitled “Living Up to Our Patriarchies,” Oscar W. McConkie Jr. engages in the grand Mormon tradition of doctrinal exposition. He is not interested in the history of scripture or even in its context. Rather, he gathers scores of verses and weaves a narrative, via a circuitous route through creation and foreordination to the core of his thesis: “natural patriarchy.” He asserts: “In heaven there existed a perfect theocratic, patriar-
chal system” (282) and those who “understand and believe Jesus and His saving truths more readily than others” (284) in mortality made better choices in that pre-mortal system. McConkie describes Mormon men as “natural patriarchs,” presumably God’s elect, who preside in a system patterned after the heavenly government. McConkie then describes the various responsibilities of these patriarchs, relying on The Family: A Proclamation to the World (297).

The introduction for A Witness for the Restoration states that the book was created “as a reflection of the varied interests and academic loves of Robert Matthew.” The concluding item in A Witness for the Restoration, the lengthy (29 pp.) bibliography of his publications, highlights this legacy. Though perhaps helpful as devotional literature, valuable to many, this work is, with the exception of Larry Porter’s article, simply not intended for those interested in the scholarly treatment of history.

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Reviewed by Stanford J. Layton

The editorial staff of this journal obviously erred in not offering a review of this fine book upon its publication in 1999. Today’s staff, recognizing that quality is always in style, seeks to correct that oversight. Who can gainsay that? Frontier Children has established itself as a standard work and needs to be brought to the attention of anyone who has missed it along the way.

Mormon children are not particularly conspicuous in this work, being mentioned only a half-dozen times, but readers of the journal of Mormon History and all other scholars of the westering experience will find great reward in the larger view of children presented here—“the universal experience of the young,” to use Elliott West’s wonderful phrase (x). Without the caption’s aid, one would not know that the three children featured in a close-up photo on p. 14 are Mormons, but that is the point. Their clothing, their expressions, the large wagon in the background, and the ubiquitous dog in their midst all bespeak that universal element. Children are children, regardless
of cultural differences, and they fascinate us endlessly.

Enhanced by nearly 200 high-quality photographs, *Frontier Children* offers infinite entertainment as a visual work. Some of the images will evoke laughter, some tears, others longing, nostalgia, astonishment, or wonder. They make the reader want to share them with friends, like the proud parent reaching for his wallet at the office, to point out details and stimulate conversation. Placement and sizing of these halftones reflect an artistic touch and add to the book’s strong aesthetic appeal.

Captions are also nicely done, nearly always identifying place and, where important, indicating time as well. Sources of photographs appear in a separate acknowledgments section. For reasons not explained, the authors have drawn disproportionately heavily from Montana archives. In fact, the northern territories/states rather dominate the offerings, both visual and narrative, throughout the book. Regardless of this peculiarity, Peavy and Smith have achieved commendable ethnic and racial balance in their selections.

And who could ever get enough of these kids? Take Bessie Felton Wilson, who grew up on a Kansas farm in the 1870s and was tasked with herding the family hogs all day. Coping with boredom, she convinced little brother Bernard that she and the grunting pigs had learned to communicate in “hog Latin,” and she proved it by translating their conversations to the wide-eyed boy. Or eleven-year-old Merton Eastlick, who carried his baby brother fifty miles to safety after the rest of his family had been killed or wounded in the Dakota Conflict of 1862. Or nine-year-old Marvin Powe, sent off by his father through the New Mexico desert to find some runaway horses and living on his own for a week before returning a week later, driving the renegade horses back to the ranch.

The stories go on, constantly amazing us with the level of responsibility imposed on frontier children and entertaining us with the variety of their experiences. This effect, of course, is by design. The authors’ stated purpose in this book is “to reconstruct the stories of childhood in the West” (5) and, in the process, to adumbrate “the philosophical and sociological views of childhood held by nineteenth-century American society” (9). A glance at the subheadings of the text will illustrate how thoroughly they have probed the subject. Included are natural disasters, illness and accidents, animal adversaries, family diversions, holidays, play, pets, indoor amusements, chores, work for hire, schools, nontraditional roles, racial exclusions, and much more.

Little wonder that *Frontier Children* has enjoyed success. It has gone into a second printing, has earned a place in all the standard bibliographies, and has won acceptance as the standard to follow in all books of this genre.

*Journal of Mormon History* readers and others who love history are now
able to add to their reading pleasure Signature Books’s fourth volume in its “Favorite Readings from Utah Historical Quarterly” series—The Skeleton in Grandpa’s Barn and Other Stories of Growing Up in Utah (2007), featuring more than a dozen articles on growing up in Utah. Such publications, regardless of layout and format, owe much to the pioneering work that Linda Peavy, Ursula Smith, and the University of Oklahoma Press have given us in Frontier Children.

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Reviewed by Kenneth and Audrey Godfrey

Glenn Cuerden is a prize-winning photographer, writer, collaborator on a public television documentary titled The Rural Midwest, and boyhood resident of Nauvoo, Illinois. Using 122 photographs and one-page introductions to various aspects of Nauvoo’s history, he has created a slim volume titled Images of America Nauvoo, covering from 1803 to 2006. In contrast, historian Glen M. Leonard’s Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), which covered only the Mormon experience in Nauvoo is more than eight hundred pages long. Thus, readers should not expect a detailed, heavily footnoted analysis of Nauvoo’s past. What they can anticipate is a fascinating pictorial stroll through that community’s history.

Each of the nine chapters is focused on a different aspect of Nauvoo’s past, beginning with the establishing of the Mississippi River frontier. The remaining chapters are devoted to Nauvoo’s settlement by the Latter-day Saints, followed by German immigrants, the Icarians, an expansion in the 1880s, the “wedding of wine and cheese,” and the Mormons’ return in the last half of the twentieth century. Pictures include an Icarian School, the dining hall, a saw, a gristmill, and a late 1880s photograph of the St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church as well as maps, and facsimiles of old newspaper article. All are captioned, enhancing the historical narratives that introduce each chapter.

Among the photographs is one of Captain James White’s home, said
to be the first permanent house in Nauvoo. Its remains were covered in 1913 with water as the Keokuk Dam raised the level of the Mississippi River near Nauvoo by twenty-five to thirty feet.

Latter-day Saints will be interested in Cuerden’s historic photographs of the Joseph Smith home before its restoration, the Mormon Arsenal, the building where the only issue of the *Nauvoo Expositor* was printed, two cannon balls (relics from the September 1846 Battle of Nauvoo), and a rare photograph of the Nauvoo Temple in 1846, among others.

Those who visit Nauvoo today are often curious about the city that historian Robert B. Flanders called “Kingdom on the Mississippi” during the hundred years that lie between the Mormon exodus of 1846 and the return of a Latter-day Saint presence which largely began in the 1960s. Cuerden fills in that gap by describing the “new” immigrants who were German Lutherans and Catholics, as well as people whose roots ran to Switzerland and Ireland. A communal group called Icarians came in 1849 and established an ambitious but short-lived socialistic community that included schools, foundries, flour mills, a distillery, and a dining hall. By 1855 almost 500 Icarians called Nauvoo home. Emma Smith Bidamon made Nauvoo her primary residence from first arriving there in 1839 with Joseph until her death in 1875. Here she raised her four sons.

Others who called Nauvoo home were flour and saw mill workers, nuns who taught and administered St. Mary’s academy for girls, the Benedictine sisters also oversaw the construction in 1907 of what some consider Nauvoo’s largest building, the Spaulding Institute, a residential school for boys through the eighth grade. Other citizens were farmers making their living growing strawberries, grapes, and corn.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Nauvoo’s population hovered between 1,000 and 1,300. Two canning factories were constructed (and failed), but a brewery and blue cheese factory thrived, as did several wineries. So did the Oriental Hotel that drew patrons from as far away as seventy-five miles. Then, beginning in the early 1960s, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints founded Nauvoo Restoration, Inc., and began to purchase property, restore old Mormon homes, and construct a second Nauvoo Temple whose facade reconstructs that of the historic building.

Cuerden in Chapter 3 focuses on the “Mormon Era in Nauvoo,” but his brief treatment is riddled with factual errors. Consider page 29: Latter-day Saints did not steal “the daughters or wives of neighboring settlers,” nor did criminals thrive in the city without fear of prosecution. The *Nauvoo Expositor*, a newspaper published by disaffected Mormons, was not destroyed by “disenchanted and disenfranchised” Latter-day Saints but by officials acting on instructions from the city council.

His maps on page 12 are interesting, but the sources need to be identified and the two figures overlaying the map need to be named. Several other maps and illustrations are, at best, difficult to decipher and, at worst, not legible. The quality of many of the maps and pictures is inadequate, thus subtracting from the book’s usefulness and aesthetic appeal.

Cuerden’s volume would also have been better had he included a chapter on the volunteers from the Community of Christ who maintain its sites in the city and provide orientation for visitors (notably, the Mansion House, the Homestead, and the Red Brick Store). A matching chapter could have described the LDS Nauvoo Mission, its missionaries, and ordinance workers in the Nauvoo Temple, a group of volunteers who today make up at least a third of the city’s population and whose spending habits energize the community’s economy. Still for those who want a pictorial journey that covers Nauvoo’s beginning-to-the-present history, Cuerden’s short volume just might fill the bill. He is to be commended for focusing on a community whose historical importance surpasses the small number of citizens who resided there.

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Reviewed by Samuel Brown
In this excellent first book, co-winner of MHA’s Smith-Pettit Best First Book Award, Paul Reeve narrates the collective lives of three peoples competing for survival and salvation at the desolate southwestern edge of Utah Territory in the latter nineteenth century. From the native Southern Paiutes to Brigham Young’s Mormon colonists to the migrating miners, these groups struggled to establish or maintain themselves in an unforgiving environment. All toiled to make food grow, to find water, and to assure a greater meaning to their lives and their communities. To a surprising extent, theirs are also stories of interference from the rising federal government and the social ramifications of the exploitive and acquisitive period dubbed America’s “Gilded Age” (1870s–1890s).

In Reeve’s summative phrase, “The chasm separating Mormons and Paiutes from the broader American scene, however, likely had less to do with prevailing perceptions of savagery, polygamy, and theocracy than it did with the two groups’ relative lack of interest in the acquisitiveness permeating Gilded Age America. More than anything, it was gold seeking, individualism, materialism, capitalism, progress, and development that were pitted against the Mormon Question and the Indian Problem” (62).

As a new Western historian, Reeve is remarkably sensitive to the meaning of the earth and the worth of marginalized cultures, drawing particular attention to spiritual relationships to the land. Here his narrative exemplifies the strength of the new Western history. The various small tribes of the Southern Paiute culture group “owned” the land first, though they may have chosen another verb to describe their relationship. That relationship was mediated by ministrations of the wolf-deity Tabuts, who preserved for them the center of the world, the north side of the Colorado River (12). To this land next came the Mormons, cast out from their Missouri Eden but guided by God to create a new kingdom in the Great Basin (16–17). They maintained this presence in the deep desert to protect their primary settlements on the Wasatch Front, to claim Deseret for God’s kingdom, and to preserve it from disunity.

Unfortunately for both groups, in Gilded Age America, soil contained more than history or the footprint of Providence and more than the infrastructure of communal identity. It contained precious metals. Prospects of treasure drew an influx of miners to the land from the peripheries of established Eastern society. The common man’s nearly mythic capacity to tear from the earth not just sustenance but fortune represented an American ideal, even something like a religious system, as Reeve carefully demonstrates (134). As they struggled and died like urban workers in slums, these miners found a nearly metaphysical freedom in exploiting the uncivilized soil.

Reeve does more than describe three neighboring groups. He ex-
plores the attempts at group-making that arose during intersections and competitions for resources and authority. Reeve accurately and sympathetically portrays the ambivalence of these collisions and collusions. Paiutes, generally distinguishing the hostile “Mericats” (miners) from the friendly “Mormonee,” still killed and died at the hands of Mormons (103–5), while they managed to make a living as service workers in mining settlements. Mormons in their relationships with Paiutes struggled against a particularly split view. They had once expected the remnant of Jacob to rise up and destroy the Gentiles (white Protestants, represented by miners), but the Paiutes largely proved resistant to this Mormon script. Rather than unlocking their ancient heritage, for most Paiutes, Mormon baptism represented a “wash” or a “swim” to earn food and clothing (76). On a personal level, some Mormons welcomed Indians into their family circles, while other Mormons formed vigilante posses to murder offending Paiutes. As far as the other whites, Mormons feared the “soft oily, low whispered words” of monogamic miners and, following Brigham Young, rejected the centrifugal greed of the mining enterprise, while they profited considerably from the markets provided by mining settlements (89, 91, 94).

Miners for their part evinced considerable ambivalence about their European and native neighbors. Unburdened by Mormon Israelitism, they often viewed Paiutes as wild animals threatening their destruction, while simultaneously the miners needed their cheap labor and knowledge of the land. Horrified by Mormon exceptionalism, particularly polygamy and theocracy, miners resented the white sectarians, even as they purchased their produce and pursued their women. Some even admired the stability of Mormon society, willing to welcome them into white society the moment they abandoned polygamy (133). Their capacity, despite their exclusion from Victorian society, to reject other outsiders arises, as Reeve convincingly argues, at least in part from the rejection by Paiutes and Mormons of Gilded Age individualism and materialism (62). For modern readers, the understanding of nineteenth-century Mormons as vehement critics of the crass pursuit of material wealth at any cost, should echo powerfully in the early twenty-first century.

In a case study included as Chapter 7 (“Dead and Dying in the Sagebrush”), Reeve considers the groups’ varied approaches to death, the moment when ashes (whether cremated or interred) mingled with soil, staking long-lasting claims and tying humanity to the earth. Paiutes, forced by poverty to abandon elderly tribespeople to starvation while the young continued to forage and hunt, earned the outrage of both miners and Mormons, even as they provided rituals to valorize those sacrificed lives (136–39, 142–43). A variety of burials by whites and later exhumations by Paiute kin demonstrate the cultural tug-of-war surrounding the end of life. The whites,
for all their vitriol against Paiutes and their generally fastidious attention to burial, did not always achieve their ideals (145).

In the main example Reeve adduces, Mormons discovered that Thomas Fuller, a hired shepherd, died alone while in the employ of Edward Westover, a prominent Church member. As colleagues prepared Fuller’s body for burial, they discovered the body “literally covered with lice,” a serious indictment of Westover’s inattention (145–47). In death Fuller testified against his Mormon employer, much as the corpses of homicide victims had against their murderers in early modern England.

Miners for their part suffered their own lapses, even while they de-famed Paiute customs as barbaric. These often solitary wanderers struggled to create community in the face of death, relying, with variable success, on fraternal organizations like Masons or the Odd Fellowship to replace family (151). In the case study of death, Reeve raises a key insight into miner culture. Miners represented a defamilialized stratum, a desperate rabble of single men existing well outside Victorian America. Despite their lack of Victorian credentials, the miners nonetheless represented the vanguard of civilization deep in the southwestern deserts, a topic Reeve explores in careful detail.

Reeve laudably avoids the temptation to particularize the West unduly. Such an impulse, standing near the center of the Western mythos, has been difficult for historians of the West and Mormonism to avoid. Reeve contextualizes the processes in southwestern Deseret within the roughly contemporaneous Reconstruction of the vanquished South (162–63). In both cases, politicized religious sensibilities provided a rhetorical basis, while other considerations, particularly greed and the quest for power as expressions of the American dream, powered the engine of change. This comparison serves as a potent reminder of the extent to which a rising national government affected the lives of people at great geographical remove.

In an extended treatment, Reeve carefully details the active cartography that pried more and more land from Deseret for Nevada, transferring both physical and symbolic power from Mormons to miners. In doing so, Reeve substantially enriches traditional narratives about the war against polygamy and the assimilation of Mormons into American culture. These wars were fought not only in Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C., but in the wilderness expanses of the Southwest.

In this thoroughly researched and quite readable tale of intersecting ethnic groups in a desolate land yielding rare treasures of ore, a new and important voice in Western history has appeared. I look forward to Reeve’s future projects.

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special interest in death culture and biomedical ethics. He is currently completing a book-length study of death in early Mormonism.


Reviewed by Boyd Jay Petersen

I returned from my mission to France in 1982 filled with enthusiasm and passion for the LDS Church. I must attribute some of that passion to the faith-promoting stories I had heard as a missionary, stories of divine intervention in behalf of the Lord’s servants, divine punishments for wayward missionaries, and divine wrath for unrepentant Gentiles. However, soon after my return, I chanced upon a copy of *Sunstone* containing an article by William A. (“Bert”) Wilson, then a professor of English at Brigham Young University. In that article, I discovered that most of the stories that had been passed around my mission as true were also circulating, with slight variations, in other missions throughout the world. I read stories about illicit trips outside the mission (212), missionaries accidentally killing an investigator’s cat (216–17), elders being struck dead for ordaining an animal to the priesthood (214), and laundry shops burning down after the proprietor put the missionaries’ garments on display (218). The article also included a discussion of missionary pranks and missionary lingo, also with surprising analogs in my mission experience.

Initially, I felt a bit dejected. “You mean these stories weren’t true?” I asked myself. But that dejection was short lived, as I came away with a deepened sense of community, a feeling that my experience in France—my goals, fears, failures, and dreams—united me in some very essential ways with other missionaries serving around the world as well as with missionaries past, present, and future. I came to feel I was part of something much greater. As I lost the sense of the magical, I gained a more richer sense of transcendent connectedness. I also came to understand that faith needed to have stronger roots than a story told by a fellow believer.

I also became a fan of Wilson’s writings, eagerly anticipating each new

essay on Mormon folklore. Next appeared “The Seriousness of Mormon Humor” with an accompanying article by Richard Cracroft on “The Humor of Mormon Seriousness”). There Wilson examined how Mormon jokes function as “clear markers of central issues in [Mormon] society, as a barometer of those concerns engaging the minds of the people at any particular moment” (235). Then in 1987, I was fortunate enough to be in the audience at the Salt Lake Sunstone Theological Symposium when Wilson delivered his Three Nephites paper. He examined the folktales of the miraculous works performed by Christ’s three New World apostles who, like John the Beloved, were allowed to linger on earth without dying until the second coming. He confronted the question of whether the legend was dying out, as folklorists Hector Lee and Austin Fife had argued. Wilson demonstrated that the legend “was alive and growing” (239), only now the Nephites appear “in urban dwellings, at parking lots, and ice cream stands, with the freeway sounding noisily in the background” (247). They also use up-to-date medical methods when aiding the sick and afflicted:

The Nephite visiting ailing Mormons today will still lay hands on people’s heads and bless them, but also frequently relies on the techniques of modern medicine. Today the Nephite pulls a bishop’s son from a lake after a canoeing accident and revives him through artificial respiration; he rescues a church official from a fiery automobile accident and treats his wound “in a very professional manner”; and in one instance he actually enters the hospital, operates on a woman the doctors had been unable to treat, and removes a “black-covered growth” from her stomach. (246)

While I came away from the lecture more suspicious of Three Nephite stories, just as I had become more skeptical of the lore of my missionary days, I also left with a greater understanding of our Mormon culture, our shared desires, fears, dreams, and anxieties, and of our connectedness as a community.

Wilson also inspired me to take a folklore class in graduate school at the University of Maryland, and, like Wilson, I decided to turn my attention to Mormon folklore. For my seminar paper, I compared the folklore told about J. Golden Kimball with that told about Hugh Nibley. I had recently decided that I wanted to write a biography about my father-in-law, Hugh Nibley, and had become confused and delighted by some of the stories people had been telling me. I began collecting the Hugh Nibley tales and, as-

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assuming BYU may have already collected other tales, I wrote to Wilson, asking for his assistance. Wilson was most gracious, photocopying numerous pages of stories from the folklore archives and, later, talking with me in person when I came back to Utah during Christmas break. I was deeply impressed by that conversation. Not only had Wilson taken time out of his schedule to tutor an unschooled amateur folklorist attending another institution, he was unassuming and kind. Most of all, he was excited about Mormon folklore. I discovered that the down-to-earth generosity and effervescent fervor for folklore I found in Wilson’s articles is an essential characteristic of the man himself.

I have long felt that a collection of Wilson’s essays was needed. Too few know and have been influenced by Wilson’s work, largely because of its lack of adequate distribution. In *The Marrow of Human Experience: Essays on Folklore*, editor Jill Terry Rudy brings together much of his work, highlighting three aspects of Wilson’s career: his work defining and building the field of folklore studies, his work on Finnish folklore (Wilson wrote his dissertation on folklore as a force in creating national identity in Finland, the location of Wilson’s LDS mission and the land of his wife’s birth), and his work on Mormon folklore. The section on Mormon folklore takes up about 45 percent of the book, and brings together all of the essays referenced above as well as classic essays like: “The Study of Mormon Folklore: An Uncertain Mirror for Truth,” “‘Teach Me All that I Must Do’: The Practice of Mormon Religion,” and “Personal Narratives: The Family Novel” (a version of which was published in *BYU Studies* as “In Praise of Ourselves: Stories to Tell”\(^4\)).

This collection does omit a few of Wilson’s works. For example, absent is Wilson’s first publication on Mormon folklore, “Mormon Legends of the Three Nephites Collected at Indiana University,” published in *Indiana Folklore* in 1969. The editor instead chose his more recent and more analytical “Freeways.” However, the collection, in my opinion, realizes Jill Terry Rudy’s desire for it to serve as a sort of “greatest hits” (2). It brings together highlights of Wilson’s work in one place, creating an “easily accessible and transportable collection” of Wilson’s work, as Rudy had hoped (1), and constitutes a lasting tribute to a significant scholar. The collection also includes a bibliography of Wilson’s complete oeuvre as well as a fine short biography of Wilson by his daughter, Denise Wilson Jamsa.

Jamsa paints the portrait of a boy from Downey, Idaho, who never really left, becoming its “ardent spokesman” and “devoting his professional

life to recording and preserving the ‘lore’ of close-knit communities like his Downey friends.” Jamsa believes it was “the communal nature of folk art that appealed to [Wilson] the most” and that his “scholarship was driven by a passionate desire to illuminate, validate, and honor the culture that produced him” (284). The celebration of community—of Downey and of Mormonism—within Wilson’s work is, I believe, his greatest legacy.

My only regret about this collection is that it will likely be read primarily by folklorists rather than the folk of Mormondom. It appears to have been designed and packaged with folklorists and students of folklore in mind, the Mormon content a part of the whole rather than the whole, an addendum rather than the focus. It is not aimed at or marketed for a Mormon audience. The Mormon community desperately needs this book and will not likely find it. Wilson believes that collecting and studying folklore “is not just a pleasant pastime useful primarily for whiling away idle moments,” but “centrally and crucially important in our attempts to understand our own behavior and that of our fellow human beings” (203). Such understanding—of ourselves, of our neighbors, and of our connectedness as a community—is, I believe, deeply needed by Mormon folk today.

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Reviewed by Alan L. Morrell

Nineteenth-century critics of Mormonism appreciated the power that tithing gave to leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Salt Lake Tribune reported on February 16, 1875, “We are informed by a Saint that after Brigham had run the expenses of the new Amelia Palace up to $80,000; and exhausted the tithing office and emigration funds, he turned around and sold the costly edifice for $80,000 cash to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Palace is now being completed at the expense of the Church, and after it is ready for occupancy, the old foxy Profit will bring in his bill of services rendered the Church, and bag the whole thing. Great is the Profit of the Lord!”

While the accuracy of their observations are debatable, critics at least recognized the significant role the tithing system played in establishing Mor-
monism in the American West. For such an important program, historians have paid relatively little attention to the subject. One reason might be the inaccessibility of many of the Church’s financial records, particularly those of the General Tithing Office in Salt Lake City. In spite of that, a few scholars have made the best of what is available and produced some interesting articles on pioneer-era tithing. Among the best is Leonard J. Arrington’s “The Mormon Tithing House: A Frontier Business Institution,” *Business History Review*, March 1954, 24–58. He noted that, in addition to its function in collecting revenue for the Church, the local tithing office “served as a communal receiving and disbursing agency, warehouse, weighing station, livestock corral, general store, telegraph office, employment exchange and social security bureau. These functions carried it into banking, the fixing of official prices, and bulk selling” (24).

Ronald S. Hanson, retired president of Zions First National Bank, student of LDS history, and collector of Mormon coins and currency, makes a welcome addition to the scholarship of nineteenth-century tithing. His little book is a nice introduction to the history of early tithing practices of the Church from its debut in 1838 by Joseph Smith to the discontinuation of “in-kind” donations that occurred as late as the 1940s in some rural areas. He lauds early Mormon leaders’ financial innovations in dealing with the difficulties created by a cash-poor economy. Bishops converted in-kind donations to dollar amounts based on prices set in Salt Lake City, making it possible to exchange one’s surplus for needed items in a relatively easy and fair way. It also allowed the tithing offices to serve as banks, as individuals could make deposits one day and withdrawals another.

Because each community’s office served as a branch of a larger whole coordinated by Church headquarters, one man in northern Utah was able to provide for his father in Arizona by making deposits at home while his father made withdrawals of an equal amount hundreds of miles away. While the system seems expensive and cumbersome by today’s standards, it was quite ingenious considering the options then available. As Hanson concluded, “The Mormon struggle to tame the desert and establish a vibrant economy was aided immensely through the elaborate system of tithing offices, a unique financial system unlike anything seen before or since” (67).

The book’s unique contribution is the thirty-six color photographs taken primarily by Hanson of pioneer tithing offices, granaries, and barns throughout Utah. A 1984 application to the National Register of Historic Places completed by Roger Roper and Debbie Randall of the Utah State Historical Society aided Hanson in identifying and locating many of the structures. It should be noted that this book is limited to buildings in Utah and is not a comprehensive list of pioneer-era tithing properties. For instance, the San Luis Stake office in Manassa, Colorado, completed in 1913, could be
grouped with the more “modern” buildings of Panguitch, Fountain Green, and Hyrum, that Hanson identifies. An “all-seeing-eye” and “Holiness to the Lord” inscription above its front door make that building particularly noteworthy. A wider search would likely uncover tithing offices in Idaho and Arizona as well.

The book also contains several color photographs of tithing, co-op, and ZCMI scrip, which served as money, as well as Mormon gold coins and Kirtland Safety Society reissued bank notes, which are part of Hanson’s personal collection. The numerous photographs, ranging from buildings to currency to the bishop’s desk from the St. George tithing office helps the reader visualize how the pioneer tithing system worked. Additional images not used in this book could have gone further in this regard. For example, nineteenth-century, birds’-eye view maps and Sanborn fire insurance maps provide a sense of how the tithing yard “worked” in the community. They show not only its location on the landscape, but also the several outbuildings needed to handle in-kind donations. Floor plans and descriptions of the various rooms’ functions would have also been nice. Regardless, the author has done a great service in compiling so many images between covers. Besides examining pioneer tithing and currency, he also touches on the Mormon Battalion and the discovery of gold in California, Relief Society granaries, and the cooperative movement.

The book is a nice introduction to a fascinating program. However, it is just that, an introduction. At only eighty pages including notes, with much of the space devoted to photographs, it left me with the desire for more. Hopefully it will inspire other historians to delve deeper. Someone familiar with the theoretical questions posed by scholars of material culture could have some fun with these buildings. But such a study would likely not interest many who will enjoy this book. It was written for anyone interested in Mormon history, not just those scholars familiar with existing scholarship. Those unfamiliar with nineteenth-century Mormon economics and the pioneer tithing system will be impressed by the ingenuity and breadth of the Mormon financial system.

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Utah is a Republican state and has been for several decades. Mormons around the nation are also often found in the Republican camp. One of the “behind the scenes” factors in this affiliation is Richard Richards, the tireless organizer of the Republican Party at both the state and national level. Richards’s recent autobiography provides an inside view of both the Utah Republican Party and the national one because he served as a party functionary and chairman of both the state and national party. He became “Mr. Republican.”

This autobiography is a partisan book, but it is refreshingly candid. Richards is a conservative but not an ideologue. Rather he is a tactician. He is an expert on how to organize state and national parties to win elections. Yet he failed to get himself elected to Congress in Utah’s First Congressional District in 1970, partly because he had been residing in Washington, D.C., and the locals didn’t respond positively when he returned, offering his leadership. Second, he was running against Gunn McKay in a county where the McKay name was just too attractive.

Richard Richards was born May 14, 1932, in Ogden, Utah, and Ogden has always been his beloved hometown. He came from the working class; his father was a sign painter and wanted Richards to be his successor. Though he attended Weber College before and after serving in the U.S. Army (1952–55) and then graduated from the University of Utah Law School in 1961, he remained focused on working people, families, and neighborhoods. His major contribution to the Republican Party at both the state and national levels was his neighborhood plan. He was convinced from his leadership in the Utah Republican Party that the way to win elections was to organize volunteers in neighborhoods. They were to visit homes, make phone calls, enlist small donations and get out the vote. That strategy was more essential than TV ads, in his mind.

As a fundraiser on both levels, local and national, he organized the party to attract small donations from millions of people, not just focus on those who could donate a million dollars. His plan worked. He used it as a consultant in Ronald Reagan’s presidential campaign and in the George Bush for President National Committee. He had learned the value of the little people through his many years as a volunteer and local leader.

Richards was the Utah chair of the First Voter Committee and then chair of the Utah Young Republicans for Richard Nixon. He was field representative for Senator Wallace F. Bennett and then assistant to Congressman Laurence J. Burton. In 1965 he became chairman of the Utah Republican Party. He chaired Utah’s delegation to the National Republican Convention two times. The list goes on and on. He worked to get Ronald Reagan elected
and became chairman of the National Republican Party as a result. Though he was often employed by the party, he started as a volunteer (at age seventeen) and continued to donate his time all his life. He felt that voluntary service was the secret of the American political system. “Action, rather than scholarship, is my forte” (37), he characterizes himself.

Richards practiced law intermittently but his focus was party service: “Notwithstanding my love of politics, I still had to make a living, which is the case for anyone who follows the same course. Politics is not a continuous source of income; therefore I had to have a job” (43). His life was a continuous round of movement—from Utah to Washington and back and from politics to law practice several times.

The book allows readers to see many well-known people at work such as George Romney, Jon Huntsman Sr., Karl Rove, Doug Bischoff, Alex Hurtado, Ray Bliss, Ellis Ivory, Dixie Leavitt, Frank Gunnell, Dee Smith, Roy Simmons, Dave Turner, Jack Carlson, Orrin Hatch, Jake Garn, Cleon Skousen, Richard Wirthlin, Ernest Wilkinson, Tom Korologos, Steve Studdert, James Watt, and T. H. Bell.

There are exciting moments in the book such as Richards’s narrow escape in the Watergate scandal. He served as Western Director of the Richard Nixon campaign. Following Nixon’s victory for a second term, Richards was offered a job in Washington at the deputy assistant level. He turned it down and returned to his Ogden law practice and was thus not in Washington, D.C., either during the election or immediately thereafter. He said, “I am forever grateful that I had the good sense to leave Washington when I did and that I refused to play their dirty tricks game in the campaign itself” (136).

The highlight of Richards’s career was serving Ronald Reagan. He was devoted to the president: “I felt a special affinity for Ronald Reagan’s personal values. It meant a lot to me that he was a decent, caring, compassionate man who took pains to be fair and kind to his associates. He told me himself that he tithed to his own church. His concern about strengthening and protecting the family was exactly in line with my own views” (206).

That didn’t mean all was harmony. Richards had endless difficulties with the Moral Majority, the New Right, and the John Birch Society. He wanted the Republican Party to enlist the independent voters and the working class. He knew they were essential in winning election victories because the Republicans were the minority party. He saw the New Right as alienating the independents, driving them to become Democrats. Though Dick Richards was devoted Republican, he was not attracted to dogma. Instead he saw the party’s role as (1) nominating good candidates, (2) conducting campaigns, (3) raising money, and (4) getting out the vote (220). He was a tactician all his life, and that is what he did as chair of the National Republican Party.
Though he did not emphasize it in the book, it is clear that he has always been an active Latter-day Saint. He held to those values in the military and all through his career. He deftly learned how to avoid liquor at the endless round of cocktail parties. He held modest Church callings and then in retirement he and his wife, Annette, served an LDS mission in Rochester, New York. She is the heroine of the book, enduring seventeen moves between Utah and Washington, D.C., and within the capital area. By Dick’s admission, she was the major influence on the lives of their five children.

The book is stimulating. It is anecdotal rather than analytical. Weber State University was well-advised in encouraging Richards to complete the book and submit it to professional editors. People in Utah will enjoy the inside story and those nationally will welcome a wider view. Democrats will find that the book reveals a story they may not get otherwise. They will be frustrated with the loyal Republicanism. For example, they will likely disagree with Richards’s appraisal of James Watt as an effective U.S. Secretary of the Interior. They will also be intrigued by Richards’s accounts of financial disclosures during his lobbying years. It is a book for all sides.

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Christian Euvrard and I were both Mormon missionaries during the spring and summer of 1976 in Bordeaux, France. A native-born convert (baptized at twelve), newly called from his tiny branch in the Paris suburbs, Euvrard by his example, temperament, and charisma set the standard that we U.S.-born missionaries struggled to emulate. Following his two years in the France-Toulouse Mission, Euvrard went to work for the
LDS Church Education System in France; at thirty, he was appointed president of the Church’s Italy-Milan Mission (1983–86). He then filled a three-year calling as a Regional Representative of the Quorum of the Twelve to Italy. He has been a ward bishop and a member of a stake presidency. Married with two children (adopted), he currently directs the LDS Institute of Religion in Paris (since 1992), and chairs the Paris chapter of the Brigham Young University Alumni Association (though not a BYU alumnus himself). He holds a master’s degree in philosophy (Paris XII) and in religious studies (Catholic Institute of Paris), and is finishing work on a doctoral degree from the Sorbonne.

Concerned that my admiration might prejudice my reading of Euvrard’s biography of France’s most famous Mormon convert, I was relieved to discover that his study represents, in fact, an important new contribution to LDS Church history. The publication of Euvrard’s scholarly treatment signals a turning point in non-English language studies of the LDS Church generally as well as more specifically of the history of the LDS Church in French Europe. Its only drawback is that its appearance in French limits its impact among non-French-speaking readers (including members of the Mormon History Association). If ever an LDS-oriented publisher were to commission a translation of a work of Mormon history into English, it would have to look no farther than to Euvrard’s biography. By this same token, MHA should consider adding to its list of book prizes an award for the best non-English-language publication. (Euvrard’s biography also makes for an invigorating refresher course for French-speaking returned missionaries.)

Euvrard begins with a two-part introduction. The first briefly discusses the beginnings of the LDS Church in America, including the Saints’ exodus to the Rocky Mountains. Euvrard’s writing is smooth and inviting; his treatment exhibits an orthodox sensibility and a narrative reflective of recent scholarship. (Though he misdates the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood to 1830 instead of 1829 [23–24], and the acceptance by the Church of the Articles of Faith as official scripture to 1880 instead of 1880 [33], both are minor misstatements that in no way diminish the utility of Euvrard’s overview.)

The second part (35–43) summarizes the history of France’s multifarious legal codes regarding the kind of religious freedom the Church’s first wave of missionaries and converts, including Louis Bertrand, encountered during the Second Empire (1851–70). Briefly, the French government recognized the right of individual citizens to believe as they wished, but at the same time monitored and circumscribed the right of individuals to practice those beliefs publicly, differentiating between legally “recognized” religions (Catholic, some Protestant) and “non-recognized” religions, especially
those which could conceivably disrupt or antagonize civilized French society. It comes as little surprise that Mormonism, and its adherents, fell into this second category.

Louis Auguste (also Adolphe) Bertrand was born Jean-François Élie Flandin on January 11, 1808, in Roquevaire, Bouches-du-Rhône (not far from Marseille), to Joseph Flandin and Marie Trémellat Flandin. (Bertrand later adopted a pseudonym, according to Euvrard, to “protect his family from the consequences of his political activism” [45].) Marie was four months pregnant with first-born Bertrand at the time of her marriage to Joseph. Following a somewhat privileged (given his Catholic education), if also unremarkable, youth, Bertrand soon felt a “love for faraway travel” and left home at age sixteen, spending the next four years visiting countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. (The severity of his Catholic education may have helped to stimulate his desire to leave home.) His love of adventure came at a price, however. At his father’s death in 1855, writes Euvrard, “a taste for travel and adventure had already separated our hero from Roquevaire’s valley and undoubtedly dismayed his parents, judging from the fact that he was left nothing of his father’s estate” (53; quotations in English are my translations).

Following his tour of the Mediterranean and environs, Bertrand traveled to America, where he stayed seven years (including a year in Brazil), importing silk worms and becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen. Euvrard suggests that Bertrand’s experience in the United States mirrored somewhat the experience of his contemporary Alexis de Tocqueville, author of Democracy in America, who concluded that in America, unlike in Europe, religion and freedom existed more or less in harmony (58–64). Bertrand returned briefly to France in 1838 but spent the next four years navigating the Indian Ocean, including stays in China, the Philippines, and several other islands. In Manilla, his dreams of achieving the financial success he had hoped for were destroyed when he was robbed of almost everything he owned. However, the devastating experience, he wrote, “opened my eyes, and brought me to a realization of the madness and futility of worldly schemes [spéculations humaines]” (66). By 1846, he was again in Paris, but would remain forever after, according to Euvrard, “an unrepentant traveler” (67).

By the time of his return to Paris, Bertrand was already intensely interested in some of the most pressing political, social, and religious controversies of his day. Euvrard devotes four-plus helpful chapters (69–114) to contextualizing this heady period of French history, and of Bertrand’s life, focusing on the intellectual contributions of, among others, Félicité de Lamennais, Philippe Buchez, Étienne Cabet, and Joseph Marie Hoëné-Wronski, liberal free-thinking Catholics, practicing or not, who hoped to unite their Christian faith with an approach to secular society that recog-
nized the worth of all individuals, notably the poor and working classes. Following his experiences with each these *philosophes engagés*, especially with Cabet, Bertrand, ever the seeker, found himself wanting more. Euvrard explains: “All these ways of thinking, all these travels, all these political and philosophical undertakings left Bertrand with a bitter taste. He felt unsatisfied while considering man’s fickleness, the fragility of all ways of thinking, the transience of all undertakings” (102). Bertrand was clearly ready for his next—and final—conversion. During this same period, Bertrand also married and fathered at least two children, though the details here are sketchy (111–15).

In treating Bertrand’s conversion to Mormonism, Euvrard introduces the Church’s first full-time missionaries to France—John Taylor and Curtis Bolton—as well as the beginnings of the Church’s fragile foothold in Paris (119–50). It was Taylor and Bolton who, in September 1850, presented the latter-day gospel to Bertrand. At the time, Bertrand was writing articles for, and helping to edit, Cabet’s Icarian-oriented *Le Populaire* periodical, and Bertrand was particularly drawn to the Church’s communitarian teachings. He described his conversion as “sudden” and “instantaneous.” “My blind eyes were opened,” he wrote. “I can truly say that the things of the past disappeared and everything became new. Soon I came to love the things that I had despised and to despise the things that I had once loved” (153). Not quite three months later, on December 1, Bertrand and a few other converts were baptized in the Seine next to the Île de Saint-Ouen. The following Sunday, he was ordained a priest as the missionaries also formally organized Paris’s first LDS branch. Late the next year, having been hired to finalize Bolton’s translation of the Book of Mormon, after losing his job at *Le Populaire*, Bertrand was ordained a high priest. “He would never have been a great help to the church,” Bolton wrote in his diary, “even after twenty years, if he hadn’t extricated himself from the political influences that surrounded him” (172; translated from Euvrard’s translation).

In the wake of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte’s rise to power, beginning in late 1850, the situation regarding religious freedom changed significantly; and on July 14, 1851, Taylor and Bolton were officially forbidden to preach anywhere in France. As Euvrard explains: the Church’s first missionaries “thought they had arrived in a land of freedom,” whereas the empire, ruled by a government both increasingly “sensitive and suspicious, to say the least,” would in fact “evolve into a police state where freedom would be reduced more than before. . . . During this period, the government’s hostility remains, together with the missionaries’ own language difficulties, one of the principal reasons for their limited success” (181). Under threat of arrest, Taylor slipped quietly out of France in December 1851. Bolton, until he departed as well in January 1853, was left as president of the French Mission,
with Bertrand as one of his counselors. “One should not be surprised,” Euvrard writes, “that the missionaries’ rhetoric distressed the powerful. The approach they adopted was globalistic, one that touched upon all aspects of a convert’s life, including the political dimension. They promised not only doctrinal truth or moral principles; they proposed a new society, which necessarily implied the end of the existing one” (190–91).

Following Bolton’s departure for Utah in early 1853, Bertrand was called by the new president of the French Mission, Andrew Lamoreaux, to work full time in the mission’s new headquarters on the Island of Jersey, relocated because political conditions on mainland France had become too difficult. Bertrand left his job, his wife and children, and his country, and for the next two years translated into French Parley P. Pratt’s Voice of Warning [Voix d’Avertissement], the Doctrine and Covenants, Orson Pratt’s articles on celestial marriage first published in The Seer, and compiled a French hymnbook. Only La Voix d’Avertissement was ever published. Finally, on April 17, 1855, Bertrand joined 432 other Mormon converts, including seventy-six French-speaking Saints, and sailed from Liverpool, England, on board the Chimbarazo for the United States. Six months later, on October 29, 1855, Bertrand arrived in Salt Lake City. “Since the time of his affiliation with the Icarian movement,” writes Euvrard, “Bertrand had longed for a new society. He had now arrived at the end of his journey. He had attained his goal, but now confronted a new departure. How would he integrate himself in this new society?” (237). (In treating the pioneers’ trek west, Euvrard inadvertently attributes the authorship of the hymn “Come, Come Ye Saints” to W. W. Phelps, instead of to William Clayton [232].)

For the next four years, Bertrand turned to horticulture, winning several prizes for his vegetables, such as cabbage and cauliflower. Still, finances were tight, and Bertrand twice had to ask Brigham Young for firewood in 1858. Predictably, Bertrand remained interested in current events and politics, and often wrote letters extolling Mormon life and culture to French-language European periodicals. He looked upon Brigham Young as a man whom he loved “100 times more than my father” (243) and stayed in touch with John Taylor. (Euvrard located in LDS Church Archives twenty-five letters from Bertrand to Young, and six letters from Young to Bertrand.)

In 1859, Bertrand received his endowments, which required that he reveal his birth name, and afterward was called to return to France to preside over the Church’s French Mission. Bertrand himself had raised the possibility of the mission call; Young embraced the idea. After nearly three months en route, Bertrand reached Paris on December 10, 1859. He immediately, and evidently easily, rejoined his wife and two sons, with whom he resided throughout his presidency. He soon purged the small Paris branch of false doctrine and apostates, one of whom insisted that Church leaders should be
elected, not appointed. He also visited Switzerland and briefly toured Marseille and nearby Roquevaire, including the home he had left twenty-nine years earlier. His parents had passed away during the previous five years.

The situation in France regarding “non-recognized” religions had not changed since the days of Taylor and Bolton. After several attempts to secure official permission to preach, Bertrand was notified that not only was he forbidden to preach publicly, he would not be permitted to convene any Church worship services. Bertrand then began lecturing to groups of Freemasons, who initially received him warmly. (Bertrand reported that earlier in his life he had been initiated into Freemasonry.) Soon, however, the French government closed all of Paris’s Masonic lodges. “We live in despotism,” Bertrand wrote, “pure military despotism” (268). “If oral expression were forbidden to him,” Euvrard continues, “he would turn to writing, a domain where he excelled” (272). The result was a defense of Mormonism and an autobiography, serialized first in *La Revue Contemporaine* in 1861 and published the next year in book form as *Mémoires d’un Mormon*. Euvrard summarizes:

> Of course, his work aims at proselytizing, and in this sense is somewhat apologetic, but his defense of Mormonism does not avoid any difficulty, including plural marriage, the relationship between church and state, and the Mormons’ economic system. He definitely wants to convince, but he is confident that the truth of Mormonism will persuade even the most reluctant. He is at once both naive and refreshing. Nor does he hesitate to invoke the principles of his new faith to prove the justice of its teachings, be they spiritual, economic, political, or simply human. He is sincere, enthusiastic, and certain. (274)

Despite some initial curiosity about Bertrand and his book, the general reception was mostly indifferent, at best. After three years, the number of French converts was considerably fewer than that in England, Germany, and even Switzerland. Bertrand had faced considerable obstacles, including governmental interdictions and his sometimes confrontational, politically inept personality. But it was the French themselves, Bertrand decided, who posed the biggest hurdle: “This experience of three years has taught me that we can expect nothing of the French infidels: They are all spiritually dead” (285). Euvrard wonders if such sentiments also reflected Bertrand’s inability to convert his French wife and two sons (286). In July 1863, Bertrand asked to be released of his mission and allowed to return to Zion. In June 1864, he left France with a group of European immigrants and reached Salt Lake City on October 26. His four years in France had left him, according to Euvrard, “frustrated, disappointed, and feeling like a failure” (288).

Bertrand returned to Utah no doubt expecting better. For the remainder of the decade and into the 1870s, he lived much of the time in Tooele, where he focused on grape cultivation and silk-worm farming. He headed
Brigham Young’s own silk-worm farm until a lack of success resulted in Young’s complaint that Bertrand was incompetent. Bertrand disagreed, but the dispute was painful. He hoped to regain Young’s confidence and tried his hand privately at silk production to prove his expertise. He then turned to importing olive oil, but success remained elusive.

During this period, he also maintained an up-beat correspondence regarding the Mormons with French-language newspapers in Europe. In early 1875, Bertrand received news from France that evidently precipitated a devastating mental breakdown. Reportedly, the news concerned the illness, or possibly death, of his wife. (Bertrand had never remarried despite what seems to have been a permanent separation.) He subsequently turned violent and was committed to the mental hospital. His health deteriorated rapidly, and he died on March 21, 1875, at age sixty-seven. Euvrard ends with an insightful chapter evaluating Bertrand’s thought, concluding: Bertrand “had his weaknesses, his vanities, his illusions, but we can never question the sincerity of his convictions, the purity of his intentions. He pursued his adventure to its end, to his hope’s final destination. We can only envy him” (326).

Euvrard’s sensitive, nuanced study is both informative and a pleasure to read. One eagerly looks forward to his next project: a comprehensive narrative social history of the LDS Church in French-speaking Europe, 1849–2007.

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Reviewed by Ken Driggs

Brian C. Hales, an anesthesiologist practicing in Layton, Utah, obviously researched and gathered material for years. This is the most comprehensive book published to date on Mormon fundamentalism and is exhaustively footnoted. It was the 2006 Best Book Award winner of the John Whitmer Historical Society.

The book undertakes a broad historical overview with a more or less chronological organization. Hales begins with plural marriage doctrine and practice in the LDS Church up to the 1890 Manifesto, then the two generations of official ambiguity until the administration of Church President Heber J. Grant beginning with the 1918 death of Joseph F. Smith. Hales
As an apostle, Grant had married three plural wives and, since he had no surviving sons, had hoped to marry another plural wife as late as 1901. Church President Lorenzo Snow had assured him in a full quorum meeting that he would “have sons and daughters” if he would be patient. He did not take other plural wives and the “sons” part of the promise remained unfulfilled during his mortal life. By the time Grant became president at age sixty-two, all of his wives except the third, Augusta, were dead so that he became, for all practical purposes, the Church’s first monogamist president. (109)

A hundred pages into his book, Hales begins discussing how those old-fashioned Mormons, who were slowly being expelled from the LDS Church, began to meet in homes and workplaces, organizing themselves as a parallel religious community in the 1920s. In particular he discusses Nathaniel Baldwin (1878-1961) and the Baldwin radio factory he built in East Mill Creek which employed many fundamentalists (134–40).

In 1929 Lorin C. Woolley (1856–1934), a Baldwin associate, began to organize a body of priesthood holders empowered to perform plural marriages without regard to the official position of the LDS Church, as well as to perpetuate other practices. Woolley claimed to be doing so under the authority of the late Church President John Taylor who called several men to this role after a September 1886 revelation at the Woolley home in Centerville, Utah. Most, but not all, fundamentalist Mormons trace their priesthood authority to this event.

Woolley was the son of excommunicated stake patriarch and Salt Lake Temple worker John W. Woolley (1831–1928) and claimed to be acting at his father’s direction. Lorin Woolley was the leader of this new body. With Lorin Woolley’s death in 1934, he was briefly succeeded by J. Leslie Broadbent (1891–1935); then after Broadbent’s unexpected death at age forty-three, John Y. Barlow (1874–1949) became the leader of the community. The Woolley body formed an alliance with traditional Mormons in the village of Short Creek, on the Utah-Arizona border, which today exists as Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Arizona.

Hales has a chapter titled “Expansion of Fundamentalism under John Y. Barlow’s Leadership” (240–90). One aspect was the 1935 the Priesthood Council authorization of a monthly magazine, TRUTH, which was edited by another original Woolley council member, Joseph White Musser (1872–1954) (244–47). TRUTH was published for twenty-one years, until 1956. Hales writes that it was created to promote the Priesthood Council’s views:

In the mid-1930s, John Y. Barlow, as Senior Council Member, sought to more openly promote his fundamentalist beliefs: “We have got to do something to get these principles of the Gospel before the people. We are
not here to set the Church in order. The Church has the missionary program under their thumb, so they have got to come some other way. So we are about to bring out a magazine called *TRUTH.* Because Musser had already proven his writing and editing abilities with other pro-polygamy publications, Barlow encouraged him to produce the monthly “magazine.” (242)

Hales recognizes Musser (179–94) as one of the most important thinkers and writers of Mormon fundamentalism: “In many ways, the history of the Mormon fundamentalist movement between 1927 and 1952 parallels Joseph Musser’s own history. When significant events occurred, he was often positioned near the center of action. Most polygamists considered him a presiding priesthood leader. His personal journal and other voluminous writings became a sourcebook of doctrinal developments and expositions. His contributions make him arguably the ‘Father of the Fundamentalist Movement’” (177). He offers considerable discussion of Musser’s own youth as a child of a second wife and his family life, including his struggles to make his own plural marriages work. With Barlow’s death in 1949, Musser would have assumed leadership of the group, but he simply was not recognized by other priesthood council members. The more conservative fundamentalists in Short Creek likewise rejected him and eventually recognized Leroy John-son (1888–1986) as their leader (291–310). By the early 1950s there was a complete rupture in the fundamentalist community that resulted in Musser calling a wholly new council in 1952. The Musser loyalists evolved into the Apostolic United Brethren (AUB) led by Musser’s successor Rulon Allred (1909–77) (355–64), Owen Allred (1914–2005) (364–69), and presently LeMoyne Jenson (369–70).

Hales discusses that rupture and the two branches that would become the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, now headed by the imprisoned Warren Jeffs (337–47), and the AUB. His AUB discussion includes the following for the period of Owen Allred’s administration:

Mormon fundamentalists, though seldom proselytizing among non-Latter-day Saints frequently teach LDS Church members, rebaptizing them into the AUB organization. Statistics show that, during the decade after the 1978 pronouncement (regarding African Americans and the priesthood), convert baptisms into the AUB doubled and the number of plural marriages performed more than tripled. Because African American Church members now had access to LDS temples, the Allreds concluded that all LDS temples were desecrated. Shortly thereafter, Owen Allred wrote and issued a revelation authorizing him and his followers to perform endowments. By 1981, an endowment house had been constructed at the Bluffdale complex. In March 1983, a temple was also completed in Ozumba, Mexico. According to rumors, the AUB bought copies of some LDS temple ordinances from LDS apostates and LeBaron fundamentalists. (362–63)
Hales also has chapters on the Kingston family (375–408) which split off from the priesthood council in the 1940s, the murderous LeBaron family (409–35), the major independents such as the prolific writer Ogden Kraut (1927–2002) (440–42), the imprisoned Tom Green (439–40), and others (437–55).

Hales’s exhaustive research is reflected in a great many photographs of the principal players of Mormon fundamentalism. He has drawn from the expected archival and journalistic sources but has also found his way into what appear of family collections. Many photographs were familiar to me, but a great many group and family shots were not. He also provides several flow charts explaining religious organization and the genealogy of religious authority, much like those accompanying recent Salt Lake Tribune coverage of fundamentalist Mormonism.

The book is exhaustive and detailed, probably the most comprehensive volume on the subject to date. It is primarily history and less of a discussion of the motivation and whys. It will overwhelm a casual reader who does not come to it with some basic knowledge of Mormon fundamentalism. Hales is a believing member of the LDS Church and generally adopts the official position of the Church toward this community. The book does not make much comment on First Amendment freedom of religion law as it might apply, or what the existence of this religious community tells us about the big church, nor does it attempt to place Mormon fundamentalists in the broader landscape of religious fundamentalism. It is my own belief that the desire to restore LDS United Order living in the mid-1930s was at least partly driven by the severe effects of the Depression in the Mormon culture area. Hales does not try to make those connections. It also presents an overwhelmingly male perspective and does not attempt to explain the faith of women, without whom there would be no Mormon fundamentalism.

Nonetheless, Modern Polygamy and Mormon fundamentalism is a book that should be in the library of any serious student of Mormon fundamentalism.

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Marcie Gallacher and Kerri Robinson. A Banner Is Unfurled. 2 vols. Amer-
In recent decades, LDS historical fiction has become quite popular, especially Gerald Lund’s THE WORK AND THE GLORY series of novels. In that series, members of the fictional Steed family interact with historical figures, such as Joseph Smith Jr. and Brigham Young to help readers experience Church history by vicariously participating in key events of the restoration and the exodus. In his first volume, Lund includes “Characters of Note in the Novel,” clearly differentiating the fictional characters from the actual people in Church history. And yet at a recent family reunion in Elba, Idaho, I talked to Richard Goodfellow who, with his wife Kathryn, had recently returned from a Church service mission to Nauvoo, Illinois. While there he cared for the horses and served as a tour guide, taking visitors on wagon rides through the streets of the restored village. I laughed when he told me that one rider, an avid Lund reader, had asked him, “Where is the Steeds’ home?”

In Marcie Gallacher and Kerri Robinson’s first two volumes of A BANNER IS UNFURLED (also the title of the first volume), a similar question would not evoke laughter because the main characters, the Ezekiel and Julia Hills Johnson family, are genuine historical personages who, like many restless seekers and homesteaders of their age, built homes primarily in a westerly exodus.

The original family home was located in Pomfret Township, Chautauqua County, New York. But in May 1833, the family moved to Kirtland, Ohio, where Joel, one of Ezekiel and Julia’s older sons, had already purchased a home. The original house still stands and is owned by the Church (1:389).

In Volume 1, the authors begin with a Prologue to give readers the psychological underpinnings for the main action of the story. In March 1787, we begin: “Fourteen-year-old Ezekiel [Zeke] Johnson threw the last forkful of hay to the livestock on his stepfather’s farm a number of miles outside Ashford, Connecticut” (1:2). Zeke’s stepfather Jonathan King is quick to misjudge and abuse his young ward: “Your heart is black, boy! Your bonny looks will not spare you a beating” (1:4). Zeke runs away from home, seeking knowledge about his biological father. In September 1798, fifteen-year-old Julia Hills, spiritually focused despite her youth, is making soap in Grafton,
Massachusetts. Her father is dead, and her mother Esther (a woman who once knew Zeke’s mother Sethiah) has been married for five years to Enoch Forbrush, a good, kind man. Zeke enters the scene. He asks Esther about Sethiah. As Esther tells the story, Sethiah once fell in love with Ezekiel Johnson, a reckless patriot during the American Revolution. He seduced Sethiah, then left for Boston, unaware that she was pregnant. When he learned that Sethiah had given birth to his illegitimate son, he visited her, begged her forgiveness, but confessed that he had recently become engaged and that his fiancée was already pregnant. He left, never to return, telling Sethiah he would fight and die “for American Independence, praying his blood atoned for his sins” (1:23). Sethiah named her son Ezekiel Johnson for his biological father.

Chapter 1 begins in December 1828, thirty years later when Zeke (age fifty-five) and Julia (age forty-five) are anticipating the birth of their sixteenth child. Zeke has become a heavy drinker, dissatisfied and restless, hoping to find what he’s searching for in the next place they live. But Julia resists this constant moving, insisting they stay in Pomfret where she can raise their children. And then they hear about “Mormonites.” Gradually some members of the family meet and have close relationships with a wide range of infamous and famous Church members, primarily during the Kirtland period in the early 1830s: Philastus Hurlbut (who professes religiosity but, chameleon-like, also attempts to seduce Zeke’s and Julia’s daughters Almera and Susan Johnson), Parley P. Pratt (who softens David Johnson’s heart when he escapes from Officer Peabody’s bulldog), Almon Babbitt (who openly loves Julianne Johnson but is secretly loved by her sister Susan), Don Carlos Smith (who meets and becomes David Johnson’s close friend), Sylvester Smith (who baptizes a young couple, Joel and Annie Johnson), Joseph Smith (who interacts fully, in a variety of formal and informal encounters, with the Johnsons), and Jared Carter (who uses his priesthood powerfully to heal, often in miraculous ways).

A key episode is a miraculous healing by Jared Carter. In August 1830, twenty-seven-year-old Nancy Johnson was thrown from her horse, breaking her thigh bone near the hip socket. Doctors could do little for her and told her she’d be an invalid for life. A little more than a year later, the Johnson family began studying the Book of Mormon. Weeks later, other members of the extended family joined the discussions: “Nancy lay on the parlor cot, her gray eyes alert and ready to learn” (1:193). By January 1832, Nancy was ready for baptism, but feverish. Her brother David brought the elders to administer to her. When Elder Joseph Brackenbury asked, “Sister Nancy, do you have the faith to be healed?” (1:243), Nancy responded that she did. The blessing healed the fever but not the lameness. Apologizing to David, Elder Brackenbury says, “I could not command Nancy to rise from her bed. I don’t
know if it was my own lack of faith or the Spirit constraining me” (1:244). Nevertheless, Nancy was baptized in Lake Cassadaga, not far from Pomfret.

A short time later, Joel Johnson moved to Kirtland, Ohio, and bought a home for his extended family. On July 26, 1834, Zion’s Camp returned to Kirtland. Julia Johnson and her children have grown spiritually in the intervening years, and they have remained true to the faith, despite death, disease, persecution, and the still-heavy-drinking and unbelieving Zeke. Lyman Sherman, a son-in-law, reported that Seth, Julia’s oldest son, had almost succumbed to cholera but was being nursed by Almon Babbitt, now Julianne’s fiancé, and that they were both expected to return before fall. Nancy was still unable to walk after four years. The authors write:

Julia felt tears prick her eyes. Her son was alive, but he suffered so far away. She asked her children to pray with her. The family knelt together. Julia wept as she thanked God for preserving her son’s life and for Almon’s goodness in taking care of him. She thanked her Father in Heaven for the glorious restoration of the gospel and for preserving the Prophet’s life. She prayed for the families of those who had died of cholera and beseeched the Lord to return Seth and Almon to their family circle. Then she prayed for each of her children, and for peace and faith to abide in her heart and home.

During the prayer, Jared Carter and Don Carlos Smith came to the door. They stood silently outside with folded arms as they listened. After hearing “Amen,” Jared quietly opened the door. He saw that good family together on their knees combining their faith. Only one sat in a chair, bowing her head near the rest because she could not kneel. He remembered speaking to David Johnson so long ago, on that bright day when he was rebaptized. Now, Brother David was dead, and Sister Nancy remained crippled.

“Come with me, Brother Carlos,” Jared whispered. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Jared Carter and Don Carlos Smith walked to Nancy and laid their hands on her head. Julia Johnson and her children looked up from their prayer.

Jared Carter spoke. “Sister Nancy Johnson, by the power of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ I command you to lay aside your crutches and arise and walk.”

Trembling, Nancy handed her crutches to Benjamin, who kneeled near her chair. She stood on her feet, her legs shaking. Slowly, she put one foot in front of the other. “There is no pain,” she sobbed as she stepped forward more confidently. “Oh, Mother! Mother! There is no pain!” (2:319–20)

I like these first two volumes of what I hope will be a much longer series. They are well-written, emotionally engaging, and compelling in their presentation of a faithful, but little-known and little-appreciated, family in Church history. Based upon extensive research into the Johnson family files
(letters, diaries, journals), the authors transform documents into full-bodied lives by using a shifting point of view, so we see into the minds of many characters. We come to know these people: the apostates, those who are not always steady in their commitment, and the faithful. For those who like to read historical documents, I refer you to the well-written Notes and Selected Bibliography at the end of each volume. But for those of you who yearn to see Church history lived, read these two volumes, an ensign for future writers of LDS historical fiction.

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Reviewed by Robert A. Rees

“Stand and unfold yourself,” the sentinel Francisco says to the ghost of Hamlet’s father (Act 1, scene 1). Shakespeare’s play is about the unfolding or progressive revelation of Hamlet’s character, of his complex inner and outer selves. The same could be said of Wayne Booth’s autobiography, My Many Selves.

From his early childhood and adolescence in Utah, to his student days at Brigham Young University, a mission in the Midwest, graduate school at the University of Chicago, army service during World War II, and various academic positions, as well as a long and distinguished career as a scholar and teacher, Booth uses various rhetorical devices to unfold his life, a life rooted in Mormon religion and culture. In many ways, one could argue that the rhetorician Booth uses his life history as a text demonstrating the power of rhetoric. Since one of the original purposes of rhetoric is persuasion, Booth’s continuous unfolding of selves is designed to persuade readers that, among the many complex parts of his personality and the many contradictions and ambiguities of his life, there is ultimate harmony—or at least a plausible chance of finding such harmony.

Booth creates a fascinating rhetorical device by telling his life through his many “selves.” They are identified throughout the narrative both by proper names (e.g., Hypocrite-Booth, Vain-Self, Thinker-Booth, Ambition-Booth, Lover-Booth, Luster-Booth, etc., identities he sometimes abbre-
viates as MoralB, AmbitionB, etc.) and by various masked selves (e.g., Cheerful Poser, wine-drinking chatterer, would-be tough guy, Lifetime Subversive, skillful Masker, half-assed Troskyite, etc.). His chapter headings are arranged as a set of dialogues between or among these various selves. Thus, we have, for example, “The Hypocritical Mormon Missionary Becomes a Skillful Masker,” “The Puritan Preaches While the Hypocrite Covers the Show,” and “The Quarrel between the Cheater and the Moralist Produces Gullible-Booth.” As Booth summarizes, his book is “a sequence of quarrels among my conflicting Selves” (ix).

Readers of the Journal of Mormon History, who are accustomed to straightforward life histories that begin with the subject’s birth and move progressively through the events of his or her life, may find themselves bemused by this frankly experimental approach. I would urge them to stick with it and even engage in the dialogue (which is what I imagine Booth intends). I do so because, first, Booth is a Latter-day Saint who achieved national prominence in his field (he was perhaps the foremost rhetorician of his day and a distinguished teacher of literature and rhetoric at the University of Chicago); second, because his life story is illustrative of those (including Mormons) who strive to negotiate the difficult terrain between their intellectual and spiritual lives; and, third, because in spite of his life on the periphery of Mormonism, it is evident throughout his autobiography “how deeply it gets into [his] heart and soul” (11). A fourth reason is that this is a unique and highly imaginative way of showing a complex life.

At times Booth’s “Self-Splits” and “Soul-Splits” make it seem as if he is a man with multiple personalities which, like the character in the film The Three Faces of Eve, are constantly in conflict with one another. At other times, they seem like a typical family where the members are variously accusing, arguing with, or making peace with one another. For example, toward the end of the book, after quoting from a passionate letter he wrote fifty years earlier to his future wife, Phyllis, about the beautiful snow in Paris, and contrasting it with his sentiments as an old man shoveling snow in Chicago—“This is awful; I hate winter”—Booth writes, “In episodes like that one, diverse young Booths and the reluctant old man live together daily, sometimes quarreling” (274).

A family tragedy ended the quarreling among the selves, at least temporarily. The accidental death of their only son, seventeen-year old John Richard, shattered the Booths’ lives. Booth comments, “Only later did it occur to ThinkerB that the tragedy curiously unified my life for once, wiping out the conflicts among Selves. By destroying all ambition, all vanity, all hypocrisy, all thought about anything but the loss, it had produced a total focus—by no means deserving the term harmony but a weird kind of total centering. Grief took over everything” (50–51). Not long afterward, however,
his Selves return, including the one who still wonders at the connection between his son’s death and a previous suggestion by his Mormon bishop that Booth’s inactivity in the Church might result in God taking “his family away . . . as punishment” (27)! A more reflective self counters, “We were angered by hints from devout Mormons that at worst God was punishing us or at best he had need of Richard on the ‘other side.’” He concludes, “I am strongly convinced that the belief in a literally meddling God is about the most spiritually destructive of all ‘religious’ beliefs.” His more caring “self” quickly adds, “At the same time, I still cringe at the pain or anger I may be producing right now with that statement for any devout Mormon reading here” (53–54).

Toward the end of his autobiography, Booth achieves a sort of détente and then an ultimate harmony among his multiple “selves.” “All of the disputes boil down to a simple conflict of three irrefutable, ultimate, universal values, oversimplified with the labels Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.” Nevertheless, he concludes, “My diverse soul-splits will die off, while Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and my small share of them—the best of me—go on living not just in other actual living creatures but in the Whole of Things” (303).

Booth closes his life history with an entry from his journal written in the summer of 2000 during a hike he and Phyllis took in the Unita Mountains. Of the scene below punctuated with “blissful kissing, spiritual ecstasy,” he writes, “Viewed from the perspective of the emerging Book [this autobiography], all of that could be called total harmony; my Self-Splits were wiped away. This is what life is for, this is . . . what we came for—to the mountains—to life itself” (307; ellipses his). Four years later, he concludes his life story by stating that this “epiphany” “still seems not just plausible harmony; it’s the real thing” (307).

Mormon readers will be particularly interested in the part Mormonism played in Booth’s life. Like the speaker in Cole Porter’s song, Booth would probably say that he was always true to Mormonism “in his fashion.” As a bright, inquisitive young man, he began quite early, and certainly during his student years at Brigham Young University, to find some of Mormonism’s incongruities difficult to harmonize. He titles his first chapter “A Devout Mormon Is Challenged by Rival Selves.” Never completely comfortable in or out of the fold, he writes, “Year by year, decade by decade, I kept moving from closer in to further out and then back in again” (17). While it was no longer possible for him to consider the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints “the one and only true church,” as orthodox Mormons testify, he did consider it “one of the good churches” (emphasis his) and declared humorously, “I am currently inactive in at least five true churches” (7). Speaking of himself as a young missionary serving in the Northern States Mission (where his companion was Marion Duff Hanks, later a popular General Authority),
Booth declares, “He chose, I still choose, to pursue the ground shared by the orthodox and the doubters, living daily with troublesome soul-splits” (132; emphasis his). He concludes, “What I sometimes call ‘the good side of Mormonism’ penetrates my life and will be with me till I die” (134).

My Many Selves is more than the story of one man’s life. It is also an important treatise on the importance of thoughtful, spiritual rhetoric coupled with abiding by true principles. Booth took rhetoric beyond the academy, the media, and the marketplace. His expansion of its importance and meaning in everyday life may be his most important contribution. This is especially true of his revolutionary insight that true rhetoric involves listening and understanding as well as speaking and that its ultimate objective is grounded in love. He says, “Whatever happens, it is my belief that when any two contestants—whether two real persons or two of my Selves—come out of an argument with some degree of agreement, achieving that harmony is more important than the question of whether they have arrived at some absolute truth” (299-300). My Many Selves may be a new model for those who seek such harmony in telling their life stories.

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Reviewed by Stephen C. Taysom

The depth and breadth of published primary sources widely available to interested readers remains one of the most appealing aspects of the field of Mormon studies. The treatment offered by Jedediah S. Rogers of L. John Nuttall’s journals, co-winner of MHA’s Smith-Pettit Best First Book Award, makes a useful contribution to this growing body of materials. Nuttall, a Liverpudlian convert to Mormonism and a nephew of John Taylor, began his work in the LDS Church administrative world in 1877

at age forty-three, assisting Wilford Woodruff with the systematization of the temple endowment. Following the death of Brigham Young, Nuttall became secretary to Young’s successor, John Taylor, and eventually to Wilford Woodruff. Rogers’s abridgement of the diaries covers the rocky period from 1879 to 1892.

Nuttall’s diaries open a window onto these turbulent years of LDS history when the Church faced increasing external pressure to abandon plural marriage, wrangled over the proper role of political parties in Utah, struggled for statehood, and weathered internal quarrels within the highest echelons of Church leadership over such issues as the succession of Wilford Woodruff to the Church presidency.

Nuttall is a rather terse diarist, and readers should not expect to find many lengthy entries or much extensive commentary. Such a style can be frustrating to the reader who wants to know more. In June 1884, for example, Nuttall records that he assisted John Taylor in “comparing the temple ordinances with the Bible & the new translation as found in the Pearl of Great Price” (152). Nuttall says nothing about what led to such an endeavor nor does he comment on the conclusions they reached. Even a topic of such profound significance as the Woodruff Manifesto of 1890 (Nuttall was a polygamist himself), receives only a clinical summary of the main points: “We receiv[e]d a telegram from Prest Woodruff containing a declaration or manifesto from him in regard to the recent report of [the] Utah Commission . . . in which he denies their statements and declares himself as willing to obey the laws of the nation on that subject & to advise the members of the church to do likewise” (418). No doubt this circumspection reflects Nuttall’s role as an observer of the hierarchy in which he felt more comfortable recording information than commenting upon events.

There are one or two notable exceptions, however. Occasionally we are afforded a glimpse into the unscripted and private world of LDS authorities, as when Joseph F. Smith said he would rather be sent to “Vandiemens’s Land” (the Australian penal colony in Tasmania) than accept his new calling in the First Presidency (338). Nuttall also notes with satisfaction another conversation he had with Smith in 1889, in which Smith recounted a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve at which apostles Moses Thatcher and Heber J. Grant disparaged Nuttall for being “officious.” Smith assured Nuttall, however, that he had defended Nuttall’s honor to the apostles. In response, Nuttall sounded an unusually personal tone in his diary, describing Smith as “a true friend,” “a noble character,” and an “honest and true man” (378).

Nuttall also occasionally reflects with emotion on darker themes. John Taylor’s declining health and eventual death profoundly impacted Nuttall, and his entries on this subject are significantly more intimate and less formal than usual. Nuttall notes with great tenderness, for instance, that
Taylor spent a good portion of his final days deliriously mumbling “to remember, to remember” in the presence of many of his wives and friends. Taylor’s death also provided Nuttall with an opportunity to display his indignation at the treatment of polygamists by government officials. In fact, Nuttall blames Taylor’s final “failure in health” on the “close confinement and inactivity of [Taylor’s] body” occasioned by his years of hiding from federal officials (218). Nuttall’s sensitivity to what he viewed as unjust persecution provides the emotional touchstone for much of the personal material that makes it into the journals. Nuttall himself spent years in hiding and describes being “overcome” with emotion when he is finally reintroduced to some of his children in 1891 (468).

Although Nuttall deals frequently with the topic of plural marriage, he offers little in the way of theological reflection on the practice. More common are entries relating to requests for permission to marry additional wives and brief notations about the government’s various legal efforts to curtail polygamy. A more prominent thread that runs through the tapestry of Nuttall’s record is the rapidly increasing institutional and bureaucratic nature of Mormonism in the second half of the nineteenth century. On nearly every page, Nuttall’s diaries highlight the development of the burgeoning Church bureaucracy that would become so central to Mormonism in the twentieth century. Nuttall handled voluminous requests for everything from second anointings and temple recommends to divorces.

These diaries also witness the increasing challenge of managing human resources in a growing Church. A notable example involved the process of staffing temples. Prior to the dedication of the Logan Temple, Nuttall recorded a meeting in which John Taylor decided that temple workers, both at Logan and St. George, would be called from the general membership of the Church to sacrifice their time and resources “the same as we do with our missionaries to the earth” (143). While such a development may appear pedestrian, it is in fact an important marker of the increased emphasis on the temple as a constant, rather than an occasional, feature of Mormon religious life—a mark of modern Mormonism that dates to the final quarter of the nineteenth century.

Rogers provides a superb introductory essay that demonstrates his broad familiarity with the complex political, social, and religious worlds that form the backdrop for the diaries. Moreover, Rogers deftly foregrounds the most significant contributions of the diaries, something helpful for those readers who would prefer not to read through the entire volume from start to finish. The work is annotated copiously and scrupulously, and the use of footnotes instead of inter-textual editorial marks spares the reader unnecessary distractions. Some readers may be disappointed to find that Nuttall’s earliest and latest diaries are not included in this published version. The lim-
itations of space no doubt precluded the reproduction of the entire Nuttall corpus, but Rogers is to be commended for selecting material from the years that saw the most dramatic events unfold.

Despite the generally excellent editorial work and the significance of the subject matter, several factors may limit the book’s popularity. First, the Nuttall journals have been available to researchers for many years at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at Brigham Young University, and excerpts have been published in other venues, most recently as part of the 1998 Signature Books-produced New Mormon Studies CD-ROM. Specialists in the field of Mormon studies are therefore likely to have already encountered the Nuttall diaries elsewhere. Second, nonspecialists may find Nuttall’s style lacking in drama and narrative flair and may find more attractive such famous and chatty contemporary diarists as the voluble Wilford Woodruff. Nevertheless, the publication of the most significant of Nuttall’s diaries in a single and superbly edited volume represents an important moment in the study of nineteenth-century LDS history, and it should be welcomed into the libraries of institutions and individuals serious about Mormon studies.

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Reviewed by Michael Harold Paulos

When I first saw this book listed on Amazon more than a year before its publication, I raised my eyebrows at the audacious title. Did Mormon author Jeff Benedict write a how-to book on starting a multi-level marketing firm in Utah? Or maybe Benedict’s book explains what Newsweek reporter Kenneth L. Woodward meant when he ambiguously wrote, “Business in Salt Lake is usually done the Mormon way or not at all.” Despite my misgivings about the title, however, The Mormon Way of Doing Business presented an intriguing read for me, given my professional and academic background in business. I have worked professionally both in

The Mormon Way of Doing Business is a very interesting book about eight Mormons, born and raised in Utah and Idaho, who’ve achieved high-powered positions in the business world. For Journal of Mormon History readers, the book’s value probably lies in two areas: documentation of Mormon participation outside the Mormon culture region that characterizes the last third of the twentieth century, and biographical information about the eight men: David Neeleman, founder and former CEO of JetBlue, New York City; Dave Checketts, former CEO of Madison Square Garden in New York City; Gary Crittenden, CFO of American Express in New York City; Kevin Rollins, former CEO of Dell in Austin, Texas; Jim Quigley, CEO of Deloitte & Touche, USA, in New York City; Kim Clark, former dean of the Harvard Business School in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Clayton Christiansen, a leading professor at Harvard Business School; and Rod Hawes, founder and former CEO of Life Re Corp in New York City.

Benedict conducted four personal interviews with each subject plus more than fifteen interviews with their wives. From his findings, he identifies common patterns in these men’s personal and professional behavior. The book’s publication serendipitously coincided with Mitt Romney’s announcement of his presidential campaign; therefore, by April 2007 it had achieved its third printing.

Journal of Mormon History readers would no doubt have welcomed more historical analysis, particularly trends over time in business practices or business leaders in the Mormon community. However, Benedict’s book does provide symbolic contemporary success stories of the Mormon Church’s transition of economic thought and practice. Recently, Ethan R. Yorgason analyzed this compelling economic shift in his fascinating book, Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003). Yorgason traces Mormon economic practices in Utah from the cooperative practices of its community-based economy during the nineteenth century to its twentieth-century embrace of mainstream capitalism. In the early stages in this economic transition, many of Utah’s top business moguls moonlighted, as it were, as General Authorities, including Joseph F. Smith, Reed Smoot, Charles W. Nibley, and Heber J. Grant. These historical figures possessed high business acumen but also faced similar professional and personal issues that would resonate with the eight subjects of Benedict’s book.

The book is organized in fifteen chapters, including missionary experiences, tough negotiating, juggling leadership callings, maintaining the

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habits of prayer and scripture study, honesty in business dealings, tithing, “the trappings of power,” family life (two chapters), observing the Sabbath, wives as “the secret to success,” two chapters on the 9/11 terrorist attacks, management styles, and leaving one position for another.

For example, Chapter 2 discusses these men’s competitive instincts and their willingness to play hardball. One interesting episode is Dave Checketts’s negotiating a contract extension for two NBA moguls, Coach Pat Riley and all-star player Patrick Ewing. Refusing to be intimidated, he successfully countered their aggressive negotiating tactics with the result that both of them extended their contracts (28–34). Later in the book, Benedict reports an incident in which Checketts’s competitive nature impelled him to impulsively be less than truthful with the press. He quickly rectified this ethical lapse by calling a press conference and admitting his prevarication.

Competitive instincts were certainly characteristic of Mormon businessmen of yesteryear. Matthew Godfrey in Religion, Politics, and Sugar: The Mormon Church, the Federal Government, and the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1907–1921 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2007) discusses some questionable business dealings by Presiding Bishop Charles W. Nibley. According to Godfrey, Nibley’s activities in Utah’s sugar industry, which the Church was bankrolling, crossed the line of business ethics and full honesty when he pursued anti-trust tactics to put competitors out of business (198–208).

Chapter 4 broaches the topic of alcohol. Each of the eight men chronicled is a teetotaler; but as JetBlue founder David Neeleman states, “I would never suggest that people not drink. . . . That would come off as me trying to impose my will on others.” This statement is similar to a comment I heard as a student in a BYU MBA class co-taught by the successful Mormon businessman, Larry H. Miller. He stated that, although he does not consume alcohol himself, he is uncomfortable about playing the role of a community censor at games of the Utah Jazz, the professional basketball team he owns. Yet surely, alcohol consumption is a major revenue driver for both the Utah Jazz and JetBlue. Church leaders a century ago faced similar quandaries. Hugh Nibley, in Approaching Zion (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989) tells of a meeting between his grandfather Charles W. Nibley and President Joseph F. Smith where they discussed the prospect of opening a bar in the basement of the Hotel Utah. Although reluctant, they made the decision to do so because it was the only way they saw to defray without default the $2 million loan secured from a New York bank.

Six of the eight men profiled in this book served full-time LDS missions as young men, and each of the six says that his mission profoundly shaped his character and life. Harvard professor Clayton Christianson described a mission as “the hardest sales job known to mankind” and explained the difficulty he faced as a zone leader in motivating missionaries
who faced constant rejection. On a personal note, Christianson is a cousin of a good friend. When I began preparing my MBA application essays, I contacted Christianson for advice and he graciously agreed to speak with me. During our conversation, he noted that Harvard (and by implication, other MBA schools) rates LDS mission leadership experience highly and suggested that I frame my mission experience as zone leader in the context of not being able to fire or lay off for nonperformance the missionary volunteers under my stewardship.

JetBlue founder David Neeleman served a mission to Brazil where he gained self-confidence as well as a disdain for the condescending “upper class.” Neeleman subsequently elected to receive a comparatively paltry CEO annual salary of $200,000. In parallel fashion, prominent Mormon business leaders from the beginning of the twentieth century also served full-time missions as young men, including Joseph F. Smith, Reed Smoot, Charles W. Nibley, and Heber J. Grant. Surely both generations of men were influenced by the difficulty of full-time missionary work.

These are just a few parallels between the current Mormon business moguls and those from a century ago, a topic which awaits a fuller treatment. In Benedict’s book, the Mormon way of doing business can be found in locating the proper balance among family, faith, and career. Each of these eight men successfully juggled major church callings, daily scripture study, large families, and significant job responsibilities. Finding this balance likely could not have been achieved without the support and understanding of wife who is a full-time homemaker. The wives’ interviews are quoted throughout, and Chapter 11 is devoted to their experience. Benedict comments that these women are immensely talented but choose to play a supportive role at home. He gives examples like this one:

To insure time with his wife, Crittenden blocks out Friday nights on his calendar. During the week Crittenden sees his wife for only two hours a day, between 8:00 P.M., when he gets home, and 10:00 p.m., when they go to sleep. That’s why he rarely makes an exception to the Friday night rule. Typically, Crittenden spends two hours every Saturday on church work, conducting a one-hour leadership meeting from 6:00 to 7:00 A.M., followed by one hour of interviews with local church leaders from 7:00 to 8:00 A.M. The rest of his Saturdays he typically reserves for American Express work from home and family time. On Sundays Crittenden devotes anywhere from six to ten hours to his church assignment. He spends another four to five hours per week conducting church business from his car during the commute to and from work. (116–17)

From my experience in the work force, these men are stellar examples of hard work and balance—and if there ever is such a thing as a Mormon way of doing business, they have found it.
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Reviewed by Jed Woodworth

Dan Vogel’s Early Mormon Documents takes an unconventional approach to exploring the rise of one of America’s most controversial faiths. Such thematic collections usually reproduce a carefully pruned selection, the classic texts of the tradition, published in one volume and rarely more than two. Representativeness, not exhaustiveness, is the conventional aim. Official minutes, transactions, speeches—public documents, created by adherents—fill much of the space and span at least two or three generations, enough for outsiders to chart change over time.

But Early Mormon Documents takes a different path. Instead of a few dozen documents published under a single cover, Vogel has amassed excerpts of between four and five hundred in five large volumes. (The exact number of documents depends on whether different excerpts within the same source and republished newspaper articles are counted twice.) The collection moves outside the circle of participants to include accounts by people who had likely never met a Mormon at the time they were writing. The hostile reports that have come to be predictable from skeptical newspapermen and rival clergy stand here alongside the more saccharine accounts that flow so easily from the pens of believers. Archival sources comprise at least one third of the total, an impressive haul by any stretch, but also a reminder that official Mormonism is a highly contested artifact. Instead of the panoramic view, Early Mormon Documents immerses us in a thirty-five-year period beginning with the marriage of Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack in 1796, and ending with their move from New York to Ohio with Joseph Jr., the Mormon
prophet, in early 1831.

In fact, most of the documents focus on a short time period (1827–29) before the Mormon Church ever organized, when a half dozen backcountry towns located along a 120-mile corridor—Manchester, Palmyra, Fayette, South Bainbridge, and Colesville, New York; and Harmony, Pennsylvania—were unexpectedly sent into an uproar over Joseph Smith’s claims. The documentary result is a kind of Mormon-Gentile midrash, with voices tangled and contradictory, usually interesting but often repetitious, all meditating on the same few people and events.

Vogel admits that *Early Mormon Documents* cannot possibly contain every reference to Mormonism from the period. Even so, exhaustiveness is the end goal. Vogel likens his situation to that of Dale Morgan and Chad Flake, the great bibliographers who lamented their inability to dig up “all passing allusions to the Mormons” (1:xvi). Vogel has included all known passing allusions, each too precious to omit, as though Mormonism were a Lourdes whose essential truth still hangs on every last case.

Vogel’s desire for exhaustiveness reflects the schizophrenic developmental history of early Mormonism, the so-called “Prophet Puzzle” articulated by Jan Shipps many years ago. The sources on Mormonism’s earliest years do not agree on the essential character of Joseph Smith or his claims to heavenly visions. The two competing camps are well known by now: the conniving, deceitful money digger, on the one hand, and the earnest, honest visionary, on the other. The Smith who appears in the sources finds its genesis as much in whether the reporter believed an angel could deliver golden plates to unlettered farm boys as whether he or she believed an angel actually did so.

An incredulous Palmyra physician, a Dr. Williams, found Smith “proficient in the art of imposing on simplicity, and cheating became to him by practice, a kind of second nature” (3:56), while an early Mormon convert, Newel Knight, saw a Smith whose “noble deportment his faithfulness [and] his kind address could not fail to win the esteem of those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance” (4:28). The passions that aroused such people either to defend a prophet or defrock him quite naturally generated an enormous literature in an era in which frontier democracy and religious awakening ran the penny presses nonstop. Vogel is far too sagacious to attempt to mediate a war of words that cannot be won. It is much easier to reproduce every scrap of reminiscence.

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Early Mormon Documents can be situated within the more recent historiographical movement toward a more realistic Smith, one that alternately grinds the horns from his head or brings him down from his levitation, depending on one’s proclivity. No informed believer today denies that Smith used magic seer stones to search for buried treasure or that he underplayed these activities in his official histories. And unbelievers are more willing to impute religious motives to Smith than they were a generation ago. Even Vogel, a former Mormon and one of its most energetic critics, is willing to crown Smith a “pious fraud.”2 If still as complicated as ever, at least Smith is one person now, not two.

The importance of Early Mormon Documents—aside from the obvious work of putting all these valuable primary sources in the hands of the academic libraries—is that it moves the question of Smith’s character back into debate, with a deconstructionist twist. Combing through this mélange allows readers to assess the character not only of Smith, but of those who spoke of him as well. Vogel’s excellent headnotes allow us to see the unevenness of the source material in a way we couldn’t before. What are we to make of the fact that Dr. Williams’s identity, as Vogel informs us, is unknown, that he seems to have barely known the Smiths, and that his testimony survives only through a pseudonymous author who published their undated, redacted conversation in 1854 (3:55)? Or what to make of Newel Knight, who spent many hours in conversation with Joseph Smith, in multiple settings over many years, and testified in Smith’s behalf before a court of law (4:25–65)? Is the distant observer or the close associate to be preferred when assessing the character of an alleged con man?

Early Mormon Documents makes plain just how utterly dependent the reconstruction of early Mormonism is on the language of later memories. By my calculations, about 30 percent of the documents reproduced in Vogel date to 1880 or beyond; some date to as late as the 1950s. Only around 15 percent of all the selections were generated near the time of the events they discuss—that is, before 1831. Most of these period sources are quotidian references in which the Smiths show up as names on a page much like other people: in land deeds, mortgages, bills, account books, tax lists, or family Bibles, all painstakingly reproduced by Vogel. These sources are remarkable for their averageness. Just six of all pre-1831 sources were produced by Joseph Smith himself, and none goes into much detail about any of the principal events of the late 1820s. Smith’s identity during these years is caught within a web of reminiscences generated by those who were writing after Mormonism had already become an object of scorn. Everyone had reason to

shield Smith or attack him. Few remained neutral.

Historians who peruse these documents will be left to make sense of the curious reality that almost no one who spent much time around Joseph Smith during these early years went away believing that he made up his stories of miraculous visions. They didn’t conclude that “cheating,” in Dr. Williams’s words, was Smith’s “second nature.” Those closest to the Joseph Smith of 1827–29 later used words like “obedient” (Lucy Smith, 1:223); “courageous” (Joseph Smith Sr., 1:461), and “inspired” (Emma Smith, 1:542) to describe him. Newel Knight emphasized Smith’s ability to win people over (4:28). People who didn’t know Smith well were the ones more likely to use words like “liar” (Parley Chase, 2:47) or “imposter” (William Sayre, 4:146).

Not all who claimed to know the money-digging Smith impugned his character, and there is little evidence to suggest that those who did spent much time with him after he did the unthinkable by hoarding the treasure he found in Cumorah in 1827 and subsequently exceeded all good sense by proclaiming himself God’s chosen prophet and seer.

All these depictions are filtered through a thick layer of emotion, an ever-expanding print literature on Mormonism (read and often referenced by the reporters themselves), and the din of “neighborhood legends” (Mehetable Doolittle, 4:338). If the task the previous generation took on itself was to assemble the puzzle of Joseph Smith, the business of the future will be to figure out who constructed the pieces and under what configuration of influences.

Now over a decade since Early Mormon Documents began publication, the series has been eclipsed in several particulars. A definitive edition of Lucy Smith’s history has been published, and the Joseph Smith Papers Project headquartered in Salt Lake City brings massive resources to bear in annotating every jot and tittle of Joseph Smith’s writings, including his revelations—which have to be the most important of the “early Mormon documents” not reproduced in Vogel. There is no evidence to suggest that Vogel followed the guidelines advocated by the Association for Documentary Editing (ADE), but I have found his transcriptions to be more careful than not in the several instances when I have compared them against the originals. The annotations are serviceable, though at times they lapse into moralizing and politicization, as when Smith “neglects” to mention the birth of his son in an official history (1:72 note 53) or when Vogel seeks to explain David Whitmer’s visions (“hallucination cannot be ruled out,” 5:11) instead of simply reporting them. Such intrusions are better left for the essay than the edited document.

Despite its idiosyncrasies, Early Mormon Documents remains the most useful collection of documents on the early movement available to researchers. Its unconventionality may actually magnify its importance, not diminish
One-stop shopping does have its advantages.

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Reviewed by Jedediah S. Rogers

Students of Mormon history have grown accustomed to the publication of selected diaries of both high-profile leaders and rank-and-file individuals who are privy to events of great moment and whose writings reveal the texture of a life lived day in and day out. The yardstick by which to assess these publications is twofold. Readers gauge the significance of the writings—that is, what the diaries reveal about the individual and the context of the times. Readers also expect editing that is accurate and that clarifies, illuminates, and broadens the diary’s central personalities, events, and themes.

It is a companion volume to Donald G. Godfrey and B. Y. Card’s The Diaries of Charles Ora Card: The Canadian Years, 1886–1903 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993). By and large, readers will not be disappointed with this publication covering the earlier Card diaries. This volume contains Card’s complete diaries over a fifteen-year period, with a five-year gap from 1872 at the end of his mission to November 1877, six weeks after the cornerstone-laying ceremonies of the Logan Temple. Newspaper clippings and other miscellanea are also included in its pages. The editors did a workmanlike job of transcribing the original diaries—now housed at BYU but little used and difficult to read. As noted in the volume’s introduction, even when historians have made use of them, for instance to document the construction of the Logan Temple, excerpts were neglected due to inaccessibility and poor readability. Now the diaries are made available in their entirety, handsomely printed and bound in a large-size volume with photographs sprinkled in the text.

What do we glean of Charles Ora Card and his times from these diaries? Card is best known for his leadership role in the Mormon settlement of Canada after 1885; but before that he was a major player in Cache Valley where, among other things, he married all four of his wives, oversaw con-
struction of both the tabernacle and the temple, served as a counselor to the stake president, William B. Preston (1879–84), and then followed him as stake president (1884–90). He was a man who wore his shoes thin in the service of his church and community; just reading of his long hours and travels, for instance of his trudging through deep snow as overseer of the mill up Logan Canyon, is tiring. Since Card was such a prominent figure, his diaries reference some of the most significant doings in the northern Utah territory.

References to family and personal feelings are few. One notable exception is Card’s divorce from his first wife, Sarah Jane (Sallie) Birdneau. Just days before the separation was finalized in 1884, Card wrote of Sallie, “I have lived with her over 16 years the greatest portion of it in Trouble in consequence of the difference in our faith. She Says no man wants more wives than one except to gratify his lust” (509). Many other entries reveal the struggle and the tangle of emotions that this strained relationship produced. For example, shortly after the divorce Card lamented that his children continued to live with their mother: “After Laboring so hard for the Salvation of my dear children I have to ask my God how long Shall a wicked & ungodly mother have an influence over them. I pray that it may be Short” (552). He does not mention her again, leaving unanswered the reader’s question about the children’s course of action. Sallie went on to marry Benjamin Ramsel and testify against her ex-husband in court on charges of unlawful cohabitation.

Eclipsing family matters and even day-to-day business are recorded sermons from ward, stake, and general church meetings. The reader interested in succinct summations of public exhortations to the Saints will find much in these diaries. The flavor of Card’s writing (and his focus on public meetings) appears in this typical entry from November 4, 1881, which summarizes a sermon by Daniel H. Wells: “When the Kingdom of God prevails the Sts will have their rights. Those that are not of our faith try to make people think that one religion is as good as another thereby lead some estray [sic]. It has gone abroad that the young people have no faith when the old Stand byes are gone the work will be done. Such is not the case. There are a few isolated cases that they draw their conclusions from” (298).

The downside is that public statements are often available elsewhere. Card’s is largely a public record, disappointingly skimpy on references to private happenings not widely available in other documents. Whether this stems from a desire to protect information meant to be private is unclear. To compare Card’s entries with L. John Nuttall’s, with which I am most familiar, in May 1884 at events surrounding the dedication of the temple, Card provides lengthy reports of discourses delivered at the quarterly conference and the dedicatory services but almost nothing on private meetings with John Taylor and other visiting authorities on May 16 or 19. Nuttall does just the reverse, reporting very little of what was said in public discourse yet record-
The editors benefit from the large corpus of printed work on Cache Valley history to identify people, places, events, and organizations. Most footnotes are a biographical register of countless men and women referenced in the diaries, which rival if not surpass in number those noted in the diaries of L. J. Nuttall or Hosea Stout. Editors also explain incidents or gospel teachings—for instance “Election and Reprobation”—referenced in the diaries. Though richly detailed, notes can be, at times, burdensome and repetitive. To give just two examples, they provide similar descriptions of the Logan Temple (33 note 66; 40 note 80), and of the doctrine of baptism for the dead (49 note 133; 57 note 173). The notes are also largely general and descriptive, culled from published sources and only minimally from rarer holographs like correspondence or diary entries which, if used, might have provided varying perspectives from other contemporary observers. And if these diaries appeal primarily to scholars and lay readers with an interest in Cache Valley history—as I believe they do—then the many notes on common Mormon practices and beliefs seem unnecessary given the narrow audience.

I do not mean to appear harsh in my critique. This is an impressive and important contribution to nineteenth-century Utah and Mormon history. Donald Godfrey and Kenneth Godfrey, who received the Best Documentary Award from the Mormon History Association in 2006, should be commended for making these diaries accessible and readable for years to come.

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Reviewed by John-Charles Duffy

Terryl Givens’s People of Paradox is an ambitious combination of intellectual history, art history, and cultural history, offering a survey of Mormon endeavors in arts and letters that runs the entire span of LDS his-

1Jedediah S. Rogers, ed., In the President’s Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879–1892 (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with the Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007), May 16, 19, 1884, 137–38.
tory, from 1830 to the present. In this telling of Mormon history, winner of MHA’s Best Book award, the key actors are not politicians, soldiers, colonizers, polygamists, missionaries, or Church administrators. Rather, they are educators, theologians, scientists, architects, musicians, dancers, poets, novelists, painters, sculptors, and, more recently, filmmakers.

Givens is not the first to look at Mormon history through the lens of artistic and intellectual cultural production. People of Paradox stands atop a sizable literature examining Mormon arts, letters, and education, as well as material culture (although Givens’s interests lie more with “high culture” than with the “folk arts”). But Givens offers readers the convenience of a one-volume synthesis across time and across different kinds of creative expression: architecture, dance, film, poetry, theology. In the process, he helps save from obscurity such curiosities as Lucy Mack Smith’s hymn “Moroni’s Lament” (122–23), Orson Whitney’s attempt at a Miltonian Mormon epic (286), and an oratorio based on the excommunication of Sonia Johnson (259).

Givens’s version of a Mormon cultural history revolves around four paradoxes that he believes hold competing principles in constant tension within Mormon thought: (1) authoritarianism and individualism, (2) searching and certitude, (3) the sacred and the quotidian, and (4) exile and integration, a theme which he sees as closely related to a tension between what is American and what is universal. Givens calls these four paradoxes “the seminal ideas that constitute a Mormon ‘habit of mind’” (xiii). Mormonism is fundamentally paradoxical, Givens believes, because of the way Joseph Smith collapsed sacred distance—proclaiming a God who is an exalted man, building the heavenly city on earth, and so on. To show how the tensions implicit in these paradoxes play themselves out within Mormon culture, Givens offers historical overviews of Mormon activities “across a spectrum of artistic media”: intellectual endeavor, architecture, music and dance, theater and film, literature, and the visual arts (xiii). He provides two chapters for each medium (e.g., two on architecture, two on music), the first running from 1830 to 1890 and the second running from 1890 to the present.

For whom is People of Paradox written? Givens’s introduction doesn’t overtly situate the book in ongoing scholarly conversations, either within Mormon studies narrowly or within academic disciplines more broadly (history, cultural studies, religious studies). The fact that Givens submitted the book to Oxford University Press implies that he hopes to attract an academic readership beyond Mormon circles. Nevertheless, the book’s introduction and concluding chapter suggest that it has been written primarily for the benefit of intellectuals and artists within the LDS Church. These individuals, Givens hopes, “may be an effective prod in facilitating the transition of Mormonism into a truly international faith” through “their thoughtful and provocative explorations” of the paradoxes that Givens identifies as lying at
the heart of Mormon culture (xvi). That is, *People of Paradox* aims to give Mormon intellectuals and artists an account of their own culture that can help them help their fellow Saints negotiate “the balance between the universal and the particular” (343)—in more familiar terms, to be in the world but not of it.

At a time when the word “intellectual” is still fraught with negative connotations in much LDS usage, Givens maintains that intellectuals and artists have their own kind of visionary guidance to offer the Church: “poets can speak where prophets haven’t” (340). In a sense, then, *People of Paradox* is a call to LDS artists and intellectuals to use their gifts to build up the kingdom; in this, Givens echoes similar calls made by Orson F. Whitney, Spencer W. Kimball, and Neal A. Maxwell. In addition to this call, Givens offers a framework for self-understanding—his four fundamental Mormon paradoxes—that might aid intellectuals and artists in navigating the difficult terrain where, as his history shows, some of their predecessors have strayed or fallen by the way.

Such appears to be the book’s primary purpose, or at least its most clearly articulated purpose. Yet instead of addressing LDS intellectuals directly, insider to insider, the book is written in a voice that talks about Mormons as if to outsiders. What, then, do Givens and Oxford University Press hope that readers other than LDS intellectuals will take from this book? What does *People of Paradox* contribute to scholars’ understanding of Mormon culture? Or, to rephrase that question in more pragmatic terms: To what ends might this book be cited by future researchers and used in college classrooms?

I answer that question from my perspective as someone who studies and teaches American religious history. The first four chapters, in which Givens expounds on each of the four paradoxes, offer interesting reflections on Mormon thought. But these chapters read less like historical analysis or cultural theory than like armchair cultural commentary from a *littérateur* or perhaps a kind of theologizing; it’s therefore hard to imagine using these chapters in the classroom to explicate Mormon culture unless as primary texts. The chapters on architecture, music, literature, and so on are much more useful for research and teaching, offering handy historical overviews of Mormon endeavors in the various media (with the caveat that the chapters on twentieth-century film and literature are stronger on literary analysis than history). I suspect, in fact, that the most widely read chapters will prove to be the two that cover Mormon intellectual life, especially Chapter 11, which recounts twentieth-century controversies over intellectual freedom in the Church. These two chapters are by far the most heavily documented, perhaps showing that Givens was aware that these chapters would attract the most controversy. Givens’s sympathies lie more with the hierarchy than with
its critics—contrast his treatment of Boyd K. Packer’s views on historiography (219) to his discussion of the AAUP’s criticisms of BYU (227)—but it’s clear that he has attempted to be even-handed. His account also has the virtue of being accessible in a way that reminded me of Richard and Joan Ostling’s *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999).

While useful as an overview of Mormons’ intellectual and artistic endeavors, *People of Paradox* does not illuminate Mormon culture in a way that interfaces readily with conversations about culture current in the disciplines. Curiously for a “history of Mormon culture” (according to its subtitle), *People of Paradox* is detached from the theoretical developments that have guided cultural studies over the last quarter century. The difficulty here lies in the tropes underlying Givens’s cultural commentary. His interest in a unitary “Mormon habit of mind” (xiii) or “Mormon psyche” (xv) smacks of idealism and essentialism, badly outmoded conceptual frameworks whose use, if Givens insists on sticking by them, requires a vigorous defense. At a time when scholars, under the influence of various “postmodern” impulses, have turned their attention to the irreducible contradictions that run through any cultural assemblage, Givens explicitly attempts to use the notion of paradox to shield Mormonism from the specter of contradiction, which orthodox Latter-day Saints might understand as threatening their religion’s truth claims. As Givens explains in his introduction, “paradox” refers to “tensions that only appear to be logical contradictions” (xiv; emphasis mine). Givens recognizes the cultural tensions that would also draw the interest of a postmodern analyst; but, bucking postmodern cultural theory, he seeks to balance those tensions by making them work together in the complex coherency of a “paradox.” I presume that Givens’s insistence that Mormon thought only appears contradictory is bound to an assumption that contradictions would undermine Mormonism’s claims to reveal transcendent truth. The trope of paradox allows Givens to deny “contradiction” while tolerating and neutralizing “tension.” (By “neutralizing,” I mean that Givens strips “tension” of negative valence, not that he believes the cultural tensions he identifies can be dissolved.)

Givens’s interest in “paradox”—that is, in rendering cultural tensions manageable and relatively felicitous—produces in his account of Mormon culture a tendency to obscure power relations, or patterns of domination and resistance. Of course, Givens recounts conflicts between dissatisfied intellectuals and Church leaders; but rather than analyze these conflicts as Church leaders’ and other actors’ attempts to assert control over the domain of Mormon intellectual life, Givens characterizes the conflicts more benignly as “growing tensions that have yet to be resolved” (193). Earlier in the book, his language is even more minimizing: “prophetic prerogatives . . .
may cramp the style of maverick intellectuals” (16; emphasis mine)—as if nothing more than “style” were at stake in conflicts over intellectual freedom.

Discussing the protests over BYU’s decision not to display nudes by Rodin, Givens concludes that “even in a conservative Mormon community, there is no consensus on how to reconcile aesthetic freedom and an austere sexual morality” (335). True enough, but Givens’s language paints a field of opposing viewpoints without acknowledging that those viewpoints (or more precisely, the people who espouse those viewpoints) are not equally influential. From the standpoint of contemporary cultural studies, we cannot understand Mormon culture without examining how power is unequally distributed through that culture. Givens’s concept of “paradox” impedes such examination by framing conflicts in terms of balancing tension or achieving consensus rather than in terms of asserting control or resisting domination. For example: Givens tames the uncomfortable slogan, “When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done,” by representing it as one side of a timeless paradox between authoritarianism and individualism (18). A more revealing analysis would pay attention to when and to whom the slogan is deployed (members who need to be reminded to toe the party line) and when and to whom it is disavowed (in the instance Givens cites, a non-member dismayed by LDS authoritarianism).

A key assumption underlying People of Paradox is that Mormon thought and culture flow from the teachings of Joseph Smith. Hence, Givens speaks of “the Mormon cultural identity that Smith and, to a lesser extent, Young founded” (xiii). That assumption cries out to be reexamined in light of a postmodern understanding of cultures as complex, makeshift assemblages without a single origin or orchestrating logic—but that’s tangential to the point I want to make here, which is this: Throughout the book, Givens discusses the Mormon founder in connection with a roll call of intellectual luminaries, including Jonathan Edwards, William Blake, Luther, Milton, Schopenhauer, even Nietzsche. This technique, which lends an air of gravitas to Smith’s teachings, summons to mind Richard Bushman’s call, at the Library of Congress in 2005, for histories that “enlarge” Joseph Smith by situating him not only in a nineteenth-century American context but alongside figures such as “Dante, Milton, Blake, and Nietzsche.”

Because of the similarity between Givens’s and Bushman’s methods, a word of caution may be in order. One of the most important lessons that textual and cultural interpreters have learned in the past few decades—under the influence of movements from British cultural studies to poststructuralism, to the New Historicism—is that anything can be read alongside anything else: Shakespeare and Monty Python, Aristotle and Balinese cockfights, sixteenth-century geographers and twentieth-century alien abductees. Givens’s and Bushman’s interest in juxtaposing Joseph Smith to leading
names in high culture is understandable as a reaction to reductive psychobiographies or histories of Mormonism that overemphasize the exotic. But if the juxtapositions are intended to convince non-LDS readers that Mormon culture has philosophical heft—or if LDS readers are inclined to draw that conclusion from Givens’s juxtapositions—then self-validation needs to be tempered with the realization that a sufficiently enthusiastic author could produce the same effect for anyone you care to name, from Emanuel Swedenborg to Elvis Presley.

A recurring pattern in *People of Paradox*, especially in the first four chapters, is to assert that Mormonism in some way resembles some other religion—usually Christian—but also differs from it, typically in a way that makes Mormonism superior: more effective, more ambitious, more ennobling, and so on. The book is sprinkled with (qualified) superlative claims on behalf of Mormonism. “Mormonism is of all religions perhaps the most relentlessly incompatible with traditional conceptions of the holy” (158); Mormons are “virtually alone among Christians” in the extravagance of their claims about the origin of their scriptures (230). Some of these claims are defensible, albeit piled so high upon each other that they begin to feel triumphalist.

Other superlatives may give readers pause. When I read that the ward system, by assigning members to a ward based on geographical location instead of letting them choose a congregation to their liking, “is an unparalleled instance of authoritarian preemption of a decision that all other Christians take for granted” (104; emphasis mine)—I blinked and wondered if Givens was taking into account the Catholic parish system. I blinked again at the next sentence, which claimed that a rotating lay clergy makes Mormon wards “self-directing”—as if LDS Church governance were congregationalist. Givens credits Joseph Smith with solving philosophical conundrums that stumped Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Aquinas (7–8). Imagine a Seventh-day Adventist making a similar claim on behalf of Ellen G. White, or a member of the Nation of Islam on behalf of Elijah Muhammad, or a Unificationist on behalf of Sun Myung Moon, or a Scientologist on behalf of L. Ron Hubbard. Readers would be justified in suspecting that such a claim represented an excess of enthusiasm. It’s not clear why readers shouldn’t suspect the same about Givens’s lofty claims on behalf of Mormon thought.

Intellectuals within the LDS Church may find Givens’s four paradoxes useful for making sense of the discomfort that restrictive or lowbrow aspects of Mormon culture can occasion. They may find *People of Paradox* a helpful guide for elaborating an LDS aesthetic that they can feel assured draws on the best “the world” has to offer while remaining distinctively, authentically Mormon. If Givens’s account of Mormon culture helps LDS intellectuals and artists negotiate a productive, satisfying place for themselves within a
church with strong anti-intellectual strains—a church, as Givens is painfully
aware, where “hypercentralization” and “standardization” stifle creativity
(337)—if Givens’s book can accomplish that, then it will have done Mormon
culture a service.

At the same time, however, *People of Paradox* is symptomatic of frustrat-
ing trends among LDS scholars that continue to prevent a closer, fruitful en-
gagement between scholarship on Mormonism and broader research agen-
das within the disciplines. Like much of the work done by those whom
Givens calls “faithful scholars” (223), *People of Paradox* relies on premises or
interpretive frameworks derived from LDS orthodoxy, pursues agendas of
greater interest to LDS insiders than outsiders, and remains aloof from the
theoretical frameworks and vocabularies that currently guide research in
the humanities. The book’s usefulness for readers other than LDS intellectu-
als is thus greatly diminished.

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*The William E. McLellin Papers, 1854–1880* (Salt Lake City: Signature

Michael K. Winder. *Presidents and Prophets: The Story of America’s Presi-
dents and the LDS Church*. American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communica-
tions, 2007. viii, 429 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. $32.95;

 Reviewed by Daniel Walker Howe

When I first opened this book, I was immediately startled by its appear-
ance. To be sure, the subject was a valid and important one: the relation-
ship between U.S. presidents and the Mormon Church. But the way it
treated that subject was, by scholarly standards, unsatisfying. It seemed,
instead, to be a coffee-table book for devout Mormon households. Each
chapter consisted of a picture of a U.S. president, a list of factoids, and
then some anecdotes and/or primary documents. Professional history re-
quires such data to be contextualized and interpreted.

*Presidents and Prophets* seemed not so much a history as a set of notes
from which a history might be written, and its purpose seemed primarily de-
vo tional. The reader learns about presidents who received gifts of the Book
of Mormon, were baptized by proxy, and heard performances of the Tabernacle Choir. All presidents are treated, including those who served before Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Mormon civil religion is evoked, a combination of religious and patriotic feeling, along with the excitement of celebrity sighting. These aspects are all summed up in the prefatory anecdote of Michael Winder himself sharing the Peace with President George W. Bush during the Eucharist at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Washington.

I kept on reading and soon found bits that interested me. Persecuted in Illinois, the Mormons called on John Quincy Adams, by then an ex-president, because he had a reputation as a defender of unpopular minorities, but no one could think of a way to exploit his debating skills. After being persecuted in Missouri, they called on the incumbent president, Martin Van Buren, who sent them packing—thereby condemning himself to a merited infamy in Mormon memory. President Andrew Jackson also refused help on the same grounds (state rights), but escaped Mormon condemnation, then or later. One wonders why.

Angry at Van Buren, the Mormons supported his challenger, William Henry Harrison, who won the election of 1840. Harrison’s sudden death let down the Mormons along with all his other supporters, and his successor, John Tyler, proved another state-rights disappointment. So Joseph Smith himself decided to run for president in 1844, an aspiration cut short by his assassination. I was sorry that Winder didn’t go into more detail about this fascinating episode, especially since Joseph Smith was not only the first clergyman to run for U.S. president but also the first presidential candidate to be assassinated. The winner in 1844 turned out to be James Knox Polk, who authorized the creation of the Mormon Battalion in his war against Mexico. Winder correctly points out that Polk had intended the battalion to be enlisted after the Mormons had arrived in the West, even though it was, in fact, raised while they were still in Iowa (70–72).

One of the Mormons’ favorite presidents was the little-known Millard Fillmore (a Whig in politics and Unitarian in his own religion), because he appointed Brigham Young territorial governor of Utah. On the other hand, Democrat James Buchanan occupies the very bottom of the list of Mormon preferences because he declared the Saints in rebellion and dispatched an army to subjugate them in 1856–57. Perhaps Buchanan wanted to distract public opinion from a more obvious rebellion in Kansas and from his failure to restore order there, but Winder does not delve deeply into this (or any) president’s motives. Abraham Lincoln, although he signed the 1862 federal law against polygamy in the territories, remained high in Mormon estimation because he made no attempt to enforce it. Indeed, Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and Ulysses S. Grant were all preoccupied with the momentous sectional issues of Civil War and Reconstruction, and essentially left Utah
alone. The resolution of sectional conflict by the Compromise of 1877 freed President Rutherford B. Hayes to turn his attention to clamping down on polygamy, in keeping with the Republican Party’s long-standing moral disapproval of it. These events are covered, not in a coherent narrative, but rather in fragmentary allusions.

In contrast, I found Winder’s presentation of Grover Cleveland’s Mormon policy illuminating. A Democrat, Cleveland contrived to reduce the criminal penalties for practicing polygamy to the point where many Church leaders were willing to turn themselves in for punishment. It proved to be a statesmanlike policy that facilitated the resolution of the polygamy issue in the Manifesto of 1890. In his second term, Cleveland backed Utah statehood. Although Winder does not go into party policies at either the national or the state level, no doubt the nineteenth-century Democrats’ sympathy for local self-rule aided such an accommodation with Utah’s LDS establishment.

At the start of the twentieth century, the Mormon leadership made a sudden and momentous change of partisanship, emphatically embracing the Republican Party. Prominently implementing the new departure was Reed Smoot, apostle and U.S. senator, a figure whose importance historians are coming to recognize thanks to Kathleen Flake’s *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). So loyal were Smoot and his church to the Republican Party, Winder reminds us, that in 1912 they even carried Utah for William Howard Taft against both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. But it took a long time before the LDS leadership’s political allegiance would become as solidly and reliably shared by the Mormon electorate as it is today. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Lyndon B. Johnson all racked up substantial votes among the Saints.

Although Winder provides some voting statistics for Utah, generalizations about long-term processes are harder to find. One gets an impression of ever-increasing Mormon influence in Republican administrations, but not much sense of why. Instead the reader gets lists of Mormons appointed to office by various presidents. As the title *Presidents and Prophets* clearly implies, most of the attention goes to leaders in the Church hierarchy, like Eisenhower’s Secretary of Agriculture, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson. In contrast, Marriner Eccles gets only passing mention, despite his fourteen years as chairman of the Federal Reserve, a position often considered almost as powerful as the presidency itself. Robert H. Hinckley, prominent in the WPA and FDR’s Assistant Secretary of Commerce, is not mentioned.

Despite the disadvantages of its format, Winder’s book is full of interesting, occasionally amusing information, such as this anecdote about John F. Kennedy:

1952–60: Kennedy serves as a U.S. senator, a post in which he is sup-
portive of Ezra Taft Benson’s agriculture efforts. A young future Apostle, Neal A. Maxwell, is on the staff of Senator Wallace Bennett (R-UT) at the time. One day while Maxwell is in a Senate corridor, the voting bell rings, calling all senators back to the main floor. Senator Kennedy rushes past him in the hallway, stops, looks around, and then turns to the future Apostle and asks, “Which way am I supposed to vote?” Maxwell calmly replies that he believes the Democrats are voting “aye” on this one, so Kennedy proceeds to the floor and votes “aye” on the legislation. (285)

Mr. Winder has raised a very important subject even if he offers little analysis of it. Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign, although unsuccessful, seems to have provided a fitting accompaniment to this book, and no doubt helped enhance its considerable popularity with the Mormon public. In its own terms, Presidents and Prophets is successful. These just aren’t the terms that professional historians are trained to apply.

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Reviewed by Jill N. Crandell

Burr Fancher’s Captain Alexander Fancher is a biography of the leader of the ill-fated Fancher party, a group of 121 men, women, and children who were massacred at Mountain Meadows in southern Utah on September 11, 1857. Burr Fancher writes, “Although the Mountain Meadows massacre was his great moment of destiny, Alexander Fancher did have a childhood and adult life filled with significant happenings before his third trip to California. . . . My only purpose in writing this book is to acknowledge Alex’s contribution to the settlement of new frontiers” (vi, ix).

The life of Alexander Fancher is related through the storytelling of “Mattie Ma” Fancher, who was James (“Red”) Polk Fancher’s wife and the author’s grandmother. Alexander Fancher was Red Polk’s great-uncle. This book is based on oral traditions passed on from Mattie Ma to her grandchildren approximately seventy-five years after the massacre. Each chapter begins with Mattie Ma telling a story to her grandchildren. These stories are in
Mattie Ma began with the story of Anne Tully Fancher, wife of Isaac Fancher, giving birth to Alexander during the New Madrid earthquakes of 1812.\(^1\) She then recounted the events of his childhood in Sinking Cane, Tennessee, and his teenage years in Illinois. In 1832, Alexander and his father both served in the same unit during the Black Hawk War. Four years after the war, Alex married Eliza Ingram in Illinois, and they lived their adult years together in Missouri, Arkansas, and California. Alexander was a cattle drover; but after many trips to the St. Louis area, he decided in 1850 that providing cattle to the gold miners in California would be a more profitable venture. Alexander was on his third cattle drive to California when he and his party were massacred in Utah.

Burr Fancher’s stories are detailed and interesting, and he has used the expressions of the time and place to reveal customs and personality. For example, here is Burr Fancher’s account of Alexander’s experience with coon hunting. “As the boy reached eight years of age, it was time to go on coon hunts along Sinking Cane Creek with his favorite uncle. A pack of Redbone and Bluetick hounds would set up a chase and bring the coon to tree. Quite often this happened alongside the creek. Uncle Hamp shinnied up the trees to jump the coons into the water. Hounds often tangled with the ringtails in the deep pools along Sinking Cane Creek. Sometimes the coons grabbed the hounds and pulled them to the bottom, nearly drowning them. Eventually, the half-drowned dog would pop to the surface” (5).

Fancher has also included photographs of family members to personalize Alexander’s life history. They include Mattie Ma, Red Polk Fancher, and their home in Madison County, Arkansas, as well as photos of nine of the survivors of the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

Although Fancher’s stories are interesting, at times they are also repetitious. Because Alexander was a livestock drover, his biography recounts several journeys. The description of each trip seems to include similar observations such as: “Once trained to the road, the menagerie moved along without incident” (18), “Once conditioned to the road, the animals moved along in a cohesive group without having to be coaxed” (31), and “After five miles of travel, hogs were road-broke and easy to drive” (39). Multiple explanations of acorn crop blasts\(^2\) and the use of beechnuts as hog feed are also examples of unnecessary repetition (31, 37, 38).

The biggest disappointment in this work is its lack of credibility.

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\(^1\)The town of New Madrid is in Missouri, but these earthquakes caused great destruction all along the Mississippi River Valley.

\(^2\)Burr Fancher explains an acorn blast as: “Sometimes the acorn crop failed to materialize. Farmers referred to such a condition as ‘the acorn crop blasted’” (37).
Fancher writes, “I have garnered as much fact as possible and filled the
blank spots with common sense analysis, oral family history, and periph-
eral research” (ix). Unfortunately, because the author frequently cites
Mattie Ma as the source of information for his expanded writings, it is vir-
tually impossible to determine which of Burr’s stories are oral tradition
based on actual events, and which have been filled in with “common
sense”—meaning, I believe, probabilities. For example, Alexander’s birth
was related at considerable length (1–4), including quotations of conversa-
tions, yet there is no indication whether these conversations represent ac-
tual oral tradition or Burr Fancher’s expansions. Fancher also does not ex-
plain where Mattie Ma heard the stories that are attributed to her. In an at-
tempt to establish her credibility, Burr states: “Mattie Ma Wilkins was born
in Georgia in 1849, moving to Crooked Creek, Arkansas with her parents at
an early age. . . . Mattie Ma was present at Carrollton, Arkansas in 1859
when William Mitchell returned the children survivors of the Mormon
massacre at Mountain Meadows. . . . She helped prepare a ‘dinner on the
ground’ to honor the surviving children” (xiv–xv). He then concludes:
“The memories of Captain Alexander’s family and her husband’s uncles,
Matt and Robert Fancher, were still vivid in her mind because all of them
had been friends and neighbors” (xv). Unfortunately, the evidence of his-
torical documents renders belief in these personal relationships and per-
sonal memories implausible.

Fancher’s claim that Mattie Ma was born in Georgia in 1849 and soon
moved to Crooked Creek is documented with the citation: “1850 Census
data for Carroll County, Arkansas” (227 note 1). A line-by-line search of the
entire county did not reveal any entry that could possibly be considered a ref-
erence to this child. Mattie Ma’s name at birth was Martha M. Wilkins. She
was born in Campbell County, Georgia, to Samuel Wilkins and Sarah
Adeline (Stewart) Wilkins, probably in February 1851.3 Her parents had
been married on March 31, 1850 and were enumerated in the 1850 census of

3 1850 U.S. Census of District 10, Campbell County, Georgia, p. 457; 1860 U.S.
Census of Sulphur Fork Twp., Lafayette, Arkansas, p. 63; 1880 U.S. Census of Sum-
mit Twp., Boone, Arkansas, ED #16, p. 495; 1900 U.S. Census of Kings River Twp.,
Madison, Arkansas, ED #71, Sheet 16B, p. 250; 1920 U.S. Census of Kings River
Twp., Madison, Arkansas, ED #75, Sheet 8B, p. 91; Campbell County, Georgia Mar-
rriage Records, Book B, p. 130 (FHL #409,834); and Boone County, Arkansas Mar-
rriage Records, Book A, p. 115 (FHL #1,035,449 item 2). Martha’s name is given in
the 1860 census, and her parents’ full names are given in their marriage record in
Campbell County and the 1860 census. The month of February for Martha’s birth is
stated in the 1900 census, and the year of 1851 is supported by her age as recorded in
her marriage record in Boone County, as well as the 1860, 1880, and 1920 censuses.
She was not listed in the 1850 census.
Campbell County. Martha was not listed, suggesting that she had not yet been born. In 1860, the Samuel Wilkins family was enumerated in Lafayette County, Arkansas, near the southern border of the state. Crooked Creek was near the northern border of the state, approximately 200 miles away. Martha was living with her parents and is listed as a nine-year-old child. Land deeds in Campbell County, Georgia, and Lafayette County, Arkansas, locate this family’s residence for the early years of Martha’s life. Samuel Wilkins sold his land in southern Arkansas at the end of 1867, and he purchased land in Boone County, Arkansas, in 1869. This is the first historical evidence of the Wilkins family living in the area of Crooked Creek. They were then enumerated in the 1870 census in Boone County, and Martha married James Polk Fancher on October 30, 1873, in the same county. Thus, contrary to Fancher’s assertion, Mattie Ma arrived in Boone County, Arkansas, more than ten years after the Mountain Meadows massacre. It is therefore not credible that Mattie Ma had a personal relationship with the victims, nor was she present to prepare a dinner when the orphans returned. There is little question that she knew the victims’ children later in life, but records do not support the claim that she was an eyewitness to the events in Crooked Creek prior to the late 1860s.

Fancher has gone to considerable lengths to preserve his family’s oral traditions. Although he acknowledges that “oral history passed down by the wagon train families has been embellished through generations of retelling and is often biased” (viii), he did not sufficiently research the family stories to determine their veracity. For example, Fancher writes: “Isaac and James described how their cousin, Westley Fancher, killed the Indian Chief Tecumseh in the War of 1812” (8). Westley Fancher was a private in Captain John Kennedy’s Company in the First Regiment of Colonel Edward Bradley’s Tennessee Volunteer Militia. This company was raised in Mon-
roe, Tennessee, and began service on October 4, 1813. For their first campaign, the troops marched southward to Huntsville, Alabama. On October 5, 1813, the day after Westley began his military service in Tennessee, Tecumseh was killed at the Battle of the Thames on the Canadian side of Lake Ontario. The volunteers fighting in that battle were from units raised in Kentucky. Although historians have long argued over who actually killed Tecumseh, Westley Fancher is not a candidate; he was marching toward Alabama that day.

Errors in historical facts are common in this book. In reference to the Black Hawk War, Fancher states: “Ironically, John D. Lee was in the same regiment as Alexander Fancher” (24). According to the Illinois State Adjutant-General’s records, John Lee was in Capt. Josiah Briggs’s company of the Third Regiment in the Third Brigade, while Alexander Fancher served in Captain Samuel Huston’s company of the Spy Battalion in the Third Brigade. Thus, they did not serve in the same regiment, but they were in the same brigade, a much larger unit. Fancher also writes: “Alex’s company was assigned to the 2nd Brigade under Milton K. Alexander” (25) and gives a brief history of the Second Brigade, which is irrelevant to Alexander’s history, since he served, as documented above, in the Third Brigade.

In addition to inaccurate statements of historical fact, Burr Fancher also relates stories of events that are out of context with the time period. For example, Fancher tells of a boy who fell into the skimmings at the molasses mill (50), but the endnote identifies himself as the boy (235 note 15). In other words, he inserted into the account of Alexander’s life an event that actually occurred four generations later. Furthermore, Fancher sometimes makes a statement and then backpedals in the endnotes. For example, “Alexander used the old Fancher earmark handed down through generations”


(39). However, the endnote concedes: “There is no hard evidence that Alexander Fancher used these earmarks” (233 note 17). Because the Fancher oral traditions related in this book have not been evaluated based on evidence in primary documents, this narrative is best described as historical fiction, not biography.

A second disappointment is Burr Fancher’s real agenda in writing this purported biography. Although he claims that his “only purpose . . . is to acknowledge Alex’s contribution to the settlement of new frontiers” (ix)—in other words, the presentation of a life of which little is known besides the fact of Alexander Fancher’s victim status—it rapidly becomes apparent that Fancher’s emphasis is on recounting the wrongs the Mormons committed against his extended family. Of the 226 pages of text, 120 deal with the massacre; for this section, Fancher relies heavily on the accounts of Will Bagley and Sally Denton. He also states: “Hopefully, this story will be consistent with [the Mountain Meadows Monument Foundation] sentiments on the massacre and reflect their aspirations for closure on that tragic piece of history” (xi). This book is intended to present Fancher’s particular point of view on the events of the massacre, and he does not make any significant contribution to what has been published previously.

Fancher acknowledges that some of his comments are his own opinion (252 note 39). One such statement is: “Brigham Young gave Hamblin another wife so that he was far from his home at Mountain Meadows when the shooting started. He got both an alibi and a wife from the big boss in Salt Lake City. With those kinds of perks from the Prophet, it is not surprising that Jacob Hamblin perjured himself to convict John D. Lee for the massacre” (157). However, far more of Fancher’s writing reflects personal bias than he acknowledges. The captions for photographs of early Mormon leaders are unabashedly sensational. Brigham Young is labeled the “Mastermind of Planning and Cover-up,” and George A. Smith is called the “Man Who Comes Apart” and “Propaganda Chief” (105).

While Fancher repeatedly (and accurately) refers to the events at Mountain Meadows as a “massacre,” he dismisses the slaughter of unarmed men and boys at Haun’s Mill by Missourians in 1838 with: “The Mormon village of Haun’s Mill was overrun by 200 soldiers on October 30, killing 18

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and wounding 15” (41). He does not cite Governor Lilburn Boggs’s extermination order at all, instead describing the Mormon War with: “Governor Boggs mobilized 2,000 militia troops to quell the rebellion” (41). In short, Burr Fancher’s perspective of similar events is decidedly slanted. By his own admission, he was one of several people who were asked not to attend a reburial service at Mountain Meadows “because of their attitude toward Mormons” (185, 257 note 30).

Burr Fancher’s stated purpose of remembering a man whose death alone has been remembered by history is honorable, but this is not an eyewitness account, nor does it contain accurate historical facts. His unproven accusations aimed at early LDS leaders and his personal opinions about the Mountain Meadows Massacre have produced a work that cannot be considered a reliable historical account.

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Reviewed by Kylie Nielson Turley

When Susanna Morrill came to Salt Lake City in 1996, she planned to write a dissertation about nineteenth-century LDS women and their changing roles and relationships with male authority. She was diverted, however, when she discovered that nineteenth-century diarists revealed little concern about authority. Instead, the stories focused on daily life in their harsh desert environment while simultaneously punctuating such reflections with idyllic nature and flowery imagery.

In her dissertation, since revised and published as White Roses on the Floor of Heaven, Morrill analyzes this pattern of imagery, concluding that women used it as an “acceptable and non-confrontational popular, female-centered theology” (4). While recognizing that the diarists, poets, and essayists were not in an authoritative position to declare official doctrine or theology, Morrill persuasively demonstrates that the nature and flower imagery “lays out a logical and comprehensive argument” about women, their
relationship to God and to men, and their roles in life and eternity (6). Though at times unselfconsciously done, LDS women adjust and revise official theology in their nature writings and thus create a “popular” theology—“popular” meaning that it is created by general, lay members of a church and is not authoritative for the church institution, though this does not suggest that it is “less important or effective” than official theology (6).

Using nature imagery in literature was by no means an original creation. Morrill positions the LDS literary technique squarely within a long history of nature religion in American culture and, more particularly, in the “language of flowers,” a Victorian female-centered trend that swept both Europe and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Despite complex and multi-faceted Enlightenment philosophies that equated women with nature in both positive and negative ways and considered the “language of flowers” to be everything from “mysterious” and “occult” to “oriental” or merely “botanical,” the movement eventually settled squarely in the mainstream, with authors claiming it had a Christian basis in glorious Eden or in God’s natural, unbreakable laws. Multiple dictionaries explicated the meanings and uses of various types of flowers, and American writers published innumerable sentimental books, poems, and essays in the “language of flowers” genre, written almost exclusively for women and often by women. LDS women came late to the trend but entered it full-force between 1880 and 1920, publishing poems and essays with flower imagery in the *Exponent* as well as expounding on nature in personal writings.

Asking herself why LDS women turned to this particular technique to create a popular theology leads Morrill to see that how women “fit theologically” in the Church was unsettled and even contradictory during this period. While much in the Church, such as the LDS conceptions of Eve, a Mother in Heaven, and the role of motherhood, elevated the female gender and placed women in a “positive, even salvific light,” the basis of the community was formed on “the patriarchal model of the Old Testament,” which emphasized men and their role in the plan of salvation (41). This tension existed in a nascent revelatory religion; thus, all questions had not been answered, and beliefs and practices were only slowly being standardized. As Morrill succinctly summarizes, “The time was ripe and ready for this kind of popular, supplemental theological language and imagery. A need was present: women’s theological and institutional place within the church was rather flexible and unexplained. And the opportunity was present: the church was still open to innovation, and leaders and members were seeking for effective ways to explain and systematize their beliefs and practices” (66).

LDS women filled in the theological gap with reasoning of their own, relying on nature imagery as their chosen technique for three key reasons: first, the genre was available, amendable, understandable, and popular; sec-
ond, the Church’s historical circumstances had caused nature to become a meaningful figure in both LDS literature and theology; and third, poetry was seen as both an appropriate venue for women’s talents and a revelatory venue.

The way Mormon women used the poetry was similar to that of mainstream women poets: in a “deflected and diverted manner” rather than in a clear-cut argument. Morrill suggests that it helps to understand the gender arguments as a triangle in which meaning depends on the interaction of the three sides, representing “nature and flower symbolism, a set of virtue-laden abstract concepts, and femaleness/women” (89). For example, flowers were typically referred to with feminine pronouns, and women were often described, both physically and emotionally, as flower-like; the cycles of a woman’s life were illustrated by the growth of a flower (though the “idea of fruitful adulthood” was never connected to the “flower as a means of reproduction”) and nature, itself, was “Mother Nature,” a clearly feminine housekeeper of the physical world. Women and flowers were associated with faith, hope, charity, truth, purity, beauty, and beneficent seasons (spring, summer, and autumn), while men in binary yet complementary opposition were connected to negative, destructive forces such as death, prejudice, and penury, as well as the winter season.

Yet such meanings are not nearly as obvious as they first appear. Within the triangulated positive meanings is a smaller shadow triangle of negative female elements; LDS women writers also use flowers (and hence women) to signify temptation, shallowness, vanity, and worldliness. Tellingly, however, in both the abundant positive interpretations as well as in the scarcer negative interpretations, women are central actors in nature, their community, and their theology. Because nature, herself, is gendered, it is a short step for LDS women to tacitly argue that “femaleness and certain natural elements really are God’s earthly representatives” (109)—even that femaleness and women are closer to nature, and hence to God, than men. While this view seems to place women’s poetic revelations in opposition to the male priesthood line of authority, the physical placement of the nature and flower imagery in and around articles encouraging women to respect the priesthood shows that women were not trying to oppose men as much as to balance them.

Motherhood and the home deserve a chapter of their own when it comes to nature and flower imagery, as do women’s suffering and sacrifice. While the contemporary Victorian assumption about the value and responsibility of women in the home found a ready place in LDS theology, the “patriarchal focus of the LDS community often deflected much of the attention, explanation, and exultation of motherhood and the home” (116). Mormon women used nature imagery to rectify the oversight and give mothers the praise they deserved. In part they did this through equating their community, Eden, and heaven with
flowering gardens, replete with the concurrent female abstract virtues. The love of nature was seen as a godly and righteous yearning for the gardenlike preexistent home, and a well-cared-for home and garden became not only a woman’s small contribution to the flowering of Zion but a precursor of an unchanging, always-flowering heavenly home. Even temples, with Garden Rooms presenting “vistas of female-identified, benevolent nature” and early twentieth-century celestial rooms at times decorated as heavenly gardens, became a tangible link between women, nature, home, and heaven. In LDS women’s writing, garden and nature imagery theologically claimed that the home was a small bit of heaven and thus endowed a mother’s child-rearing and even housekeeping duties with sacred and eternal significance.

Yet the earthly home was surrounded by the perilous world, and women also used the imagery to explore the existential question of suffering, especially in regards to the difficult questions surrounding polygamy and death. Youth and beneficent nature were linked to comforting memories of home, and memory, itself, was characterized as a female-identified gift from God that could lift one beyond the immediate problems at hand. Social gatherings were poetically immortalized as “necessary oases, . . . as flowers in the midst of a desert” meant to comfort and uplift struggling women (162), while women brought literal flowers to create soothing beauty and spirituality at religious meetings, community events, and family occasions of all sorts. Morrill concludes that “ultimately, this nature and flower theology seeks to reassure women of the meaning of their seemingly anonymous lives. . . . By using flower and nature imagery, LDS women authors argue for the humbleness, the sublimity, the fragility, and resiliency of women’s mortal and eternal lives” (166).

Whether the imagery was ultimately positive or destructive is debatable. Using theories of Ann Douglas and Margaret Homans, Morrill notes that, through the use of nature imagery, “women were shown to be essentially female, naturally mothers and wives, and, especially in respect to the practice of polygamy, required to sacrifice and suffer for their community at sometimes great emotional and physical costs” (177). Yet the same imagery gave women a safe and acceptable technique for challenging norms and participating more fully in their religious communities. Morrill concludes that the imagery “shows how women developed another mode of discussing and arguing crucial issues in their lives, beliefs, and practices. . . . In the very act of reading and writing, LDS women staked their claim in the theological plot of their faith” (183).

Susanna Morrill’s work is a welcome addition to a thinly populated academic field, joining a small handful of M.A. theses and articles that discuss nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Mormon literature and the somewhat greater number of sources discussing LDS women and their place in
the Church. Anyone who rejects prematurely the idea that LDS women could be constructing a theological argument in their poetry ought to read the book; Morrill’s painstaking research, thorough theoretical background, and careful logical linkings make her interpretations difficult to dismiss. Because she is plowing new ground—and I use the nature cliché much more self-consciously after reading her book—Morrill must lay her argument’s foundations carefully, which means that she is unable to dive into the literature itself until Chapter 4, nearly halfway through the book. One can hope that Morrill’s serious study will prompt more such attention and will, in time, ameliorate the need for a preponderance of background information.

The lack of a standardized vocabulary with which to discuss these new ideas, theories, and applications at times causes Morrill’s prose to be densely descriptive. Once again, future scholars will no doubt have an easier time referring to the same ideas and discussing LDS women’s popular theology now that Morrill has carefully laid the foundation.

One of Morrill’s greatest strengths, her rigorous cross-disciplinary approach, may be a weakness to some readers. As one who has wandered the chasm between history and literature, I believe some historians will snub (or simply never read) a book that seems so literary while those with a more literary bent will feel that the book needlessly meanders through historical details rather than focusing squarely on LDS women’s texts. Both views are unfortunate. White Roses on the Floor of Heaven is the tenth book in the RELIGION IN HISTORY, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE SERIES by Routledge, a series that is “self-consciously interdisciplinary” (“Series Editorial Foreword,” vii). Morrill’s reliance on literary analysis, history, sociology, and the anthropology of religion is an asset.

Her novel approach brings her full circle and answers her original question about LDS women and authority in dramatic, complex, and interesting ways. Morrill understands that those studying the LDS religion cannot understand women’s lives merely by studying official pronouncements; those who wish to more fully understand the Mormon community—be that sociologically, historically, or otherwise—should view it from many different directions:

Within the LDS church history, these arguments by LDS women writers—this theological imagery—does not stand as authoritative. But I would argue that when scholars try to develop a full picture of the LDS community, they should view the use of this imagery as one crucial element within a larger, varied conglomeration of experiences and discourses. As important as knowing that Mormon women were barred from exercising apostolic authority, is knowing that an influential group of LDS women argued, seemed to believe, and act accordingly, that they were as close to God and just as truly carried out God’s will as their brothers in faith, and that they were able to live without any obvious conflict with either the be-
lief or social structures of their church. In other words, this seemingly contradictory contention was actually an accepted, or at least an alternative part of the tradition of the group. This adds another dimension to the history of this particular community, and also demonstrates the more general reality of contradictory strains, practices, and subcultures within any given religious community—contradictory but, paradoxically, not necessarily openly conflicting. (174)

Even with her multifaceted approach, Morrill cannot answer all questions. She recognizes weaknesses in her methodology, such as the fact that studying poetic popular theology does not necessarily speak directly about women’s “reality of life on the ground” (178); still, she unhesitatingly argues that the nature “imagery acts as a deeply revealing window into the internal and social lives of the women of this community as they struggled to define their position within the church” (178). After reading the book, I agree wholeheartedly.

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Reviewed by Dlora Hall Dalton and Dawn Hall Anderson

*The Killing of Greybird* is a well-wrought piece of historical fiction set at the outset of Utah’s Black Hawk Indian war in 1865. Author Eric Swedin, an assistant professor at Weber State University with publications in history and information technology, notes in an Afterword that he originally intended to write a history of this conflict. His research, however, soon led to John Alton Peterson’s *Utah’s Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998). Feeling that he “could not easily improve on [Peterson’s] excellent work,” Swedin’s “thoughts turned to writing a novel set during that time” (227). He has done so with enviable skill.

David Halliday of Manti, Utah, the novel’s central character, returns from a stint in the Civil War (he was one of the few Mormons to sign up) to discover that the Indians are on the warpath and that Greybird, his closest friend and adopted brother, has been killed. Greybird, a Piede Indian, had been adopted into David’s family as a child through a rescue purchase from Ute slavers. The prevailing belief is that Greybird has been killed by raiding
Utes from Black Hawk’s band, but David’s Uncle Josiah, who found the body, confides that the absence of mutilation “just doesn’t make sense” (30). His uncle, a quiet, somewhat aloof man, is content to let the puzzle go, but David vows to find out who murdered his brother, a resolve which eventually becomes obsessive.

Let’s get one minor complaint out of the way: the front cover of this paperback edition is misleading. A comely blonde in a modest blue dress is seated in a field of warm golden grasses beside a wooden grave marker. Over her stands a dark-haired, ruggedly handsome young man who is gazing pensively off into the distance, a rifle angled up at the ready, the butt resting on his thigh and his finger on the trigger. The implication that this book is a historical romance is a genre red herring, since the novel is actually a carefully crafted, complex murder mystery.

One of this engaging novel’s strengths is the more universal themes that arise as David’s search to discover who is responsible for Greybird’s death leads him to ponder the equally troubling question of why. As the Black Hawk War escalates, drawing David in, the murder becomes a microcosm of personal violence set against the macrocosmic violence of war. David frequently muses on the differences between this war and the Civil War. He compares, for instance, his own brewing animosity and distrust of the Indians to his feelings for the Confederates:

During the war, he hated the Rebel officers for their part in starting the war. He did not hate the common soldier, for he saw them as misguided . . . If they were close to a Rebel army and enough time had passed since the hatred of battle, he even chatted with the Rebel pickets.

If an Indian sneaked up now with no intent to kill, merely wishing to talk, would he respond with friendliness? David supposed not. This was a different sort of war. (97)

A prayerful, sensitive, and thoughtful young Mormon, David’s reflections on slavery, racial and religious bigotry, justifications for war, and the spiritual danger of his own “gnaw[ing] . . . hunger for vengeance” (65) thread logically and mostly unobtrusively through the story, adding a dimension that a straight, just-the-facts-ma’am history of these events could not.

Swedlin, whose original sleuthing was through the thickets of history, doesn’t fudge on his facts, however. A cross-check with Utah’s Black Hawk War bears out the author’s assurance (Afterword) that “the events of the novel are as accurate as I could make them,” from the unlikely presence of Colonel Patrick E. Conner’s California Volunteers prospecting in Sanpete Valley to the grisly details of the Indian attack on the unarmed Danish settlement of Ephraim (82). Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde did, in fact, countermand Brigham Young’s directives, repeatedly. The sacrament water was passed in a pitcher, the Indians were far better armed than the Saints, and
some mothers did require children to bathe as often as once a month. We
may assume the Civil War details are accurate also, given Swedin’s proclivi-
ties.

As a murder mystery, the red herrings may seem rather thinly dis-
guised. Was Greybird murdered by Utes after all? Or was it those “bad Mor-
mons,” the surly Ivie twins, Mark and Luke, who have always despised and
taunted Indians? Or was it the Mormon-hating soldiers from Fort Douglas?
On the plus side, investigating these more obvious potential suspects pro-
vides a ready-made forum for Swedin to explore cultural assumptions, arro-
gance, and prejudice from several angles—against Indians, against the Mor-
mons, and against the Utah Gentiles. When one twin, Luke, repeats Orson
Hyde’s incendiary opinion, following the attack on Ephraim, that the In-
dians are “the sons of Cain” who deserve to be exterminated like the Gadian-
ton robbers in the Book of Mormon, David interrupts:

“They are Lamanites, Luke. You know that. They have the chosen
seed of the Jews in them and are a promised people in a promised land,
just as we are. God loves them too.”

“Just look at history, David,” [the other twin] Mark said. “Have the
negroes or Indians ever built great buildings? No, they grub around for
food like animals. Look at Utah before we came. There was nothing. In-
dians were just another animal, like a bear, or coyotes, or wolves. They
built huts and tepees, not homes, or farms, or any kind of civilization.
White men bring civilization. We improve the land and make it how God
meant it to be. We make the land fertile with crops and irrigation.” (90)

In Civil War flashbacks, David muses on similar expressions of preju-
dice among Union soldiers toward blacks, whether slave or free (170–73).
Curiously, Greybird falls into three target categories for racial hatred and re-
ligious bigotry—he is an Indian, he has converted to Mormonism, and he was
briefly a slave headed for the New Mexico markets.

The dangers and exigencies of the Indian war at times sidetrack David
from his hunt, as does falling in love with Danish convert Sonja Anderson
(presumably the blonde on the cover). Because of his experience in the Civil
War, David is asked to help defend the settlements, train the ragtag local
Nauvoo Legion volunteers, and join retaliatory raids. When David accompa-
nies a cattle drive to Salt Lake City to purchase guns, he also delivers a letter
to Brigham Young from his father, Manti’s bishop for more than fifteen
years. This plot interlude provides an interesting snapshot of the valley and a
brief interview with the larger-than-life Mormon prophet whose oft-re-
peated counsels to feed, not fight the Indians make him an almost ubiqui-
tous presence in the novel.

From this novel set in central Utah, the reader learns a good deal
about Mormon beliefs and habits in the 1860s, such as tithe farms, the du-
ties of a bishop, the Mormons' deteriorating relationship with the indigent Indians, life in a polygamous family, peace missionaries, and even peep stones. We see the Saints' reverence for their prophet/president Brigham Young and their attempts to follow his policy of vigilance and nonviolence during the war. The southern communities were instructed to abandon smaller settlements and gather to larger ones where they were to build forts and buy arms. However, as Brother Brigham laments, "I may be the president of this church, but I am not always obeyed" (124). Brigham's policy was based partly on his concern that drawing more government troops to Utah for any reason would prove an invitation, now that the institution of slavery was abolished, to eradicate that other "twin relic of barbarism," polygamy.

"Some of the Saints want you to ask the army to come in and chase down Black Hawk," David said.

"Then we would be beholden to the federal government," Brother Brigham said. "We will not do that. I am trying to keep this war secret from the army. It is our problem and we will solve it alone."

"Yes, sir."

"With regards to how Greybird died, I pray that you find who committed such a foul crime, but I also fear that you may not like the answer when you find it." (126)

As Brother Brigham foretells, the secrets David uncovers solving the murder of Greybird are unwelcome. The circumstances and motive driving the murder are inextricably entwined in the Mormon culture and beliefs of the day; and even though, as required of a good mystery, the author leaves enough clues that astute readers can solve the murder before the protagonist, it might be as much a surprise to them as it is to David.

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BOOK NOTICES

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.


“This book is not intended to be an academic work,” writes Paul Lyman in the introduction, “although it is fully researched and documented. It is not meant to be a tour guide, although it gives direction to and provides maps for the various places the Saints visited. It is not a book on all of the handcart companies or even the two that suffered the most. It is focused on only the Willie Company. And it is written for all ages. . . . By following the driving directions while reading the firsthand accounts, a modern traveler can be near to where the handcart pioneers were, see or imagine what they might have seen, and feel what they surely felt” (8). This is a very apt summary of this book.

This book uses the Willie Company journal, kept by various company clerks, as the framework. It describes the company’s journey from Liverpool, England, to Great Salt Lake City. It does not focus on the tragedy in the Nebraska Territory (currently Wyoming). He uses three other daily records (Peder Madsen’s journal, Levi Savage’s journal, and the History of William Woodward) plus other subsequent reminiscences to supplement the company journal. Lyman thus provides different perspectives from various people having the same experience. He also provides extensive directions on how to follow much of the Willie

Although Lyman is obviously a devotee of his topic, the book, somewhat perplexingly, lacks an author’s note. Perhaps this is because he is a state juvenile judge, as an internet search disclosed. At the very least, it would have been appropriate to explain why the author chose to write the book, which obviously required a great deal of effort in researching, compiling, and retraveling the earlier path.

Lyman provides commentary on the various primary and secondary sources that generally provide insights about the journey. More photos of past and current-day journey sites would have enhanced this book. The modern-day travel descriptions could have been improved with some simple format changes. Two different headings would have been helpful to distinguish the original journey from the modern-day trip. Adding the year to the date of the original journey would have added further clarification, while contemporary travel could have had a heading such as: “Modern-day Journey: Day 1, 2, 3 . . .”

Another useful addition would have been a summary of each of the ten Mormon handcart companies and their various fortunes. Other useful information for the Willie Company would have been some summary statistics: how many started out, died, left the Willie Company, etc.

Overall, this book provides useful information about the Willie Handcart Company and some of the people who made the journey.


In this novel designed for middle readers, Laurel Beck, a red-headed twelve-year-old, is living on the wooded slope above Haun’s Mill on a pleasant October afternoon in 1838. Her father is on a mission in Pennsylvania, and Laurel resents both the attention her mother gives her frail younger brother, James, and the fact that her mother forbids her to play with Sardius Smith. Suddenly, the peaceful afternoon explodes in gunfire. Laurel’s mother, her leg wounded, is thrusting James into her arms, and the two children are trying to hide in the woods. The action, over approximately the next four weeks, shows Laurel, first trying to reach Far West with James, then finding refuge with a friendly Missouri family, before a chance trip to “Maple Town” brings them back to their parents.

The massacre at Haun’s Mill takes place off stage, with Laurel getting confirmation indirectly, thus making the book suitable for younger readers. Despite Sardius Smith’s role as Laurel’s playmate, there is no mention of the fact that he is among the men and boys killed. Laurel assumes, though she does not know, that her mother
was dead because she last saw her
crawling toward the barn, which
had been burned by the time Laurel
returned.

In a more nuanced version than
the usual narrative of persecution
that is traditional for retelling stories
of the Missouri period, a Missourian
raider prevents another man from
shooting Laurel and James. When
they find refuge in a barn, they over-
hear the conversation between the
farmer, who expresses approval of
the massacre, and his son, who re-
fuses to agree. The son spots the chil-
dren, feeds them with his mother’s
secret assistance, and takes them to
the safety of another sympathetic
Missouri family.

The author provides no research
notes, but her information is rela-
tively accurate: “at least fifteen”
killed (actually seventeen) (98). Ma-
ple Town seems to be the only fic-
tional place name. Jarring modern
slang intrudes once “Abraham got in
the other man’s face” (113). Williams
correctly dates the Boggs extermina-
tion order as being issued prior to
the massacre, but has one of the mili-
tiamen cite it as explicit authority for
the massacre. This version has long
been the Mormon tradition; but Al-
xander Baugh’s research has deter-
mined that the militia probably did
not know of the order or act under
its authority, although Boggs did not
repudiate their action. See Alexan-
der L. Baugh, “A Call to Arms: The
1838 Mormon Defense of Northern
Missouri” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham
Young University, 1996), 281–83.

The writing is engaging and spe-
cific:

We walked till it felt my feet
were going to come off at the an-
kles and keep going on by them-
selves. We stayed out of the way for
a good long time, then moved back
near the water’s edge. . . . Every
time the wind ran down the creek
it made me and the trees shiver.

Every one of my steps seemed
to haunt me. It was like the crunch
of my feet on the sand and stones
and old leaves was saying. “He’s
after you. He’s after you.” I looked
over my shoulder so much that it
soon felt like a hammer tapped on
the bone between my eyes. (74)

Annette Lyon. At the Journey’s End.
American Fork, Utah: Covenant
176–7

This novel is closely based on the
history of the “Honeymoon Trail,”
the difficult route used in the
1880s and 1890s by couples from
Arizona’s Mormon settlements
who were traveling to St. George to
be married in the temple. These
couples were accompanied by fam-
ily members or close friends, and
the return journey was their honey-
moon, hence the name. For some
who had already married, such as
the couple in this book, the journey
was to be sealed in the temple.

Most of the characters in this
novel are fictional; however, a few,
such as Bishop Hunt of Snowflake,
Arizona, and Warren Johnson, who
operated Lee’s Ferry on the Colo-
rado River, are historical charac-
ters. The author’s descriptions of
the dangers faced on the trail are very realistic. For instance, when crossing the Colorado River on the ferry, a woman falls overboard: “The ferryman had already heard the shout and was pressing his pole hard into the riverbed to slow the craft. A jolt like the first followed as they reduced speed, and as the horses shifted forward, they kicked and pawed, neighing with complaint and fear as the wagon pressed its weight against them” (187).

In addition to the adventures of the married couple and the three people accompanying them on the trail, one story line features an elderly lady whose lifelong dream was to someday receive the blessings of attending a temple. Though quite elderly and in poor health, she makes the difficult journey from Salt Lake City to St. George to visit the first temple dedicated in Utah (1877). A young man traveling the Honey-moon Trail, Abe, a Shoshoni Indian, happens to be this woman’s adopted son, whom she plans to meet in St. George.

The book uses two folk tales that have developed around the St. George Temple over the years. The first is that Brigham Young did not like the short, stubby tower as first built but did not insist that it be changed. However, he got his way a year after his death when lightning struck the tower and it was rebuilt to its more aesthetic height (151–52, 262–63, 338). It’s true that Young didn’t like the short tower but there is no documentary evidence that he complained to anyone but his son, Brigham Jr. The lightning strike is also true, but the tower was not rebuilt for five years. (See Darrell E. Jones, “The St. George Temple Tower: Evolution of a Design,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 [Spring 2008]: 113–29).

The second is the oft-told story that the cannon used as a pile driver when building the temple’s foundation had been brought to Utah by Mormon Battalion veterans in 1848 (266–67). The cannon in question was purchased in California and brought to St. George by Jesse Crosby about 1861. (See Brent Crosby, “Jesse W. Crosby Finally Recognized for Bringing Temple Cannon to St. George,” *The Giants of Joshua* [St. George: n.p., n.d.], 19; Andrew Karl Larson, *I Was Called to Dixie: The Virgin River Basin: Unique Experiences in Mormon Pioneering* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961], 581).

Although *At the Journey’s End,* does not resist these two appealing folktales, most of the research is carefully done. For instance, when preparing to climb “Lee’s Backbone,” a difficult hill immediately south of the Colorado River, Lynn writes, “Maddie stood and looked at the daunting pass: steep and rugged, without a clear path visible, at least from where she stood. She wondered if you could see broken wagons or horse remains from the top, since so many people seemed to have toppled wagons or lost animals while trying to cross it” (175). The novel recreates the challenges faced by young couples who spent as long as two months traveling up to 400 miles through the desert in
each direction to the St. George Temple in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Lyon includes a romance woven into the historical fabric, with some surprising twists and turns in the final few pages.


In this easy-to-read autobiography, Mario Facione details his conversion to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but he was an unusual investigator: a member of the Mafia. He grew up as a less-active Catholic in Detroit, became involved with the local mob at age nine, and ran away from home at age sixteen, becoming more deeply immersed in various Mafia practices. In considerable detail, Facione explains his scams, from cheating friends to black-marketing government-owned equipment.

In the spring of 1980, Facione visited Utah to appraise a potential scam with some partners in Utah County. When he first arrived in Salt Lake City, “the friendliness of the people and the cleanliness of their city struck me moments after I stepped off the plane. It just blew me away. I couldn’t believe there was a metropolis so neat, and where people were overly kind. . . . I started thinking about the Quakers, living a funny kind of life, not being in the mainstream of the world” (37–38). This positive impression created a curiosity and openness to the Mormon faith.

When Facione returned home, he found, to his surprise, that two Mormon missionaries had come to his house and introduced themselves to his wife Lynette. They subsequently arranged a return appointment. Facione agreed to take the missionary lessons because he suspected that the missionaries were trying to scam or spy on him. He later warmed to their visits as they provided adequate answers to his many questions. Facione’s description of these lessons provide a snapshot of how LDS missionaries taught and interacted with their investigators during the early eighties when the emphasis was on presenting memorized discussions.

A turning point in his conversion occurred when the missionaries showed him a video on the dedication of the Washington D.C. Temple: “It . . . just penetrated me. It sent volts of electricity running through me. . . . Something inside me just broke open, I bawled like a baby. It was just this feeling that I had to get into that building” (55–56). Facione, still associated with the Mob, and Lynette were baptized.

Although Facione first saw no conflict between his life as a Mormon and life as a member of the Mafia, interviews with his branch president quickly established that he could not receive a temple recommend as a member of the Mafia: “There really was no choice I finally concluded. I could not give it [Mormonism] up. From that point on,
my life became focused on one final deal, one final objective that carried more risk than any ever before—how to get out of the organization [Mafia] with my life” (66).

Facione’s plan was to blackmail his Mafia connections in New York so they would let him leave the Mafia without being killed. Surprisingly, Facione’s plan worked, but the repercussions included the loss of his money, a divorce, and even the loss of his honest employment; but he achieved his goal of going to the temple. In his conclusion, Facione comments that he is currently re-married, is active in the Church, and has little fear of the Mafia as he had kept a low profile during most of his illegal activities.

Facione’s book is an interesting contemporary addition to the many historical conversion stories recorded by LDS members.
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